

# MENTOR'S GUIDE



*Updated July 2024*



## FOREWORD

Thank you for stepping up to contribute as a mentor.

Mentoring is an important developmental initiative which supports the overall personal and professional development of the officer being mentored. As a mentor, you play an important role to guide and support these officers in their careers, by drawing on your own experience, past lessons and understanding of the organisational context to support them in charting their personal and professional development.

A key success factor to a rewarding mentor-mentee relationship is the mentor's commitment to his/her mentees. To support your role as a mentor, PSD and CSC have developed this **mentor guidebook**, to provide you with tips on being a good mentor and guiding questions/discussion themes which you could use in your sessions with your mentees.

Through this mentor guide, we hope that you will be better equipped to support your mentees and at the same time gain the skills and know-how to guide your teams back at work.

Once again, thank you for contributing to the development of officers in the service. We hope that you will find this mentoring journey to be richly rewarding for both you and your mentee.

## 1a. Introduction – What is Mentoring?

*“A mentor is a more experienced individual willing to share knowledge with someone less experienced in a relationship of mutual trust.”*

*- David Clutterbuck*

Successful mentoring is built on the foundation of a trusting relationship between mentors and mentees to offer support, challenge, guidance, and empowerment to mentees as they pursue their personal and professional development. Mentoring offers a safe and nurturing environment for individuals to draw on the mentors' experience and knowledge as they reflect on their own developmental and career paths.

## 1b. Benefits of Mentoring

### **Benefits to the Mentee**

- Benefit from receiving encouragement and support;
- Gain increased self-esteem in the role;
- Gain increased confidence in interactions with stakeholders;
- Be empowered to challenge oneself to achieve new goals and explore alternatives;
- Receive advice on balancing work and other responsibilities and setting priorities;
- Acquire knowledge of workplace “do’s and don’ts”; and
- Seize opportunities to network and build connections.

### **Benefits to the Mentor**

- Develop and enhance mentoring capabilities, including skills in fostering good relationships, practicing deep listening and powerful questioning;
- Expand personal/professional network in other parts of the Service; and
- Discover fresh perspectives or skills from the mentee.

### **Benefits to the Service**

- Foster a developmental and people-oriented culture;
- Enhance personal and professional development of public officers;
- Strengthen employee engagement, encourages retention and reduces turnover;
- Encourage a collaborative mindset within and across agencies;
- Elevate knowledge retention, transfer and sharing by tapping on practical experience and wisdom of the experienced officers; and
- Foster alignment between officers' aspirations and Whole-of-Government imperatives

## 1c. Role of a Mentor

As a mentor, you may find yourself performing some of these functions<sup>1</sup> depending on your mentee's needs and what you are comfortable doing.

### 1. Develop and manage the mentoring relationship

A key aspect of this lies in fostering a collaborative relationship with your mentee, where both of you share the responsibility towards the success of the mentoring process.

A successful mentoring relationship is built on **strong rapport, mutual trust and respect**, as well as commitment to the partnership. A mentor must be mindful that individual preferences, aspirations, communication and management styles, and values would influence the fit and comfort level with the mentee. Invest time in getting acquainted with your mentee and be willing to stay open, non-judgmental and encouraging. You can also engage in some self-disclosure to connect with your mentee at a deeper level and to build mutual trust for more open, meaningful conversations.

As you are likely to be more senior and experienced than your mentee, be sensitive to prevent power distance and the perceived influence (intended and unintended) that you have on your mentee to prevent it from getting in the way of fostering an empowering relationship.

It is also important to manage the sensitivities around confidential issues to ensure that your mentee feels safe to discuss matters without being judged, appraised, or penalised for doing so. Unlike a supervisor, you should not be involved in evaluating or appraising the mentee's performance at work.

### 2. Model effective behaviours and mindset

As a mentor, you are looked upon as a role model for others in terms of how you behave and cope with situations as well as the mindset, attitude and philosophies that you embody at work and in life. Your mentees will notice how you are as a person or leader (e.g., your confidence, competence, professionalism, standards) and will be keen to learn from your experience and practice.

It is useful as a mentor to be aware of what you are comfortable modelling and what you are not, and to encourage your mentees to consider multiple role models to expand their learning.

