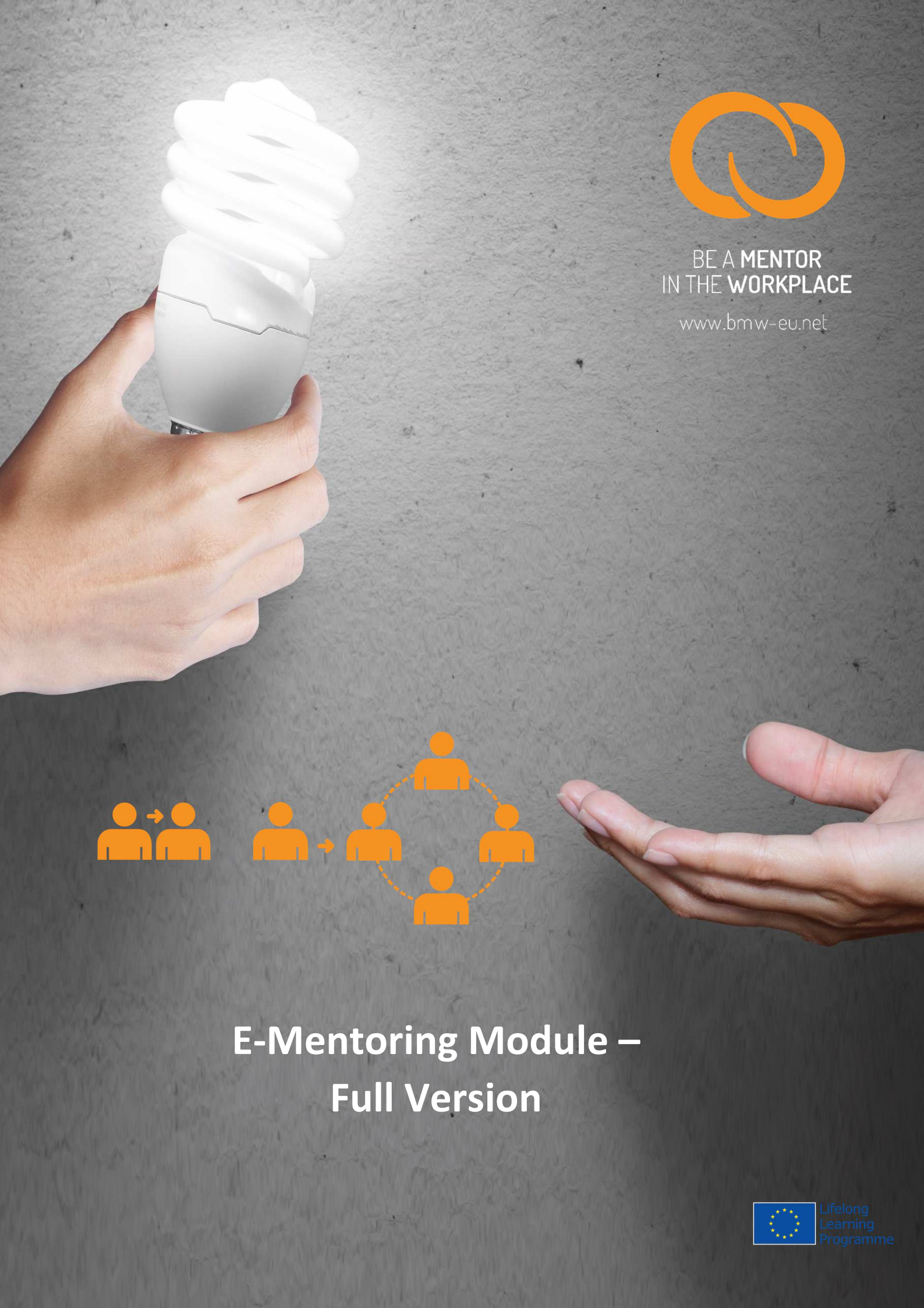

E-Mentoring Module – Full Version

Lifelong Learning Programme

Lifelong Learning Programme

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E-MENTORING MODULE – COMPACT VERSION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Be a Mentor in the Workplace is a project which promotes, widely speaking, the address of Mentoring methodologies to the interchange of generations in the profit of active ageing and younger population employability, involving the development of mentoring skills, under the perspective of work based lifelong learning, of both mentors (traditionally the older and/or experienced employees) and mentees (traditionally the youngers already employed or the new comers) to the organization.

This manual consists in a training module on e-mentoring in a full version.

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1. MODULE DESCRIPTION

MODULE TITLE	**E-MENTORING**
KEYWORDS	E-mentoring, tele mentoring, online mentoring, virtual mentoring, benefits of e-mentoring, challenges of e-mentoring, e-mentoring tips, e-mentoring strategies.
AIMS OF THE MODULE	This Module aims to give you knowledge about e-mentoring, its benefits and challenges as well as giving you some handy strategies and tips for e-mentoring relationship.
LEARNING OUTCOMES	Upon successful completion of the module the participant will have learned; a. the definition of e-mentoring; b. the nature of e-mentoring; c. benefits of e-mentoring; d. challenges of e-mentoring and how to avoid them; e. some handy strategies for e-mentors including first contact and first virtual meeting, communication strategies, conversation and discussions; f. e-mentoring relationship strategies. g. planning and tools for e-mentoring
LEARNING HOURS:	8 hours online training (4 days) Self-study hours: 10 Assessment hours: 1
ASSESMENT	Self-assessment test

SUPLEMANTARY MATERIAL(S)	Supplementary Materials File for this Module (containing sample "General TOOLS of Mentor" and "TOOLS for every Mentee")

2. INTRODUCTION

Dear Participant,

Welcome to this Module!

The information age is changing the dynamics of many relationships, including mentoring.

E-Mentoring or Virtual Mentoring (or sometimes referred as tele-mentoring, computer mediated mentoring, cyber-mentoring or online mentoring) is a new concept where participants rely almost exclusively on electronic tools to communicate. Electronic tools may include email, online meeting platforms, videoconferencing, phone, voicemail, instant messaging, other VoIP methods and faxes. Although the great majority of the time is spent in the electronic world, the mentor and the mentee may meet face-to-face one or more times during their partnership if they have opportunity for that. Technology is increasingly used in the mentoring process because of its widespread accessibility. Additionally, electronic tools allow mentoring relationships to occur where geography, time, or financial constraints, physical constraints would otherwise prevent them. It is expected that this e-mentoring holds promise for redefining mentoring relationships and changing the conditions under which mentoring is sought and offered.[1]

This Module will introduce you to a number of benefits of e-mentoring as well as specific challenges and barriers to e-mentoring that have to be considered and resolved for a successful mentoring relationship. You will also be introduced to selected strategies that would enhance communication and understanding when mentoring relationships occur at a distance.

