

A Guide to Mentoring within NHS Finance



Who is this document aimed at?

This guide has been produced as part of a series, to assist with the development of world class financial management in the NHS. It is for anyone in NHS Finance who is, or wants to be, involved in mentoring. It provides an introduction to mentoring and a guide for mentors and mentees on the important aspects of a mentoring relationship. It offers a framework within which mentoring can be practised and points the way to further resources to support mentors and mentees.

The mentoring materials have been written to sit alongside the guidance on coaching which has already been produced. All of the resources can be found on the FSD website www.fsdnetwork.com

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I What is mentoring?

Mentoring in NHS Finance – A Definition

“The provision of assistance by one person to another in a relationship of trust outside of the line management relationship, that effectively enables the recipient to learn, develop their abilities and enhance their potential in line with personal objectives.”

RN Richards 2003 as amended 2009

It has also been described as:

“Off-line help by one person to another in making significant transition in knowledge, work or thinking.”

David Clutterbuck and David Megginson 1995

“Acts as a friend willing to play ‘devils advocate’, listen and question to enlarge awareness.”

David Megginson

“That person who achieves a one-to-one developmental relationship with a learner, and one who the learner identifies as having enabled personal growth to take place.”

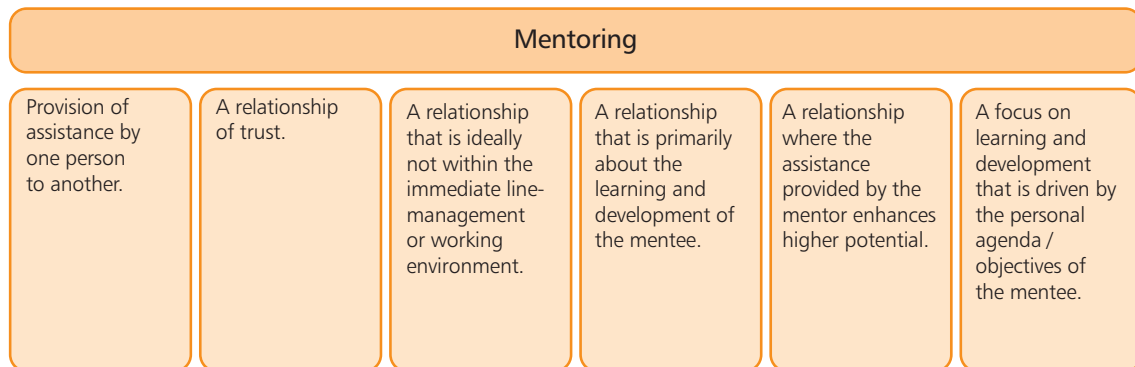
Chris Bennetts 1994

“...a relationship in which the mentor gives something of themselves to pass on experience and knowledge, but also a support and development mechanism requiring a range of techniques and skills”

HFMA Mentor

What Mentoring Is – A Definitive Model of Mentoring Good Practice

The above definitions are not perfect but do give a clear outline of what is at the heart of mentoring and can be applied across most types of mentoring relationship. The definitions can be broken down to provide core characteristics of the mentoring relationship as follows:



Each of these characteristics have been expanded upon:

Provision of assistance by one person to another

This assistance might be in the form of:

- Providing professional guidance.
- Providing advice and information.
- Providing intellectual knowledge, ideas and possibilities.
- Providing access to a role model along with experience, know-how and wisdom.
- Providing a sounding board and counsel.
- Providing 'critical' friendship, challenges and stimulation.
- Helping to develop specific skills and abilities.
- Facilitating learning and growth. Opening up opportunities through access to networks, resources, contacts, etc.

This is not an exhaustive list but it covers a wide spread of mentoring possibilities.

A relationship of trust

It is crucial to the mentoring relationship that there is mutual trust between the mentor and the mentee. Effective mentoring relationships will more often than not involve disclosure, honesty and openness, which are often keys to the development of a sound rapport between the two parties and enable a true learning environment.

This trust is not just about confidentiality, it is about providing a safe, objective and non-judgmental learning environment for the mentee. It is also about establishing agreed boundaries within which the mentor is free to challenge, question and stimulate reaction in the mentee as part of the learning process.

A relationship that is ideally not within the immediate line management or working environment

Mentoring works best if there is an absence of authoritarian aspects to the relationship. Mentoring relationships should have mutuality and if mentoring relationships are formed within the line management chain or in too close proximity to the working environment, problems can occur.

Examples of these problems are:

- Power relationships where one party has power over the other.
- Dependant relationships where mentees stop thinking for themselves and rely disproportionately on the mentor.
- Controlling relationships where the mentor becomes the dominant force in the mentee's life and controls their actions and thinking.
- Adversarial relationships where issues of status, management, politics, etc. interfere with the flow of the mentoring relationship.