### 3. Advocate development and connect others to resources and learning opportunities

As a mentor, you can be an advocate for your mentee's development and seek to connect them to resources and opportunities (e.g., stretch assignments, challenging projects, cross-functional committees) to build their capabilities in a more intentional manner. This may include discussing the various options available to them, how they can plan or seek out those opportunities, as well as linking them up to people or resources that you have access to.

Meanwhile, be mindful of how you may be advocating or seeking developmental support for yourself (including having access to your own mentors), as your mentees will likely be noticing how you lead by example.

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<sup>1</sup> Hart, E. W. (2009). Seven keys to successful mentoring. USA: Center for Creative Leadership.

#### 4. Provide guidance and counsel

Your mentees will likely seek your counsel on different matters, relating to or going beyond career and Public Service issues. As such, you need to be prepared and comfortable dealing with the different issues that may be raised, including challenges and concerns that may be personal to the mentees, as they grow to see you as a trusted confidant.

Nevertheless, mentors are not expected to have all the solutions to the mentees' challenges, but ought to be willing to discuss and help the mentees discover their own solutions. Through your sharing of relevant stories, experiences and lessons learnt, you would help your mentees better understand and appreciate the context, culture, and practices, as well as learn to navigate challenging situations more effectively.

As part of the conversation, you could:

- Challenge assumptions, biases, preferences and attitudes that may not serve the mentees well;
- Facilitate mentees' reflection and awareness of their current behaviours and impact in relation to the desired personal/professional development;
- Engage and inspire mentees to take ownership of their development (including the process of setting goals and taking action) and to pursue their goals and aspirations;
- Provide honest and constructive feedback to mentees; and
- Offer support and act as a sounding board.

#### 5. Motivate and inspire

It can be difficult to embark on change or undertake challenging tasks without the personal motivation and confidence needed to sustain the efforts. As a mentor, you can encourage and inspire your mentees to pursue their aspirations and achieve their potential, help them align their actions and goals with their values and passions, and acknowledge and affirm efforts in their quest for continuous growth and improvement.

**In summary**, an effective mentor is someone who:

- Seeks to understand the challenges and context of the mentee;
- Empowers mentees to drive the agenda for the mentoring sessions and responds effectively to help the mentee address his/her articulated needs;
- Offers a good balance of challenge, support and constructive feedback to the mentee;
- Inspires confidence in the mentees to overcome personal challenges and fears;
- Is willing to teach and guide the mentee, but also to learn from the mentee;
- Respects the mentees and their values, beliefs and personal styles, even if it may be different from their own;
- Is non-judgmental and interested in the views and well-being of the mentees;
- Makes the effort to foster collaborative, open and trusting relationships with the mentees;
- Encourages mentees to take ownership of their behaviours, decisions and goals;
- Motivates and inspires the mentee to be a better person and be better at what they do;
- Connects the mentee to resources and others to support personal and career development;
- Makes the effort to stay in touch and updated with the mentee's developmental progress;
- Commits to the mentoring relationship and stays accessible to the mentee; and
- Maintains confidentiality of discussions and information shared between mentor and mentee during and after the relationship.

## 2. Mentoring Process

### Mentoring Duration

The duration of a mentoring relationship can vary depending on several factors, including the specific goals, needs, and circumstances of the mentee. While there is no fixed timeline for mentoring, many mentoring relationships last several months to a year. This duration allows for a more comprehensive exploration of the mentee's goals, challenges, and progress.

### Frequency of Meetings

We encourage mentors and mentees to meet regularly to maintain a consistent and ongoing relationship. This could be done either through virtual (e.g., Zoom, Skype) or face-to-face meetups at a mutually agreed venue that is conducive for conversations (e.g., mentor's/ mentee's offices, public places).

### Mentor-Mentee Confidentiality

To provide a safe space for your mentee's growth, you are required to maintain confidentiality about all personal and professional issues discussed both during the relationship and once it has terminated. You are also required to seek mentee's permission if there is a need to reveal the mentoring relationship to others to facilitate further development.

