



Mentoring that Impacts Lives
best practices in mentoring relationships



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What is Mentoring

What is Mentoring?

A mentor is a person who shares their knowledge, skills, and experiences to help another person grow. They enable the mentee to move towards their chosen goals with the benefit of their insight based on their experiences. Through this relationship there are conversations and interactions that produce insight and growth.

Mentors:

- Listen
- Are nonjudgmental
- Help mentees set goals and stay focused on the big picture
- Help mentees problem-solve and think about the choices they can make
- Maintain regular contact so mentees know there is someone they can rely on
- Offer prayer and emotional support

The terms mentor and coach are often used interchangeably. However, there are some important differences. A coach is a person who facilitates action-oriented change in a person's life that result in skill or situation improvement.

Coaching	Mentoring
• Supports achievement of specific goals	• Enables self-development of broad capabilities
• Action oriented	• Reflection oriented
• Concentrates on small action steps	• Focus on the big picture
• Results can be measured objectively	• Results are subjective, and more difficult to measure
• Uses Motivational Interviewing and relationship to achieve goals	• Uses healthy relationship to facilitate growth
• Behavioral outcomes, occurring within a determined time frame	• Insight, personal and professional growth, over an indefinite time frame
• BOTH: use one-on-one interaction to achieve growth, learning and positive outcomes	
• BOTH: Facilitate access to information and choices about new behaviors and opportunities	
• BOTH: support the achievement of positive outcomes	

“A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you.”

Table of Contents

What is Mentoring.....	1
Examples.....	2
Mentor Qualities.....	3
Core Components of Mentoring Programs.....	4
Mentoring Mindset.....	5
Mentoring Stages.....	7
Mentoring Dynamic Model.....	9
The Mentoring Conversation.....	10
Helpful Resources and Citations.....	13

Important Mentoring Characteristics

RELATIONSHIP OVER ACTIVITY:

How you do it is more important than what you do

QUALITY OF THE RELATIONSHIP:

Building trust, listening, following through on commitments, etc.

PERSEVERANCE:

Meeting regularly over a long period of time and overcoming barriers

ENCOURAGE THE MENTEE IN WHAT THEY DO:

Learn about and take interest in mentees interests and goals

STRUCTURE:

Caring by putting effort into planning activities and facilitating intentional conversations, checking in around goals

Mentoring and the Bible

The Bible does not use the term mentor; however, many including Moses, Elijah, and Deborah have the attributes of a mentor and leader. Freeks (2016) believes that God uses mentoring to help mentees in their personal and professional growth and development (Deut. 34:9, 2 Kings 2:19-21, Judg. 4:16).

- **Moses** mentored Joshua by supporting, encouraging, and teaching him to lead Israel to the Promised Land (Deut. 34:9).
- **Elijah** inspired and taught Elisha, who assumed Elijah's ministry (2 Kings 19:16).
- **Deborah** motivated and supported Barak to fight Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army (Judg. 4:7).

In addition to their duties as prophets, these three leaders were successful in mentoring at least one person who would execute the will of God. Litfin (1982) suggests that leaders and mentors must (1) know the group/individual needs; (2) understand what the group/individual can and cannot accomplish; (3) encourage and inspire the group/individual to implement tasks; and (4) help the group/individual move toward maturity in Christ.

Jesus modeled teaching and mentoring after he called the first disciples to follow him. He connected with them where they were and shared the greater possibility of transforming them into "fishers of men." The Scriptures detail how Jesus deeply invested in those He called. In the process of advancing the development of the team, Jesus daily practiced listening, teaching, encouraging and holding them accountable.



Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 19:16)

Examples of Mentoring Relationships

There are many different types of mentoring relationships that differ based on the location where mentoring occurs, the number of people, formality, the approach and special characteristics/experiences of the mentor and mentee.

Examples of different types of mentoring relationships include:

School-based Mentoring



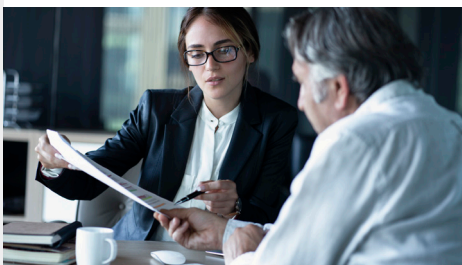
An adult mentors a youth in a school setting with the goal of fostering positive youth development or academic success.

Community-based Youth Mentoring



Adolescents are matched with mentors who spend time together after school.

Professional Mentoring



Mentors and mentees are matched for mentoring in a professional setting with the goals of career/professional development.

Reentry Mentoring



Returning citizens are matched with a mentor to offer support and help them navigate the reentry process..

Group Mentoring



A group receives mentoring from an individual to support their growth and develop new skills.

While there is diversity in various types of mentoring relationships, there are a number of characters that are shared. The following sections outline mentoring best-practices that should be expressed across all mentoring relationships.

Important Mentor Qualities

Research shows that certain qualities are key to fostering growth and change for both the mentee and mentor. The following mentor qualities have been linked to positive outcomes (Straus, Johnson, Marquez, & Feldman, 2013). These have been adapted for mentoring in faith-based settings.

