



MANUKAU INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Mentor Training Resource



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This was developed by: Dr Philip Harris-Worthington

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Introduction

This document provides the framework for the training of mentors at MIT.

It offers a range of information, ideas and activities to assist mentors develop mentoring knowledge and skills.

It is offered as a resource from which others might develop, or begin to develop, training material relevant to their organisation.

Background

Purpose

These resources have been developed to support the training of mentors of academic staff at Manukau Institute of Technology.

The aim of any mentoring project is to create partnerships, outside the normal line-management relationship, where a mentor helps a mentee or client to enhance their performance, learning or development. These recourses reflect that attitude.

The type of mentoring envisaged in this context is non-directive in the sense that, while the mentor may occasionally offer experience and advice, their preference will generally be to let the mentee/client work out his/her own way forward.

Principles underpinning the mentoring scheme

Participation - both of mentees and mentors - is voluntary.

Mentees and mentors will be briefed on the purpose of the scheme, their respective roles and responsibilities, and any ground rules.

Mentors are expected to take part in two half day training sessions to develop basic mentoring skills and knowledge, and to engage in a process of ongoing reflection on their practice as a mentor.

Mentors and mentees may indicate what kind of mentor they would like, and this preference will be taken into account in pairing up mentors and mentees as far as possible.

Mentoring relationships will be set up for a fixed duration, generally six months, with an end point established at the outset. Some partnerships may continue to meet informally but this will not constitute part of the MIT Scheme.

A mentor will only have one or two mentees at any point in time.

Line management support of those being mentored should be regarded as vital and line managers need to understand the purpose of the MIT Scheme and appreciate their role relationship with those involved as mentors.

The Academic Development Centre facilitates the matching of mentors and mentees and keeps appropriate records.

Code of Ethics

A code of ethics for any mentoring scheme might consist of the following which is based on an adaptation of the *Code of Practice* published by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council:

Participation - of both mentees and mentors - is voluntary. Either party may break off the relationship if they feel it is not working. Both parties share responsibility for the smooth winding down and proper ending of their relationship.

Mentoring is a confidential activity in which both parties have a *duty of care* towards each other. The mentor will only disclose information when explicitly agreed with the mentee or when the mentor believes there is a serious danger to the mentee or others if the information is withheld.

The mentor's role is to respond in a non-judgmental and primarily non-directive manner to the mentee's performance and development needs. The aim is to help the mentee to articulate and achieve goals. The mentor will not impose his/her own agenda, nor will he/she intrude into areas that the mentee wishes to keep off-limits.

Both parties will respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring they do not impose beyond what is reasonable. Both parties will also respect the position of third parties.

The mentor will be aware of and operate within the limits of their experience and expertise.

The mentor and mentee will be honest with each other about how the mentoring relationship is working.

Defining the Mentor

The benefits of being a mentor

Whilst the primary purpose of a mentoring relationship is to help the mentee, nevertheless most people gain in various ways from the mentoring experience. For instance:

- there is real satisfaction in helping another person to learn and grow in confidence and self-esteem
- mentors play a part in building the future capability of MIT by developing some of its talented individuals
- acting as a mentor offers a real time opportunity to practise and enhance coaching skills, such as the ability to listen and question, to support and challenge, and to be non-directive and non-judgmental
- listening with empathy to the mentee - seeing the world through his/her eyes - affords a fresh perspective on the world which may stimulate a range of insights into personal and work issues. (It is important to remember that the mentor is a learner too)

What makes a good mentor?

Apart from the obvious one of having the time available to meet on a regular basis, the following qualities are useful attributes in a mentor.

A mentor must be able to build the right kind of relationship and rapport with his/her mentee. He/she must have good listening skills and be able to both support and be able to challenge in appropriate ways. He/she must be able to work non-judgmentally and non-directively, giving the mentee the space to try things out in his/her own way and, if necessary, learn from his/her mistakes. The mentee needs to be able to share his/her own experiences in a way that leaves him/her free to take what he/she wants to use and leave what he/she does not.