### Initiating and Maintaining the Mentorship Relationship

While each mentoring relationship is different, most go through the following phases<sup>2</sup>:

1. **Building rapport:** getting to know each other and agreeing on the basis for working together
2. **Setting direction:** identifying the issues and priorities to be discussed and worked on
3. **Making progress:** facilitating mutual learning and development
4. **Winding down:** reviewing what has been achieved
5. **Moving on:** transiting to the next phase of the relationship

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<sup>2</sup> David Clutterbuck 5 stages of mentoring relationship

## 1. Building Rapport

**The first meeting provides the opportunity to establish rapport, and this is crucial to the success of the partnership.** Come prepared to talk about expectations and hopes for the relationship, but more particularly to share some personal interests and anecdotes to establish common ground.

Mentoring relationships flourish when both parties feel that they are getting something from the relationship. It also tends to work best at the start of a mentoring relationship if the mentee brings two or three significant topics to discuss.

Whilst the mentee will drive the relationship, there are a few issues requiring the agreement of both parties. It is worth sharing your expectations of mentoring to agree on some ground rules for the relationship, and to be prepared to re-assess and reinforce the rapport and relationship over time.

Preparatory questions for mentees	Preparatory questions for mentors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do I want to gain from the mentoring experience?</li><li>• How has my career/professional experience been like so far?</li><li>• What are my strengths that have contributed to my success so far?</li><li>• What are my major development needs and challenges?</li><li>• What are the most important things the mentor can help me with?</li><li>• What are my short and long-term goals (personal/professional/career)?</li><li>• What might the mentor expect to get from the relationship?</li><li>• What do I expect to contribute to the mentoring process?</li><li>• How can I help the mentor help me?</li><li>• How will I know if the mentoring is working / not working?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What can I offer to my mentee and what do I want from the experience?</li><li>• <i>(With reference to my past experience as a mentee)</i> What kind of mentoring experiences were most helpful for me?</li><li>• What career experiences have helped me most in my own professional development? What are the important lessons learnt from these experiences?</li><li>• How relevant will my experiences and professional learning be to the development of my mentee?</li><li>• How much responsibility should each of us bear in the mentoring relationship?</li><li>• How will I know when the mentoring is working / not working?</li></ul>

### Possible Discussion Themes

- Experiences, career, and leadership journey
- Career aspirations
- Learning and developmental opportunities
- Taking charge of personal and professional development / Strengths and weaknesses
- Supervisory skills and challenges

## 2. Setting Direction

**This phase focuses on reaching agreement on learning goals and defining the content and process of the relationship.** This phase will be revisited as the relationship develops, as trust is established and where the mentee feels free to set further goals.

Below is a general approach that may help establish the issues and the priorities. While it may sound rather formal, exploring some of the questions may allow the mentee to gain clarity on the developmental areas to focus on.

### **Clarify the mentee's needs**

- What is the mentee's current situation?
- What is their vision, their aim?
- What are the barriers or challenges that could get in the way?

### **Explore the situation**

- Where is the mentee now in relation to the situation?
- What does the mentee bring to the situation? (e.g., strengths and limitations)
- What are the supporting 'evidence' (e.g. views of others) that the mentee can offer?
- What is the context? What is happening around the mentee?
- What are the issues in the mentee's team?

### **Plan**

- What are some goals for the mentee's career, for his/her life?
- What are the milestones that are meaningful for mentee to ascertain his/her progress?
- What are some priorities that the mentee will work on over the next 3 to 6 months?

### **Check commitment and capability**

- What is needed to enable mentee to follow-through on action steps?
- Is the mentee prepared to act on the outcomes?
- How many meetings are we committed to for this relationship?

Remember, there is no one process for conducting a mentoring session. Each relationship and each session are likely to require a different process. You should discuss this regularly with your mentees as the relationship progresses, so that your meetings remain productive and appropriate.

## 3. Making Progress

**This is the most productive of the stages, a period of sustained activity in which the relationship is regularly reviewed and adapted.** The success of this phase depends on maintaining a climate of mutual trust and respect.

Facilitating learning and professional networking will be the focus of the sessions that are held on a regular basis and mentoring works best with preparation on both sides. Besides helping both parties to prepare for the mentoring sessions (beyond the first meeting), the following set of questions could also be useful in helping you to reflect on the mentoring relationship to date.

