CHAPTER 10

Developing Mentoring Skills for the Workplace

Please note that this is a draft chapter and may be subject to alteration

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

This chapter will:

- explain the meaning and purpose of mentoring
- describe the potential benefits of mentoring
- consider factors that affect the implementation of mentoring
- explore the role of a mentor in the mentoring process
- identify some techniques for use in mentoring.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an exploration of the meaning and purpose of mentoring and the general nature of different mentoring relationships. We consider similarities between mentoring and other approaches and when mentoring is most appropriate. Having identified the potential benefits that mentoring has to offer, we move on to explore the further implications and key questions involved in implementing mentoring within a workplace. We conclude the chapter by exploring the mentoring process in more detail, and looking specifically at the mentor role and some mentoring techniques.

The original Mentor is a character in Homer’s epic poem The Odyssey. When Odysseus, King of Ithaca went to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted the overseeing of his son, Telemachus, to Mentor.

A MENTORING RESURGENCE?

It would be fair to say that mentoring has existed in the shadow of coaching for some time. The popularity of coaching continues to soar and coaching continues to be a main theme in the learning and development (L&D) media.
Some would say that this is because coaching has a more exciting image, or that the benefits of coaching have been more explicitly reported, or even that the term coaching implicitly includes mentoring. It is also, undoubtedly, because coaching is now a profession of its own, in which people earn their living, network and gain accreditation and so the ongoing promotion of coaching is essential to, as well as being an outcome of, this growing industry.

However, just a small amount of research shows that mentoring is very much alive and well and seemingly increasing in popularity.

In the 2008 CIPD Learning and Development annual survey report, 36% of respondents reported an increasing use of mentoring and buddying systems, and mentoring schemes are now reported as operational in the National Health Service (NHS) and other areas of the public sector, the finance industry, the voluntary sector, education, armed forces, charities, social initiatives and a wide range of business organisations.

Mentoring has always been around and brought benefits, and many of us will be lucky enough to have had people in our lives we think of, however informally, as our ‘mentors’. Perhaps, though, we are now seeing the resurgence of the popularity of mentoring and an increased recognition of the potential benefits mentoring can bring to the workplace.

From our point of view mentoring seems to have become exceedingly popular. Back in the days when we first set up, mentoring was not well known but it seems to be all over the place now.

(Jan West, MentorSET, quoted in TrainingZONE)

**DEFINING MENTORING**

As with most L&D approaches, there are several variations of mentoring, and therefore the term can mean different things to different people.

In its simplest form, mentoring is about two people coming together with a view to helping one of them progress more easily through work, life or whatever context the mentoring is taking place in.

However, to get a fuller definition of mentoring, we first need to explore this activity, and some of its variations, in a little more detail.

**PURPOSES OF MENTORING**

The various purposes of mentoring include:

- to provide a role model – someone who a mentee can look up to and base their own behaviour on
- to provide a sounding board – someone with whom the mentee can discuss ideas, problems and concerns within a safe environment
● to provide a source of advice from someone who has already ‘been there’, and has real experience of the issues likely to be faced by the mentee
● to enable work-related development – someone who can directly or indirectly help the mentee to develop their work-related skills and knowledge
● to provide an advocate – someone who can help support, represent and champion the mentee when needed
● to provide contacts and access to opportunities – someone who can ‘open doors’ for the mentee (sometimes called ‘sponsorship’)
● to enable personal development – someone who can help the mentee to become more adept at managing themselves and their relationships and at achieving personal and career goals.

In reality, a mentoring relationship is unlikely to be restricted to any one of these. In fact, perhaps one of the real benefits of mentoring is that there are fewer assumed restrictions and it is accepted that mentors and mentees will work together in different ways to suit their particular needs at any time.

**Reflective Activity 1**

Looking at the different purposes of mentoring above, who are the people who have provided these things in your life? Have you thought of these people as your mentors?

**Different Models of Mentoring**

In the very broad definition above, we talked about ‘two people coming together’. While this arrangement remains the most popular, there are also various models of mentoring that involve more than two people coming together – and indeed some where no one physically comes together at all.

**Group mentoring**

Where there are several potential mentees in an organisation and fewer potential mentors, it is possible for groups of mentees to work together with one or two mentors facilitating the group. The group might discuss a variety of issues from all mentees or concentrate on a particular issue at each meeting. This arrangement can allow a greater number of mentees to benefit from mentoring and, where available, different mentors may be asked to attend the meetings, enabling everyone to benefit from the different specialist experience of individual mentors.

**Group peer mentoring**

This is another type of group mentoring. Here, groups come together because they have a common interest, usually a similar work role, for example new
managers or owners of small businesses. Rather than have a lead mentor, the group operates in a self-directed way, in which all group members operate as both mentees and mentors.

A typical format for peer mentoring is for individuals to take it in turns, perhaps at successive meetings, to talk about challenges and aspects of their work, and for the rest of the group to focus on that person’s situation, helping them to clarify issues, find new ideas – inspired by the suggestions and experiences of other group members – and determine potential solutions.

This type of mentoring arrangement, also referred to as action learning sets (as conceived and described by Reg Revans (1971)), brings forward a multitude of different experiences and allows all group members to learn from each other.

