



Key skills and issues in mentoring

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Purpose of input

- Share with mentees the key issues raised with mentors in terms of:
 - Active listening;
 - Effective feedback; and
 - Negotiating conflict
- Give mentees a sense of what to expect and how to prepare
- *Note:* Not all mentors attended the webinars and each mentor will have a slightly different approach to mentoring, but ...
- Mentees can use this information to promote an effective mentoring experience

Various approaches to people development



The essence of developmental mentoring

- In modern mentoring models (often described as developmental mentoring) the emphasis is on mentees *finding their own solutions* to challenges rather than straight advice-giving by the mentor.
- “A mentor is not someone who walks ahead of us to show us how they did it. A mentor walks alongside us to show us what we can do” (Simon Sinek)
- The person that holds the question holds the wisdom to answer the question – the mentor provides an **enabling** space for the mentee to surface their own wisdom (Concept developed by Nancy Kline)

Mentoring sessions provide a space to think (out loud)

- The quality of everything we do depends on the quality of the thinking we do before we take action
- Mentoring sessions should provide an opportunity for *you* to:
 - Identify issue(s) you would like to be mentored on (part of the discussion of the mentoring contract in first session and *preparation before each session*)
 - Discuss/think about the issue to develop a better understanding
 - Explore options for dealing with the issue
 - Decide on the best option, one that you are willing to commit to

Active listening in a thinking environment

- The quality of our thinking depends on how we are treated (by *ourselves* and others) when we are thinking
- Attention:
 - Listening in a way that allows the person speaking to think for themselves
 - Listening without:
 - ✓ Interrupting
 - ✓ Multi-tasking (switch off your cell phone & email message notifications etc.)
 - ✓ Thinking about how to respond to what the other person is saying

Active listening in a thinking environment

- Respect and equality:
 - Everyone has the potential to have great ideas
 - Everyone benefits from having an opportunity to express their views
- Mutual appreciation:
 - Listen in a non-judgmental way
 - Not only constructive (critical) feedback but positive reinforcement, encouragement and recognition
 - Mentor should do this, but so should mentee (acknowledge what was helpful and new insights)

Outcome of attention, equality and appreciation

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did, but people will never
forget *how you made them feel.*”

Maya Angelou



American poet, singer,
civil rights activist
(1928-2014)

Asking questions rather than giving advice

- Shouldn't expect mentor to come up with 'solutions'
- Rather expect open-ended questions, posed with genuine curiosity/interest, that will assist you in moving forward

Mentee expects mentor to direct, to teach, to chair meetings, to correct mistakes

Mentee expects mentor to support, enable, inspire, and treat them as a thinking equal

Dependent thinking

Changing mindset, gaining courage to act differently, practicing, learning from mistakes, trying again

Independent thinking

Mentor may control and over-direct mentee, cannot resist 'telling them what to do'

Mentor understands role to be one of enabling and supporting mentee to forge their own career

GROW-S model for empowering mentoring sessions

G

Goal - what do you want to happen?

R

Reality - what is happening now?

O

Options – what could you do?

W

Will - what will you commit to doing?

S

Support – who can help?

Group mentoring – may be 2 mentees

- May feel more comfortable and can expand peer network
- But may have confidentiality concerns
- Some tips:
 - After first session, mentees could chat about how to ensure both of their priority goals are addressed over year
 - Even if dealing with an issue that not of priority concern to you in a session, can learn valuable problem-solving skills and gain insights into something you may have to deal with in future
 - Be mindful of your peer – don't dominate discussions and practice active listening

Negotiating conflict or roadblocks

- Use 'thinking pair' approach – a structured conversation between two people that ensures attention, reciprocity and equality
 - One person thinks out loud / expresses their views and ideas for an agreed amount of time (e.g. 3 minutes)
 - Other person listens without interrupting
 - Then swap roles
 - Repeat until both feel they are done
- Conclude with dialogue and agreed actions

Try 'thinking pair' out

- Decide who will listen first
- Set a timer for 3 minutes
- Emphasise that the listener will do their best not to interrupt the thinker
- The listener asks an opening question: "What is the most important issue that you want to work through in the mentoring process over the next year?" [**press go on the timer**]
- The thinker goes ahead and expresses their views for 3 minutes
- The listener listens attentively, uncritically and with genuine interest
- If thinker finishes before 3 minutes, listener asks "Is there anything more that you think, feel, or want to say?". If not, that's fine!
- Once 3 minutes are finished (or thinker has finished), swap roles, and repeat the above exercise
- Do not go into a dissection or dialogue on what has just been shared [the thoughts are owned by the thinker and not the listener]

Key tips

- Mentees should drive the process (setting up meetings) and setting the agenda (issues to engage about – clarify for your mentor at the outset what your goals are for next five years and how the issues of focus link to these goals)
- Prepare for mentoring sessions – indicate to mentor what issue you want to focus on in upcoming session (linked to what was agreed on in the mentoring contract) and do some initial thinking beforehand
- Expect to be treated with equality and to be enabled to find your own solutions
- After the session, reflect on the discussions, note down and share with your mentor the key take aways from the session; and review these before the next session



Thank you