Mentoring for Success

"Is this your first time at formation flying?"

COACH Program
Purpose of Mentor Training

• Gain a better understanding of the mentoring process and the role of the mentor and mentee.
• Improve your mentoring skills and think about who you see as potential mentors and mentees for yourself.
Why are you interested in being a mentor or be mentored?
Topics to be discussed

• What does it mean to be a good mentor or mentee?
• Assessment of your skills and interests
• Stages of the mentoring process
• Mentoring techniques and tools
Mentoring Definitions

“Creating possibilities and providing guidance and support to others in a relationship of trust; it includes facilitating, bringing visions to life and enabling people to achieve” (Henley Management College 2000)

“A relationship, not just a procedure or activity, where one person professionally assists the development of another outside of the normal manager/subordinate relationship” (Abbey)

“Mentoring relates primarily to the identification and nurturing of potential for the whole person. The learner owns both the goals and the process.” (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2004)
Benefits of Mentoring

To the Mentor

• An opportunity to hone and improve their own management skills, particularly advisory and supporting skills in a safe environment

• An opportunity to learn about the perspectives and views of others less senior

• A chance to influence and improve communications with others in the organisation

• Learning from mentee – new technologies, new developments, important features of next generation

• “Passing the torch to a new generation”
Benefits of Mentoring

To the Mentee

• A smoother adjustment to a new role or position

• Help in acquiring more quickly and comprehensively the skills and knowledge they need

• Help with the necessary choices in the development of their careers

• Access to someone more senior than themselves, other than their line manager

• A greater understanding of both the formal and informal workings of the organisation
Disadvantages of Mentoring

Disadvantages for the mentee:
- Over-dependence on the mentor
- Micro-management from the mentor

Disadvantages for the mentor:
- Mentee dependence on mentor
- Time, energy commitment to mentee
- Negative halo from mentee who fails

Have you ever been in a bad or ineffective mentoring situation? What led to that?
What is and is not a mentor?

**A mentor is a:**
- Role model
- Active listener
- Resource
- Leader
- Communicator
- Skill builder
- Negotiator
- Facilitator that is
  - **Non-judgmental**
  - **Respectful**
  - **Empathetic**
  - **Committed**
  - **Resourceful**
  - **Supportive**
  - **Encouraging**
  - **Accountable**

**A mentor is not a:**
- Therapist
- Parent
- Counselor
- Advisor that is
  - Authoritarian
  - Judgmental
  - Critical
  - Rejecting
  - Disrespectful
## Mentoring versus Coaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COACHing is:</th>
<th>Mentoring is:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task oriented</td>
<td>Relationship oriented</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short term</td>
<td>Long term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Performance driven</td>
<td>Development driven</td>
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Identify someone who has been a mentor to you?

- Pre college
- College
- Graduate School
- Postdoc
- Early Career
- Mid Career

What did you learn from them about being a mentor?

What was the outcome?

Make a table for them to fill out.

Discuss around their table

What were the common characteristics that made these individuals effective mentors to you?
What do Mentors do?

- Listens
- Is an opposite (at times)
- Uses non-judgemental questioning
- Demonstrates ability to follow through on commitments
- Motivates others
- Can relate to issues of the mentee
- Wants to help
- Is trustworthy, responsible and ensures confidentiality
What Mentors don’t do

• Mentors will **not:**
  – Take action on behalf of mentees
  – Intervene on behalf of mentees
  – Take part in any succession planning discussions that relate to their own mentee
  – Discuss the mentee with the line manager
Stages of Mentoring

• Initiation Stage
• Building Trust and Relationships
• Testing the Boundaries
• Seeking Independence

– Not all stages are beneficial to the mentor or to the mentee.
Mentor - Tips for Starters

• Stay in your zone of expertise/experience
• Be clear that mentee sets pace of relationship
• Advise, do not manage
• Extend mentee’s developmental network - suggest additional mentors to address unique needs
• Be reliable, patient and consistent
• Be aware of your own biases, doubts, life styles etc.
Mentor - Tips for Starters

• Do not try to fix
• Listen without judgement
• Be open and honest about what you can and cannot do and have to do
• Recognize that mentee may be uncomfortable asking for help – break ice by sharing some of your career experiences
Mentee – Tips for Starters

• Seek counsel and advice, not a supervisor who directs actions.