It is important to realize, however, that the purposes and goals of mentoring programs and the human nature of mentoring relationships must drive the mentoring process, rather than the advantages provided by technology.[2]

After finishing this module you will have learned;

a. the definition of e-mentoring;
b. the nature of e-mentoring
c. benefits of e-mentoring;
d. challenges of e-mentoring and how to avoid them;
e. some handy strategies for e-mentors including first contact and first virtual meeting, communication strategies, conversation and discussions;
f. e-mentoring relationship strategies.
g. planning and tools for e-mentoring

[1] http://i-careermanagement.com/e-mentoring.pdf

[2] http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/mentoring/index.html

At the end there is a test with some questions to check if you understood the content of this module.

We wish you an interesting learning experience!

Warm regards,
BMW Project Team

3. DEFINITION OF E-MENTORING

E-mentoring can be defined as a computer mediated, mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and a mentee which provides learning, advising, encouraging, promoting, and modeling, that is often boundaryless, egalitarian, and qualitatively different than traditional face-to-face mentoring.[3]

This definition has two elements[4] that distinguish e-mentoring from traditional mentoring: the boundaryless configuration of e-mentoring and the egalitarian quality of the exchange.

Boundaryless Configuration

E-mentoring is distinctive because it challenges the conventional opinion that mentoring must be based on a personal, face-to-face relationship. It opens the possibility for relationships that cross boundaries of time, geography, and culture unlikely to happen under the classical model.

E-mentoring programs promote both formal and informal online exchanges between working professionals and learners of all ages when a face-to-face relationship would be impractical. It has low barriers to entry, requiring Internet access, an email account, and minimal investments of time. It is highly time efficient and can be engaged in at the convenience of both the mentor and mentee. Further, large amounts of information can be transmitted between the mentor and mentee in a short time span.

Egalitarian Quality of the Exchange

E-mentoring has the potential to cross barriers of race, gender, geography, age, and hierarchy that are rarely crossed in traditional mentoring relationships.

[3] http://i-careermanagement.com/e-mentoring.pdf

[4] http://i-careermanagement.com/e-mentoring.pdf

4. THE NATURE OF E-MENTORING

In the rush flow of business life, people usually may not find time for face to face mentoring relationships. Therefore, employees of any level as well as managerial people who may not have time for face to face meetings find the features and facilities of ICT beneficial, which give them the opportunity to still participate in a mentoring relationship and share their expertise.

The benefits of mentoring to one's academic success, career aspirations, and personal development are widely recognized. Two of the components necessary to a rewarding mentoring relationship are the ease and frequency of interaction and communication.3

E-mentoring is not necessarily based on a wise elder offering advice and instruction to a mentee. Rather it is a mutually beneficial relationship that is highly versatile and can be adapted to work in a variety of settings. E-mentoring may happen between peers, one-on-one, one mentor may work with a team, or even students may provide mentoring to their mentors in some aspects. Mentors may be professionals, business people, retirees, or parents. E-mentoring need not be bound by local or national culture. The virtual medium provides a context and exchange that may not be possible to replicate in face-to-face mentoring relationships. The nature of the e-mentoring relationship may be qualitatively different when mediated through a computer. While information is certainly exchanged in e-mentoring, there is a level of support, counselling, and advisement that is absent from merely posting a request for help to a mailing list or sending an email request. The mentor is sharing information in the context of helping the mentee learn and grow, and the relationship between the mentor and mentee sets e-mentoring apart from mere knowledge exchange and acquisition. E-mentoring assumes that a relationship exists between the mentor and mentee and that there is a mutual benefit for participating in the relationship.

E-mentoring can be accepted as an ongoing (powerful) learning process which assures the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and "know-how" throughout a lifetime.4

3 http://i-careermanagement.com/e-mentoring.pdf

4 http://cet.usc.edu/resources/teaching_learning/docs/eMentoringsep04.pdf

5. THE BENEFITS OF E-MENTORING

E-mentoring can be beneficial for both parties in many aspects. Some of the benefits can be given as follows: 5, 6

1. It is an excellent enhancement to offline face-to-face mentoring programs: it connects people and ideas.

2. E-mentoring can enhance values regarding online (and offline) ethics, behaviour and safety, as participants practice and learn about netiquette, being responsive to each other, keeping commitments as participants in the relationship, adhering to online confidentiality and safety guidelines, and talking about what can be harmful or inappropriate online.

3. E-mentoring provides improved access due to its flexibility. It can allow for the involvement of mentors who might not be able to participate in a traditional, face-to-face program, because of their geographic location, transportation issues, their work schedule, a home obligation or a disability. There are online mentoring programs with a particular focus on bringing people together professionals of a particular field, or people in a particular geographic area. Tele mentoring also has the potential to equalize access to mentors.

4. Minimizes the scheduling and geographic concerns associated with face-to-face mentoring relationships/programs: Mentor and mentee can benefit from asynchronous communication while still maintaining a focus on the dialog.

5. Helps expose mentees to the opportunities in their fields, offers guidance and advice based on experience, and provides support, encouragement, and access to professional networks for further career development.

6. In online mentoring, mentees will discuss subjects online that they are not always comfortable talking about face-to-face

7. An excellent way to enhance online writing, reading, and online researching skills

8. Ecological considerations: Online mentoring may be considered as environmentally friendly since it reduces the need for travel and use of paper.

5 http://cet.usc.edu/resources/teaching_learning/docs/eMentoringsep04.pdf

6 http://www.coyotecommunications.com/vv/direct/benefits.shtml

6. POTENTIAL CHALLENGES OF E-MENTORING

Although e-mentoring can be relationship driven, boundaryless and egalitarian, cultivating a successful relationship poses challenges and it is obvious that e-mentoring has a number of potential challenges.

Finding the right mentor and developing a relationship may be problematic for the individuals in some aspects. Virtual intimacy may be difficult to obtain, particularly if the parties have never met in person. Making virtual matches may also require several tries. Developing the levels of trust and confidence to sustain the relationship take time, familiarity, and work. Finally, miscommunication can occur on a number of levels in e-mentoring, especially if the parties have only a virtual relationship with a fragile commitment. E-mentoring may not be a timely process if one or both parties is not careful about making quick responses to requests for information or advice. These relationships may also be characterized by less commitment based on the ease with which one can initialize or end, strike up or out, virtual relationships. [5]

The five major potential challenges of e-mentoring can be identified here: [6]

1. likelihood of miscommunication,

2. slower development of relationship online than in FtF,

3. requires competency in written communication and technical skills,

4. technological problems, and

5. issues of privacy and confidentiality.

