



Facilitating management
development for the health
services in Ireland

*Guidelines on Mentoring & Coaching
for Managers in the Health & Personal
Social Services*

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Section 1 Introduction

These guidelines are intended to provide you with an overview of what's involved in mentoring and coaching. In particular they explain the concepts of mentoring and coaching, the various benefits involved and who should mentor and coach. Also included is an overview of the role of a mentor and coach, the key skills for effective mentoring and coaching and a suggested process for your organisation. Potential problems that may emerge in a mentoring relationship are also covered in addition to some suggestions on how to improve your coaching skills. The key words that are referred to throughout are explained in the appendix.

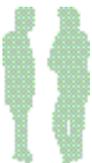
What is Mentoring?

Mentoring essentially is a career management tool used by organisations to nurture and develop their staff. Mentoring occurs when there is a relationship between two people in a work setting for the purpose of passing on knowledge and information, sharing wisdom and experience, and offering advice and help in a confidential manner. Mentoring therefore can be defined as:

“...off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work and or thinking”¹

The term 'off-line' in this context, means that the mentoring relationship is not between the manager and the immediate subordinate. Mentoring generally means to give advice and guidance to others by either helping newcomers settle in or in providing a role model for existing staff. For example, a mentor can highlight organisational cultural issues and invisible roadblocks which an organisation chart cannot do. Mentors focus on the development of the learner, giving time and attention beyond the extent of the manager. Development usually takes place 'as required', at a pace which suits the individual.

Interestingly the word 'mentor' has its origins in Greek mythology, when Odysseus before setting out on a journey to Troy, entrusted the education of his son Telemachus to his old friend Mentor, and exhorted him to 'tell all you know'.



What is Coaching?

Coaching is an informal but personal on-the-job training technique aimed at developing a persons' skills, knowledge and work performance. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines coaching as:

“to tutor, to train, to give hints, to prime with facts”

Coaching usually takes place between a line manager and his or her staff - it is a key element of any manager's role and can prove to be a highly effective method of staff development. Another description therefore of coaching is one of:

“... helping people to develop and perform to their full potential”⁹

While mentoring has its origins in ancient Greece, coaching has its origins in the world of modern sport. On the sporting field an instructor tries to get the best possible performance from an individual or team without necessarily taking part in the sport directly.

“Coaches in the sporting world have fine tuned their coaching skills to ensure their athletes win, set records, or at least achieve their best results. In the same way that athletic coaches help their teams or individuals to achieve excellent performances, workplace coaches need to help their teams and individual team members to reach their potential and deliver a personal best”¹⁴

Coaching is very much concerned with getting individuals to unleash their own potential, or put another way, in bringing out the best in people.

“...helping them to learn rather than teaching them...”²²

This highlights the subtle distinction of coaching - the focus of coaching is very much about facilitating or helping people to learn for themselves rather than simply teaching them what to do and then telling them to do it. Returning to the sporting analogy, the best sporting coaches are not necessarily the best athletes or players. Rather they have the ability to create the right environment for learning and development and then bring out the best in the individuals and teams they are coaching.



Coaching versus Mentoring

Coaching is sometimes confused with mentoring. However while they have some similarities they are also different from each other. Mentoring is usually conducted with someone other than the person's line manager and the focus is on providing advice and guidance on career and organisational issues. Coaching is generally conducted with the person's line manager and the focus is generally on day to day work activities and job performance improvement. Mentoring however can be highly effective in complementing both formal training and informal on-the-job learning and coaching.

“Coaching is the responsibility of a line manager who has an immediate and day to day accountability for the learner’s performance (while) a mentor is rarely a learner’s line manager...mentors have protégés rather than learners and will therefore aim to develop a special kind of relationship”¹⁶

The differences between coaching and mentoring have been summarised as follows⁶:

Coaching	Mentoring
Concerned with task	Concerned with implications beyond the task
Focuses on skills and performance	Focuses on capability and potential
Primarily a line manager role	Works best off-line
Agenda set by or with the coach	Agenda set by the mentee
Emphasises feedback to the learner	Emphasises feedback and reflection by the mentee
Typically addresses a short term need	Typically a longer-term relationship, often ‘for life’
Feedback and discussion primarily explicit	Feedback and discussion primarily about implicit, intuitive issues and behaviours

Who Needs Mentoring & Coaching?

