

Australasian Nursing and Midwifery Clinical Trials Network

MENTORING OVERVIEW

WHAT MENTORING IS

Mentoring is enabling people to get the right goal and ambition for their values and talents through advice, support, encouragement and the sharing of expertise and experiences.

Mentoring is about more than giving advice, it's about motivating and empowering and helping the other person understand themselves and their aims.

The aim of mentoring is to help the mentee find ways of resolving their issues, or reaching their goals, while understanding and respecting that the mentee may do things differently to the mentor.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR AND MENTEE

Both parties have a responsibility to ensure that the mentoring relationship is of mutual benefit, and it is based on trust, confidentiality and equality.

Mentors have volunteered their time in addition to their daily job, so it's crucial the mentee maintains the momentum and utilises time effectively.

BENEFITS

Mentoring offers many benefits to both mentor and mentee:

Mentoring is a rewarding experience. Mentors often experience a sense of satisfaction in supporting other colleagues or giving back.

Mentoring not only benefits participants but can also foster a more inclusive workplace.

Mentoring exposes both mentor and mentee to fresh work perspectives, ideas and approaches.

Mentoring expands your support network outside your own team, department or institution which you can draw on in the future.

Mentoring develops knowledge, skills, confidence and a sense of value.

Mentees gain independent feedback, and have access to an informed second opinion on performance.

ANMCTN mentors are supporting the next generation of nursing and midwifery researchers.

WHAT MENTORING IS NOT

Mentoring is not coaching, counselling, therapy, mental health assistance, a tutor-student relationship or a support for academic studies.

Mentoring is not an offer of employment or work experience.

Mentors cannot have and are not expected to have, all the answers.

EFFECTIVE MENTORS WILL

Act as a confidential and non-judgmental sounding board.

Create a positive relationship based on open communication, trust and respect.

Be supportive, encouraging, empowering and motivating.

Recognise and celebrate achievements.

Be interested in the mentee and their objectives, encourage reflection as well as independent and creative thinking.

Create a supportive environment to build rapport and be willing to share knowledge and expertise.

Provide guidance based on experience in a sensitive and straightforward way.

EFFECTIVE MENTEES WILL

Be proactive and drive the relationship; schedule meetings, set the agenda and maintain a record of agreed tasks and goals. This also allows the mentee to steer the mentoring relationship in the direction that suits and works for them.

Be prepared to reflect and evaluate your own practice; what went well, what could have been done differently.

Share any concerns or expectations openly, be transparent and honest with their mentor.

Show commitment and flexibility.

Ask for help via email (if agreed by both parties), for advice for queries or ideas that arise in-between meetings.

Be receptive to step out of your comfort zone and consider new ways of doing things.

Keep their mentor informed of progress and any problems at each meeting.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is of utmost importance in mentoring relationships and is essential for building trust and rapport.

In order to build an effective and trusting mentoring relationship, agree together that you will not disclose to anyone else what is discussed in the mentoring conversations unless otherwise agreed.

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KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR MENTORING SESSIONS

WHAT TO AGREE IN YOUR FIRST MEETING

- Meetings should take place in a mutually agreeable time and location. Most meetings will take place on line via Zoom/Teams etc. You may also wish to meet in person if practical.
- In the first meeting it is expected that participants agree their mutual expectations for the relationship.
- Agree when, where and how often you will meet and for how long. Normally participants will meet on a monthly basis for an hour for a six month period.
- Discuss and agree whether the mentee can contact the mentor between meetings and, if so, what the circumstances for that might be e.g. to ask a particular question. It is a good idea to agree this initially and re-negotiate if it gets out of hand, which is unlikely if your other meetings are regular.
- Discuss the criteria of success for the mentoring relationship and how you will know whether the mentoring arrangement is working and what to do if one or more parties feels that it is not working.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING

- Why are you considering mentoring?
- What are your goals and priorities? If the mentee does not have a goal, their first goal might be to get a goal.
- What are your strengths?
- How do you learn best?
- What is the best way to give you feedback / What sort of feedback do you find helpful?
- What can you tell me about yourself to help me to get to know you better?
- Do you feel successful in your role at this time? If not, what is preventing you from succeeding?
- What satisfies you most at work?
- What has been the most significant learning experiences in your career?
- What do you like best about your job?
- What do you think most hinders your success?
- What scares you?
- What are you doing really well?

GROUND RULES

- It is important that at the start of a mentoring relationship that both parties appreciate each other's understanding of what they expect from the relationship and how they anticipate it will move forward.
- Discussions with your mentor should be career focused.
- Missed or cancelled meetings should be rearranged as soon as possible to avoid damaging the relationship.
- The mentor and mentee should be sensitive to issues of culture, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, race, age and all other aspects of diversity.
- Be prepared for meetings with questions, problems, or opportunities you want to discuss.

MAINTAINING GOOD PRACTICE

- Having an agreed framework scaffold for mentoring conversations can be useful.
- Mutual respect, trust and confidentiality is key.
- Communication is vital to cultivating a strong connection.
- Be appreciative and understand that one of the most important parts of being a mentor is giving the mentee honest and constructive feedback whilst also providing support and encouragement.

LISTENING SKILLS

Listening is a core skill for being an effective mentor and mentee. How well you listen has a major impact on the quality of your relationship. Practice active listening and pay careful attention.



AUSTRALASIAN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY CLINICAL TRIALS NETWORK MENTORING PROGRAM

Building research leaders: A program to build capacity in nursing and midwifery led research by mentoring to increase leadership skills to support the care and welfare economy and the nursing and midwifery workforce.