Mentor Qualities

- 1. Maturity** Effective mentors need to be emotionally, relationally, mentally and spiritually mature.
- 2. Has integrity.** Mentors need to have integrity, character and values that align with God's Word.
- 3. Willing to guide mentees.** Effective mentors operate like shepherds, guiding mentees to positive actions, not simply telling them what to do.
- 4. Gives honest and candid feedback.** Effective mentors offer honest feedback in a caring and nonjudgement way.
- 5. Asks intentional questions.** Effective mentors ask open-ended questions that help mentees articulate their hope and dreams and make a plan for achieving them. They also ask questions that sparker greater self-awareness.
- 6. Shares their knowledge and experience.** Mentors share wisdom gained from their life experiences.
- 7. Withhold judgment; seek understanding.** Mentors ask questions to seek understanding and do not judge. They seek to see their mentee as God does.
- 8. Understands the power of relationships.** All healing happens in relationships and mentors understand the transformative power of healthy relationship.
- 9. Is passionate about making a difference.** Mentors care deeply for their mentees and are committed to working towards positive change in their lives.
- 10. Invests in the people around them.** Mentors invest their time, skills, knowledge, emotions and relational resources into the mentoring relationships.
- 11. Always takes responsibility for their actions.** Mentors are trustworthy, always follow through, take responsibility for their actions and acknowledge when they make a mistake.
- 12. An effective communicator.** Effective mentors have strong communication skills. They share feedback clearly, and are patient, active listeners who are willing to answer questions and help mentees find solutions on their own.

“Mentors should be spending 80% of their time listening, 10% of their time asking questions to probe deeper into important topics, and 10% of their time offering advice.”

Core Components of a Mentoring Program

Rehnborg, S., Bailey, W., Moore, M., Sinatra, C, (2009) offer a model highlighting core components of any mentoring program. These include:

- **Planning:** Establish basic organizational principles such as mission, vision, target population and values as well as mentor engagement policies and procedures.

Forms: Mission Statement
Mentoring Policy and Procedures

- **Recruiting:** Develop a strategy for sharing about mentoring opportunities, screening, and matching.

Forms: Mentor Job Description
Mentor Application
Background Check Form

- **Training:** Orient and equip mentors so they feel confident in their role.

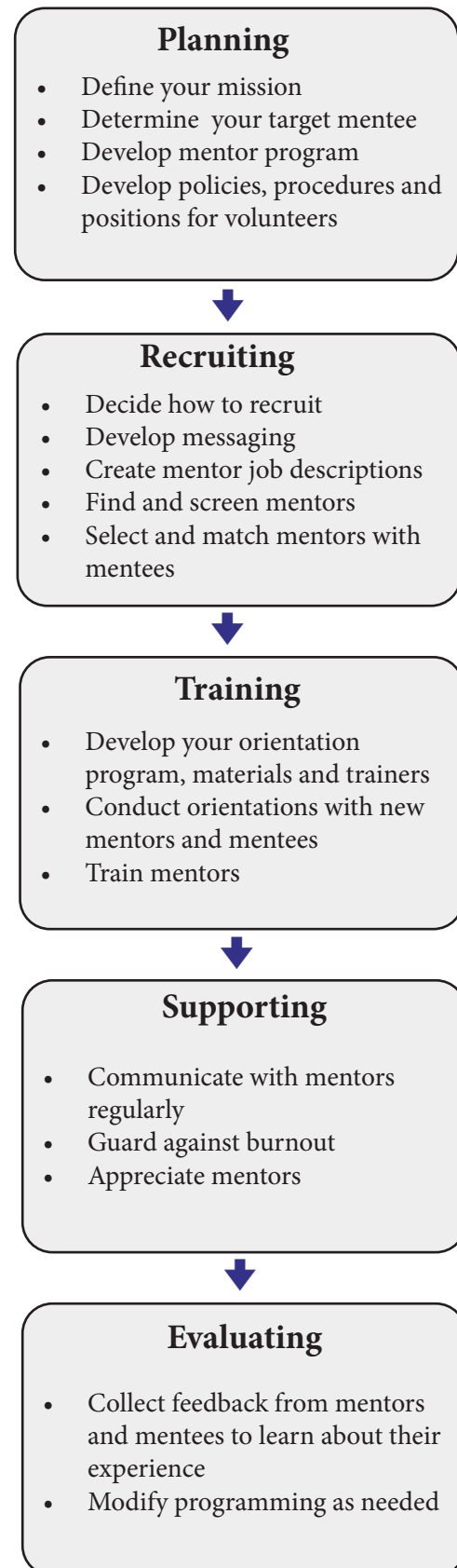
Forms: Orientation Materials
Training Materials

- **Supporting:** Offer support and oversight to mentors.

Forms: Appreciation Certificate

- **Evaluating:** Offer feedback and collect feedback to strengthen programming and the mentor and mentee experience.

Forms: Mentor Feedback Form
Mentee Feedback Form



Mentoring Mindset

According to Dr. Carla Herrera and Michael Garringer (2022), there are some critical attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that serve as the foundation of being an effective mentor. It may be helpful to think of these as contributing to a “mentoring mindset” or a way of thinking and interacting that places the mentee at the center of this work and allows mentors to be true partners in a mentee’s journey.