Online mentoring

The Internet has brought a new way for mentors and mentees to find each other and work together. An increasing number of sites allow potential mentors to register and offer their services and mentees to find and communicate with selected mentors. This is a voluntary arrangement in which mentors are offered the satisfaction of passing on their wisdom to others and mentees have a safe and confidential (anonymous, if they choose) context in which to discuss concerns and uncertainties. While many online mentoring schemes are positioned within specific contexts and professions, others are open to all. Certainly there may be safety considerations about use of some of these sites, but there is no doubt that the Internet has widened access to mentoring, and access to specialist mentors, for many more people.

One-to-one mentoring

Returning to the more traditional mentoring arrangement, of one mentor and one mentee, there are further variations possible in the type of relationship between the two.

Typically a mentor in the workplace is:
- a more experienced person
- in a senior position in the organisation, industry or sector
- not connected to the mentee’s management line (that is, not the mentee’s manager or their manager’s manager)
- someone who may or may not have been trained as a mentor (although increasingly training is provided), and
- someone who is motivated to assist the development of a ‘junior’ person in their organisation or industry.

Variations on this traditional arrangement are where the mentor is a mentee’s peer or colleague, rather than being in a senior position, or where the mentor actually is the mentee’s line manager.
One-to-one peer mentoring

The term peer mentoring has already been used above to refer to a form of group mentoring but it can also refer to mentoring between two people, where the mentor is a peer, rather than someone of designated senior position in the organisation. In this arrangement mentoring may be one-way or two-way, with each of the pair taking mentor and mentee roles, as required. This arrangement allows the two to learn from each other, share the challenges of the workplace and maybe feel less isolated. It can also open up access to mentoring for a greater number of team members.

Line manager mentoring

This is an accepted model, and no doubt happens informally all the time. However, discussing issues and uncertainties can be more sensitive within a management line relationship and could inhibit honest discussion and resolution of problems. On the positive side, managers may have greater insights into work situations and be able to facilitate more relevant and useful thinking, but the arrangement does require some careful and flexible shifting of roles by both manager and mentee.

GROUP PEER MENTORING

The example here is of a group peer mentoring session or action learning set, supported by a facilitator (whose role is not to act as a mentor but to facilitate the peer mentoring process). The six participants are all owners of small businesses who meet every four to six weeks as part of a ten-month peer mentoring programme. The number of meetings was determined to ensure that every participant could have a meeting devoted to their particular issues; plus an introductory meeting and a final, review meeting.

The facilitator, an L&D professional, explains about setting up the group:

‘When I started the peer mentoring group I couldn’t decide if there ought to be two groups – one for very new businesses, and one for established businesses. The question I had was “what would start-ups have to contribute to the learning experience of more established businesses?” I could see the value that the established companies could potentially add to the new ones, but was unsure how much value would be added in reverse. I wanted the sessions to be of equal benefit to everyone and I was concerned that the more experienced ones would do all the talking, limiting the participation of the newer ones – and also that the more experienced ones might feel that there was not much learning from the sessions for them.

‘Here’s what I’ve found so far from the 5 sessions that have already run…

‘Indeed the new owners are keen to learn and ask lots of questions, and they listen. They have no previous experience so are very open to “thinking differently” because everything IS different. They respond well to anecdotal input and real examples, and the conversation flows easily with little input from me. The new owners leave the sessions with lots of new thinking, ideas and learning.

‘However, the established business owners are also learning a lot from the sessions.'
Some of the established owners have been "stuck and struggling", thinking the same thoughts and using the same ways of solving their problems even though the world has changed. The “new guys’” naive questioning has made them think about what they did in the past, what worked, what didn’t and why. These questions cause them to relive past issues and so reflect on their own behaviour patterns, taking them to another level of learning.

‘When the new ones ask completely open questions such as “what do you THINK you could do about X?” – it is because they have no idea themselves and are looking for suggestions, not because they are trying to be mentors and stimulate learning – but that is definitely the effect!’
Christine James, Chris James Learning

DIFFERENT STYLES OF MENTORING

There are probably as many different styles of mentoring as there are mentors. One of the benefits of mentoring is the greater acceptance of different approaches to working together than, say, in a coaching context, as long as the needs of both mentee and mentor are being met. However, we can categorise mentoring styles to some extent.

In the previous chapter on coaching we explored the concept of directive versus a non-directive approach. By directive, we mean how much the coach inputs their own opinion, suggestion and advice into the process, as opposed to how much they stand back and desist from inputting to the process, leaving the coachee to take responsibility for decisions and selection of activities.

We considered ‘directiveness’ as a scale, from highly directive to non-directive. This scale of approach applies equally to mentoring, with non-directive activities including:
- listening
- reflecting back
- paraphrasing
- summing
- asking questions to raise awareness.

More directive approaches are:
- making suggestions
- giving feedback
- offering guidance
- and, ultimately, instructing or telling.

In Everyone Needs a Mentor: Fostering talent in your organisation (Clutterbuck 2008), David Clutterbuck refers to another dimension of mentor approach, a scale of ‘stretching through to nurturing’. On this scale mentoring can be geared
towards stimulating greater learning through challenging and stretching the mentee or towards the perhaps more comfortable position of being supporting, encouraging and nurturing.

The style taken by the mentor will depend on their personality, the training they have received and any parameters set for the programme in which they participate.