- a mentor must totally respect confidentiality
- a mentor needs to be interested both in his/her own learning and development and in supporting the learning and development of others.
- a mentor should also have a positive, but realistic, view of the world.

Adapted from the Warwick Mentoring Scheme, University of Warwick

Beels and McMillan (1997) in *Mentoring in Organisations* argue that mentors will more effectively support the mentee in tertiary education contexts if they:

- possess good communication skills
- have a commitment to learning and development - and are willing to learn themselves
- are knowledgeable about issues relevant to the mentee's work
- are relatively experienced
- have respect and credibility within the organization
- are aware of the place of mentoring within the organization's overall staff development programme
- have influence and/or access to influence within the organization and can represent the mentee
- are committed to quality in his/her own work and clear about standards of performance
- are able to devote sufficient time and energy to the role
- are a voluntary participant in the scheme

Adapted from Beels, C., McMillan, J, *Mentoring in Organisations*, CCDU, 1997.

Defining Mentoring

Where mentoring is particularly useful

Mentoring can be a valuable experience at many points in a career, helping someone to:

- learn by reflecting on his/her experience
- develop his/her confidence and skills
- improve difficult relationships
- tackle performance challenges
- plan their career

Mentoring can be especially useful in the following situations:

- to help someone who has recently joined the organization from outside - or who has taken on a significantly different role - to find his/her feet
- to develop someone who is technically very capable but struggling to build productive working relationships or to influence effectively

- to develop young managers or programme leaders who are seen as having the potential to go far in an organization
- to help someone to break through real or perceived “glass ceilings”

Mentoring or Coaching?

Rightly or wrongly, mentoring and coaching are often used interchangeably in the real world so we will collapse the terms by referring to each as one and the same thing. In this way, we do not have to concern ourselves unduly with terminological debates. Thus, the words mentor and coach, mentee and “coachee” or client should be seen and used as rough equivalents.

Whilst it is a matter of balance, the main differences between mentoring and coaching tend to be that:

- mentoring can be more *directive*
- a mentor tends to be *more experienced* than his/her mentee
- *advice* and *guidance* is often given to support mentee development

So what is mentoring?

Mentoring has been used to describe a relationship in which a more experienced person provides counsel and advice to a less experienced person. It has its historical background in industry and much of this development was in the USA. Mentoring initially took root in the private sector but has now found its way into the public sector and voluntary services.

It is worth remembering that mentoring is part of our lives even if we have not called it that. We learn and take advice from parents, teachers, older friends, colleagues etc.

Participant activity: The aim of this activity is to assist mentors to develop an understanding of mentoring by reflecting on examples where they themselves have benefited from a mentoring relationship.

Give some thought to the following. Try and identify someone that you see as having been a mentor for you in some way at some stage of your life. This might have been in a work context, in your schooldays, a social or sporting context, in another activity or family situation.

Individually, select such a person and reflect on:

- the nature of the relationship you had with that individual
- how he/she helped you
- what he/she did for you to see them as a mentor
- what it was about him/her you appreciated
- what were the ways you benefited from that support

As a group, identify common points emerging from these experiences and list them down .

So what does this involve?

- relationship building and empathy
- use of experience and intuition
- facilitation skills
- a series of conversations
- active listening

- questioning
- playing back
- rapport and trust
- helping client to articulate and achieve goals

Some other words we might use to describe general tasks attached to the mentor role are likely to include the following to a greater or lesser degree:

- negotiating and agreeing
- identifying needs
- observing
- recording
- giving and receiving feedback
- assessing
- advising
- informing
- reviewing
- problem-solving
- target-setting
- clarifying strategies and actions
- evaluating

Defining Coaching

Coaching occurs through a series of conversations in which one person uses their ability to listen, to ask questions and to play back what they have heard. This creates a relationship of rapport and trust that enables the other to clarify what matters to him/her and to work out what to do to achieve his/her aspirations.

(Thomson, forthcoming publication)

Participant Activity: Silent Coaching and the 'Grow' Model

The purpose of this activity is to introduce the value of self-reflection as a tool of mentoring and of question asking techniques in the mentoring process.