A relationship that is primarily about effectively enabling the learning and development of the mentee (Although in good mentoring relationships the learning is often two-way)

The critical part of this statement is the emphasis on 'effectively enabling' learning and development. Good mentoring is not just about having knowledge, experience, wisdom, willingness, etc., it is about knowing how to 'enable' the mentee to learn and to adopt flexible strategies attuned to the mentee's needs, that effectively lead to sustained development.

A relationship where the assistance provided by the mentor does not only facilitate learning and development, but beyond that, aims to be a catalyst for enhancement of the mentee's higher potential.

Many writers on 'learning' and 'development' will distinguish between the two terms, describing the first as a process and the second as an outcome. Within a mentoring relationship, the learning process will vary depending on the needs of the mentee and the skills of the mentor but the focus should be on a development path that moves the mentee 'forward' towards an outcome. The development of higher potential is harder to quantify, as often a person is not aware of how the mentoring process will affect them and how the journey towards their goals will catalyse their development beyond specific objectives. However, a good mentoring relationship, where a well trained mentor works effectively with a receptive mentee, is likely to create the conditions where the mentee can enhance their higher potential.

A Focus on Learning and development that is driven by the personal agenda / objectives of the mentee

The key to any mentoring relationship is that it must have a formal process of agreeing objectives where there is a particular focus on outcomes and success criteria, rather like the process one might use for putting together a Personal Development Plan. The mentor can assist in this process but must ensure that the mentee is the free decision maker.

What Mentoring Is – A Definitive Model of Mentoring Good Practice

The techniques and skills associated with effective mentoring are actually designed to develop the abilities of a mentee to:

- Understand how they think, how they see the world and how this impacts on how they behave.
- To think creatively and from multiple perspectives.
- To manage their own learning and to understand how they learn best.
- To be self-managing and self-reliant using techniques such as self-directed reflection and self-analysis to identify issues and understand themselves better.

- To understand how to manage change and to manage their own transitions.
- To analyse issues / problems and apply effective decision-making approaches to problem solving.
- To be confident in dealing with others in networking, interpersonal scenarios, managing people and situations, influencing, etc

These techniques and skills are the critical part of mentoring that can enable mentees to develop their higher potential.

Types of Mentoring Relationships

Each mentoring relationship is likely to be unique, driven by factors such as the mentee's objectives and drive to achieve them, the motivation and skill levels of the mentor, and the structure of the mentoring process or scheme. Broadly however, mentoring relationships fall into the following categories:

Personal-Development Mentoring

- The most popular form of mentoring where the mentee is twinned with an external mentor who will act as a role-model, providing knowledge and experience to enable the mentee to develop in line with personal goals.
- The mentor is usually an experienced individual, with influence and kudos, whose knowledge and skills can enhance the mentees development in line with their personal goals.
- The relationship can be either formal or informal but it often arises as part of a formal mentoring scheme.

Sponsorship Mentoring

- Often part of fast track and leadership schemes usually linked to succession planning.
- The mentoring process is usually governed by the sponsoring scheme, which places formal requirements on the mentoring process.
- The mentoring process is often supported by opportunities for the mentee to work on high profile projects or through job rotation into various positions designed to provide relevant developmental experience.
- The mentor is often at Director Level with the depth of experience to assist the mentee through what is a highly challenging programme of development.

Peer Mentoring

- This system is widely used to develop new recruits by 'buddying' them up with a colleague.
- The mentor is likely to work or have previous experience of working in the area into which the mentee has been recruited.
- The relationship is often set up formally, perhaps part of an induction scheme, but the mentoring contact is more often, informal – the mentor is 'there' for them when required.
- Mentors will typically provide information on organisational systems and procedures as well as moral support
- The formal relationship is normally for a few months but will often evolve into a longer-term relationship given working proximity and shared objectives.

Line-Manager Mentoring

- This type of mentoring has evolved from the traditional requirement of the manager to provide 'on-the-job training'; also confused with coaching.
- Works better when the line manager has less direct involvement in the mentee's work or does not complete their appraisal.
- When these conditions are not applied there can be difficulties in the relationship typified by conflicts of interest and confidentiality issues.