There will be many times when it is appropriate to be non-directive, to encourage the mentee to explore their experiences and enhance their understanding of their own behaviour. Non-directive mentoring encourages mentees to find the answers within themselves, which in turn impacts positively on their confidence and self-esteem. Equally the more ownership the mentee has of any potential solutions, the more likely they are to follow through on agreed actions and be committed to making improvements.

As for coaches, there are a number of models available to mentors that can assist a non-directive style of conversation, for example the GROW model, and these are discussed in the previous chapter on coaching.

I am always ready to learn, I am not always ready to be taught.
(Winston Churchill)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROW</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrap up/Will</td>
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</table>

There will also be times when it is appropriate to be a directive mentor. Mentees often need mentors to help them negotiate workplace challenges or politics, help them find accurate solutions quickly and point them in appropriate directions. A mentor who only asks questions is likely to frustrate the mentee rather than meet the pressing need.

Learn from other people's mistakes – you don't have time to make all of them yourself.

(source unknown)

Equally there will be times when mentees need to be challenged and other times when they will just need reassurance and support.

So is there one correct approach? No. Ideally a mentor will move around the different styles, finding the best way to support their mentees as they experience different challenges, performance results, emotions and, consequently, differing needs of their mentors.
Some of the potential and reported benefits for *mentees* of a mentoring relationship or programme are:

- increased confidence and self-esteem
- an opportunity to reflect and focus on personal situations
- improved ability to reflect, analyse and find solutions to problems
- increased motivation from being encouraged and the desire to have ‘achievements’ to report back to the mentor
- broadened horizons and raised aspirations
- reduced isolation and availability of a ‘sympathetic friend’
- an acceleration of learning from mentor coaching or advising
- a supported opportunity to develop a career plan
- faster orientation to the organisation for new recruits
- increased understanding of the wider organisation
- insights into the thinking patterns of more senior management
- links with a figure who is respected within the organisation
- a role model for success within the organisation
- a better understanding of, and help to build, professional networks
- a chance to discuss issues that straddle the boundary between work and personal (work–life balance, job insecurity, work pressures, work relationships) with someone who understands the workplace but is off the management line
- reduced stress as a result of being able to discuss challenges and frustrations.

And for *mentors*:

- an opportunity to make use of hard-earned knowledge and experience
- satisfaction of helping someone else and seeing their development
- an opportunity to learn from others
- enhanced communication skills
- enhanced skills relating to the development of others
- insights into other areas and aspects of the organisation
● satisfaction of helping the organisation, through contributing to the development and effectiveness of the workforce

● recognition of mentor contribution by the mentee

● recognition of mentor contribution by the organisation.

And for organisations...

Where mentoring is part of an organisational programme, there are also benefits to be had for the organisation as a whole. These can include:

● greater transfer of knowledge and learning

● a more competent workforce

● potential for improved productivity

● enhanced understanding of learning needs and skills gaps

● greater individual ownership of development

● greater retention of knowledge within the organisation

● enhanced atmosphere of trust and respect

● stronger links across hierarchical levels

● stronger links across different areas of the organisation

● greater employee understanding of the wider organisation

● increased individual engagement with the organisation

● better working relationships, with issues being addressed in a safe context, before they grow in significance

● enhanced staff well-being

● improved staff retention rates

● helps build an organisational identity

● enhanced image of organisation for staff and externally – which can impact on recruitment, marketing, etc

● potential recognition of organisation’s efforts by staff, and possibly others (external awards and accreditations).

Mentoring – A Summary

We have now explored different aspects of mentoring including purpose, types, styles and benefits, and discussed some of the main variations of mentoring practice. Despite these variations, we can extend our earlier definition of mentoring to:

● a relationship between mentee(s) and mentor(s)

● aimed at helping to ease the progress of the mentee through work, career or life generally, depending on the context of the mentoring,

● in which mentors can employ a wide range of different styles and approaches
(including listening, encouraging reflection and self-learning, sharing experiences, giving advice, coaching and assisting with networking) to support mentee progression.

We could also add:

- while also meeting particular needs and motivations of the mentor, and
- potentially bringing organisational benefits, where mentoring is part of a supported organisational programme.

### Mentoring in Practice

#### Mentoring, Coaching and Other Approaches

Undoubtedly, there is substantial confusion between mentoring and coaching, and often the two are combined together into a single approach labelled ‘coaching and mentoring’ or just labelled ‘coaching’, even though mentoring is included.

This confusion and combination is understandable. There is much crossover in the two approaches, particularly in the type of techniques used by coaches and mentors. Both are encouraged to listen in depth and use open questions and strategies that enhance self-reflection and both seek to enable development and progression.

Also, as both coaching and mentoring can appear in different variations, there is every chance that one organisation’s mentoring programme may be very similar to another organisation’s coaching programme – while two programmes with the same title could actually be quite different in practice.

Mentoring does have much in common with coaching and other L&D and even some therapeutic interventions, but there are also many differences. In the chapter on coaching we presented a chart showing differences between coaching and mentoring and this has been extended to include counselling, which is also sometimes confused with mentoring (see Table 10.1).

We can also compare mentoring to other approaches, such as direct training, which is likely to be more focused on one particular theme, more directive, delivered by qualified L&D professionals and possibly subject specialists, and shorter in duration than mentoring, possibly a one-off or series of specific initiatives.

All of the above approaches have their uses and the main consideration is that the approach selected is most appropriate and will bring the most benefits for the individuals involved and, importantly, for the organisation in which they operate.

