



# Preparing for Mentoring Sessions<sup>1</sup>

## Some key roles of the mentee include:

- developing the relationship with respect, openness and trust
- setting personal goals
- communicating directly and honestly
- having clear expectations of the mentoring relationship and process
- being willing to share interests, views and beliefs with the mentor and bring issues forward for discussion
- being prepared to have one's beliefs and values challenged and to challenge the mentor
- being ready to accept increasing responsibility for managing the mentoring relationship

## Establishing a mentoring agreement

If you decide to establish an ongoing mentoring relationship, it's important to think about how it will work. Like other interpersonal relationships, the success of a mentoring relationship is dependent on commitment from all parties involved. To ensure mentoring **is** beneficial for all parties, it is important to discuss ground rules and define a set of mutually agreed expectations that help to keep each other accountable. Partners in a mentoring relationship will need to collaboratively identify what is going to work for them.

## Mentorship- Initial objectives<sup>2</sup>

- Well defined goals and outcomes – What do each of you want from this mentoring relationship?
- Successful criteria and measurement – How will you know when this has been achieved? How will you know this mentoring relationship is successful?
- Delineation of mutual responsibility – What do each of you agree to do?
- Accountability assurances – How will you work together to hold each other accountable for what is planned?
- Confidentiality – What do you agree to in terms of protecting confidential information?
- Protocols for addressing stumbling blocks – What are processes for collaborative conversations or problem-solving strategies?
- Boundaries – When and how do you agree to communicate with one another? What topics are relevant? What is off-limits, in terms of your mentoring relationship?
- Partnership agreement – How do you document your decisions about these issues?

<sup>1</sup> Burke C. 6 Steps for a Successful Mentor Relationship [Internet]. GovLoop; 2015 [cited 28 August 2017]. Available from: <https://www.govloop.com/6-steps-successful-mentor-relationship/>

<sup>2</sup> UQ Leadership . Mentoring Reference Guide. The University of Queensland Australia; 2017.

## Commonly used mentoring ground rules<sup>2</sup>

- Mentoring is a confidential activity that is built on a foundation of honesty, fairness and mutual respect.
- The mentee accepts responsibility for managing the relationship; the mentor empowers the mentee to manage the relationship.
- The mentor and mentee are open and honest with each other about the development of the mentee, and the mentoring relationship itself
- The mentor and mentee are organised and each prepare adequately to support the achievement of mutually beneficial outcomes.
- The mentee is proactive in their development and does their best to honour commitments made in mentoring conversations.
- Both parties need to acknowledge the level of effort required when they commit to the mentoring relationship

## Goal setting

The mentee should set specific and appropriate goals for performance improvement, achievement and/or learning. The SMART objective tool can be useful to set these goals.

**Specific:** *What exactly will you accomplish?*

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**Measurable:** *How will you know when you have reached this goal?*

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**Achievable:** *Is achieving this goal realistic with effort and commitment? Have you got the resources to achieve this goal? If not, how will you get them?*

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**Relevant:** *Why is this goal significant to your life?*

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**Timely:** *What is the timeframe? When will you achieve this goal?*

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## Stages of the mentorship<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Getting Acquainted

Break the ice and get to know each other by exploring commonalities and experience. At the first meeting discuss the preferred communication style (email, phone calls, texting, or in person) and the best time of day to be contacted.

### 2. Set a Plan

Start by thinking about these questions:

- Where you want to be 3-5 years from now in your career?
- What do you want to be known for at your organization?
- What skills do you want to build?

These questions can help you determine topics to cover in the mentor meetings. Make sure to write the answers down and keep them handy each time you meet to make sure there documented progress.

### 3. Have Regular Meetings

It's important to meet regularly and prioritise time for the mentor relationship, try creating meeting invites for the duration. Be prepared and have an agenda to keep the conversation on track.

### 4. Have Frequent Contact

Forming a good relationship takes time. In addition to regular meetings, take the extra time to reach out to your mentor. Some quick, easy ways to do this are to ask questions or share an article or book you read.

### 5. Keep It Going

The end of your mentorship doesn't have to be like a break-up. Just because your formal mentorship is over, doesn't mean you should stop communicating with your mentor. First off, make sure to thank your mentor. Recap on what they've given you and feedback about the positive experience and review the goals you have achieved

### 6. Pay it Forward

As a mentee, you've gained a lot. Now it's time to pay it forward. The best ways to do this are to help the program grow by being an advocate. Talk about your experience and the ultimate give-back, when you're ready, is to be a mentor yourself.

## Reflective practice<sup>3,4</sup>

Nurses and Midwives are encouraged to be reflective practitioners. Reflective practice can contribute to facilitating significant change, can be used as a process of personal and professional development, and has the potential to directly improve patient care. Reflection, in a professional sense, should be purposeful, focused and questioning. Many Nurses and Midwives believe that they reflect regularly; however, for this to be purposeful they are required to ask what happened or what might happen, what they are doing or did, and how that relates to their objectives. In reality, nurses rarely scrutinise when situations have gone well, or investigate why or how something went well or went wrong. By adopting a structured and strategic approach, practitioners can link experience to intentions of what was, or is, being attempted.