Everyone can benefit from mentoring or coaching. However there are some situations where people can benefit in particular:

- where performance improvements are needed
- when someone starts a new job, task or procedure
- where someone is formally studying and learning
- where people aspire to develop and advance their careers



Section 2 Mentoring Guidelines

Why Mentor?

Let's look firstly at mentoring. Mentoring potentially has numerous benefits for all concerned.

Mentee

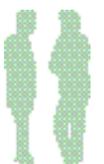
- a smoother adjustment to a new role or position
- help in acquiring more quickly and comprehensively the skills and knowledge that they need
- help with the necessary choices in the development of their careers
- access to someone more senior than themselves, other than their line manager
- a greater understanding of both the formal and informal workings of the organisation

Mentor

- increased motivation and self-esteem brought about by the mentoring role
- greater respect and recognition from staff in the organisation
- an opportunity to hone and improve their own management skills, particularly advisory and supporting skills in a safe environment
- an opportunity to learn about the perspectives and views of others less senior than themselves and in other parts of the organisation
- a chance to influence and improve communications with others in the organisation

Organisation

- an opportunity for staff to be encouraged, supported and motivated to reach their potential
- greater job satisfaction, morale and commitment by mentors and mentees to their work
- improved work performance of mentees
- the transfer of the organisational values to mentees
- leading to a more stable culture
- improved communications through linking different departments and levels within the organisation
- established routes for effective career development that can aid the recruitment of high calibre staff



Who Should Mentor?

A mentor is usually a more experienced and senior person than the mentee. They may be technical or professional experts or middle / senior managers and can come from either inside or outside the organisation. Typically they are not the mentee's line manager although this can sometimes be the case. If the manager is also the mentor, then the mentoring role should be very clearly defined in a mentoring contract as there can be a tendency for both to focus on operational day-to-day work issues.

Mentoring will suit those who are interested in the development of others and who enjoy sharing their knowledge and experiences with them. Not everyone however will necessarily be suited to mentoring. It is also important to consider the time commitment, emotional resources and sustained effort that will be involved in mentoring - a mentor can feasibly cope with a maximum of two mentees at any given time.

The Role of a Mentor

The mentors' role is usually to provide their mentee with one or more of the following ²:

- guidance on how to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to do a new job
- advice on dealing with any administrative, technical or 'people' problems
- information on 'the way things are done around here' - the culture and its manifestations in the shape of core values and organisational behaviour
- help in obtaining access to information and people within the organisation
- coaching in specific skills, especially managerial skills such as leadership, communications and time management
- help in completing projects - not by doing it for the mentee but by helping them to help themselves
- a parental figure with whom mentees can discuss their aspirations and concerns, and who will lend a sympathetic ear to their problems

There are a number of roles therefore that mentors may have to fulfil ²:

- **mentor as coach** - coaching can help in developing new skills in the mentee, can give constructive and considered feedback and can offer an insight into management practice. It works best when the mentor is supportive and offers friendly encouragement.
- **mentor as counsellor** - counselling can help mentees explore and resolve problems and difficulties they may be facing in a confidential setting. However, it is important to remember that you are not a trained counsellor and any issues that you cannot handle should be passed to an expert.
- **mentor as role model** - mentors by their behaviour can demonstrate the acceptable standards of conduct and impart 'the way things are done around here', particularly in the case of new recruits. They can also be seen as someone who has 'trodden the path' already.

It is important that the focus of the mentoring is on helping the mentee to learn. While direct advice and instruction from the mentor can be helpful, it is important to ensure that the mentees learn to think for themselves and not, either intentionally or unintentionally, create a dependence where they just blindly follow the mentor's instructions and cannot take action without advice from the mentor.



The Mentoring Process

While there are a number of ways of approaching mentoring, the actual process of mentoring will typically look like the following:

1. Identify an Appropriate Mentor

Selecting the right mentor is a critical task. Good mentors should have empathy, experience and commitment. Fundamentally they should be interested in other people, and particularly their development, as, in a sense, they can act as surrogate parents, combining both authority and friendship.