To do the exercise you need to have in mind an issue facing you that you would genuinely like to spend 20 minutes thinking about. The issue has to be a real one, not an imaginary situation. It may be work-related or it could be a personal issue that has nothing to do with work. It has to be current in the sense that you are not sure how to proceed - it is not an issue that you resolved last year or one that you might hypothetically face in the future. It also needs to be something that matters to you – it is bigger than what to have for dinner tonight, though smaller than the meaning of life. Finally, it needs to be an issue where you yourself are reasonably central to the action – it is not a problem that a friend of yours has.

I am going to ask around 20 questions to structure your thinking about the issue. (We will look at the structure behind the questions later.)

Begin by writing down in a sentence the issue that you want to think about.

Now, here are the 20 questions. Because I don't know what you are thinking about or how your thinking is progressing, some of my questions may not be relevant to you. If you hear a question

that doesn't seem appropriate, simply move on to the next question. I'll also ask you to draw a line across the page at four points - this is simply to explain the structure behind the questions later.

- What are you trying to achieve?
- Imagine that you have successfully addressed your issue. What does success look like?
- What does success feel like?
- What do you really, really want?

Draw a line across the page.

- What is going on that makes this an issue for you?
- Who is involved?
- What assumptions are you making?
- What - if anything - have you already done to address the situation?
- And what has been the effect of what you have done so far?

Draw a line across the page.

- What options do you have?
- What else might you do?
- If you had absolutely no constraints - of time or money or power or health - what would you do?
- If you had a really wise friend, what would they do in your shoes?

Draw a line across the page.

- Your answers to the last four questions - that is, between the last two lines - have generated a set of options. Some of these options may be quite practical, while others are completely impractical. Looking back at these options, rate them quickly on a scale of 1 to 10 on how practical they seem. Don't worry about scoring too accurately - we're only really interested in practical options which score 8, 9 or 10, say.
- From your list of options, which options will you actually pursue?
- For each chosen option, what specifically will you do?
- What help or support do you need?
- What deadlines will you set for yourself?
- What is the first step that you will take?

Draw a line across the page.

This is the end of the silent coaching questions. I'd like you to answer one more question, which is about the process you've just gone through rather than the content of what you've written.

- What was the effect of these questions?

Ideas arising from the Silent Coaching exercise

Most, though not all, participants on a coaching skills programme find the silent coaching exercise powerful. Incidentally, it is called silent coaching because, although the facilitator speaks, the participants are silent as they write down their answers. It is, thus, an exercise to demonstrate some aspects of coaching - it isn't coaching, as we shall see later.

The first idea that usually emerges from the exercise is that you can help someone without being an expert in their field. Indeed, the exercise demonstrates that you can help someone without even knowing what their issue is. The exercise is an antidote to the notion that to help someone you need to give them advice or tell them what to do.

So, the first message from the silent coaching exercise is that you can help someone without telling them what to do. How does this happen? We shall explore in some depth how this happens in a coaching relationship, but for the moment simply note that the exercise is built around asking open questions that encourage the client to think. We look later at the art of asking good questions - and one thing that we'll see is that the best questions arise out of what the client says. In the exercise, the coach doesn't have this information but nevertheless, asking open questions often helps the other to think purposefully about their issue. The second message from the exercise is the power of questioning.

Finally, the exercise introduces a framework to structure a coaching conversation called the GROW model. The questions above - separated by the lines drawn across the page - are structured around four areas:

Goal	What are you trying to achieve?
Reality	What is currently going on?
Options	What could you do?
Will	What will you do?

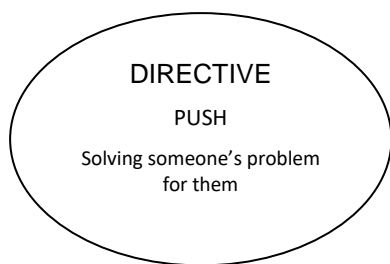
There is nothing magical about the precise questions set out in the silent coaching exercise - indeed other questions crafted in response to the client's answers will be more appropriate. And you will find that you will need to work flexibly with the steps in GROW. Sometimes the client's goal will be very clear, and you don't need to spend a lot of time in this stage. On other occasions, you will need to take considerable time to help the client clarify their goal. And again, you will sometimes find that exploration of reality or options leads to the insight that the goal as originally formulated isn't achievable and so you need to track back to help the client to revise their goal.