Now, let's look at them closer:

1. Likelihood of miscommunication

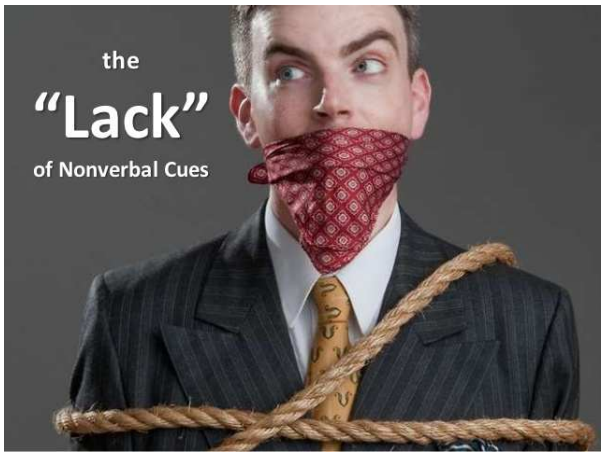
The first challenge confronting online mentoring are aspects of interpersonal dynamics unique to electronic communication means (the ones without ftf feature) that can cause miscommunication. These kinds of means do not allow communicators to see smiles and body language, to hear tone of voice, or to infer meaning from a variety of non-verbal cues. In online mentoring situations, while the anonymity of the medium may appeal to those who would normally be uncomfortable in a FtF situation, the lack of vital facial non-verbal cues provides an incomplete picture of the problem and may lead to a higher rate of inappropriate diagnoses or suggestions.

The likelihood of misinterpretation can also lead to miscommunication. Mentors and mentees who do not know each other well or communicate primarily via email may misunderstand attempts at humor, misread tone, or fail to clarify when they do not understand one another. Misunderstandings can even turn hostile as the anonymous nature of the Internet can promote a lowering of inhibitions, even among mentors and mentees who know each other well. This disinhibition can lead to increased incidences of ''flaming'' in which mentors and mentees respond in an emotionally charged, often negative manner to each other and often write things to each other that they would be too inhibited to say in person. Studies show that incidences of misunderstanding and disinhibition are decreased when participants are provided information regarding warning signs of this phenomenon prior to engaging in a relationship.

[5] http://i-careermanagement.com/e-mentoring.pdf
[6] http://emailmessage.me/online-mentoring.pdf

Sometimes, distancing behaviours that can occur in FtF mentoring relationships may be relevant here as well. For example, the mentor might simply neglect the mentee by failing to express an interest or simply not respond to his/her email. These types of neglectful behaviours can also elicit negative responses from mentees and lead to misunderstandings or frustrations expressed in writing that would perhaps be better handled constructively in FtF conversation.

The challenge of miscommunication may vary depending on the type of e-communication[7] means used in mentoring relationship. It seems likely that the lack of non-verbal cues and increased incidence of disinhibition may be more likely to occur in relationships where mentors and mentees interact only or primarily with the e-tools where they cannot see each other, such as e-mail. It seems likely that the more comfortable mentors and mentees are with one another in an online FtF setting such as videoconferencing (eg: Skype, Hangouts), the more likely they might be to verbally clarify misunderstandings that arise. [8]



2. Slower development of relationship online than in FtF

The second challenge related to e-communication is that the development of relationships is usually slower than face-to-face. It is important to note that the process of relationship development between individuals relying on e-tools and those in FtF relationships is similar to FtF relationships. Individuals go through the same steps of gathering information and forming impressions of others. However, this process is slowed down because of the reduction of personal information exchanged in e-communication compared to FtF communication.

For most mentee–mentor relationships, we believe that the reduced exchange of personal information and less rapid relationship development will be more of an issue as mentees and mentors may bring different levels of enthusiasm to their relationships due to the fast-paced business environment filled with multiple demands that they continually operate in. Mentors and mentees who are in a type of relationships using only e-mail or other type of text

[7] What is e-communication?: E-communication, or electronic communication, refers to the transfer of writing, signals, data, sounds, images, signs or intelligence sent via an electronic device. Some examples of e-communication are email, text messages, social media messaging and image sharing. E-communication is a common form of interaction for many people. The use of e-communication allows people to interact in different ways and combine many forms of media in the process. E-communication makes it easy to interact with groups through chat interfaces or video conferencing. (from http://www.ask.com)

[8] http://emailmessage.me/online-mentoring.pdf

messaging may find themselves frustrated at the slower pace of their relationship development as compared to FtF relationships or those that are supplemented by FtF interactions. Therefore, it is likely that mentors and mentees who take more of a hybrid approach to mentoring and actively seek to know one another via other sources of communication such as videoconferencing (like Skype), telephone and in-person visits (if possible), may find that their relationships develop more rapidly.

3. Requires competency in written communication and technical skills:

The third challenge is related to specific competencies that mentors and mentees must perform to communicate effectively online. For example, one of the basic considerations of online counselling is that individuals should be comfortable expressing their feelings in writing, therefore those who do not have good written communication skills may not find this medium useful. Moreover, computer aided communication also presents unique additions to our written language in the form of new set of acronyms (ex.: lol—laughing out loud) and unique forms of expression or emoticons that can affect communication. Mentors and mentees who do not communicate well in writing and/or who lack the ability to use good e-etiquette or ability to express themselves effectively in writing may find online mentoring to be less effective, or even particularly difficult. [9]

Another key competency that online mentors and mentees must have to be successful is an adequate comfort level with e-mail and other basic computer applications.

In sum, to be successful in an online relationship, mentors and mentees must actively work to develop and update both their communication and computer skills.

4. Technological problems:

A related and fourth challenge is the possibility of technological problems such as internet or computer malfunction detracted from the momentum of the relationship and caused lapses of communication.

5. Issues of privacy and confidentiality:

The fifth challenge related to online mentoring are issues of privacy and confidentiality and type of information provided online. Although having a written record can be considered as a positive opportunity, it can also be a significant challenge. In today's litigious environment, mentors may be afraid to share company information or self-disclose mistakes or career mischances since an email correspondence creates a written record. Mentees and mentors need to establish an agreement regarding what is and is not appropriate to share with others

[9] http://emailmessage.me/online-mentoring.pdf

regarding their correspondence and relationship. However if the relationship sours, then the risk that messages will be exposed is greater. [10]

f mentor relationships. In general, though, it seems likely that the more mentors and mentees rely on e-mail only or other text message/IM only communication, the more problematic this issue might be for several reasons. The major reason this may be more problematic is the establishment of a written record of interactions. Also, when discussing issues of disinhibition and flaming, it is possible that individuals who rely solely or primarily on this kind of communication may feel a false sense of anonymity and be less prudent than they might in a FtF conversation. Thus, many e-mentoring programs recommend that mentors and mentees sign a confidentiality contract according to mutually agree ethical guidelines to safeguard against these negative aspects.