When choosing a mentor, qualities often looked for include:

- experience
- breadth of knowledge
- technical proficiency
- people who are
 - credible
 - supportive
 - empathetic
 - mature
 - interested in other's development
- respect for confidentiality
- status
 - well known
 - respected.

When choosing a mentor, questions that mentees often ask about mentors are:

- 'Do I want someone with similar or contrasting work experience to me or a mixture?'
- 'What type of background and experience do they possess?'
- 'Do I want a mentor with a similar, contrasting (to myself), or particular management style?'
- 'Do I want to work with someone of the same or a different gender?'
- 'Should they be based in the same building or site or could I travel easily to another location to meet them?'
- 'Do I want to work with someone with a wide knowledge of the health and personal social services or with a deeper understanding in a specialist area?'
- 'Will I have ready access to them or will they be too busy to meet me at short notice?'
- 'How well do they know my line manager?'



2. Approach the Mentor

If mentoring is taking place on a formal basis then it is likely that mentors and mentees will have been allocated to one another. If however, mentoring is taking place on an informal basis then the mentee will probably have to seek out and approach a suitable mentor (if this hasn't already happened naturally).

Mentees often talk to colleagues, their line manager or a member of the personnel department about suitable mentors and how to approach them. Often a line manager or member of the personnel department may make the initial approach on the mentee's behalf.

3. The First Meeting

3.1. Suggested Agenda for First Meeting

- Find out about each other in terms of general background, professional training, time in the organisation, career history, key skills and knowledge
 - profile of the mentor
 - profile of the mentee
- Set up a mentoring contract
 - identify and explore the expectations you both have
 - agree the overall objectives of the partnership
 - agree on what each other's roles are within the relationship
 - consider what will be covered and what will not
 - decide how you will give each other feedback
 - discuss any involvement of the mentee's line manager
 - decide who will be responsible for organising meetings
 - decide when and where you'll both meet
 - decide on how long you will generally meet for
 - discuss on-going informal contact with each other
 - agree on the structure for meetings
 - agree on the breadth of confidentiality
 - decide on the overall duration of the partnership
 - agree on an 'opt-out' clause after a certain timeframe (usually three months) if the partnership is not working out
- Set a date for the next meeting
 - agree an outline agenda
 - confirm any agreed actions



4. Follow-up Meetings

It is recommended that initial meetings should occur on a four - six weekly basis for the first six months to establish the mentoring partnership. Every effort should be made on both sides to keep to meetings and not to break appointments - if this does happen then aim to re-arrange the meeting within one week of the original date. The duration of meetings tends to be for 1-2 hours per month.

The overall duration of formal mentoring relationships tends to be from six months to two years - certainly it should be for no shorter than six months. In between meetings, mentors and mentees often contact each other to check on progress, ask questions etc. and this on-going informal contact should also be seen as very much a part of the mentoring process.

4.1. Suggested Agenda for Follow-up Meetings

- Decide and agree what you want to get out of the meeting
- Review progress since the last meeting
- Establish what has been learnt
- Focus on making progress on a specific issue
 - establish what the issue is
 - explore what is causing it
 - consider it and discuss possible ways forward
 - seek suggestions and, if needed, offer advice
 - agree a way forward
- Summarise conclusions and actions
- Agree on a time and place for the next meeting



Potential Problems with Mentoring

The task of building and maintaining a rewarding mentoring partnership is not an easy one. Consequently, not all mentoring relationships survive or reach the same standard of quality. Some of the reasons why mentor / mentee relationships do not work out and some suggestions as to how to overcome these are outlined below:

1. One or both members in the partnership finds it difficult to get along with the other

They may not like one another because they hold widely differing views, or simply there is a clash of personality. If this arises then it should be addressed as early as possible - both should review the relationship to date and discuss whether it is worth trying to resolve differences and start again, or indeed whether to call on the opt-out clause and agree to part. It may be worth involving another person such as a member of the personnel department in these discussions and decisions

2. Someone breaches a confidence

This can lead to a lack of trust on the part of the other and in turn an ineffective mentoring relationship results. If the spread and depth of confidentiality has not been previously negotiated, then this should be discussed immediately. If a confidentiality clause is already in place then both mentor and mentee need to sit down and discuss the reasons behind the breach of confidence and how to ensure it doesn't happen again - there may be a need to renegotiate the mentoring contract again.