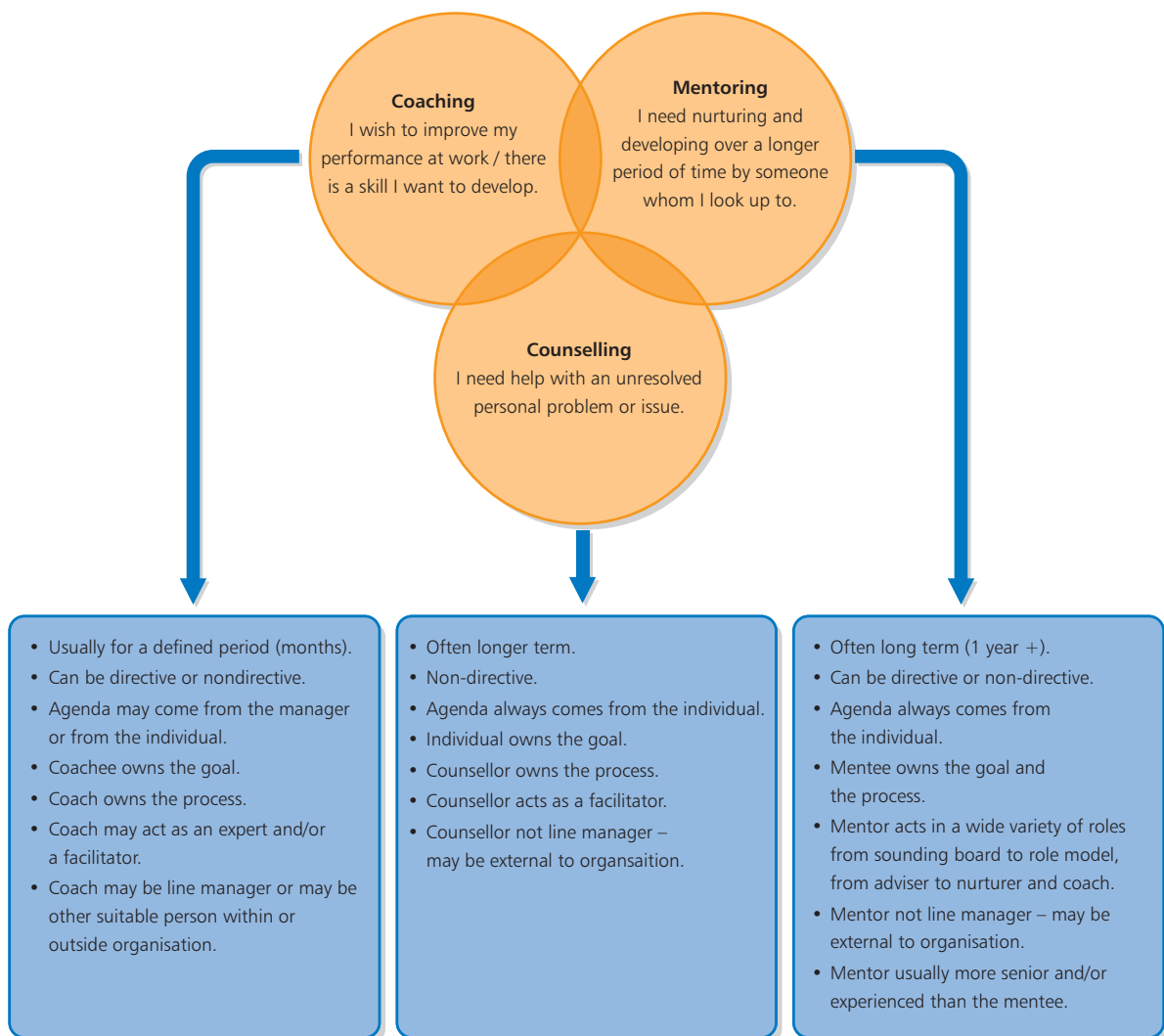
Upward Mentoring

- This is where the mentee is a specialist or has unique knowledge that is required by a senior manager.
- Another mechanism used as part of 'fast-track' schemes for management and leadership development.

The ideal mentoring relationship is one where an individual from outside of the line-management relationship takes on the responsibility for the mentoring process. This mentor works with the mentee, under a joint agreement of shared responsibility to achieve the goals of the mentee.

In reality it is the uniqueness of every mentoring relationship that ultimately shapes how that relationship is formed and evolves. The types of mentoring relationship outlined here represent common formations and many mentoring relationships will be hybrids of these and other variations not listed.

Mentoring Versus Counselling versus Coaching



It is important to recognise that many of the skills and techniques are common to both mentoring and coaching situations.

II The mentoring process

Phases in the mentoring relationship.

There are four key phases in the mentoring relationship.

Phase One : Beginning

Phase Two : Growth

Phase Three : Maturity

Phase Four : New Beginnings

Each of these phases have their own features, issues and milestones and the following pages describe each of the phases against these headings. These support sheets are designed for you to proactively utilise as you are moving through the mentoring relationship. They include guidance on how to get the most out of each stage.