7. BUSINESSES AND E-MENTORING

Business e-mentoring is a cost-effective way to increase employee engagement, loyalty and upskill employees as well as increasing sense of belonging for new employees.[11]

E-mentoring does offer new ways for experienced managers and leaders to share their knowledge and expertise, and to help bring up fresh talent. Both mentees and mentors learn from the process. It deepens relationships and builds bonds either within an organisation or across networks in an industry or sector.[12]

In more recent times, roles of individuals in executive and managing positions have changed markedly and become much more complex, to the extent that they must continue to learn and acquire new skills to stay abreast of developments. With a lack of appropriate training courses, and the time these often take them away from the work environment, their attendance at these courses becomes either impractical or it may not

[10] http://emailmessage.me/online-mentoring.pdf
[11] http://www.e-mentoring.net/business.shtml
[12] Does E-mentoring Offer New Opportunities for Management and Leadership Development? Barbara Allan | Singapore Management Review - from http://m360.sim.edu.sg

be appropriate to be absent from their workplace for an extended period. In addition, it is often found that these courses do not fully meet their needs.[13]
Learning is greatly enhanced when it is directly relevant to the Mentee's current industry and employment. This is where mentoring is most effective as it helps these business people access and utilise their Mentor's extensive knowledge and experience to develop new ways of working.

In today's competitive corporate climate, many business people - including managerial positions - often feel isolated because of a lack of local peers and feel unable to discuss problems or issues with each other, with Board Members or with other managerial people for fear they may be seen as weak or indecisive. Therefore, these people could be enhanced in areas of weakness with appropriate assistance and guidance.

Mentoring allows the Mentee to think openly, and aims to provide in the strictest confidence, a sounding board for ideas, an analysis of business plans, and assistance to individuals in their development. Mentors help create a comfort level for these business people they are not able to acquire with their seniors, managers or even with their peers.

Another important point is that e-mentoring is becoming increasingly important in career development due to the changing face of workplace. Freelancing, consulting and work-from-home arrangements are becoming commonplace with reduced opportunities of contact between potential mentors and mentees. Many organizations are looking to telementoring for building relationships.[14]

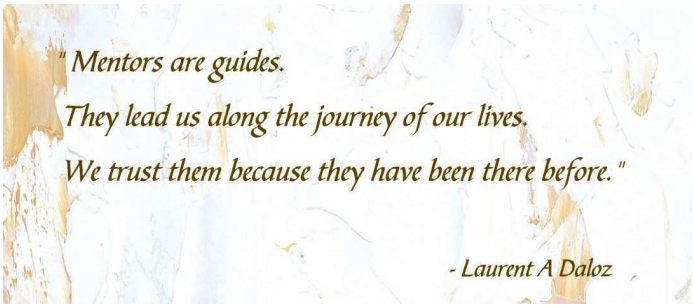
8. HANDY STRATEGIES FOR E-MENTORS

A mentor is an experienced and trusted advisor who provides guidance, support and assistance and enjoys helping others to learn and grow.

[13] http://www.australianbusinessmentors.com/why-a-mentor
[14] http://www.usask.ca/gmcte/mentoring/index.html

At the core of almost all successful and personally satisfying mentoring is a meaningful relationship with another person. Regardless, it's important for everyone, both mentor and mentee, to understand a mentor's true role in the mentoring relationship.

It is the mentor's role to empower the mentee, encouraging him/her to move from what is known to new areas of thought and practice. Mentors help by providing a vision and by offering support: challenging your mentee when appropriate, prodding if necessary, and comforting as needed.



The following tips, suggestions, important qualities, key points that mentors should keep in mind are based on the experiences of well-known researchers in the area of mentorship and of successful mentors who has engaged in so many mentoring relationships, and compiled and adapted from various resources. We tried to gether them according to their relevance with various aspects of the mentoring: First contact and first virtual meeting, communication, conversation and discussions, and relationship.

Consider trying these ideas as you plan how you'll be working together with your mentee, in order to establish a successful, effective and fruitful mentoring relationship.

8.1. FOR THE FIRST CONTACT AND THE FIRST VIRTUAL MEETING

- After matching, you may take the initiative to make the first contact to your mentee, to introduce you and to fix a first virtual meeting date and method. After you both mutually agree on the first virtual meeting date, time and method, hold this agreed meeting time as essential, try not to shift it unless an emergency occurs.
- Review the mentee's information to learn about his or her background, experience, and interests before the first virtual meeting. If you want more details you may ask your mentee to send those details in the electronic environment, eg: by e-mail.
- To be prepared for your first virtual meeting, you make a list of things that you would have wanted to know if you were in the position of the mentee. This list might include information about yourself (as the mentor), about expectations concerning the mentor-mentee relationship.
- When you meet mentee first time in the virtual environment, keep it simple and mentee friendly and create a welcoming atmosphere

- Sometimes it's hard getting started. Start off with a simple introduction. Tell the mentee a bit about yourself, both professionally and personally. This helps give the mentee some idea of who you are and where you're coming from.
- Be friendly and sincere in your first meeting. Emphasize to your mentee that you would be happy to be his/her mentor and that you are really interested in him/her.
- It would be better for you to be clear about and define ground rules, expectations, purpose and boundaries of your mentoring relationship at the beginning of the mentoring relationship.

- When you meet your mentee, you may ask him/her if it is okay that you identify some items for an agenda. You can make the list and then ask the mentee if he/she has any items he/she would like to add. Some examples of typical items of agenda may be: 1. getting to know each other, 2. logistics, 3. goals and expectations, 4. concerns that might interfere with your meetings, 5. initial impressions, 6. questions you have about mentee, and 7. why you think he/she can benefit from you as a mentor, etc.
- Also discuss with the mentee the parameters for working together, the methods of communication, and the frequency of contact and responses. Build a sense of trust with the mentee by carefully keeping to any agreements made.

8.2. FOR COMMUNICATION

- Establish regular meeting times. Make a special effort to adjust preferably once a week virtual meetings if it is possible. The golden standard is weekly for 1 to 1.5 hours; however, you may agree on what will work for both of you and do it regularly.

- Do your best to keep the lines of communication going. In the online world, "dead time" in communication can cause breakdowns in relationships. It is very frustrating for a mentee who sends out a message and doesn't get a reply. Once your mentee has made contact, please make every effort to respond in a reasonable timeframe. Try to reply to messages within 48 hours or sooner if possible.
- Choose videoconferencing (such as Skype, Hangout, etc.) as your meeting method as much as possible since this allows both of you to see each other and avoid misunderstandings due to lack of nonverbal clues, enhances mutual understanding, and helps to establish your relationship easier and faster as well as helping to build trust.
- Maintaining regular contact and soliciting the same from your mentee will aid in developing a successful mentoring relationship. Sometimes a short sentence acknowledging receipt of a message and saying you'll be in contact later will be sufficient during a busy time. Plus, it will assure your mentee of future contact. You may even prompt or encourage your mentee to do the same. A quick line, such as "I haven't heard from you lately, are you very busy with your tasks?" may help bridge a lag in communication.