3. Mentoring takes up more time and is more demanding than originally anticipated

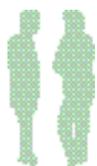
If the mentor or mentee cannot commit the necessary time and attention or is continually cancelling and re-scheduling meetings, particularly at short notice, then frustration is likely to develop. Furthermore this behaviour will send a negative signal about the importance of the relationship. If this is simply due to poor time and diary management then revisiting the time aspect of the mentoring contract and agreeing in advance to a programme of meeting dates over a considerable time frame e.g. six months, may work. However if the reason is a genuine lack of time then both parties need to consider whether it is worth seeking another mentor / mentee.

4. Neither party is really interested in maintaining the relationship

This occurs when the mentor and the mentee become complacent and eventually the partnership dissolves due to lack of interest. This can arise if the relationship has run its course in which case the mentoring has reached its natural conclusion. But if this isn't the case then both need to make more of an effort in terms of general input, setting objectives and goals, agreeing action plans and arranging a programme of meetings etc. in order to maintain a sense of overall purpose to the relationship.

5. The mentee has unrealistic expectations about what the mentor can offer

The mentee views the mentor as someone of considerable standing in the organisation, and as such, someone who should be able to 'pull strings' and really transform their career. When this doesn't materialise the mentee may be left feeling annoyed and disillusioned. Mentors should ensure therefore that the mentee has a realistic perspective of what the mentors' role is from the beginning and what they can and indeed cannot do for them. They should never engage in making unrealistic promises or commitments to the mentee that they cannot deliver upon.



Section 3 Coaching Guidelines

Why Coach?

Coaching too can have numerous benefits for those involved.

Learner

- the recognition of their importance to the line manager
- the development of their skills
- higher job satisfaction as they improve their performance
- greater interest in, and sense of responsibility for their work
- a growing ability to take on a greater variety of tasks

Coach

- a more successful and productive department / team
- greater confidence when delegating tasks to your staff
- development of your own management skills
- a growing reputation as a 'developer of people'
- exposure to new ideas and perspectives from your staff

Organisation

- encourages people to value learning
- provides instant and ongoing feedback about performance
- improves manager and staff relationships and communications
- provides a cost effective means of staff development
- greater value for money from formal training



Who Should Coach?

Coaching is normally undertaken by the learner's immediate line manager. Anyone, however, can coach or find themselves in coaching situations such as experienced staff, recognised technical experts or simply those who enjoy teaching others. Like mentoring, coaching will suit those who are interested in the development of others and who enjoy sharing their knowledge and experiences.

The Role of a Coach

The role of a coach is primarily to ensure that the learner is achieving optimum on-the-job performance. This is done by providing regular hands-on leadership, clear guidance and direction as to what is expected from the learner, and on-going feedback about their performance. Ideally the coach should be doing this daily as part of the normal process of line management, all be it on an informal basis. The role of the coach in this context is ²:

- making subordinates aware of how they are managing by, for example, asking questions on how well they have thought through what they are doing
- controlled delegation
- using whatever situations arise as teaching opportunities
- setting individual projects and assignments
- spending time in looking at higher-level problems as well as discussing the immediate job

The role of a coach should be to move from a traditional 'command and control' management style to one that is more facilitative and participative, with the individual learner taking more responsibility for their own learning and development and having a say in that process.