#### Implementing a Mentoring Scheme

In view of the potential benefits of mentoring it is unsurprising that it appears to be growing in popularity. However implementing a scheme does require
Table 10.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context/areas addressed</th>
<th>Workplace coaching</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Counselling</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship between coach and coachee</th>
<th>Workplace coaching</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Counselling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often coach is coachee's line manager, but could be peer or trainer or an external coach.</td>
<td>Usually a more experienced, senior work colleague, from outside the mentee's immediate work team.</td>
<td>Usually a professional relationship, in which counsellor is paid to provide a therapeutic service.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach expertise</th>
<th>Workplace coaching</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Counselling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach may or may not have experience in the area being coached, and may or may not be trained as a coach.</td>
<td>Mentor usually has general knowledge and experience of the mentee's work area. May or may not be trained as a mentor.</td>
<td>Professional counsellors must be trained and qualified. Some are subject specialists – for example bereavement.</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coach/mentor approach</th>
<th>Workplace coaching</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Counselling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coaches are encouraged to, at least, limit the giving of advice and focus on assisting coachees to find their own solutions.</td>
<td>Greater acceptance of mentors taking a more directive, advisory role, allowing mentee to share and learn from mentor's experience.</td>
<td>Different styles of counselling – but tend towards being non-directive in approach.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Typical nature of meetings</th>
<th>Workplace coaching</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Counselling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused, agreeing goals and reviewing progress towards them.</td>
<td>General and informal discussion around work, personal and career issues.</td>
<td>Often slow and intense exploration of experiences, feelings and emotions.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of meetings</th>
<th>Workplace coaching</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Counselling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular programme of meetings usually agreed in advance.</td>
<td>May be more ad hoc or called, when needed, by mentee.</td>
<td>Regular, planned meetings.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of arrangement</th>
<th>Workplace coaching</th>
<th>Mentoring</th>
<th>Counselling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Usually short term – until goals achieved (task related).</td>
<td>Can last for a long period of time (career related).</td>
<td>Duration depends on need – can be short or longer term.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

significant resources and expenditure, for example, possible work down-time costs of participants, the provision of training for mentors, and the costs of co-ordinating and supporting a scheme, probably by L&D professionals, and so it is important that mentoring is implemented in a way that ensures potential benefits are realised.

As well as financial considerations, thought also should be given to how appropriate the introduction of formal mentoring would be to the existing culture of the organisation.
### Reflective Activity 3

Consider the opposing organisational features in Figure 10.2 and which would help or hinder the implementation of a new mentoring programme.

#### Figure 10.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is very little training activity already within the organisation and appraisal activity is left to individual managers to implement as they choose.</td>
<td>The organisation supports all staff to undertake learning relevant to job role and monitors this via regular performance and development review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation does not have a specific budget for learning and development.</td>
<td>The organisation has a specific learning and development budget and reviews this at least annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation has a macho culture with little acceptance of error or slower/poorer performance.</td>
<td>The organisation has an open culture where acceptance of some mistakes is considered an acceptable price to pay for continuous development and improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation has a very formal hierarchy, with little interaction between different levels.</td>
<td>There is an informal and relatively ‘easy’ interaction between managers and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most staff see their work as just a means of earning a living and have little respect or affection for their workplace.</td>
<td>Staff are proud to be associated with their organisation and have a sense of personal investment in the organisation’s success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The organisation has little experience of any initiatives beyond the usual routine work activities.</td>
<td>The organisation has a history of involvement in community, social and developmental initiatives for staff and the local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management has no interest in or commitment to a mentoring programme.</td>
<td>Mentoring is supported from the top down as part of an overall L&amp;D strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If anyone wants to mentor anyone else in the organisation it is up to them to find the time and capability to do this and organise it for themselves.</td>
<td>Mentoring is a designed initiative, where mentors are supported by the organisation and their efforts are recognised, by some flexibility of work conditions, professional respect and internal celebrations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If mentoring is to be introduced there are key questions to consider, including:

1. **In relation to the format and design of mentoring:**
   - What are the aims of introducing mentoring and how does it fit into the wider organisational L&D strategy? What are the specific purposes of mentoring? To give clear guidelines and parameters to participants,
organisations need to be clear about why they are introducing a mentoring scheme and the specific purpose(s) of the scheme. The answer to this question will inform the answers to all the remaining questions about the design of any mentoring scheme.

- **Who will have access to mentoring?** Will it be open to anyone or targeted at specific groups? This is, of course, a business decision but most heard advice from those already involved in managing mentoring schemes is to start small and build up numbers slowly, as processes are snagged and mentoring becomes an established initiative.

- **What form of contact will be used?** Will all mentoring be face to face, all by email or online, or a specified combination of these? Or will contact arrangements be left for the mentor and mentee to decide? Factors to consider here include availability of mentors, geographical locations, access to IT equipment, IT skill levels, safety and ethical considerations and availability of appropriate meeting places.

- **Where and when will mentoring meetings be held – during normal work time or not, within organisational premises or not?** To a great extent this is a business decision – but there are also safety and ethical factors to consider. From our research most workplace mentoring schemes allow mentoring sessions to take place within work time and require them to be held on work premises. Careful thought should be given to safety considerations if schemes are to operate outside of these boundaries.