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<sup>3</sup> Nicol, J, Dosser, I. Understanding reflective practice. Nursing Standard. 2016; 30, 36, 34-40.

<sup>4</sup> Gibbs, G. Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Oxford: Further Education Unit, Oxford Brookes University 1988.

## Gibbs Reflective Cycle<sup>4</sup>

### Description

- Describe in detail the event you are reflecting on.
- What happened; where were you; who else was there; why were you there; what were you doing; what were other people doing; what was your part in the event; what parts did other people play in the event; what was the result?

### Feelings

- What were you thinking and feeling?
- Try to recall and explore the things that were going on inside your head.
- How were you feeling when the event started; what were you thinking about at the time; how did the event make you feel; how did other people make you feel; how did you feel about the outcome of the event; what do you feel/think about the event now?

### Evaluation

- What was good and bad about the experience?
- Evaluate and make a judgment about what has happened.
- What was good about the experience/event; what was bad about the experience/event; what didn't go so well; what did you and other people do to contribute to the situation (positively or negatively)?

### Analysis

- What sense can you make of the situation?
- Break the event down into its components.
- Explore the various components.
- Look back and ask more questions about previous answers like: What went well; what did you do well; what did others do well; what went wrong; what didn't turn out the way it was supposed to; who and what contributed to how things turned out?

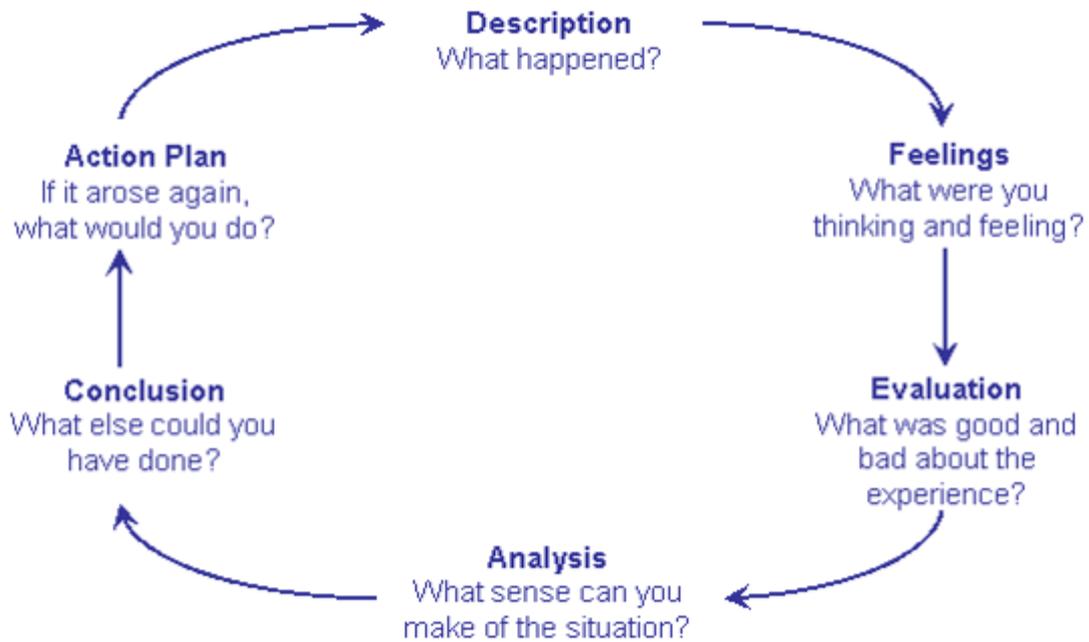
### Conclusion

- What else could you have done?
- Having worked through the different stages you now have more information to base your judgment on.
- What insights have you gained by working through the cycle; what have you learnt from the experience; what could you have done differently; what skills do you need to develop, so that you can handle this type of situation better; how could this have been a more positive experience for everyone involved?

### Action plan

- If it arose again, what would you do?
- Would you do things differently; would you do things the same way; what actions do you need to take

Diagram 1. Gibbs Reflective Cycle<sup>4</sup>



## Maintaining the relationship: Effective mentoring<sup>1,2</sup>

How do we ensure it is successful?

In order to be effective, your mentoring relationship needs to possess:

- **Collaboration** - both the mentor and mentee play a partnership role in the mentee's development.
- **Respect** - mutual appreciation is core as both parties are investing time and energy.
- **Responsiveness** - as in any respectful collaboration, the mentor and mentee need to be sensitive and responsive to the goals, needs and perspectives of the other person.
- **Confidentiality** - this supports the ability to be vulnerable, yet safe, in difficult conversations.
- **Joint Accountability** - When both parties keep agreements, this strengthens trust and helps keep the learning relationship focused and productive.
- **Focus** - the mentoring relationship needs to be clear in its purpose and goals. The mentoring agreement goals are the focus of learning and development.

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