Preparatory questions for mentees	Preparatory questions for mentors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the issues?</li> <li>• How do I feel about them?</li> <li>• What do I want to tackle this time?</li> <li>• Why do I want to tackle this now?</li> <li>• What am I avoiding? What is important to me?</li> <li>• What examples would illustrate the issue?</li> <li>• What outcomes do I want?</li> <li>• What outcomes do I want to avoid?</li> <li>• What do I want to say?</li> <li>• Where would I benefit from a different perspective?</li> <li>• How specifically do I see the mentor helping?</li> <li>• How am I going to make best use of the time together?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of issues does the mentee want/need to address?</li> <li>• How ready is he/she to address them?</li> <li>• What issues remain from our last meeting?</li> <li>• What specific insights should I help the mentee acquire?</li> <li>• How directive should I be to meet my mentee's needs?</li> <li>• What models would be useful?</li> <li>• What contacts might be useful?</li> <li>• How have I helped so far?</li> <li>• How well have I handled the role so far?</li> <li>• How should I pace the meeting?</li> <li>• What else could I do to help?</li> </ul>

#### 4. Winding Down

Both mentor and mentee may recognise that they have largely achieved all the goals they set for the relationship. It is important to acknowledge this together and to discuss if there are further things you would both like to work on together. However, if both of you are clear that you have achieved all you need, it is time to start thinking about how you will wind the relationship down.

#### Consider the following pointers for reflection

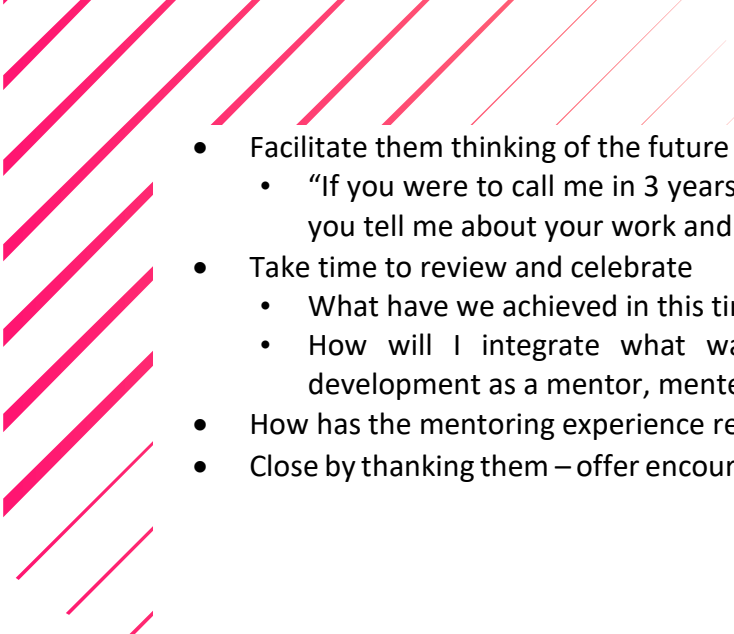
- Have we achieved all the goals that we set for our relationship?
- Does my mentee have any other objective that he/she would like to work on?
- Can my mentee now tackle most situations confidently without my help?
- Where will the mentee get support to help sustain the learning?

#### 5. Moving On

At the end of the mentorship, **both partners in the mentoring relationship should evaluate and reflect on their learning and to take this new learning forward.**

Consider the following pointers to reflect and review the learning together:

- Talk about your thoughts and feelings about closure, and encourage your mentee to do the same
- Talk about your mentee's journey:
  - Where were you when we started?
  - What are you seeing in the way ahead?
  - How are you feeling about the way ahead?

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- Facilitate them thinking of the future
    - “If you were to call me in 3 years to say, ‘the past 3 years have been great!’, what would you tell me about your work and personal life?”
  - Take time to review and celebrate
    - What have we achieved in this time? What can we be thankful for?
    - How will I integrate what was learnt from this relationship to my subsequent development as a mentor, mentee, leader, person?
  - How has the mentoring experience redefined our relationship (e.g., as colleagues, friends)?
  - Close by thanking them – offer encouragement and support for the way ahead (as appropriate)

### 3. LEARN Resources

Please note that the information provided here is a general guide on mentoring practices. While it can provide a foundation for establishing a mentoring relationship, it is important to recognise that each mentoring situation is unique, and additional resources can offer further insights and perspectives of mentoring.