In short, the role of a coach can be summarised under three key words as follows ³:

- motivation - stimulating the learner's enthusiasm for the learning activity
- opportunity - creating and supporting opportunities for learning
- support - building confidence and self-esteem and reinforcing successes



Approaches to Coaching

Coaching generally occurs unnoticed and undetected on a daily basis within many organisations. However, it is worth considering the various approaches to coaching and thinking about what may suit both you and your staff. Outlined below are some of the main approaches to coaching that line managers often employ ¹⁶:

Individual versus Group Coaching

Coaching is primarily a one-to-one activity and ‘workplace’ coaches generally coach on an individual basis. However coaching can also take place with groups or teams, particularly as some people may find working on a one-to-one basis uncomfortable and are more comfortable with groups or teams. However, in order to be an effective coach you first need to be comfortable working on a one-to-one basis. Like all skills, it takes practice to increase your competence and feel comfortable with the coaching process.

‘Hands-on’ Coaching

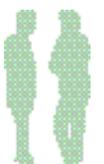
‘Hands-on’ coaching is used when training new or inexperienced staff. The coach will generally demonstrate and explain new tasks, activities and procedures and then observe staff putting them into practice. The tone and manner of the coach needs to be sympathetic, motivational and patient. The ‘hands-on’ coach will typically say:

- ‘I am going to tell you exactly what to do’
- ‘I will show you how to do it’
- ‘That was good (not so good or indifferent)’
- ‘Now try it again’

‘Hands-off’ Coaching

‘Hands-off’ coaching is used with experienced staff or when trying to develop superior performance in someone. This coach is relying almost entirely on questioning to enable learners to improve and to take responsibility for doing so. At the same time, the learner is developing the mental attitude necessary for success. The ‘hands-off’ coach will typically say:

- ‘Can you tell me what your performance objectives are?’
- ‘How can you improve?’
- ‘Can you show me?’
- ‘How does it feel?’
- ‘Can you imagine what success might be like?’
- ‘Can you describe it?’



'Qualifier' Coaching

'Qualifier' coaching may be used when helping learners who are studying or training for a professional qualification develop a specific piece of knowledge or expertise for that. The 'qualifier' coach will need to:

- explain clearly the standards and performance criteria required for the specific qualification desired
- enable the learner to collect appropriate evidence for assessment
- liaise effectively with other people supporting the learner's qualification
- provide the learner with technical input, support or expertise

The Coaching Process

A popular coaching model which traces a typical process is called 'POWER'¹⁷:

P - Purpose

O - Objectives and options

W - What is happening now

E - Empowerment

R - Review

1. Purpose

In a coaching relationship it is important to define the purpose of any coaching session for those involved. For example:

- 'How much time have we got?'
- 'What is the purpose of this session for you?'
- 'What are you looking for from me?'
- 'What can I not coach you on?'

It is important to spell out exactly what the learner sees as the purpose of each coaching session, rather than the coach prescribing it. If the learner encounters difficulties answering these questions, then the coach should first help the individual to clarify the learning purpose before embarking on any actual coaching. This helps create a sense of ownership in the learner in their own development.



2. Objectives & Options

It is vital for the learner to identify their own objective(s), option(s) and indeed goal(s). The coach must keep the learner on track and help them to measure progress, but the goals must be relevant and realistic and owned by the individual. Objectives should be SMART:

S - Specific

M - Measurable

A - Achievable

R - Relevant

T - Timebound

2.1. Specific

The objective should clearly state exactly what you should be able to do after completing the development activity.

2.2. Measurable

The objective should indicate the level of performance you are required to achieve.

2.3. Achievable

The target should be realistic and attainable.

2.4. Relevant

The target should be appropriate to your situation.

2.5. Timebound

The goal should include the timescale over which the change should occur. Depending on the content, the timescale could be weeks or months.

A trusting and honest relationship is fundamental between coach and learner if real progress is to be made towards the achievement of goals. The coach should ask many questions in order to help the learner to identify their objectives, such as:

- 'What is your ultimate goal?'
- 'How realistic is that objective?'
- 'What do you want to achieve in the short term / medium term / long term?'
- 'When do you need to achieve this goal by?'
- 'Is it realistic?'
- 'How will we measure your progress?'
- 'What will you feel like when you achieve your goal?'
- 'What would achieving this goal mean to you?'

In asking these questions the coach can effectively act as motivator in building enthusiasm for the personal benefits the learner will gain from the coaching.