Learning a new skill, such as coaching, is like learning to drive a car. At first, you mechanically apply a set of instructions, such as the sequence *Mirror - Signal - Manoeuvre*. But with increasing practice comes increasing competence, confidence, and the ability to apply technique flexibly. So, as you experiment with the GROW model, you may wish to stick initially to the above questions and, as your familiarity and ability develops, begin to use the model more flexibly and to create your own open questions. Moreover, just as you wouldn't expect to be able to drive a car competently after just a couple of lessons, so too your ability to coach well will develop over time with increasing practice and experience.

A Range of Mentoring Approaches

The following information is useful in defining the practices of mentoring in relation to directive and non-directive practice. It is expected that the mentor-mentee relationship will be more directive in the early stages, and less directive as the mentee develops confidence and assertiveness.

We recommend an activity around the following diagram whereby trainees are asked to list the various terms from most to least directive.



Instructing

Giving advice

Offering guidance

Giving feedback

Making suggestions

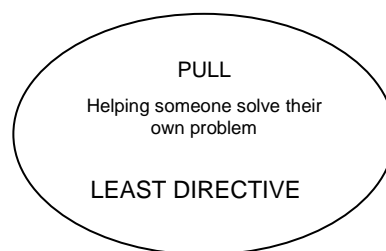
Summarising

Paraphrasing

Reflecting

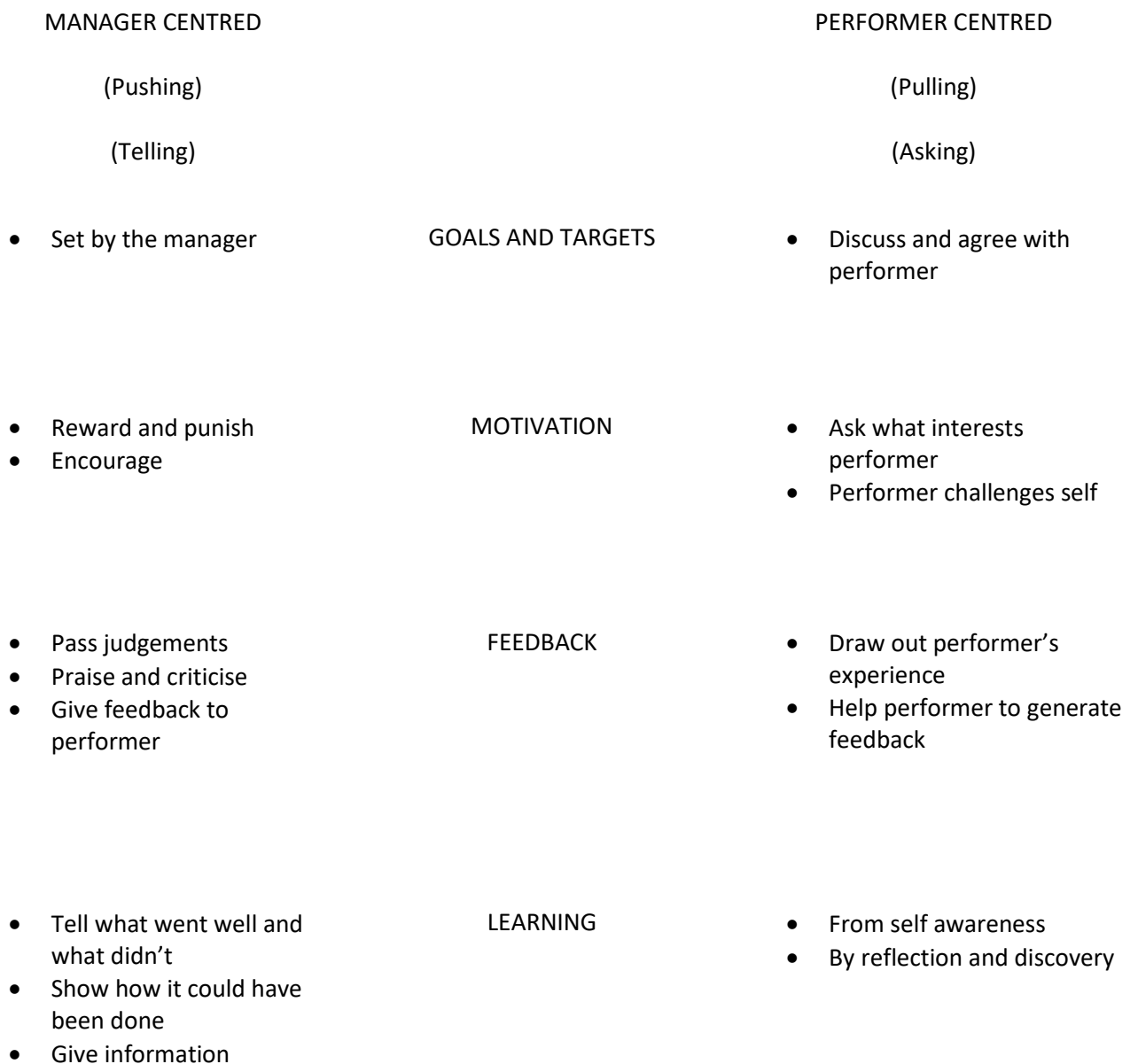
Asking questions that raise awareness

Listening to understand



The Coaching Dance

The following diagram is also useful in determining levels of direction when mentoring/coaching individuals. As stated above, the preferred mentoring approach is less directive, that is, performer centred.



After David Hemery

Listening and Questioning

Some Thoughts on Listening

Anyone who cannot listen long and patiently will presently be talking beside the point and be never really speaking to others. There is a kind of listening with half an ear that presumes already to know what the other person has to say. It is an impatient, inattentive listening, that despises the other and is only waiting for a chance to speak and thus get rid of the other person.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

Attentive listening is creating space - it is constructive. It is not sitting passively in front of a verbal water jet. It is actively applying often intense concentration to facilitate the person we are listening to, to help them move on in their journey.