Phase 1 – Beginning

Beginning		
Phase One	<p>Overview</p> <p>The beginning of a mentoring relationship, like any relationship, will be about getting to know each other and establishing rapport.</p> <p>The success of the relationship will be determined by how well you do this and it is worth investing the time and energy to ensure that the mentoring relationship you enter is the right one for you.</p>	<p>Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to mentoring • Establishment of relationship • Formation of trust • Development of rapport • Agreeing common purpose & direction • Sort out boundaries & expectations • Decision on both sides to move mentoring relationship forward
	<p>Issues</p> <p>There will be 'testing the water' and some relationships will not progress – this needs to be handled sensitively on both sides.</p> <p>It is important that mentors do not make their decision on whether or not to enter mentoring relationships based on their perception of the potential / lack of potential of the mentee.</p>	<p>Milestones</p> <p>Early contact to establish possibility of a mentoring relationship.</p> <p>The first meeting to establish the relationship and agree purpose, direction and boundaries.</p> <p>Decision to move the mentoring relationship forward.</p>



Phase 2 – Growth

Growth	
Phase Two	<p>Overview</p> <p>Having established your mentoring relationship, this phase is about developing that relationship to the point where you are working together to achieve the agreed aims and objectives.</p> <p>This is still a period of learning about each other but through the establishment of some rapport coupled with trust, it is often considered to be the most stimulating phase in the mentoring relationship.</p>
	<p>Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about each other. • Development of relationship. • Working together towards goals. • Skills & knowledge transfer. • Development, learning & growth. • Regular review, feedback, evaluation and modification.
	<p>Issues</p> <p>Mentees may over-rely on the knowledge, skills and attributes of the mentor and the mentor needs to recognise this and lead mentee away from over dependence.</p> <p>Mentors must guard against leading and directing the relationship – it must be about mentee 'pull' rather than mentor 'push'.</p> <p>As the relationship develops it is important to maintain boundaries, not crossing the line management chain, favouring mentees or crossing other political / cultural lines.</p>
	<p>Milestones</p> <p>The second meeting where the mentoring process is likely to seriously begin and the mentor and mentee will start to build their relationship.</p> <p>Analysis of the mentor / mentee to establish learning preferences preferred working characteristics and other information relevant to the mentoring relationship and purpose.</p> <p>Agreeing actions and putting in place a mentoring PDP.</p> <p>Ongoing meetings and additional contact as the mentoring relationship progresses.</p>



Phase 3 – Maturity

Maturity	
Phase Three	<p>Overview</p> <p>This phase is characterised by a shift in the mentee’s levels of self-knowledge, confidence and ability. A good mentoring relationship will develop a mentee in these areas resulting in a parallel shift in the nature of the relationship towards greater parity between mentor and mentee. As this occurs, there is a tendency for the relationship to undergo a natural transition towards the conclusion of the relationship, where the objectives have often been fulfilled and the mentee perhaps needs less of what the mentor offers.</p> <p>This is an important stage for managing the conclusion of the relationship in a way that leaves both parties positive and ready for the final phase of the mentoring relationship – new beginnings.</p>
	<p>Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentee develops self-confidence. • Higher level skills transfer. • Greater mentee self-reliance. • Mentee learns to learn and to be self determining. • Mentee becomes more independent. • Mentee achieves objectives. • Relationship matures and moves towards equality. • Relationship formally ends.
	<p>Issues</p> <p>Mentors can sometimes find the transition of the relationship difficult to deal with at the termination stage – this can be helped by exit policies and agreement on maximum duration.</p> <p>Mentee growth could cause a change in the dynamics between the two and both parties need to work to develop the relationship onwards to a natural conclusion.</p>
	<p>Milestones</p> <p>There are ongoing meetings working through objectives, sometimes agreeing new ones, but generally progressing against action plans and PDPs.</p> <p>The relationship begins to deepen and the relationship develops with a sense of achievement as the mentee grows and achieves new things.</p> <p>There is often a 2-way flow of learning as the growth of the mentee stimulates new awareness in the mentor.</p> <p>The growing independence of the mentee signals that the mentoring relationship can formally draw to a close and agreement needs to be reached on how to manage that.</p>



Phase 4 – New Beginnings

New Beginnings		
Phase Four	<p>Overview</p> <p>This phase represents the period of time following the official ending of the mentoring relationship. How this phase progresses will depend on how the relationship has matured and how mentor and mentees have managed that transition.</p> <p>Often a mentoring relationship continues on a more informal, ad hoc basis where the exchange of knowledge and learning becomes more two-way with both parties getting something from it.</p>	<p>Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship becomes more informal. • There may be ongoing contact from time to time without agendas. • The mutuality of the relationship may increase with reciprocal learning.
	<p>Issues</p> <p>Mentors and mentees must recognise early on that the relationship is likely if successful to lead to changes in the way they relate to each other – the shift towards mutuality and equality.</p> <p>Open acceptance of this can greatly aid the transition to a useful informal relationship after the formal mentoring is over.</p>	<p>Milestones</p> <p>The formal mentoring relationship is replaced by a more informal arrangement often agreed at the end of the Maturity phase.</p> <p>The ongoing relationship between the former mentor and mentee takes its natural course.</p>



III The responsibilities of each party

The Responsibilities of Mentors / Mentees

The given definition of mentoring is quite detailed and sets out the boundaries that will govern mentoring relationships in the NHS Finance Function.

The matrix below, and on the following spread, integrates the given definition criteria with an outline of the responsibilities that all relevant stakeholders have in making a mentoring relationship successful.