- **Frequency of meetings, duration of meetings and duration of relationship?** Much of this is best left to mentee and mentor to decide, within business constraints. But in terms of guidelines, typical schemes involve four to six weekly meetings of approximately one to two hours. Scheme duration varies, but with quite a few found to be for a one-year period.

- **What safety and ethical guidelines are required?** Areas to consider here include:
  - arrangements for matching mentoring pairs
  - scope and boundaries of mentoring activity (for example are discussions ring-fenced to work and performance issues?)
  - guidelines regarding means of contact (see above)
  - ‘ground rules’ for working together
  - confidentiality arrangements
  - arrangements for ceasing unsuccessful relationships or for changing mentors.

- **What will be the position of the mentee’s line manager in the mentoring arrangement (assuming they are not the mentor)?** Most arrangements do not formally involve the mentee’s line manager in the relationship, other than them knowing a relationship is in place. Some of the more formal schemes do include an update from mentee to their line manager about progress made within the mentoring arrangement.
To what extent, and how, will mentoring be recorded? A usual scenario is for mentoring pairs to complete an agreement, often referred to as a mentoring agreement, mentoring contract or mentoring plan. (See the example agreement provided below.) After that, the amount of recording of ongoing meetings varies, depending on the formality of the scheme. For some, recording is seen as a possible inhibitor or burden and so there is no requirement, while others include completion of a standard summary document, usually just detailing key discussion points and agreed actions, which then informs discussions at the next meeting.

2 In relation to the initial implementation of mentoring:

- How will the scheme be promoted and volunteers attracted? As well as promotion on intranets and notice boards, it is usual to offer an information session before expecting people to volunteer.

- Will there be selection criteria for mentors? Different mentees suit different mentors, so there is unlikely to be one description of the ideal mentor. However, a general checklist of qualities reflecting a good mentor candidate might be someone who:
  - wants to be a mentor and volunteers for the role
  - genuinely respects, likes and cares about others
  - is respected in the organisation
  - has relevant professional experience, knowledge and skills
  - has reasonable people skills
  - is generally supportive of organisational change and progression
  - is open to different viewpoints and new learning
  - has time to commit to mentoring
  - agrees with the purpose, guidelines and ethics of the mentoring scheme.

- How will mentoring be integrated into existing job roles? Some organisations make the role a formal part of a job description, thus ensuring time is allocated and allowed for the activity, within the working month. Other schemes are less formally integrated but promote a culture of general support for mentoring activity.

- How will mentors and mentees be matched and allocated? More informal and online schemes leave mentors and mentees to self-select. Where allocation is undertaken by a third party such as the L&D function, different approaches can be taken (working on a like with like basis or bringing together different types to increase difference of thinking) and different factors considered, for example: location, style, gender or common areas of interest.

- What training should be provided for mentors? Mentors should be made fully aware of the purpose and processes of mentoring and are likely to
benefit from some training to refresh techniques, such as using questions effectively, active listening, problem-solving, setting objectives and giving feedback.

3 In relation to the ongoing management of mentoring:

- **What ongoing support is required for mentors?** Some organisations offer supervisory support for mentors, usually provided by L&D staff or external providers. This may take the form of ad hoc advice as needed or formal mentor meetings, where mentors can discuss issues and participate in ongoing development activities.

- **How will mentoring be monitored and evaluated?** Finally, as with any other L&D approach, thought needs to be given to how mentoring will be evaluated. Evaluation results (however intangible outcomes may be) will inform the design of further programmes and should be essential to the ongoing justification of expenditure on a mentoring programme.