Michael Mitton, *A Heart to Listen*

Why is being heard so healing? I don't know the full answer to that question, but I do know that it has something to do with the fact that listening creates relationship.

Meg Wheatley, *Turning to One Another*

During my conversations with the people most important to me, silence has become my favourite sound because that is when the work is being done. Of all the tools I use during conversations and all the principles I keep in mind, silence is the most powerful of all.

Susan Scott, *Fierce Conversations*

To relate effectively with a wife, a husband, children, friends, or working associates, we must learn to listen. And this requires emotional strength. Listening involves patience, openness, and the desire to understand - highly developed qualities of character. It's so much easier to operate from a low emotional level and to give high-level advice.

Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

Listening Skills

Two basic skills required to coach/mentor well are listening and questioning. Why is it important that you listen well? There are a number of reasons:

Firstly, we need to understand the mentee's position - how much he/she already knows, where he/she is struggling, what will interest him/her, what help he/she might need, how much time he/she has, and so on. We can make assumptions about all these things - or even ignore them - but that will not get us very far. So, listening checks these things out.

Secondly, if we are going to ask useful questions, we have to base them on what the mentee or client has said. In other words, we have to listen to question more effectively.

Thirdly, when we listen to another person we are showing them respect and respect helps us build a meaningful relationship.

Fourthly, if we listen effectively, we not only hear the words but also 'see' the emotion which lies behind them which is often conveyed non-verbally.

Fifthly, when we really listen, we are better able to summarize what we have been told. This might be a summary of parts of the conversation or of the whole conversation. This does two things - it serves as a check on understanding for both mentor and mentee and it highlights for the person being coached anything he/she may have missed themselves by hearing a summary. All this, though, stems from effective listening.