	Mentors	Mentees
Provision of assistance by one person to another	<p>Take the mentoring relationship seriously and commit the resources required for it to succeed.</p> <p>The assistance to be provided might encompass a whole range of roles including the provision of professional guidance, being a role model, providing intellectual knowledge, wisdom, advice, counsel, challenges, etc., opening up opportunities / networks and so on; the exact nature of this 'assistance' should be established early on through discussion around expectations and subsequent establishment of the mentoring relationship boundaries.</p> <p>The mentor needs to discuss and agree the level of commitment that is expected by the mentee and what they are prepared to offer. This needs to encompass how they will communicate, how often they will meet, what 'out of hours' commitment there might be, what scope for spontaneity there is, and so on.</p> <p>Mentors should make every effort to meet their commitments in terms of numbers of meetings, punctuality, availability, etc.</p>	<p>Take the mentoring relationship seriously and commit the resources required for it to succeed.</p> <p>To consider what their expectations of the mentoring relationship are and discuss this with the prospective mentor.</p> <p>The mentee needs to agree the level of commitment they will give to the mentoring process and put in the required effort. They also need to ensure that they respect the mentor's privacy / communication boundaries in terms of acceptable levels / methods of contact.</p> <p>Mentees should make every effort to meet their commitments in terms of numbers of meetings, punctuality, availability, etc</p>
A relationship that is ideally not within the immediate line management or working environment	<p>If based in the mentee's workplace, to ensure that the mentoring relationship remains separate from other work interactions that might interface with the mentee and mentee's work environment.</p> <p>Mentors should ensure that the mentoring relationship has mutuality and that the relationship steers clear of power conflicts, dependency, controlling or adversarial problems.</p>	<p>Not to use the mentoring relationship, beyond the boundaries of agreed trust, in attempts to gain advantage or leverage with colleagues and managers (this could cause detriment to the mentor).</p>

	Mentors	Mentees
A relationship of trust	<p>Agree boundaries in relation to trust by discussing issues such as disclosure, honesty, privacy, confidentiality and protection of reputation.</p> <p>Maintain trust by building a rapport where there is a sense of respect and a belief in the mentor and the process.</p> <p>Mentors need to ensure that they manage the mentoring relationship in an open and transparent way, to ensure that the mentee feels comfortable and can trust the process whilst other stakeholders and interested third parties understand and respect the boundaries that are in place.</p> <p>The mentor needs to ensure that they provide a safe, objective and non-judgmental learning environment for the mentee where the mentee can feel safe to open up and discuss issues.</p> <p>The mentor needs to take time to evaluate how the mentoring relationship is progressing and particularly check that the mentee is not becoming dependant on them. If tendencies towards this are noticed then the mentor needs to review their approaches so as to encourage greater self-reliance in the mentee.</p>	<p>Agree boundaries in relation to trust by discussing issues such as disclosure, honesty, privacy, confidentiality and protection of reputation.</p> <p>Maintain trust by adhering to agreements made and ensuring that the mentoring relationship is kept private and confidential.</p> <p>The mentee needs to understand and agree boundaries that enable the mentor to challenge, question and stimulate reaction in the mentee as part of the learning process.</p> <p>To be open with the mentor regarding progress of the relationship; providing the mentor with feedback will enable him or her to tailor their mentoring more effectively to the needs of the mentee.</p>
A relationship that is primarily about the learning and development of the mentee (although in good mentoring relationships the learning is often two-way)	<p>To ensure that the processes involved in the mentoring relationship are of benefit to the mentee and not driven by the mentor's agendas or needs.</p> <p>To create an environment both physical (surroundings, privacy, timings, etc.) and mental (comfortable, mutual, open, etc.) that encourages learning and development.</p> <p>To facilitate a learning environment where mentees can explore how they think, behave, interact; where they can express feelings and discuss issues openly; where they can consider issues from different perspectives; where they can develop the thinking and problem solving skills that will enable them to manage their own development; where they learn how to be independent learners.</p>	<p>Not expect your mentor to tell you what to do; the relationship should help you to diagnose the causes of your issues and guide you towards thinking of a solution yourself.</p> <p>Be open to the suggestions that the mentor will make to help you to learn.</p> <p>Provide the mentor with early feedback if any aspect of the relationship is impeding your learning and development.</p>