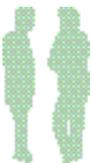
3. What is Happening Now?

Once the coach and learner have begun with an objective or goal in mind, they need to establish the current level of performance of the individual. The coach needs to ask powerful, non-judgemental questions which help to raise the awareness of the learner and increase their focus as to the actual gap which exists between reality and the desired level of performance.

The coach also needs to pay close attention to the answers, and to explore further with the individual if the responses are not specific enough. Reality check questions could include:

- ‘What is happening now?’
- ‘What has been done so far?’
- ‘Who is involved?’
- ‘What is your contribution?’
- ‘What are the current results?’
- ‘What stopped you from achieving more?’
- ‘What are the barriers in relation to your goal?’
- ‘What if anything, have you done to overcome these obstacles?’
- ‘What would you do differently now?’
- ‘What are the opportunities open to you in relation to your goal?’
- ‘On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your current level of performance?’

Open questions similar to those above aim to encourage the learner to dig deep within themselves and not rely on the coach to come up with all the answers. They can be supported or followed-up with questions to explore further.



4. Empowerment

Empowerment is a way of giving more responsibility to the learner. The line manager / coach must remain accountable for the overall results and the performance of their staff / learners. However, from the commencement of coaching it should be the learner who is primarily responsible for their own development. People who are empowered in a coaching situation can identify what objectives they need to meet and what options therefore they can take in order to close the gap between their current performance and their desired performance.

Empowering questions in a coaching context could include:

- ‘What are the different alternatives?’
- ‘What else could you do to improve your performance?’
- ‘What options do you have?’
- ‘What are the pros and cons of each option?’
- ‘Which would give the best result?’
- ‘Would you like a suggestion?’
- ‘What would you do differently if you could start all over again?’
- ‘How much trust do you have in your ability to do it?’
- ‘On a scale of one to ten, what is the likelihood of your succeeding with this idea?’
- ‘What are the advantages / disadvantages of this approach?’
- ‘What plan of action will you implement?’
- ‘How can (I) the coach help you?’

A coach will need good interpersonal skills in helping a learner through these empowering questions. It is advisable to start on a positive footing and to ask what has worked so far? Out of empowering should come an agreed plan of new tasks, actions and activities for the learner to carry out.

5. Review

The coach now needs to observe and review the learner’s performance and compare it against an agreed standard. Constructive feedback should be offered and the coach should ensure that such reviews are on-going. Typical questions to ask during a review include:

- ‘What were you trying to achieve?’
- ‘What worked well for you during the performance?’
- ‘What could have gone better?’
- ‘What would you do differently the next time?’
- ‘What are the next steps in your action plan?’

Finally the coaching style outlined above is designed to build self-confidence and in particular to encourage learner autonomy.



Improve your Coaching Skills

Finally there are various ways in which you can hone and improve your own performance as a coach:

- Consider attending a management development programme or a specific management training course
- Enter into a mentoring programme to raise issues with an experienced manager / coach outside your immediate work environment
- Always employ an open door policy with your staff
- Aim to get more involved in the daily activities of your staff
- Be on the look out for coaching opportunities
- Ask your staff for feedback on a regular basis
 - how are they are getting on?
 - what problems or issues do they have?
 - assess their individual workloads
 - keep an events diary
- Try to give your staff regular feedback on their performance
- Be open to trying different approaches to coaching with different staff
 - not everyone learns in the same way
- Talk to other line managers about their coaching experiences
- Ask your personnel / staff training officer for advice
- Do some further reading - see the further reading section at the end of these guidelines



Section 4 Skills for Effective Mentoring & Coaching

There are a range of basic skills that have been identified^{10 12 23} as fundamental to successful mentoring or coaching.

Questioning Skills

Mentors and coaches need to be able to use a variety of questions during meetings, for example:

- Open** - 'How's work going for you at the moment?'
'How are you getting on with the work I gave you yesterday?'
- Probing** - 'Give me an example of what you mean?'
'Give me an example of how you did that?'
- Gauging** - 'Do you agree with that?'
'How do you feel about that?'
- Cueing** - 'And then what happened?'
'What happened next?'
- Interjecting** - 'Before you go into that, can you explain how you resolved the problem?'