• Be aware of potential pitfalls: Overbearing mentor, mentor exploitation of mentee’s work.

• Be sensitive to the difference between asking for help/advice from your mentor and demanding favors from your mentor.

• Synthesize lessons learned from all mentors – become your own person.
What Mentees need to ask themselves?

• What do they want (from the mentoring relationship, what learning outcomes are they aiming for etc.)

• How will they know when they have got there?

• What strengths do they have in what they do now, that will help them get this outcome?

• How much time can they expect from my Mentor?
Establishing Trust & Respect

• Careful preparation at the start of the relationship will help build rapport
• Be consistent, reliable and predictable
• Insure confidentiality
• Trust is reciprocal, if the mentor trusts the mentee and vice versa the relationship is more likely to build on trust.
• Once trust is lost it is very difficult to rebuild
• Value and respect differences
Dysfunctional Mentoring

When the relationship does not work for one or more parties.

Problems develop when:

- Interests of the parties change
- Differences in judgment between parties
- Intrusion/over-involvement in another’s personal problems
- Triangulation problem with others (mentor/mentee/supervisor)
- Destructive tone of relationship (e.g., envy/jealousy; dependency/suffocation; support/exploitation)
- Ambiguous expectations
Mentoring Women

Women face additional challenges in finding mentors

- Limited access to potential mentors due to limited informal networks
- Few same-sex role models
- Peer-perceptions of cross-gender mentoring relationships

Mentoring provides additional benefits for

- Sharing “inside” knowledge about the profession, the department
- Expanding networks
- Providing encouragement and role modeling
Mentoring Women

Provide assistance to women in identifying and forming mentoring relationships

• Women benefit more from mentor-initiated or mutually-initiated relationships (Stonewater, Eveslage & Dingerson 1990)

Multiple mentor model is especially effective for women

• “Collective mentoring” model can create supportive environment

• “Peer mentoring” can also be effective, esp. as complement to mentoring team

• Encourage protégés to look beyond research group, department, discipline, institution
Effective Mentoring Conversations

- Conversations are the foundation for strong relationships
- Questions are an important element in mentoring conversations
- Open ended questions are particularly effective
Open ended questions

• Open ended questions and conversations are designed to encourage more detailed and meaningful responses because they are based on the mentee’s own knowledge and feelings.

• Wonderful tool to promote creating thinking, problem-solving skills and cognitive growth

Use them as often as possible
Open ended questions

• Create free and open lines of communication
• Means of developing rapport, trust and credibility
• Perceived as less threatening than closed ended questions
• No right or wrong answer
Open ended questions

• In an open ended question there is:
  No leading
  No prompting
  No interrupting
Closed ended questions

- Usually answered by either yes or no
- Can often be leading, presuming or probing
- Often stifle open engagement in conversation and limit information sharing

“Have you had a mentor before?”
“Do you see yourself going into industry?”
“Why” Questions

Be careful when using “Why” questions as they are often interpreted as judgmental and can close down a conversation.

“Why do you want to take an academic job?”
“Why do you want to give a talk at that meeting?”
“Why do you think it is important to take a postdoc?”
Block and Unlock Words and Phrases

Unlock phrases provide an opening to learn more about the mentee.

“What do you like about....?”

Block phrases stop or stall a conversation.

“How do you expect to...?  No....”
BLOCK Phrases

Avoid block words and phrases as they can imply manipulation, judgment, criticism, control or correction.

Also – be mindful of your tone and implication when using the word “you”. It may be interpreted as implying power.

“Did you...?”
BLOCK and UNLOCK Phrases

Block or Unlock phrases?
You must...
It’s not so bad...
I like what you are.....
You need to....
Did you....
Have you thought about...?
How do you expect to...?
Can you give me an example...? Tell me more...
Reflective Listening

A communication strategy involving two key steps:

  Seeking to understand a speaker’s idea and then offering the idea back to the speaker to confirm that the idea has been understood correctly.