	Mentors	Mentees
A relationship where the assistance provided by the mentor does not only facilitate learning and development, but beyond that, aims to be a catalyst for enhancement of the mentee's higher potential	<p>To discuss with the mentee, their wider aspirations and try to gain insight into their 'higher needs'. This may be an accrued process over the period of the mentoring relationship.</p> <p>Apply techniques to the mentoring process that encourage the development of skills and abilities that allow the mentee to develop their potential.</p>	To consider wider aspirations and review these over the 'life' of the mentoring relationship – updating the mentor where relevant.
A focus on learning and development that is driven by the personal agenda / objectives of the mentee	<p>Accept that mentees should generate their own aims, objectives and outcomes; but support them in the process of that generation, in a non directive way so as to reach a mutual understanding of what the mentoring relationship requires.</p> <p>To ensure that such aims, etc., are primarily driven by the mentee's agenda and not a reflection of the mentor's agenda.</p> <p>To recognise that progress and attainment of the mentee's agenda may not be smooth and may include blockage, diversion or changes along the journey. The mentoring relationship is about the processes of learning and development that the mentee experiences whilst 'travelling' and the focus of the mentor should be on showing the mentee how to 'travel' most effectively.</p>	<p>To consider aims, objectives and outcomes, ensuring these are clearly communicated during early discussions with the mentor.</p> <p>To regularly review progress against aims and objectives and let the mentor know how you think things are progressing.</p> <p>Be prepared to consider new or alternative aims and objectives as the relationship progresses and you develop. This often occurs and it is important to re-negotiate with the mentor to ensure that the focus of your work is relevant and motivating.</p>

IV The benefits of effective mentoring

Benefits for the mentee

- Development of greater motivation, self-confidence, self-esteem and growth through increased self understanding and personal insights.
- Learning and development in line with specific aims, objectives and outcomes, scoped with the aid of the mentor and normally relevant to the job.
- Learning how to learn and developing the skills and techniques that facilitate self-managed learning.
- Advantage of a safe learning environment, with learning tailored to the needs of the mentee, using methods which provide optimal growth and development.
- A learning environment which allows the mentee to role play, to discuss issues without fear of criticism, to receive constructive feedback and to learn through the job with the ongoing experience of testing learning in a 'live' environment.
- Developing managerial competences (particularly strategic thinking, problem solving and influencing) and being able to draw on the mentor's experience of management scenarios, thereby enhancing career and wider potential.
- Potential to raise profile in organisation through greater depth of understanding about the organisation, its culture and its 'power-lines'.
- Potential for career advancement drawing on the mentor's position / knowledge / wisdom / networks etc.
- Access to advice and support and the benefit of a mentor's experience, wisdom and competences.
- Enrichment of work through an increased understanding of what is required to be effective, coupled with the enhanced ability to perform effectively.
- Where relevant, effective induction through mentor guidance on culture and insights to formal / informal organisational structures.
- Good mentoring will leave the mentees able to continue to grow and manage their own learning and development, resulting in continuous enhancement of performance.

Benefits for the mentor

- Increased recognition from managers, peers and staff along with acknowledgement of their (mentoring) competences.
- Increased self-esteem, job satisfaction and motivation from a more rewarding work environment.
- Personal satisfaction at having made a positive influence on a mentee's development, learning and growth.
- Opportunity to influence the next generation of managers and maintain their own currency in the organisation with the enhancement of their own skills through the mentoring relationship.
- Opportunities for personal advancement by helping to develop potential successors.
- Development of personal awareness, new perspectives, enhanced understanding of selves and the organisation as a result of the mentoring process – process provides thinking time whilst mentee provides challenges and a different view on the organisation and related issues.
- The process of working with another often refreshes the learning processes for the mentor but can also provide impetus to bring their own professional and technical knowledge up-to-date.
- The mentoring process often stimulates the desire of the mentor to learn. They seek to enhance and refresh their skills so as to be more effective as a mentor.
- Opportunity to improve networks and communication links into other parts of the organisation and with people at different levels – this can bring new perspectives and opportunities.
- Can demonstrate commitment to the organisation and result in a recognised contribution to organisational development and learning.
- Enhancement of interpersonal skills, such as rapport building, counselling, influencing, etc., through the implementation of the mentoring relationship in line with best practice.

Benefits for the Organisation

- Where good mentoring is prevalent in an organisation there tends to be higher motivation, increased receptiveness to change and a positive culture; all of this benefits personal and organisational performance.
- Training and development is taken seriously by managers and staff alike resulting in palpable benefits in terms of increased competence and performance.
- There is a cascade effect as the learning experienced by mentees effectively passed on through the organisation to peers and staff who in turn develop their potential more quickly.
- There is a real cost-benefit as the tailored / focused approach of mentoring often provides a higher level of learning for mentees compared with often expensive external courses.
- The transfer of skills and knowledge within an organisation can provide maintenance of critical information that prevents costly mistakes or duplication. Organisationally based wisdom and knowledge is irreplaceable and cannot be gained through courses.
- Mentoring relationships can be focused around the achievement of specific targets in line with organisational requirements / goals; this often results in high quality outputs of benefit to the organisation.
- Mentoring inspired networks can improve organisational communications, reduce 'silo' management and enable more 'joined-up' working.
- A reputation for mentoring significantly attracts graduates and high calibre staff who can see concrete career paths. Often the resultant mentoring processes can create 'high flyers' who settle into the ethos and culture of the organisation more quickly and then contribute effectively to its development.
- Mentoring can be useful for creating 'communities of good practice' and the maintenance of organisational values as they are passed on through the mentoring relationship.
- Mentoring can increase retention of mentees who can see clear career paths and this often can result in the creation of a pool of high quality 'talent' to feed organisational succession planning.