- Logging in often is helpful. Keep the connection rolling. Don't wait for your mentee to contact you with a problem. If things are going great, use your connection to offer praise or to share success stories as well.
- Pay attention to the frequency pattern of the messages. If it has been a while (say, 5 days) since the last message, ask a question or bring up a new topic to get things rolling again.
- When you're sending messages to your mentee, please be sure that you use the subject line effectively. Make the subject line reflect the content of the message. Effective use of the subject line helps mentee know at a glance what to expect inside the message. It also helps to retrieve messages at a later date. Whenever the focus of your discussion shifts, let that be reflected in the subject line as well.

- By simply clicking reply, a "thread" of discussion is created. In other words, the topic in the subject with Re:..... indicates that the message continues discussion on a topic that has already been raised.

- Part of your role as a mentor involves establishment of a trusting relationship. During this relationship there might be periods of busy schedule, off days, sick leaves, travels, any times you will be out of reach, you will have limited access to internet or you will be offline, etc. Share that information with your mentee, so that if you don't write or answer, if he/she doesn't hear from you, he/she knows that it's not because you're ignoring your mentor responsibilities, it's because you're away or you're swamped. Take some time before these periods to establish a plan for communication with your mentee. Planning your communication pattern early will help avoid a disappointing gap in communication which will require much effort to fill in again.
- What if an unplanned situation occurs? Just send a message saying that you're under such and such condition. Give an approximate time you expect to be out of touch. For example: "There is an urgent problem with my family, will be out of touch until Monday!" This helps the other person know why you're not replying.
- Sometimes technical difficulties occur. If this happens, contact your related service providers directly so that technical difficulties can be handled promptly.

8.3. FOR CONVERSATION AND DISCUSSIONS

- Exhibit respect to your mentee. Ensure your mentee knows that there would never be condescension and sarcasm from your side. Set the appropriate tone and create a respectful and constructive context in all your interactions with the mentee.
- Maintain a cheerful and positive attitude with your mentee.
- Start off with an introduction. Tell the mentee a bit about yourself, both professionally and personally. This helps give the mentee some idea about who you are and helps better understanding about you and your world as well as providing conversation starters.

  - Sometimes, your mentee might see you as an authority figure; it may take time for him/her to open up to you. Encourage your mentee to communicate openly and candidly. If after your first few meeting sessions you still feel like your mentee is hesitant about speaking up, try asking him/her some tough questions to encourage breakthroughs in conversation, possibly questions about his/her views or passions.
  - Encourage your mentee to share his/her goals about what he/she would like to get out of the mentor/mentee relationship openly.
  - Encourage the mentee to ask questions at meeting sessions.
- Listen deeply and ask powerful questions. The two of the skills that are essential for successful mentoring are:

  1. in-depth listening, that is, suspending judgment, listening for understanding and providing an accepting and supportive atmosphere; and

  2. asking powerful questions, that is, questions that are challenging in a friendly way and questions that help the mentee talk about what is important to him/her.

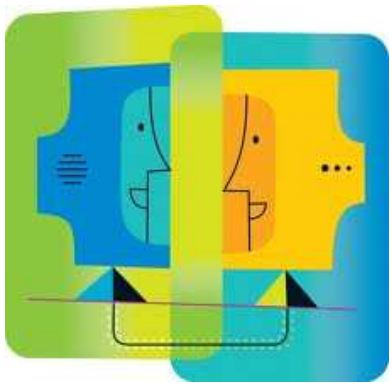
Mostly ask thought-provoking and high-value questions which can be described as "open-ended" and usually starting with "how" or "what." You may create your list of "Powerful Questions" to assist you with this task.

- Use and practice active listening. Don't dominate the conversation; carefully listen to the mentee, be an engaged listener and respect what your mentee has to say. Ask follow-up questions to let them know you are listening. Try to understand your mentee's needs, and try to respond appropriately.
- Take the advantage of active listening to hear the meaning behind the words, such as themes or recurrent words, tone and mood, and level of commitment.
- Do less talking and more listening so your mentee can share his/her thoughts
- Listening is hard, but giving advice is easy. Most of the people are more prone to commenting or giving advice without first truly listening to the issue being presented. Listening by asking good open-ended questions like "What makes that hard for you?" or "What could you have done differently?" and letting your mentee speak gives another advantage that it gets you out of the "I'll solve this problem" to "I'm facilitating this conversation to arrive at a solution that the mentee thinks is best."
- When mentees initiate discussion, they usually try to learn and focus on asking about mentor's education, career path and experiences. There may be other topics that might prove fruitful for discussion. You may want to reflect back on your educational experience and identify information that would have proven useful to you back then. Offering information about your education and/or professional history can help put a mentee at ease. You may want to discuss specific skills (personal, technical) or trainings that have enhanced your professional successes. Some other topics may concentrate on professional opportunities, career challenges, goals and activities and so on.

- To give you an idea, here are some topics that your mentees might want to discuss and improve in: Career goals and opportunities, Life/work balance, Multi-tasking, Experience, Networking, Strengths/Weaknesses, Interpersonal skills, Problem-solving, Stress management, Time management, Working strategies, Work ethics, etc.
- Consider information and referrals that might be helpful to the mentee based on the proposed topics for discussion.
- Do not make inappropriate remarks about your mentee's life/family.
- Keep the conversations and the information given and received between you and your mentee confidential.
- Be an advisor, not a preacher; be a sympathetic listener, not a psychologist; be a friend, not a parent.
- Refrain from profanity and other inappropriate speech.
- Know that "thank you" may come in the form of a smile instead of words.

9. E-MENTORING RELATIONSHIP STRATEGIES

- First of all, believe in your ability to mentor
- Be honest with yourself and have a good rationale for being a mentor.
- An ideal mentor possesses a number of qualities: being empathetic, open minded, honest, good communicator, talented, responsible, artfully astute, able to provide structure, encourages taking on challenges, and values lifelong learning.
- Don't forget that the primary characteristics of effective mentoring include the ability and willingness to:
  - Value the mentee as a person
  - Develop mutual trust and respect
  - Maintain confidentiality
  - Listen both to what is being said and how it is being said
  - Help the mentee to solve his/her own problem, rather than giving directives.



- Remember that effective mentoring requires commitment, time and skill.
- Think about what you have to give in a mentoring relationship, ie. what you can offer to your mentee. Identify all that you can offer including your skills, knowledge, lessons learned, opinions, and personal and professional experiences.

