

Undertaking 1-2-1 Mentoring

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a form of development, where a Mentor supports you (a mentee) to create learning, self-development and improved performance in a way that benefits you. One thing that all forms of mentoring have in common is that people are using it to help them move forward in a certain direction.

Mentoring is normally a conversation, or series of conversations, one person has with another. The mentor intends to produce a conversation that will benefit the other person, the mentee, in a way that relates to the mentee's learning and progress.

Why do people have mentoring?

People enlist the services of a Mentor because they want to improve their situations and achieve goals. They want to learn new ways of thinking and approaching situations, in order to get better results. Common goals might be being more effective and organised at work, gaining confidence in certain situations, or simply relating to other people more effectively.

A skilled Mentor uses a combination of observation, questioning, listening and feedback to create a conversation rich in insight and learning. At times they may share their experience in a way that supports your learning and growth. For the Mentee, they will experience a focus and attention that enable them to develop a greater awareness and appreciation of their own circumstances. In addition, they will also create new ways to resolve issues, produce better results and generally achieve goals more easily.

Common benefits people experience from coaching include:

- Improved performance in role
- Improved sense of direction and focus
- Increased knowledge of self / self-awareness
- Improved ability to relate to and influence others
- Increased motivation
- Improved performance effectiveness, e.g. focussed effort
- Increased resourcefulness / resilience, e.g. ability to handle change
- Increased confidence.

What mentoring is not

Mentoring is not any of the following:

- **Structured training, e.g. classroom learning**

Structured training relates to a fixed agenda of learning, and a prepared approach to making that learning happen. For example, if you were being trained in a classroom to use a computer, the trainer would use a structured approach to making sure you learn a certain amount of information, within a certain time frame.

Mentoring follows a more flexible format, according to the mentee's objectives. Both the mentee and the mentor influence the direction and content of sessions. Mentoring also places real responsibility for learning on the individual and encourages learning to continue after the session.

- **Therapy, psychoanalysis, psychotherapy**

Whilst Mentoring is not therapy, and should not be viewed as therapy, it does provide a viable alternative to people who may have previously considered some form of counselling to resolve a situation. For example, mentoring promotes a greater self-awareness, and full appreciation of our situations and circumstances. Sometimes, change can be promoted by a simple change in perspectives. Barriers of self-belief such as "I cannot" or "I do not" can be challenged in order to encourage fresh approaches and ideas.

- **A way of someone else solving your problems for you**

Mentoring is based in the principle that an individual is ultimately responsible for their work, lives and the results they are getting. If we acknowledge that we are responsible for something, it follows that we have power and influence over it. For example, if you are not getting the results at work that you want, a mentor may encourage you to:

- Understand the situation more clearly
- Develop new ideas or approaches for such situations
- Take constructive action that gets you the results you want.

What a Mentor will not do is instruct you to go and do something specific or go and do it for you. If they did, the mentor would be taking responsibility and so power away from you.

What you can expect from your me your mentor

The role of mentor provides a kind of support distinct from any other. I will focus solely on your situations with the kind of attention and commitment that you rarely experience elsewhere.

I will listen to you, with a genuine curiosity to understand who you are, what you think and generally how you experience the world. I will reflect back to you, with the kind of objective assessment that creates real clarity. I will offer models, techniques and frameworks to support your development. During conversations, I will encourage you to rise to challenges, overcome obstacles and get into action.

A mentoring relationship is like no other, simply because of its combination of objective detachment and commitment to the goals of the individual.

Because the relationship is based on trust and openness, the contents of our discussions will be confidential.

What I will expect from you

In return, I will encourage you to stay committed to the mentoring process. That means showing up for sessions, taking your own notes where appropriate, and keeping any agreements you make during sessions.

In addition, I encourage you to be open to the potential of mentoring. That means contributing to conversations honestly and openly. For example, if something is not working, I need to know. If you have concerns or problems, voice them. If you know why a problem is occurring, say so. The strength and power of mentoring relates strongly to the level of openness and trust between us.

Setting Goals for your 1-2-1 mentoring Programme

In preparation for your mentoring programme, please spend some time reflecting on the following questions. The intention here is to help you identify some key objectives that you would like to achieve from the mentoring programme with me.

- What are your current challenges?
- What work issues are currently on your mind?
- What is keeping you awake at night?
- What do you fear most? (How do those fears affect your behaviour?)
- What does success mean for you?
- In 6 months' time how would I like to be behaving differently at work?
- If this mentoring programme was successful, how would you know? What would others be saying?

When we meet for our first conversation, the initial focus will be to discuss:

- how we will work together effectively over the four sessions
- our expectations of each other
- your objectives
- set some goals that you want to achieve from the mentoring.