Figure 10.1 An example mentoring agreement form

```plaintext
Mentoring Agreement

Mentor:          Mentee:          Date: 

Arrangements for meeting or contact
How: 
When: 
Where: 

Agreed main aims of mentoring *(add as many as required)*
1) 
2) 
3) 

Ground rules for working together *(add as many as required)*
1) 
2) 
3) 

After each meeting (mentee) will update the mentoring record with any actions agreed and email to (mentor).

Agreed: 

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by Kathy Beevers and Andrew Duncan Rea 
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If you would like to purchase this book please visit www.cipd.co.uk/bookstore.
XXXXX Council (a large metropolitan local authority) has long recognised the benefits of mentoring and had made a commitment to making the resources available to ensure that they had a successful in-house scheme.

Their initial scheme involved establishing mentoring relationships that were set to last for a one-year period. The first stage was to train the mentors and mentees, which was an essential foundation for the year ahead. Mentors and mentees were 'matched' by use of a process that compared learning styles and interests.

Mentoring pairs then held monthly meetings that lasted for an hour and a half, with mentees setting the agenda and objectives for each meeting. There was a quarterly evaluation process involving groups of 12 mentors and mentees, as well as a half-yearly evaluation interview. The year was topped off with a mentoring ceremony.

This scheme ran very successfully for five years, and was used as a model for many other local authority mentoring initiatives. After five years, however, the scheme seemed to run out of steam and was drawing to a natural end. There were fewer volunteers coming forward and feedback began to show that the issues and needs of the mentees had changed, as had the time available for participation in the scheme.

The council now runs two different, but complementary schemes:

- A scheme specifically for black or minority ethnic (BME) staff. This is part of the positive action that the council is taking, aimed at tackling the imbalance of BME staff in senior management roles. This particular scheme has been funded by the Government’s Tackling Racial Inequality Fund. (See www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/tacklingraceprospectus)

- A general scheme that still attracts the same type of mentees and mentors as before, but which has been updated and simplified.

Both schemes still involve initial training for both the mentors and mentees, together with a degree of matching, but in other ways they are less ‘formal’ than before. Mentees and mentors agree the frequency of their meetings, and the form of contact they will have, which could be face-to-face or, equally, other forms of contact such as Facebook, tele-conferencing, video-conferencing and email.

Although, at the time of going to print, these new schemes have only just got up and running, initial feedback has been very positive.

(CIPD members can get more up-to-date information about this scheme from the webpages relating to this book on the CIPD website: www.cipd.co.uk/learninganddevelopmentpractice)

### Reflective Activity 4

Looking at the case study above:

- What do you think caused the downturn in the initial scheme?
- Does this tell us anything about the life-cycle of mentoring schemes?
- How might this case study influence the way in which you would introduce a mentoring scheme?
- What specific groups would benefit from a scheme in your organisation (such as BME staff in our example)?
THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

The beauty of the mentoring relationship is that it is not prescribed but that it evolves with the needs and requests of the mentee. However, all ongoing mentoring relationships will have an introductory phase, a phase of mentoring activity and an exit phase, each of which requires different activities and skills of the mentor.

MENTORING ACTIVITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introductory stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making initial contact with mentee and arranging first meeting. Relationship/rapport-building, introductions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of initial meeting, to include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● ensuring mentee's understanding of purpose and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● exploring mentee's motivations and needs of process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● sharing and aligning expectations of process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● establishing a commitment to work together (or not)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● agreement of how to work together, both in terms of guidelines and ground rules as well as logistics about where, when and how communication will take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreements would usually be recorded in a mentoring agreement, contract or plan – see Figure 10.1 above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active mentoring stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depending on the needs and preferences of the mentee, and the nature of any mentoring programme, the mentor's role will include any or all of the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Assisting the mentee to reflect on, analyse and fully understand work progress, challenges and issues, through:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● reviewing progress towards objectives and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● actively listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● using open questions to stimulate thorough reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● reflecting back, to clarify own and mentee's understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● challenging assumptions and perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● providing different perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● discussing and debating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● clarifying work requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● helping to identify and explore obstacles to progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● giving honest and constructive feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Assisting the mentee to find appropriate solutions and best courses of actions, through:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● drawing out mentee's ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● encouraging mentee to find own solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● making suggestions and giving advice from own experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● sharing technical knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● sharing knowledge about the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● providing 'nuggets' of direct training, coaching or teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● signposting mentee to useful resources or contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● helping convert thoughts into specific objectives for action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Assisting the mentee to become more self-aware, more self-directing and to develop personal effectiveness skills, through:
- assisting the mentee to recognise and understand their own behaviours, communication styles and learning styles
- summarising and reflecting back to aid self-awareness
- challenging assumptions and limitations to help develop greater self-responsibility
- providing encouragement and reassurance to help build confidence
- encouraging the mentee to set the agenda for meetings and to ‘drive’ the mentoring process.

4 Assisting to plan and progress their overall career, through:
- reviewing career aspirations and goals
- developing a career plan
- reviewing the different requirements of different career stages and how the mentee can prepare for these