Below are some additional learning resources<sup>3</sup> available on the LEARN website to help guide you in your journey as a mentor.

LEARN Courses				
No.	Name of Course	Course Provider	Duration	Outline
1	<a href="#">Mentor for impact - Start mentoring</a>	Udemy	1 h 13 mins	<b>Essential wisdom &amp; tools to succeed as a mentor:</b> Why the world needs mentors, What makes a great mentor, How to structure the meeting, GROW model, How to pass on experience as a mentor, How to get mentee to follow through, Next steps <b>Practical exercises for mentoring</b> <b>Bonus materials:</b> Mentoring with GROW model (structure & questions), Action plan, Powerful questions for mentoring conversations
2	<a href="#">Be a Great Mentor: A Practical Guide to Mentorship</a>	Udemy	1 h 5 min	<b>What is mentoring:</b> Mentor vs Coach vs Manager vs Supervisor; Value and Types of mentoring; Business impact of effective mentors, Role of mentor vs mentee <b>Before you start:</b> Saying "No" Graciously, (Exercise) Mentor Inventory, Hold a Discovery Meeting, When NOT to mentor, Confidentiality <b>Great beginnings - Get off on the right foot:</b> Mentor mindset, First meeting, Establishing mentorship goals <b>Mentor skills:</b> Asking powerful questions, Writing open-ended questions, Effective listening, Giving advice, Sharing your experience, Wrapping up each session <b>Mentoring challenges:</b> Spotting potential barriers for the mentee, Over or under-communication, Making referrals, Giving and receiving feedback, Mentoring in the age of #metoo, Moving on, Mentoring Challenges: Case Studies

<sup>3</sup> This list is not exhaustive and there are other resources and materials that may offer further guidance and insights.

3	<a href="#">Becoming an inspiring mentor</a>	LinkedIn Learning	47 min	<p><b>The business case for mentoring</b></p> <p><b>Two roles of a mentor:</b> Mentor as career advisor and cheerleader</p> <p><b>Becoming the mentor everyone wants:</b> The mentor who is always there, Helping mentee overcome self-doubt, Develop goals and milestones, Celebrate small wins, Developing a mentoring team</p> <p><b>Avoid being the frustrating mentor:</b> Active and passive mentoring missteps</p> <p><b>What is worrying your mentee:</b> Cognitive overload, Mentoring through differences, External environment</p> <p><b>Becoming a sponsor:</b> Nominate your mentee, sponsorship circle, amplify your mentee's work</p>
4	<a href="#">Being a good mentor</a>	LinkedIn Learning	1 hr 1 min	<p><b>Introduction:</b> What is a great mentor</p> <p><b>Getting to know your protégé:</b> Starting the relationship, Building chemistry, Developing rapport, Listening, Asking questions, Giving feedback, Developing trust</p> <p><b>Developing your protégé's skills:</b> Setting SMART goals, Developing protégé's task-related and interpersonal skills, Discernment and decision making, Developing grit and resilience in protégé</p> <p><b>Overcoming obstacles:</b> Navigating trouble spots in the relationship, Managing toxic protégé, deciding whether to break/make up, Breaking up gracefully</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> Making time for mentoring in busy life</p>
5	<a href="#">How to be a good mentee and mentor</a>	LinkedIn Learning	27 min	<p><b>The power of mentoring</b></p> <p><b>Why mentoring matters:</b> What it means, avoiding mentoring pitfalls</p> <p><b>How to seek out a mentor:</b> Who should be your mentor, How to ask someone to be your mentor, How to keep in touch with your mentor</p> <p><b>How to respond to a mentee:</b> Make yourself an available mentor, Establish mentorship goals, What to offer your mentee</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> Seasons of mentoring</p>

LEARN Articles			
No.	Name of Article	Course Provider	Year of Publication
1	<a href="#">How to tell a great story</a>	Harvard Business Publishing	2014
2	<a href="#">Why reverse mentoring works and how to do it right</a>	Harvard Business Publishing	2019
3	<a href="#">CEOs need mentors too</a>	Harvard Business Publishing	2015
4	<a href="#">How to mentor someone who doesn't know what their career goals should be</a>	Harvard Business Publishing	2018