- Be open minded to mentees from different backgrounds. Your mentees might come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Take the time to get to know each mentee individually.
- Value the diverse economic, cultural, and religious traits of your mentee. Respect differences while discovering common ground.
- Be ready to adjust and adapt to your mentee's skill level and background.

- Uniqueness is important. What makes every mentoring relationship different is the uniqueness of each individual. This is especially true when it comes to diversity. Gender, nationality, ethnicity should not matter to mentor.
- Celebrate differences: Experienced mentors report that working with a mentee from a different background broadened their own horizons and deepened their understanding of other people and cultures. Sometimes it is the differences that make the difference.
- Share with your mentee your specific expectations for the relationship honestly beforehand. **Set Firm Guidelines and Expectations from the Beginning**: Determine how frequently you will have meetings. Ask your mentee to spell out what he/she wants from you; you should have a specific idea about what he/she hopes to gain from the relationship, and he/she should know what you are hoping to accomplish.
- Honour your limits and boundaries. It is never healthy for anybody to give without limits. This only depletes us and makes us less available for others. You have a right to determine your own boundaries, such as how frequently you can meet/communicate, areas of discussion that may be off limits, contacts you don't want to share. State those clearly to your mentee so that he/she will respect them. Ask him/her to do the same so that both of you gain a mutual understanding of the boundaries in your relationship.
- Layout a guideline and stick to the boundaries within which the relationship is expected to be productive to both. The mentoring experience will be more enjoyable if you are both "on the same page" from the start.
- **Maintain and respect the values -privacy, confidentiality, honesty, and integrity- in your core relationship**. Otherwise you may experience disastrous consequences that can accompany violating these values.
- Consistency is critical. Relationships develop through ongoing contact. Keep your commitments to engage on a regular basis. This gives the mentee the assurance that you are genuinely interested and that he/she can count on you.
- Demonstrate to your mentee that you are consistent, dependable, and trustworthy.
- Project yourself in a positive manner as someone interested in supporting the mentee.
- Provide encouragement. You can help tremendously by encouraging and motivating the mentee. By logging in, e-mailing, or phoning to enquire how things are progressing you will convey the message that there is someone out there who cares whether or not he/she successfully progressing to achieve his/her goals.

- The purpose of the mentor relationship is to promote the mentee's professional growth. Mentor should assure that interactions with mentee will be in this frame and comply with applicable ethical standards.
- Consistently act in ways that are ethical to earn the trust of your mentee. Building trust takes time. A mentee may not show it at first, but your help may be just what is needed. Be patient and persistent.
- Be reliable and consistent- The more consistent you are, the more your mentee will trust you.
- Facilitate not clone. Focus on the mentee's development, and resist the urge to produce a clone. Remember that you are sharing your mentee's journey, not yours. If you act more as a facilitator for

knowledge, experience, professional and personal development, you'll avoid the temptation to create another "you" and you'll allow the mentee to develop into the "who" he/she wants to be.

- Please always remember that "**Mentoring is in the details. Details make the difference between merely ordinary and exceptional mentoring relationships.**" Mentors monitor numerous details in their *own* roles and actions, and they also give their mentees a hand keeping track of theirs.
- Table below offers some strategies for both mentor and mentee for enhancing the success of the relationship.

Strategies for E-mentoring Relationships

Strategies for mentors	Strategies for protégés
Understand the person's hopes and fears.	Know your goals for the relationship.
Share background information.	Share background information.
Work to develop familiarity.	Seek a mentor you can trust.
Be honest and open.	Work to develop familiarity.
Get a mentor yourself.	Be prepared to work and act on your mentor's advice (or explain why you aren't).
Help protégés understand and agree with your style of intervention.	Take the lead in the relationship.
Expect to learn and benefit from the relationship just like the protégé.	Initiate frequent contact.
Work at building trust and at feeling it yourself in the relationship.	Ask your mentor for help with things you are struggling with and cannot find the answer easily.
Recognize that mentoring is a process that has the potential to change both of you.	Seek feedback from the mentor about how the relationship is working.
Initiate frequent contact.	
Seek feedback from the protégé about how she or he thinks the relationship is working.	

(Source[15])

- Invest time in learning about the aspiration, attributes and preferences of your mentee, the better you know your mentee the more detailed guidance you can provide. Always remember that an effective mentor is sensitive to the mentee's needs.
- Follow through on any agreements or offers made between you and the mentee.
- Be aware of what's going on and what's likely to come next. But at the same time, *don't over-structure your mentoring relationships*, otherwise it would be a discomfort for both of you.
- Act as a sounding board for the mentee, especially for his/her ideas. Because, when a mentor listens intently and provides feedback, he/she provides perspective that otherwise would not be available through introspection or thought alone.
- Use leading questions. If you ask leading questions, you can stimulate your mentee to think on his/her own about a problem. This will facilitate a deeper understanding of the situation than would be achieved by immediately giving the correct information or answer.

[15] http://i-careermanagement.com/e-mentoring.pdf

- Try to understand your mentee's viewpoint: Always LISTEN well to your mentee, do not assume. Even if you don't share his/her point of view, trying to appreciate it shows you care.
- Establish milestones for progress, set intermediate project goals, smaller milestones, and track progress plans.
- Keep the process logical and allow room for modification if necessary.
- Provide Clear Performance Measures: This way, your mentee can chart his/her professional progress. Follow up with him/her in the next session.

- Plan for the next meeting session. When you come to the end of a virtual meeting session you may ask to review progress and ask for ideas about next session's topics. You may also ask for an impression of how this meeting session went and what you might be able to do (or stop doing) next time to make the next session as good or better.
- Close the meeting session with a proposed plan of action for the mentee and track the development.
- Express your appreciation to your mentee for what you might personally have gained from the meeting session.
- Keep records. It is important to keep a brief record of interactions with the mentee. Note down briefly about the nature of a communication so you can follow-up later and ensure problems have been resolved. This provides useful information for assessment purposes as well.

- Ask questions often to assess how well the process is going.
- Empower rather than solve. Very often, people think that mentors are problem solvers. The tendency is to take the mentor's problem solving skills directly into the mentoring relationship and provide solutions. The problem in that is, the solution is the one that worked for mentor, and may not work for his/her mentee. In addition, a mentor should be empowering the mentee to arrive at their own solutions. Remember the old saying: "You can provide a fish and feed someone for the day or teach them how to fish and feed them forever".

- Experiment with process, try to use techniques and activities having meaning for relationship building like: role plays, simulations, role rehearsals, experiential learning activities, brainstorming, mind-mapping and other techniques (according to applicability to the situation)
- You are not responsible, you have shared responsibility. Mentors feel responsible for their mentee. This is fine if you understand it as you should act responsibly, but this should not go so far as to believe that you are primarily responsible for your mentee's success. It is a shared responsibility. However, the mentee bears the larger portion since it's up to him/her to act on what is discussed during the mentoring relationship.

