

STEP 3 – WHAT TO DO DURING THE COURSE OF A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP?

COURSE OF A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

1. DEVELOP A MEETING SCHEDULE WITH YOUR MENTORING PARTNER

Meeting	Key Topics	Aids	Timing
1	Getting to know each other. Clarify assumptions. Discuss confidentiality.		
2	Discuss mentee career plan/vision. Determine mentee goals. Discuss learning options. Reach agreement.		
3	Negotiate the conversation guidelines. Ensure satisfying and meaningful closure.		
4-.....	Discuss Topics/issues. Periodic evaluations.		
	Review agreement. Evaluate progress. Renegotiate/closure.		

2. SET A TIME FRAME FOR YOUR RELATIONSHIP

Effective mentors and mentees set an initial time period for the relationship based upon the current needs and goals of the mentoring relationship, with an end-evaluation.

They also set up periodic reviews to evaluate how well the relationship is meeting its goals.

3. REFLECTION FORM FOR MENTEES

To fill in before each mentoring session, with a copy for the mentor:

Name:

Date:

Topic:

What did I want to achieve after the last mentoring meeting?

Was this met? What concrete measure did I take as a result What were my feelings about the session?

What went well?

What went not so well?

What questions or remarks do I have for my mentor?

4. MEETING DEBRIEF – MENTEE

Complete after each meeting with your mentoring partner to capture your thoughts, learning and/or agreed upon next steps:

Date

Meeting topics

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

Other comments:

Next steps:

5. PERFORM TOGETHER PERIODIC EVALUATIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RELATIONSHIP

This conversation should occur several times during the relationship.

- The relationship
 - o How are we doing?
 - o How is the quality of our interaction?
 - o In what ways might we strengthen our relationship?
- The learning process
 - o Is the process we are using facilitating the Mentee's learning?
 - o In what ways are the Mentee's learning needs being met/not met?
 - o What might make the process work better?
 - o What do we need to change or strengthen in the relationship?
 - o What are you learning about yourself as a learner in this process?
- Progress toward learning goals
 - o What progress are we making toward realising Mentee learning goals?
 - o What is our greatest success thus far?
 - o What is our biggest frustration?
 - o What gives us the most satisfaction about what you are learning?

Ref. The Mentor's Guide, Lois Zachary, 2000, San Francisco

6. THE RELATIONSHIP NEEDS HELP

Disagreements and differences of opinion are a natural part of any relationship. Use the following tips for the discussion with your mentoring partner:

- Talk openly and candidly with your mentoring partner in a collaborative, problem-solving way.
- Let go of personal issues and positions.
- Focus on facts.
- Describe the problem.
- Come to a shared understanding of the issue.
- Brainstorm possible new strategies.
- Choose the strategy that has the highest likelihood of success.
- Contact the Mentoring Program Coordinator for further assistance.

7. RESOLVING DIFFERENCES

In any relationship, at times there are disagreements or misunderstandings, and a mentoring relationship is no different. Keeping in mind that mentoring relationships are partnerships, it's important to accept that you have a right to express yourself when you want to make adjustments..

However, it's just as important to make sure that you resolve differences appropriately, professionally and respectfully. Some examples of differences that might crop up in a mentoring relationship include:

Getting advice or guidance that you don't agree with.

Instead of arguing with your mentor or just ignoring the advice, approach the situation with a sense of curiosity. Ask yourself and/or your mentor questions about

the advice. For example: "That suggestion doesn't feel right, but I'm not sure why," or "My situation doesn't seem quite right for that idea. Can we talk about what doesn't fit and why?"

Your mentor doesn't show up for an appointment you had scheduled and didn't call.

This is another time for curiosity. Instead of saying "You missed our meeting yesterday," approach your mentor with the goal of finding out information rather than blaming. "I had put on my calendar that we were meeting yesterday, did I get confused?"

It feels like your mentor is telling you what you should do, rather than letting you rely on them for a sounding board and then solve your own problems.

Often, mentors feel that giving advice is what they're supposed to do and is what is expected of them. You can help your mentor build their mentoring skills by articulating what you expect of them up front. You might say something like this: "I have a situation at work that I'd like to talk to you about. I have some ideas of how to approach it, and I'm hoping you can listen to my ideas and ask me questions to help me get to the right solution."

Or at the beginning of your relationship, let your mentor know up front that you don't expect them to know all the answers, but are looking forward to having someone you can bounce ideas off and who will help you solve your own problems.

8. SKILLS INVENTORY FOR MENTEES

When you have been in a mentoring relationship for a while, it's time to evaluate your comfort level in regard to the mentoring skills listed below. How you doing? Do you see improvement? Does your partner?

Skills	Very Comfortable	Moderately Comfortable	Uncomfortable	Need to Work on
Requests feedback				
Acts on feedback				
Builds relationships				
Demonstrates good personal skills				
Expresses dilemmas, feelings and emotions				
Honestly self-evaluates motivations, values and behaviours				
Maintains confidentiality				
Maintains relationships				
Negotiating skills				
Networking skills				
Takes risk as it relates to trying new behaviours				
Self-directed learning				
Values differences				

9. RELATIONSHIP APPRAISAL SUMMARY

Use these questions after you have met several times. Appraise your relationship using the following questions. Continue to appraise your relationship periodically throughout the relationship.

- How satisfied are you that you and your mentoring partner are clear about the goals of your relationship?
- What are the three to five satisfaction criteria for the relationship? To what extent are they being met?
- In what ways is the learning in this relationship impacting the Mentee's performance?
- What success (if any) has the Mentee encountered that he or she can attribute to the relationship?
- What are the most useful outcomes of your relationship so far?
- What are the least useful outcomes?
- How satisfied are you with the frequency of your mentoring contact?
- How satisfied are you with how you spend your time together?
- What is the biggest challenge facing your mentoring relationship?
- What three things could you do to enhance the learning and satisfaction taking place in your mentoring relationship?

10. SIGNALS THAT INDICATE IT MAY BE TIME FOR CLOSURE

When..	It may be that...
I am bored, uninterested and thinking about other things when I meet with my mentor.	I am just going through the motions and this relationship is not meaningful or important to me.
We meet whether or not there is an agenda.	We are meeting just to meet and there is no real purpose to our meeting.
I begrudge the time I must spend to maintain this relationship. There are other more important and pressing matters I must attend to.	Mentoring is not a high priority for me right now. I am no longer engaged in the relationship.
I have run out of things to talk about with my mentor.	We are wasting each other's time.
There has been consistent breach of confidence.	I don't trust my mentor and need to be selective about what I choose to share.
My mentor listens to me but doesn't follow through.	I am spinning my wheels and wasting my time.
We have been meeting for many months and don't seem to make progress.	Someone else could better fill my mentoring partner needs.
After most meetings, I feel rung out, like my mentor has drained the energy out of my batteries.	This is not a healthy relationship.
This appears to be a one-way relationship.	I get little, if any, satisfaction from contributing to this relationship.
Just being with my mentor is unpleasant and painful.	I don't like or respect my mentor.

Ref. The Mentor's Guide, Lois Zachary, 2000, San Francisco