V The skills and characteristics of an effective mentor

What makes a good mentor

- A good mentor will have many competencies but at the heart of their skills will be flexibility. In context, this means the ability to integrate their skills across a number of core mentoring activities in order to meet the mentees needs.
- They will be able to draw on a mixture of coaching and counselling skills, augmented by rapport building and facilitation abilities.
- They will have the self-awareness and critical thinking skills that enable them to consider the mentoring relationship from both a strategic point of view and from a practical /operational perspective – preferably at the same time!
- A mentor that is 'connected' to the organisation or with wider networks can be very useful to a mentee if access to other parts of the organisation, to people and opportunities is integral to the mentee's objectives. Often, it is this accessibility that allows a mentor to assist a mentee to gain new perspectives and gain experiences that help them to learn and develop.
- Another useful quality in a mentor, is that they have kudos, position and power within the organisation and perhaps a sound track-record for developing people.
- They need to have a commitment to develop the mentee and to put the required energy and motivation into the relationship. They should also go into the relationship with their own learning expectations as this is often a by-product of the mentoring process.
- Finally, and significantly, these characteristics need to be balanced against your personal connection with each other. If the mentor and mentee respect and get on with each other as people, this will often significantly augment the relationship.
- Mentors should continually seek to develop and refresh their knowledge.

VI Are you ready for mentoring? - choosing a mentor

What to expect from the mentoring relationship

Mentoring is all about the development of the mentee and this can occur in a variety of ways. Mentoring is readily acknowledged as a powerful way of enhancing mentees' potential, developing skills, thinking ability, self-awareness and personal growth. It does rely on the relationship working and the more both parties put in, the more reward there tends to be.

The effectiveness of any mentoring relationship depends on the energy, motivation and commitment of both the mentor and the mentee. To this end, part of setting up the relationship should include a structured process for clearly setting out the expectations each party has and ensuring there is a sense of reality around those expectations.

Typical expectations might include:

- The opportunity to work with someone whose skills, knowledge and abilities can significantly advance learning and growth potential through their advice and experience.
- Opportunity to work with someone who can provide a trustworthy and neutral ear, bounce around ideas with, who can assist with issues/problems, can advise and guide, and help mentee navigate through various processes required to be effective within the organisation.
- A chance to develop the skills required to enhance career potential and achieve career breakthroughs.
- Benefiting from a connection with someone whose organisational position attracts respect and whose kudos and networks can lead to development opportunities for the mentee.
- The chance to develop a wider skills base and deeper perspectives of how the organisation works, how strategic decision makers think & deal with situations, and how leaders - lead.

Choosing a mentor

When choosing a mentor it is important to have spent some time thinking through the attributes you require that they bring to the relationship; this might include elements of their personality, skills, qualities and competencies.

Typical questions you should consider when making this decision are:

- How compatible are they with you in terms of personality and intellect, and do you actually like them?
- Can you place your trust in them and give them your respect?
- Do they have the required levels of knowledge to enable you to develop and learn?
- Do they have the skills, qualities, experience and competencies required to meet your mentoring goals?
- Do they have the influence, kudos, networks, organisational power to enhance your mentoring experience (where this is relevant to your mentoring goals)?
- Do they have people skills associated with mentoring, to build rapport with you (listening, empathy, questioning, strategic thinking, etc..) and manage the mentoring relationship effectively?
- Can they provide you with the intellectual stimulation required and where necessary to both challenge you and provide useful feedback in a constructive way?
- Are they interested in mentoring you and do they have a good track record as a mentor or in the development of others?

Be aware that it is not a forgone conclusion that a mentor will agree to work with you. They may well wish to see evidence of your skills and qualities along with having an understanding of your drive and determination to achieve the proposed mentoring goals. If there is a perception of incompatibility on either side, you should be open and honest about it, discuss the issues in question to seek clarity. If necessary, it is better to not start a relationship or finish it early rather than run into problems much later.

VII Potential problems you might experience with mentoring

Potential problems and issues to watch for

Mentoring relationships do sometimes run into difficulties and these are some of the more common issues that arise:

- Unequal expectations of the relationship leading to an imbalance between the mentoring offered and the mentoring required/demanded.
- Pressures on the relationship caused by its ineffectiveness through failure to meet expectations. This might include: loss of respect and confidentiality, lack of mentee development, insufficient ability of the mentor, issues around motivation, breach of confidentiality, becoming personally involved and so on.
- External interference in the relationship by others (often the mentee's line manager) or unnecessary interference by the mentor in the mentee's part of the organisation.
- Tensions and conflicts arising between the mentor and the mentee around status, rank and authority.
- Interference by the organisation into the goals and objectives of the mentoring relationship where long term development needs are sacrificed for short term organisational requirements.
- Common shifts in the relationship caused by changes in people, geography and environment. This could involve pressures/stress at work, a job move (location change), politics and working environment changes (e.g. new manager with less commitment).