Lastly, a good listener is able to stay quiet during silence and to feel comfortable with the silence. Sensitivity is also required in choosing what to say or do in breaking a silence.

Active Listening

When someone communicates a message to another person, the message usually contains two elements: ***content and feeling***. Both elements are important because both give the message meaning.

It is easy to lose sight of the fact that ***communication is a two-way process*** - it involves both sending and receiving, talking and listening. Unfortunately many of us do not consider listening as a skill. We tend to equate hearing with listening, believing that because hearing is a natural function, listening must be effortless too. In fact, ***listening is an active skill*** which requires effort and practice.

Remember - without a listener, talking is not communication. Most of us want to talk and express our own ideas rather than listening to the ideas of others and many of us consider listening a passive rather than an active communication skill.

The following are skills which we can learn and practise to improve our ability to listen. An easy way to remember them is to remember the formula

B R I E F

Body posture	including movements and gestures which communicate attentiveness
Respect	for the other person's right to speak and be heard
Intimacy	involves creating a safe, caring environment in which ideas and feelings can be expressed freely
Eye contact	communicates interest and attention

Following is both verbal and non-verbal. It is an invitation to say more. Verbal following includes statements like: "I see" "Tell me more about that". Non-verbal following is communicated by nodding, smiling, and, sometimes, a touch.

The Active Listener:

- defers judgment
- actively takes responsibility for picking up both the content and the feeling of what the speaker is saying
- encourages the speaker to discover his/her own solution by helping to clarify the issues related to the problem (if there is one).

Paraphrasing

What it is Paraphrasing consists of restating in your own words what the other person's statements mean to you.

What it does Use of this technique provides the speaker with an indication of how you interpret what he/she is saying. Paraphrasing involves more than repetition. To be effective you should try to convey what you understand the message to mean.

Why it works This technique provides feedback to the speaker, allowing him/her to adjust presentation to clarify, expand, and/or further explore the ideas. Everyone perceives messages differently and this technique provides a way of checking for differences.

How to do it *Steps in Paraphrasing:*

- Focus your attention on the other person and really listen to what is said and how it is said
- Ask yourself what this means to you
- Restate the ideas expressed by the other person in your own words, using such phrases as "It seems to me that you are saying ..." (these phrases avoid any indication of approval or disapproval)
- Wait for and listen to the other person's response to your paraphrase
- Repeat the paraphrasing process until you both agree that you are saying the same thing

How to use it

This technique should be used when you want to clarify and understand better what is being communicated. It is especially useful when you wish to teach someone, when you give or receive directions, or when you are collecting information.

Questioning

When you ask someone a really good question it makes them think. He/she may think more deeply about something he/she just said, or it may force him/her to look at something from a different perspective or explore contradictions or be challenged on their commitment. In sum, a good coaching question will either raise a mentee's awareness or prompt him/her to look at his/her responsibility.

Questioning and listening go hand in hand. If you are communicating well, questions will emerge from what you are told by the mentee.

Generally speaking, open questions are more useful than closed ones. For instance, the open question '*What do you like about my proposal?*' will prompt a fuller response than a closed question – '*Do you like my proposal?*'

Open questions usually begin with: *What, Why, When, How, Where, Who.*

Closed questions, on the other hand, begin with a verb: '*Is the report at the printers?*' or '*Can you finish this by Friday?*'

Just think for a minute how someone might answer the following set of alternative questions:

Closed

Was it the signal which caused the accident?

Have you finished?

Do you like this?

Are you supportive?

Can you finish the report by Friday?

Open

What caused the accident?

How close are you to finishing?

What aspects do you like?

How supportive are you?

When can you finish the report?

The open questions will prompt fuller replies whereas all of the closed questions can be answered **Yes** or **No**. Occasionally, however, a closed question is highly appropriate - for instance, in pinning down a decision: '*So, will you speak to him today?*'

The right kind of question might be described as *crisp*. A crisp question helps us to focus on the most useful issue at that moment in time. This is, essentially, an art not a science. It cannot be proved, for instance, that another question or different phrasing of the same question would not have been even better. But you will "know" when you have asked a really useful question.