- It's not coaching; it's mentoring. Mentors certainly coach in areas of skill development and knowledge acquisition, but mentoring is more than that. It's about having a personal relationship with a mentee that moves beyond coaching to discussing who the mentee is and what his/her dreams, expectations and aspirations are. Understand his/her vision.

- Do not see yourself as a person with answers. As an individual, you have learned from your experiences. As a mentor, when relevant, share what you have done or what you have learned, not as a prescription, but more as an example of something from which you gained some wisdom. You can also feel comfortable contributing ideas or suggestions, not as a sage, but as a collaborator. In other words, draw on your experience to share insight, wisdom, and knowledge.
- Provide space for mistakes, nudge your mentee, encourage his/her persistence and act as a positive role model in both word and deed to help your mentee understand the importance of professionalism.
- Mentoring wisdom can be briefly reduced to three interrelated themes: 1. value the mentee and his/her goals; 2. spend the time and energy; 3. realize it's your job to guide and advice the mentee according to his/her goals.
- Difficult relationships can be reduced by staying focused on the goal rather than personal flaws
- Be aware of your mentee. Seek to uncover the mentee's strengths and challenges. Listen carefully to the mentee, and try to understand his/her point of view. Don't assume that which works best for you also works best for your mentee.
- Be self-aware. Know your strengths, but also be aware of your limitations. Seek out self-development as well.
- Be patient with the development process of your mentee. Sometimes being patient means stepping in to help, or stepping back to let your mentee try to solve a problem by himself/herself.
- A good mentor knows the current level of his/her mentee and provides the right level of support.
- Effective mentors provide crucial support to mentees. Even if they are experts in the tasks, they do not simply tell the mentee how to accomplish them. Their focus is rather to help the mentee make sense of the situations by responding to the unique challenges mentees encounter in their development. Therefore, effective mentors need to be sensitive to the kinds of difficulties mentees may encounter and be able to provide the kind of support the mentee will find helpful.

- Some mentees may require your assistance in prioritizing the required activities in order to match their time commitments.
- Encourage strategic thinking.
- Be positive. Give off energy- Continuously motivate your mentee and show your excitement about achievements of him/her.
- Provide resources. If you provide detailed answers to every question asked by the mentee there is a danger that your mentee may become overly dependent on you. Refer him/her to additional resources in websites, to manuals, books/e-books, e-zines or similar references and always encourage them to become active in their own learning.

- Honour any commitments to and confidences of your mentee.
- Actively assist the mentee in developing his/her own personal network of professional contacts.
- Have fun with your mentee as you cooperate and learn together – mentoring should not be all work. Make it fun and maintain a sense of humour.
- Never violate the law or codes of conduct.
- Help your mentee understand when he/she may be operating from an assumption (which may or may not be accurate).
- Help the mentee to recognize risks involved in actions and make suggestions to help avoid major mistakes.

- Praise is power: A word of praise would empower, motivate and encourage your mentee. Show your appreciation and encouragement frequently to your mentee.
- Believe: Many mentees struggle with self-esteem. Your faith in them can be the greatest gift you can give.
- Boost your mentee's self-confidence by being an advocate and providing encouragement.
- Be innovative and creative. Don't hesitate to share your ideas, give appropriate advice, and be a resource for creative ideas and new knowledge. For example, this might mean showing a mentee a new technological tool, challenging him/her to try something new, etc.
- Interact and share – Share your mistakes and struggles, as well as your successes with your mentee when relevant. Share challenges you have faced and strategies you have used in similar situations – both successful and not.
- Try to think of things you wish you had known before in your professional life, and share this with your mentee in terms of expectations vs. realities.
- Be open and honest. Don't be afraid to reveal when you don't know something. If you feel uncomfortable about a discussion or if you are unclear about a task or reference, let your mentee know you will do some research and get back to him/her with an answer. Perfection is hard to emulate, and your mentee will respect you more when he/she gets to know you as someone who has setbacks and who is in a learning process as well. Besides, this approach will result in less confusion for the mentee.
- Provide honest, caring, constructive, regular, and diplomatic feedback and advice to your mentee that is specific, descriptive, and non-judgmental.
- Your feedback to your mentee should be continuous, including gentle guidance but also should let your mentee think for himself/herself.
- When commenting on the mentee's approach to a problem, express your opinion in an honest and corrective manner. Be specific in your feedback and balance your comments towards the positive. Try to find success even in small accomplishments.

- Know when it is time for the mentee to advance.
- Appreciate what you're giving. Mentors often feel that they never give enough. The best way to learn what you have contributed and how helpful you have been is to ask this to your mentee, who is the person most directly affected. Periodically validate your mentee the value of the information and counsel you are providing him/her. This will provide you with valuable feedback about what you've given and in addition, it will allow the mentee to be aware of this and to be appreciative.
- To assess and improve your mentoring relationship, both you and your mentee should fill in the related assessment and feedback forms periodically. Filling those forms will not take up much time but the responses are crucial in shaping the future of your mentoring relationship as well as the future of your mentoring performance.

- Most mentoring relationships develop and flourish without problems. Occasionally, however, something comes up. If there is any unpleasantness that arises in the relationship, provide a warning first, wait for recovery and be honest when you pull back if necessary.
- Sometimes your mentee may go through a rough time and may have very stressful time periods. In those periods be supportive, yet set clear boundaries.

Mentors have an important role, but they are not intended or expected to serve as mental health professionals, legal professionals, or parents who can assist with personal issues and difficult times. If at any time the mentoring relationship is extending beyond what you are comfortable with, if your mentee has problems you cannot help with, feel free to address the situation by pointing your mentee to the appropriate persons or organizations for assistance and additional help.

- Be an active participant, you are not supposed to be a textbook. Engage in your own learning while you are mentoring. Sometimes, you may learn from your mentees as well.
- Go with the flow of the relationship, but always be prepared for the unexpected.
- Give explicit instructions for successful work habits.
- Recommend books or other resources which have been useful to you in your career. Let your mentee know what professional organisations or associations have helped you more about your field or profession.
- Provide access to contacts. A network of colleagues and experts in various fields is one of the most important resources available to a professional mentor. Give opportunity to help the mentee build contacts and working relationships and provide access to your contacts if applicable to the situations.

- Identifying specific professional organizations that can further the mentee's professional goals, or providing referrals to other appropriate individuals for further professional guidance, is valuable assistance.
- Bring in other peers to your mentoring relationship. Creating a web of contacts for a mentee will be very valuable to him/her.
- Periodically identify special learning opportunities in professional networks for your mentee.
- Additionally, while not required, feel free to refer the mentee to others in your personal or professional network that might be interested in helping out.
- Introduce your mentee to your former mentees in the field of development of your current mentee, show him/her how the professional transition is made.
- Identify referrals to other people who might be able to assist the mentee with a challenge or opportunity.

