



Mentoring

A practical activity guide



Mentoring

What is mentoring?

‘TRADITIONAL’ MENTORING

The idea of a mentor is an old one which has become popular in the last 20 years. In workplaces, more senior or experienced staff are offered mentoring training to enable them to offer support to less experienced colleagues. Typically, the aims of the mentoring will be to enable the mentee or client to gain a better understanding of the way an organisation operates or to gain new knowledge relevant to their work. Traditional mentoring often happened in an ad-hoc way, for example, when a ‘mentor’ identifies a promising new person and offers to support them.

Mentor is:	Mentor:	Mentor relationship is:
older	advises	unequal
more experienced	supports	hierarchical
guide and champion	encourages a younger person	
teacher	helps them to learn	
sponsor	helps them to navigate in the workplace	

‘MODERN’ MENTORING

Other mentoring schemes however do not necessarily require the mentor to be more experienced or knowledgeable. According to this view, the mentor’s role is to support and encourage a mentee through a time of change. This encompasses the idea of ‘peer mentoring’ when two or more people mentor one another.

Mentor is:	Mentor:	Mentor relationship is:
someone who facilitates the personal growth and development of another	fosters development	one-to-one
supportive	asks questions, listens to the mentee, helps the mentee develop options	between equals
not an expert who is expected to give advice.	encourages reflection and learning	dynamic
comparable with a coach, able to ask questions, listen, and signpost	increases awareness	reciprocal
	identifies alternatives	a process of engagement
	initiates action	reflective

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Traditional mentoring definitions

An older more experienced person who advises, supports and encourages a younger person

Collin, A (1988)

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A relationship between a young adult and an older, more experienced adult, that helps the younger individual learn and navigate in the adult world and the world of work

Kram K (1988)

Mentoring at Work, New York: University Press of America

A good enough mentor is a transitional figure who invites and welcomes a young man into the adult world. He serves as guide, teacher and sponsor... The protégé has the hope that soon he will be able to join or even surpass his mentor in the work they both value

Levinson D et al (1978)

The Seasons of a Man's Life, New York: Ballantine Books

A true mentor fosters the young adult's development by nourishing the youthful Dream and giving it her or his blessing, believing in the young woman, helping her to define her newly emerging adult self in its newly discovered adult world, and creating a space in which she can move towards a reasonably satisfactory life structure that contains the Dream

Levinson D & Levinson J (1996)

The Seasons of a Woman's Life

New York: Ballantine Books

Modern mentoring definitions

The one-to-one relationship that evolves through reasonably distinct phases between the mentor and an adult learner

Cohen N (1995)

Mentoring Adult Learners

Malabar, Florida: Kreiger Publishing

Someone who provides an enabling relationship that facilitates another's personal growth and development. The relationship is dynamic, reciprocal, and can be emotionally intense. With such a relationship, the mentor assists with career development and guides the mentee through the organisational, social and political networks

Morton-Cooper A & Palmer A (1993)

Mentoring and Preceptorship 3, Oxford: Blackwell Science

A formalised process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitate that person's career and personal development

Roberts, A (2000)

Mentoring & Tutoring 8 (2) 145-170

A relationship between equals in which one or more of those involved is enabled to

- increase awareness

- identify alternatives

- initiate action

to develop themselves

Hay J (1995)

Transformational Mentoring: Creating Developmental Alliances for Changing Organisational Cultures, Watford: Sherwood Publishing

Mentoring is a process of engagement...successful mentoring is a reflective practice... mentoring focuses on the learners, the learning process and the learning

Zachary L (2000)

The Mentor's Guide

San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass



Mentoring activity: practising asking questions

Identify a real issue or dilemma relevant to your role. It could relate to a situation where you want to make a difference. It should be something which you are prepared to talk about. One of your colleagues will be practising asking you questions, and the session will be observed, so don't choose an issue which is highly personal – the purpose of the exercise is to give everyone the chance to try out some key mentoring skills.

You will be asked to work in groups of three.

In each group, take turns to fill the following roles:

- mentor
- client or mentee
- observer

You will have the opportunity to swap around and try different roles.

Each mentoring session will last no more than 10 minutes, followed by short feedback to the mentor from the observer.

MENTOR ROLE

Your role is to get the mentee talking about a real issue which they have identified, with a view to encouraging them towards an outcome. You should avoid offering advice. You should start by asking questions and listening, summarise regularly, and then encourage the mentee to reach a decision about their next steps, using challenging questions.

OBSERVER ROLE

Your role will be to listen, observe, and practice giving feedback based on what you have seen and heard to the mentor, immediately following the session you have observed.

At the end of the three sessions, as a group agree the feedback you wish to share with the whole group about what you have learnt (not about the details of any session).

Be prepared to report back.

References

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Zachary L (2000) The Mentor's Guide