You should also try to direct your questions at future opportunities, for example:

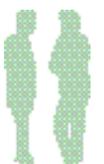
- 'How do you see yourself doing that?'
- or
- 'What will be the benefits of that course of action?'

By asking questions directed at future opportunities, the idea is that you are subtly pushing your mentee or learner forward. Avoid closed questions that lead to a 'yes / no' answer as they can appear very interrogative. Always try to use open questions starting with 'who', 'what', 'where', 'how', and 'when'.

Listening Skills

One of the most important skills in mentoring and coaching is the ability to listen intently. Mentors and coaches should open their senses to hear what is being said - and indeed not being said - by the mentee or learner. Never let unclear comments or unanswered questions pass and aim to repeat key points you have heard and link them to follow-up related questions, for example:

- 'You mentioned that your report was late - did you follow this up with your manager?'
- or
- 'You mentioned that you had some problems with doing the report - let's explore that'



Building Rapport

It is vital that both mentor / coach and mentee / learner build a strong rapport and have mutual trust, respect and a genuine interest in each other. This is particularly important in the early stages of a mentoring relationship and where both parties do not know each other. Building rapport can be achieved through talking and spending time finding out about one another. It also comes particularly from the mentor or coach in trying to show and develop empathy with their mentee or learner.

Being Non-Judgemental

An important skill in effective mentoring is the ability to put any judgmental tendencies to one side. You are there primarily to help and facilitate the other person to commit themselves to decisions and to make things happen. However these must suit them and their particular situation.

Being Candid & Challenging

Being candid is about speaking out frankly as a mentor from what should be a reasonably objective position. Your purpose is to draw attention, in a positive way, to certain issues for the benefit of the other person. For example, it could be that they are avoiding action in a particular area. It is important to strike the right balance between being candid and too direct. A candid mentor or coach therefore might say:

- 'Nothing seems to have happened here. Why are you avoiding it?'

or

- 'Why haven't you done that? What is getting in your way?'

Being challenging is a bit more than being candid. Essentially it is the phrasing of your questions in such a manner that the other person challenges themselves. It should be non-threatening and non-confrontational, yet more powerful than a destructive challenge which may leave them bruised and battered but no further on. Questions that work in this context include:

- 'How do you know that?'

or

- 'What evidence do you have for that?'



Ability to Work From Other's Agenda

It is important to be able to appreciate what the mentee or learner's agenda is, and where they are coming from without allowing your own personal agenda to cloud this. A simple technique to use is called 'suitcasing'. Imagine that all your ideas, thoughts and experiences are packed up in a large suitcase. When going into 'mentor mode' or 'coach mode' deliberately put it down to one side of you, firmly shut. Remember that you are giving your time and attention to the other person, not striving for their attention.

Giving Encouragement & Support

Making encouraging gestures and statements are all part of effective mentoring and coaching. Comments such as:

- 'Go on, you can do that'
- 'Yes, you would be very good at that'
- 'I think you should give that a try'
- 'Well done - I knew you could do it!'

can make a real difference. You will undoubtedly find on occasions that you can see quite clearly that someone is capable of more, yet they cannot always see it for themselves. Part of the mentor and coach's role is to encourage them to see and explore all the possibilities.

Focusing on the Consequences of Actions

It is important to be able to get your mentee or learner to consider the likely outcome of any agreed actions and behaviours. 'Future pacing' is a technique that can be used to reinforce commitment to a course of action. It can be done in two ways: by mentally rehearsing the likely outcome or by pacing into the future one step at a time. For example:

- 'If you did this, what would be happening ten days from now?'
- 'What would you be doing?'
- 'In a month's time what would be happening?'
- 'Describe events around you'

What is happening here is that you are not only rehearsing, but reinforcing the future course of action. By future pacing you are creating a clear focus on what the future would look like, and enabling the other person to start achieving and maximising their potential.