  Listening closely with their whole body to the content and intent of what someone is saying.
Reflective Listening

Use paraphrasing (restating what you heard) as a tool to reassure your mentee that you are interested in understanding what is being said.

“It sounds like what you are saying is....”
“What I hear you saying is....”
“Let’s see if I understand what you are saying....”
“Do I have this right...?
Others?
Reflective Listening

When practicing reflective listening, the mentor should not be thinking –

“What can I do for my mentee?”

But rather steer the conversation to obtain more information to the following questions

“How can I help her work towards a realistic solution?
“How can I help her get her needs met”
Caution!!

When the mentor shares his/her opinions, judgments or advice on a solution, a message of dependency rather than independence is conveyed, thus limiting the mentee’s ability to develop critical thinking skills.

Mentors play a key role in offering guidance and encouragement as mentees *work toward* plausible decisions.
Engage in the Listening Process
Give the mentee full attention

• Make eye contact
• Nod your head
• Offer verbal affirmations and short phrases that will not cast shame, blame or judgment such as:
  “I understand....”
  “That’s interesting....”
  “I’m with you....”
  “Tell me more about that...”
  “Really.....” (but be careful with this one)
Listen for feelings, not just content

Listen for feelings, not just content

An effective listener listens for what the mentee is saying about herself rather than the situation, incident or others involved.

“I’m worried that I won’t finish my thesis in a timely manner”

It’s more effective for the mentor to acknowledge the state of worry rather than the situation.

“I can appreciate your worry as you don’t want to be in graduate school forever”

Rather than offering a solution on how to get the thesis done in a timely manner.
Let’s practice

Break up into groups of 3: Mentee, mentor and observer. Role-play the scenerio given. Once completed, switch roles and repeat. Each group is given 3 scenerios.

Have the mentee read the question and the mentor practice reflective listening techniques to help the mentee come to a solution. The observer looks for examples of reflective listening and conversation unlocking techniques used.

When the mentor-mentee discussion is completed, the observer reports what she likes about the mentor’s approach.

Switch roles for the next 2 scenerios.
My advisor refuses to acknowledge anything that I do right. How can I change this?

I would like to network at meetings but I’m very shy. What do I do?

The chairman of my department seems to easily talk to the other male members in my department but rarely interacts with me.

I am having difficulty getting some of my research papers completed and I am concerned that it will work against me in my upcoming evaluation. What should I do?

I have a very heavy teaching load and rarely have time for my research. I am very worried that the effort that I am putting into teaching will be to my detriment when coming up for promotion.

It seems to me that the men in the department can easily recruit the best graduate students and I am left with the weaker ones. What should I do?

I believe that I am doing some of the best research in my field but I worry that others are not noticing my work or are overlooking it in favor of others. What should I do?
Reporting out

Is it hard to use reflective listening?

How can reflective listening be more beneficial to the mentee?

Can you think of a situation where reflective listening would not be beneficial to the mentee? The mentor?
Distance Mentoring

• How to use e-mail
  – Use e-mail to set up meetings (face-to-face or phone), clarify plans/goals, pose non-time urgent questions, review plans, maintain contact.
  – Don’t use e-mail to give critical or complex feedback, provide impressions of other’s behavior, provide impressions of third parties, exchange sensitive information.

• Communication Challenges
  – Listen for nonverbal cues (e.g., pregnant pauses, voice tone, tempo, volume)
  – Push for specific information, clarify meanings
  – Summarize agreements
Developing Independence

- Closure - begin slowly - provide opportunities to say goodbye in a healthy, respectful, affirming way
- Continue to support mentee while encouraging independence
- Expect setbacks as natural part of this stage
- Identify natural emotions - mentors model behavior - express their feelings (grief, denial, resentment)
- Address appropriate situations/venues to stay in touch
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Topics Discussed

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