- exploring and identifying development needs
- exploring and identifying development opportunities
- signposting or enabling access to opportunities.

5 Assist the mentee to build their professional networks, through:
- role-modelling behaviour
- coaching in networking skills
- arranging introductions or access to useful contacts.

6 Managing own role in the mentoring process, through:
- monitoring own responses to mentoring, for example ability to stay objective, comply with guidelines and ethics, honour confidentiality
- monitoring own effectiveness and enjoyment of the role
- recognising own learning and support needs and fulfilling these
- ensuring compliance with any process requirements, such as record-keeping or participating in process evaluation.

Exit phase

The mentoring relationship may come to a natural end, when it is no longer useful or when situations change. Equally the relationship may change to a more distant one of friendship, based on the sharing of previous experiences, but no longer be a formal mentoring relationship. Where there is a set end to mentoring – because a programme or particular context has come to an end, for example the programme is a one-year programme or is linked to a particular phase of the mentee’s work or career progression, say the first the year in the job or until a particular qualification is gained – then it is useful to formally close down the relationship. Useful activities here include:
- reviewing progress and learning from the relationship
- exploring how this can be taken forward into new aspects of work, and life generally
- identifying further areas for and ways of developing
- recognising and celebrating achievement.

Some mentoring techniques

There are so many ways in which mentors can assist mentees to work through issues and develop their abilities. Some have already been discussed and some are detailed below. If you would like to explore some of these techniques further, some references have been provided in the Explore Further section at the end of this chapter.
Active listening

- Try to eliminate other distractions and focus on the speaker.
- Show your concentration physically (with body language) so the speaker feels they have your attention.
- Avoid interrupting.
- Summarise and reflect back to check your understanding.

Problem-solving techniques

- Brainstorming
- Fishbone analysis
- Force field analysis
- Edward DeBono’s Six Thinking Hats
- Pros and cons

Agreeing SMART objectives

SMART objectives are:
- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Timebound

Giving feedback

- Be honest – unless you have a very, very good reason not to be.
- Be gentle – none of us take negative criticism well.
- Be balanced – the good as well as the not so good.
- Be specific – otherwise it may be general encouragement rather than feedback.
- Be constructive – help the recipient to see ways of moving forward.

Using questions effectively

Questions can open up or close down a conversation. They can be used quite simply to draw out information:
- ‘What did you do next?’
- Or to inspire deeper thinking:
- ‘Why did you choose to do that particularly?’
- Or to consider different viewpoints:
- ‘Why do you think they might have responded in that way?’
- Or to challenge assumptions:
- ‘How do you know for sure that (X) feels that way?’

They can also be interesting, creative and engaging:
- ‘Has this situation occurred before, and how was it resolved then?’
- ‘If you could do anything you wanted in this situation, what would you do?’
- ‘How would (celebrity, hero, person admired by the mentee) deal with this?’

Open questions – usually require more than a few words by way of a response and so can help open up a conversation or derive greater amounts of information:
- ‘How are things going at work?’

Probing or clarifying questions – seek to find out a bit more about specifics to clarify or extend understanding:
- ‘Can you say a bit more about what X involves?’

Reflective questions – help the speaker to check that their words are reflecting their real thoughts and the listener to check that they have properly understood:
- ‘So, you feel that they did that intentionally?’

Closed questions can usually be answered with one word (often yes or no) or just a few:
- ‘Do you have any ideas about what to do next?’
MENTERING – WHAT NEXT?

1. Building on the responses to the first two reflective activities in the chapter, consider...what sort of mentor would you be? Or are you already?
2. Find out if there are any mentoring schemes in operation near you and see if you can visit to find out more. Also, have a look at some of the online mentoring sites, easily found via a search engine.
3. Look at the mentoring techniques mentioned in the chapter, and carry out your own further research of these, and maybe other, mentoring skills and techniques. Some further references are provided in the Explore Further section at the end of this chapter. Then, using this material, design a training session you could deliver to new mentors.
4. If there are no organisational opportunities immediately available to you, you might consider finding out about and applying to one of the many social programmes seeking mentors, for example there are schemes for young people in care, for young offenders and for people setting up new businesses.
5. Finally, have a look at the case study below and, considering this and all the information offered by this chapter, think about:
   - How could mentoring be useful to your organisation?
   - What kind of mentoring programme would best suit your organisation?
   - How would you make a case to implement a mentoring programme?

ONE-TO-ONE MENTORING

This example is from a primary school, where an experienced teacher, Suzanne, is acting as mentor to a newly qualified teacher (NQT), Rachael, during Rachael’s (probationary) year of teaching. The purpose of the mentoring scheme is to ensure that Rachael meets work standards and expectations while being supported with any difficulties or challenges that may arise. Suzanne and Rachael describe their work together as follows:

'We began with an initial discussion to understand Rachael’s current experience and areas to focus on during the year. As our mentoring is part of a wider programme we have specific documents to complete (an Initial Discussion Record and an ongoing checklist (“Calendar”) showing completion of various required activities by Rachael) over the year. These standard documents ensure consistency of information and process for all NQTs.

'We meet approximately six-weekly (half-terminly) to reflect on the progress made during that time and to find solutions to any problems encountered. We also discuss Rachael’s development since our last meeting and update her Calendar.

'A typical meeting takes place at an appointed time and usually begins with Suzanne asking how things have progressed since the last meeting, which then forms the basis of our discussion. Any minor problems are considered and solutions found together. For instance, when Rachael found that her PE skills needed developing, Suzanne referred her to an NQT PE course with lots of hands-on experience. After the course, Suzanne was able to link Rachael to the local gymnastics coach, who then supported her in some lesson delivery. This has proved to be very successful, with Rachael now having increased confidence in developing more
stimulating and interactive lessons for the children.

‘If Rachael has a problem that can’t wait until the next planned meeting, she can always contact Suzanne and a suitable time will be found to discuss her concerns. It is times like this when a mentor’s advice and support can be most valuable. As an experienced teacher, Suzanne has a wealth of ideas and methods of dealing with behaviour and relationships in schools, which is of great help to Rachael. On one occasion, Rachael had issues that both she and Suzanne felt needed to be taken to a higher level and Suzanne was able to support Rachael in this and accompany her to a meeting to discuss the problem, where it was quickly resolved.’