A Final Word on Mentoring & Coaching Skills

While everyone needs to develop their own personal style, the range of skills outlined above are fundamental to successful mentoring and coaching. Newcomers often comment on their discomfort with the process. Listening and asking questions during mentoring or coaching means that the other person does most of the talking and some people may initially feel uncomfortable, fearing that they have not given enough input.

Coaching

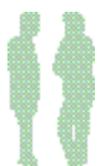
Coaching may not be your natural way of operating, particularly if you are used to telling people what to do. In order to get into 'coaching mode' you may find it useful to imagine yourself putting on a baseball hat with the word 'coach' embossed across it! It is important to be yourself when you have your coaching hat on. Coaching should be a non-threatening, non-invasive process, where it is not necessary to ask deep probing questions. It is a relatively straight forward process, namely, working from the learner's agenda.

Here are some tips on finding opportunities for coaching in the first place ⁹. Starting with you the coach:

- are there decisions you make very frequently that you could delegate?
- are there tasks which you have kept for yourself (because you particularly enjoy them maybe) which should be shared or delegated?
- are there tasks which you do not particularly enjoy or find challenging that you could delegate (to someone who may enjoy them or feel challenged by them)?
- are there tasks in which you are very practised and experienced which now need to be passed onto others to allow you to develop and get involved in new things?
- are there tasks in which you are not particularly competent which your staff could do better than you?

Mentoring⁶

Developmental mentoring involves:		
<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
Listening with empathy	Using coaching behaviours	Discipline
Sharing experience	Using counselling behaviours	Appraisal
Mutual learning	Challenging assumptions	Assessment for a third party
Professional friendship	Being a role model	Supervision
Developing insight through reflection	Opening doors	
Being a sounding-board		
Encouraging		



Personal Development Plans

A personal development plan (PDP) is a means primarily for someone to take responsibility for their own development by providing a medium in which to record their current situation, consider where they would like to be in the future, to assess strengths and weaknesses, and identify training and development needs. Areas typically covered include:

- where have I been?
- where am I now?
- what skills / knowledge / personal qualities do I need to do my job?
- what do I have? what do I need?
- where do I want to go in the future?
- how am I going to get there?
- what do I need to do to get there?

It is worth considering using a personal development plan as a useful framework to either mentoring or coaching. In particular mentoring can work particularly well when used in conjunction with a specific development programme which incorporates a PDP.

A personal development plan is a working document and a mentor or line manager can prove to be an invaluable support in helping the person work through their plan and to continually review it with them. Involving a mentor or line manager can also help the person focus on organisational and team / department goals in addition to their own personal and professional goals.

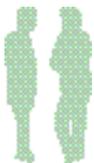
If you are considering or about to embark on mentoring or coaching then

Good Luck!



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Appendix 1

Key Words

Mentor

In spite of the variety of definitions that exist as to what a mentor is, there appears to be a common agreement that the modern mentoring concept has its origins in the practice of apprenticeship⁷. In times gone by the older and more experienced master craftsmen passed on their trades over a period of time to the younger apprentices. The term mentor can be defined as:

“...someone who acts as a guide, advisor and counsellor at various stages in someone’s career from induction, through formal development to a top management position”¹⁵

or put more simply

“A mentor can be described as someone who acts as a friend and trusted counsellor”¹⁶

Mentee

A mentee is someone who is allocated to a mentor and can be:

- a new joiner or recruit
- anyone undertaking technical / medical / professional training and qualifications
- someone who aspires to a supervisory role
- a supervisor moving into middle management
- anyone seeking to improve their on-the-job performance and / or
- anyone seeking to develop new knowledge and skills

Mentoring Contract

A mentoring contract can be described as an agreement between the mentor and the mentee on the objectives and goals of the relationship. This can take the form of a written statement or can be agreed verbally at the first meeting. A full list of what may be included in a mentoring contract is included on page 8.

Coach

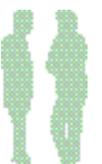
A coach can be defined as a line manager who endeavours to develop their staff (referred to as ‘learners’ in these guidelines) to achieve optimum job performance through informal, but planned, on-the-job training, which generally occurs through personal coaching sessions.

Learner

A learner can be defined as a more junior staff member of the line manager or coach.



Notes



Notes