Adapted from Bob Thomson (2006) and used with permission

Questions Questions Questions

Try and conduct a mentoring session entirely by asking questions

Open questions

Can't be answered "Yes" or "No", obtain information, open up discussion

What would you like to discuss?
How did you feel about ...?
Tell me about ...

Probing questions

Follow up the topic in more details, check issues and assumptions

What do you mean when you say?
Tell me a bit more about ...
How do you know...?

Hypothetical questions

Open up new possibilities, reframe problems (note: avoid leading questions)

What if you were to ...?
What would be the consequences if ...?
How would you feel about ...?

Link questions

Connect ideas/events, prompt new understanding, explore cause and effect

You say you do ... and ... often happens. Is there a connection?
How will you ... if ...?
So, if you say you cannot do ... what will that mean for ...?

Closed questions

Useful in moderation, to establish facts and avoid misunderstanding

So this happened last week?
Are you saying you have tried this?
Will you have this done by ...?

Leading questions

Invite a particular answer by the way they are phrased

So, you think your problem is ...?
I expect you were just feeling a bit off, were you?
I guess at that point you ... did you?

Adapted from Wallace and Gravells (2005)

Participant Activity: Mentoring Practice in Trios

Mentoring Trios

The aim of this activity is to provide an opportunity for a participant to experience the role of mentor, mentee and observer of a mentoring session.

Step one: 30 minutes

Agree who will be mentor, mentee and observer first time round. The mentoring session will last for **20 minutes**. This will be followed by a **10 minute** feedback session.

The observer acts as a time keeper. *Please limit the mentoring session to 20 minutes* – the objective is to practise and learn about mentoring, not to complete the session.

Before the session starts the observer should ask the mentor about *what areas of their practice they want feedback on*. The mentor might also indicate if he/she would like a time signal from the observer - for instance, *5 minutes to go*.

The mentor then structures a 20 minute conversation with the mentee on a topic chosen by the mentee. The observer is silent during this (apart from possibly a time signal).

The observer then structures a *10 minute* feedback session, including feedback on the areas requested at the outset by the mentor. Note that this 10 minutes can be used to *give* feedback to the mentor, or to help mentors *generate* feedback for themselves. Note too that the mentee will have valuable information from their experience of being mentored.

In the feedback session, *avoid revisiting the content of the conversation but focus rather on the process* – what went well or not in terms of questioning, listening, use of the GROW model, not giving solutions, and so on.

Step two: 30 minutes

Swap roles so that *everyone* now takes on a different role. This will ensure that everyone will have the chance to be mentor, mentee and observer.

Repeat step one above.

Step three: 30 minutes

Swap roles.

Repeat step one.

Plenary: 15 minutes

Each trio produces two **DO's** and two **DON'Ts** for effective mentoring. *Discussion of DO's and DON'Ts*

Adapted from the work of Bob Thomson (forthcoming publication) and used with permission

Review and Reflection

Mentor Review Sheet

The purpose of this document is to help you to reflect on each mentoring session so that you can identify ways of continually improving as a mentor.

Name of Mentee : _____

Date and venue of session: _____

Agreed next steps:

Spend a few minutes capturing your thoughts in response to the following questions.

What did you do during the session that seemed to help?

What did you find difficult to handle?

What might you do differently next time?

Any other reflections?

Mentor Feedback Sheet

The purpose of this document is to help you to gather feedback - periodically - from a mentee in order to help you to improve as a mentor. Ask your mentee to spend a few minutes capturing his/her thoughts in response to the following questions. Then spend some time with the mentee clarifying your understanding of what is meant.

Resist the temptation to become defensive or to justify your actions. You do not need to agree with the mentee's views but it is important to understand them.

What does the mentor do that helps you?

What does the mentor do that does not help you?

What might the mentor do differently?

Any other reflections?

Action Planning and Moving Forward

Action Planning

1. What are the key insights you are taking from the workshop?
2. In what ways will you apply your mentoring skills?
3. When and how will you review your progress in using your mentoring skills?



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