- Invite guest people experienced in the mentee's field of development for teleconferencing, live chat, etc. Use your networking and contacts for this purpose.
-
- Assist the mentee in focusing on action strategies to handle job challenges and identify options for continuous improvement.
- Expedite resources by using knowledge of systems and bureaucracies in obtaining support.
- You may prepare some distance mentoring activities such as: forwarding interesting articles and blogs, setting up a chat time for a discussion, offering feedback on a new work plan, etc.
- Always have current knowledge and relevant skills as a mentor and try to understand how the disciplines interact.
- Do share your knowledge about the current industry trends and procedural information unique to your profession.
- Be approachable. It is important for mentees to know that you are available for questions. Make sure that you are open to your mentees and make sure they know that you are there to help and to talk.
- Accept that the relationship is temporary, but be alert for the possibility that it may exceed for a longer time frame, this should be a mutual agreement as to how you wish to proceed.

- Help your mentee lead the departure process. Talk to your mentee about transition, make "Thanks and goodbye", a positive and satisfying departure, and be open to future contact.
- Express your appreciation for all you have gained from your mentee as well.
- Participate in ongoing training in mentoring
- Attend formal and informal programs whenever possible to enhance your mentoring strategies.
- Become a lifelong learner.

- Dress appropriately for each virtual ftf meeting (videoconferencing via Skype, Hangouts, etc.) session with your mentee. Even if you're meeting online from your computer, your attire is important and should be professional in videoconferencing as you can see each other.

10. PLANNING E-MENTORING RELATIONSHIP AND TOOLS FOR E-MENTORS

Development of an e-mentoring plan equipped with appropriate and reflective tools at the beginning of the relationship and application of these tools in a systematic way are fundamental for a fruitful and healty mentoring relationship, and helps to identify any possible risk areas beforehand.

These tools can be gathered in two categories:

1. Mentor's General Tools
a. Basic Details List Of Mentees
b. Mentor's Basic Personal Details
c. General Researches File

2. Tools of Mentor for Each Mentee
a. E-Mentoring Relationship Indicators Form
b. Worksheets For The First Meeting
c. Mentor's Diary And Mentee's Diary
d. Base Forms For Developing The Personal And Professional Development Plan Of Mentee
e. Activity Tracking And Result Assessment Form
f. Feedback And Assessment Forms

You can find these tools as a **Supplementary Materials File** (containing BMW-GENERAL TOOLS OF MENTOR.xls and BMW-TOOLS FOR EACH MENTEE.xls) for this module.

11. SELF ASSESSMENT

(The right definitions are in green).

1. Which one of the followings gives the elements that distinguish e-mentoring from traditional mentoring?

- o Meeting the mentee face-to-face.
- o Development of soft skills and optimism
- o The boundaryless configuration of e-mentoring and the egalitarian quality of the exchange.
- o None of the above

2. Which one of the following choices below is a true sentence about the nature of e-mentoring?

- o E-mentoring assumes that a relationship exists between the mentor and mentee and that there is a mutual benefit for participating in the relationship.
- o E-mentoring can be accepted as an ongoing powerful learning process which assures the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and "know-how" throughout a lifetime.
- o E-mentoring is not necessarily based on a wise elder offering advice and instruction to a mentee. E-mentoring may happen between peers, one-on-one, one mentor may work with a team, or even students may provide mentoring to their mentors in some aspects.
- o All of the above sentences are true.

3. Which one of the choices below gives the definition of e-mentoring correctly?

- o E-mentoring is a traditional form of mentoring.
- o E-mentoring is a computer mediated, mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and a mentee which provides learning, advising, encouraging, promoting, and modeling, that is often boundaryless, egalitarian, and qualitatively different than traditional face-to-face mentoring
- o E-mentoring is a form of mentoring which uses only e-mails for communication.
- o Both A and C.

4. Which one of the choices below gives one of the benefits of e-mentoring?

- o Faster development of relationship online than in FtF.
- o It does not require online ethics and netiquette.
- o Mentor and mentee use only asynchronous communication.
- o Minimizes the scheduling and geographic concerns associated with face-to-face mentoring relationships/programs.

5. Which one of the following choices is giving the potential challenges of e-mentoring?

- O Likelihood of miscommunication.
- O Slower development of relationship online than in FtF.
- O Issues of privacy and confidentiality.
- O All of the above.

6. Which one of the following choices is <u>not</u> true for businesses and e-mentoring?

- O E-mentoring deepens relationships and builds bonds either within an organization or across networks in an industry or sector.
- O There are appropriate training courses and enough time for individuals in executive and managing positions; so e-mentoring is not very beneficial for them.
- O Business e-mentoring is a cost-effective way to increase employee engagement, loyalty and upskill employees as well as increasing sense of belonging for new employees.
- O E-mentoring does offer new ways for experienced managers and leaders to share their knowledge and expertise, and to help bring up fresh talent.

7. Which one of the choices below is <u>not</u> one of the handy strategies for e-mentors for the first contact and first virtual meeting ?

- O Review the mentee's information to learn about his or her background, experience, and interests before the first virtual meeting.
- O Be clear about and define ground rules, expectations, purpose and boundaries of your mentoring relationship at the beginning of the mentoring relationship.
- O It is not necessary to be prepared for the first virtual meeting; it is better to be spontaneous.
- O Discuss with the mentee the parameters for working together, the methods of communication, and the frequency of contact and responses.

8. Which one of the choices below is one of the handy strategies for e-mentors for communication?

- O Establish regular meeting times. Make a special effort to adjust preferably once a week virtual meetings if it is possible.
- O When you're sending messages to your mentee, use the subject line effectively.
- O Choose videoconferencing (such as Skype, Hangouts, etc.) as your meeting method as much as possible since this allows mentor and mentee to see each other and avoid misunderstandings due to lack of nonverbal clues.
- O All of the above are true.

9. Which one of the choices below is one of the handy strategies for e-mentors for conversation and discussions?

- O Listen deeply and ask powerful questions; practice active listening.
- O Dominate the conversation.

- Do more talking and less listening so your mentee can share his/her thoughts.
- Both A and B.

10. Which one of the followings is <u>not</u> one of the e-mentoring relationship strategies?

- Set firm guidelines and expectations from the beginning.
- Encourage strategic thinking.
- Maintain and respect the values -privacy, confidentiality, honesty, and integrity- in your core relationship.
- Simply give directives to the mentee to solve his/her own problem rather than helping to solve on his/her own

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