It is very easy to come unstuck when in a mentoring relationship and here are some basic rules and reminders to help avoid pitfalls.

- Remember that all the rules, regulations and legislation that apply to the workplace in relation to equality, diversity, health & safety, etc., are all equally relevant to the mentoring relationship and take care to maintain standards.
- It is possible that a mentor and mentee might become involved beyond the mentoring relationship and in such cases, it is better for this to become open and for the formal mentoring relationship to be discontinued to avoid any perceptions of favouritism arising.

- Mentors should avoid making decisions about working with a mentee purely based on perceptions of that person's potential as opposed to their need for assistance. Similarly, mentees should not choose their mentor based on perceptions of that person's political power or organisational influence. A good relationship will be based on more solid factors as previously outlined and these should be the key criteria to be considered.
- It is important to consider the time issues involved in mentoring and ensure that both parties put aside time and plan for their mentoring commitments. Too many promising mentoring relationships fail because of an inability to meet often enough to keep the momentum going, and / or perceptions of a lack of commitment by one or both parties.
- The mentor must remember that the mentoring relationship is best served when it is a 'pull' model where the mentee takes responsibility for progressing under the relationship. The mentor should avoid 'push' characteristics where they become too involved in 'guiding' the mentee where they think it is best for the mentee to go. There is a subtle difference between letting a mentee find their own direction and telling the mentee what is best for them. Mentors should therefore avoid being too directive, opinionated, uninformed, dogmatic, negative, etc...
- There should be mutual recognition that some mentoring relationships don't work out for whatever reason and there should be an agreed no-fault opt out clause built into agreements so that there is not any bad feeling between the mentor and mentee, but equally, there is no external stigma.

VIII Useful references

Further Reading

Implementing Mentoring Schemes, A practical guide to successful programmes

Nadine Klasen with David Clutterbuck 2002
Butterworth-Heinemann: ISBN 0-7506-5430-9

An all round definitive guide to mentoring and mentoring schemes.

Coaching Mentoring and Assessing: A practical guide to developing competence

Eric Parsloe Kogan Page: ISBN 0-7494-0664-X

The manager as coach and mentor, standard practical text. This guide has been written for the manager, trainer or consultant.

Successful Mentoring in a Week

Stephen Carter and Gareth Lewis
Hodder Arnold HS: ISBN 0-340-61137-5

Mentoring the quick-way!

Nothing by Chance

Eleanor Macdonald
Nimrod Press: ISBN 1-85259-090-4

An autobiography of a lady who was ahead of her time in adopting developmental techniques such as networking and mentoring.

Mentoring: Practical Guide to the Skills of Mentoring

Reg Hamilton
Spiro Press: ISBN 1-85835-046-8

Handy little book to give an outline of the basics of mentoring.

Everyone Needs a Mentor, Fostering Talent At Work

David Clutterbuck 1993
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development:
ISBN 0-85292-461-5

A very practical book dealing with the history and background, benefits and practicalities of establishing a mentor system and the special issues of the male / female mentoring relationship. Useful case studies.

Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring

Margo Murray 1991 (with Mama A Owen)
Jossey Bass Wiley: ISBN 1-55542-333-7

Another practical book which outlines what mentoring is and is not, the benefits and difficulties, the application and development of a system, together with assessment of the effect of the gender issues.

Networking and Mentoring, a Woman's Guide

Dr Lily Segerman-Peck 1991
Piatkus: ISBN 0-7499-1030-5

For women specifically, to give help to those who wish to break through the Glass Ceiling and are willing to help themselves. Deals with issues such as female networks, women returners and also gives practical help on setting up systems. Substantial bibliography/useful references.

Mentoring, The Definitive Workbook

Ann Holloway, Cathy Whyte
Development Processes (UK): ISBN: 1-8609-3002-6
Tel: 0161 728 3700

Useful working document for anyone wishing to implement mentoring in their organisation.

Developing Yourself, Your Career and your Organisation

Burgoyne.J. 1999
London; Lemos and Crane

Learning Alliances

Clutterbuck. D 1998
London: IPD

The Mentoring Pocket Book

Geof Aldred, Bob Garvey & Richard Smith

Goleman D 1998

Working with Emotional Intelligence
London: Bloomsbury

Handy C

Inside Organisations: 21 Ideas for managers

Whitmore J. 1994

Coaching By Performance
London: Nicholas Brealey

IX Web links

Further information on the mentoring process including links to other websites, local support material, case studies and contacts with your SHA mentoring leads can be found on the FSD Network website - www.fsdnetwork.com



Also available to download from the FSD Network website are mentor and mentee journals, which can be used to aid your ongoing mentoring relationship.



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