As the mentoring is part of a formal development scheme, Suzanne is required to give formal feedback on Rachael’s progress, which contributes to Rachael’s achievement of full teacher status. Although the year is only halfway through, both find the mentoring arrangement extremely helpful and satisfying and look forward to Rachael’s success at the end of the year.

Provided by Suzanne Copley (mentor) and Rachael Beech (mentee) of XXXXXXXXX School, XXX.

In this chapter we have learned:

The meaning and purpose of mentoring:

- Mentoring is essentially about two (or more) people coming together with a view to helping a mentee progress more easily through work, life or whatever context the mentoring is taking place in.
- Mentoring exists in many variations, including one-to-one and group mentoring arrangements.
- Mentoring can have several different purposes, including sharing experience, providing advice, developing professional networks and facilitating learning.
- The nature of a mentoring relationship will depend on the styles of the personalities involved and the parameters of the mentoring programme in which they operate.

The potential benefits of mentoring:

- The benefits of mentoring for mentees can be both personal, for example increased confidence and reduced stress, and work-related, such as new ideas and learning and a greater understanding of the workplace.
- While mentoring is primarily intended to benefit the mentee, it also offers a range of potential benefits to the mentor and to the employing organisation.

Factors that affect the implementation of mentoring:

- Implementing mentoring programmes requires organisational commitment and resources, and so it is important to spend some time working out the best and most suitable type of programme for the organisation.
- Factors to consider include: how mentoring would fit with other L&D initiatives, the level of formality of the programme, the actual design of the programme, how to get mentoring started, and how to co-ordinate mentoring on an ongoing basis.

The role of a mentor in the mentoring process:

- The mentor role includes: helping to establish the mentoring relationship, undertaking mentoring activities during the relationship, and when the relationship has run its course, helping to bring it to a successful conclusion.
Helping to establish the relationship involves building rapport, clarifying roles and agreeing main objectives.

The nature of mentoring means that mentoring activities can be very diverse, from non-directive approaches such as active listening and reflecting back to highly directive approaches, such as giving advice and direct training.

The mentor’s role is to work with the mentee, finding the approaches that best meet the mentee’s needs as they emerge.

Mentoring techniques:

- Because the range of approaches used in mentoring is so wide, mentors can benefit from developing a whole range of skills and techniques.
- Some useful ones are rapport-building, active listening, effective questioning, giving feedback constructively, agreeing objectives and facilitating problem-solving.
- Mentors will already have many of these skills and use them in other areas of their work and lives – but they can be enhanced and contextualised through specific training for mentors.

Books:


Online guidance and resources related to mentoring:

www.cipd.co.uk

www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/lrnanddev/coachmntor/mentor.htm

www.cipd.co.uk/qualifications/choose/foundation/ccm.htm

Online articles related to in-company mentoring and mentoring networks:

www.TrainingZone.co.uk

Free (or partially free) online access to problem-solving techniques:

http://businessballs.com

http://mindtools.com

For guidance notes relating to the CIPD Certificate in Learning and Development Practice:

see the CIPD companion website that accompanies this book:

www.cipd.co.uk/learninganddevelopmentpractice
THE BIG PICTURE

A simple coaching model that uses a series of questions to guide the coachee towards a suitable set of actions, helping them to identify and achieve their goal.

BACKGROUND

The GROW model was devised by Sir John Whitmore who wrote about it in his 1996 book *Coaching for Performance*. John Whitmore’s first career had been as a British racing driver in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He then became a sports psychologist before moving his coaching interests and talent into the world of business. He is now the executive chair of Performance Consultants International.

THE ESSENTIAL DETAIL

The initial stage of this four-stage model is:

G IS FOR GOAL

What do you want to achieve? It is very important to set a SPECIFIC goal at the very beginning. A goal should also be SMART, i.e.:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time-bound

The GROW process helps to ensure this.

It is also important to have goals that are congruent with our VALUES otherwise we will keep putting barriers in our own way. Further exploration of the reality of our goals helps to uncover our values and self-limiting beliefs, and goals are often refined and revised in view of this.

GOAL QUESTIONS

- What are you aiming for in the long/medium/short term?
- When would you like to have reached your aim?
- What would you like to achieve by the end of this session?
- How will you know when you have achieved this?
- What will it look/feel/sound like?
R IS FOR REALITY

What is the TRUTH about the situation? The current situation is explored and the facts are established. During this phase it is important to encourage the client to use DESCRIPTIVE and not evaluative statements. It is also helpful for the coach to ask challenging or searching questions and to probe beneath the surface in order to get the client to examine their thoughts and to raise awareness. Questions at this phase are usually prefaced by ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘who’ and ‘how’ which help the client to think creatively and to draw out the facts of the situation.

REALITY QUESTIONS

- What is happening at the moment around (this issue)?
- What have you done so far towards this (goal)?
- What is your main concern around this goal/issue?
- What resources do you have to help you with this?
- What might be holding you back?

O IS FOR OPTIONS

What CHOICES do you have to change your reality and reach your goal? What ALTERNATIVES are there? Generating options is a creative process that is stimulated by the coach asking the right kinds of open questions, by inviting the client to suspend all judgement and self-criticism, by maintaining interest and by challenging the client just when they think they cannot come up with another idea. Often the best ideas come after the point when the client thought she was finished.

OPTIONS QUESTIONS

- What could you do to move yourself one step closer to achieving your goal?
- In what different ways could you approach this?
- What else could you do?
- What if you knew you couldn’t fail?
- If you could think of three more things, what would they be?

Evaluating each option narrows down the choice to which one or ones feel right and achievable for the client, this leads into the final stage:

W IS FOR WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Which option WILL you really enjoy because it is part of the life you want? Which one are you willing to do, regardless of how much work it takes? Which one will you actually do because it will take you nearer your goal or your dream? This is where COMMITMENT comes in. This is the step just before ACTION or
implementation. The next steps are agreed with a timetable and a commitment from the client.

**WILL QUESTIONS**

- Which of your options feels best/seems best/looks best/sounds best? (depending on the coachee’s preferred sense)
- Which would take you nearest to your longer term goal?
- Which would give you the most satisfaction?
- When will you do this?
- What specific actions will you take and when to carry this out?

**WHAT NEXT?**

See also

- Chapter X – Coaching
- Chapter X – Mentoring

Further reading

- Coaching for Performance – Sir John Whitmore
- The Coaching Handbook – Sara Thorpe & Jackie Clifford
- www.performanceconsultants.com