Take some time to reflect on the components of a mentoring mindset described below and do an honest assessment of whether and how these beliefs and principles show up in your work with mentees.

1. Be Intentional (“I see you”)

- **Always prioritize mentee’s needs** – Though you may get a lot out of the experience of being a mentor, the aim is to support the mentee by keeping their needs at the forefront of your mind.
- **Be curious!** Make an effort to get to know the mentee — their dreams, goals, skills, interests, personality and, importantly, their history and context.
- **Have a positive and respectful view of mentee** – Mentoring is not about “fixing,” “saving,” or “having all the answers”. Although there is space to bring your story, skills, resources, and expertise into the relationship in a way that can support the mentee on their journey, it’s important to provide this support without judgment.
- **Honor the mentee’s full self** – Recognize and appreciate the mentee’s culture, identity, life experiences, and trauma, as they all contribute to how they see the world and themselves. Don’t make the mentee have to fit your world view or disregard things that make them who they are.

There are critical attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that serve as the foundation for being an effective mentor



2. Be Supportive (“I got you”)

- **Commit fully to the relationship** – It is very important to commit and follow through on being there for the mentee, and not back out even when the role becomes challenging. Being consistent and curious, checking in and communicating regularly, and being fully present in your interactions is essential.
- **Be authentic and honest** – Act with integrity. There is no room for coercion or deceit in mentoring. Be yourself and share your story and life lessons. Just remember that anyone you mentor deserves your respect and your real self.
- **Do no harm** – Although mentors can do great good, those who are inconsistent or disappear when things get tough can also do great harm. It is important to create a safe and healthy space through boundary setting, appropriate disclosure, respecting privacy and confidentiality.

3. Take a Developmental Approach (“I’m here to help you grow”)

- **Consider a goal-orientation** – If the mentee has shared concrete goals and aspirations with you, place them at the center of your relationship and think about how you might leverage your skills, knowledge, or network to strategically support their steps.
- **Honor and strengthen the mentee’s web of support** – You are only one person contributing to a web of supportive relationships for the mentee. This web can include guardians, family, peers/near-peers, coaches, supervisors, teachers, and more. Take some time to get to know and work with the other caring members of this group.
- **Take a “Biblical justice” approach** – As a mentor you can be a major asset in helping the mentee move from surviving to thriving by helping them turn spaces shaped by oppression, bias, prejudice, and injustices into spaces rooted in liberation, empowerment, belonging, and equity.
- **Be willing to grow and learn** – All mentors grow as people through the experience, but only if they are willing to be open to new experiences and ideas. You may find you are gaining as much from being in the mentee’s community and circle of support as they are in yours.
- **Leverage community resources and role models** – Look for resources, role models, and opportunities in both of your communities to support your relationship and the goals of your mentee.
- **Care about all the mentee’s circumstances** – Whether you are mentoring for a season or a lifetime, a mentoring mindset can strengthen your interactions and relationships because it is oriented toward thinking about, and acting on, what is best for mentee. It involves not only caring about the mentee you meet, but also contributing to the policies, practices, and contexts that allow them to thrive wherever they live, work, and learn.

Four Stages in Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring relationships also have their own stages of development. The relationship between the mentor and mentee has different needs at each stage. Research published in 1985 conceptualized four sequential stages through which mentoring relationships evolve (Kram, 1985).

#1 Initiation

In this phase, mentors and mentees form expectations and get to know one another. This phase, particularly if your mentee has experienced disappointing relationships with others, can include trust building and “testing” in which mentees are trying to understand the mentors intentions (i.e. “Can I trust this person?”).

Mentor Considerations:

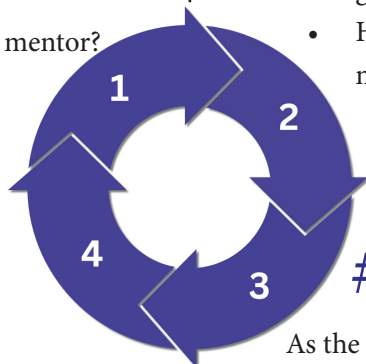
- Can I make time for mentoring?
- Is this person someone I want to mentor?
- How can I help build trust?

#2 Cultivation

The majority of the time in a mentoring relationship will occur in this stage. Much of the content provided in this booklet offers strategies and insights to strengthen and maintain the relationship over time.

Mentor Considerations

- How can I take the lead, set the tone and facilitate conversations well?
- What questions can I ask to explore values, goals, and strengths of the mentee?
- How can I manage time effectively during meetings?



#4 Redefinition

Eventually mentors and mentees transition into a different form of relationship characterized by more peer-like interactions or terminate the relationship. It is important to intentionally end the relationship, reflect on the impact, and celebrate growth.

Mentor Considerations

- How can I celebrate successes with the mentee?
- How can I facilitate dialogue that reviews the mentoring process?
- How can I give and receive feedback to/from the program and/or mentee?

#3 Separation

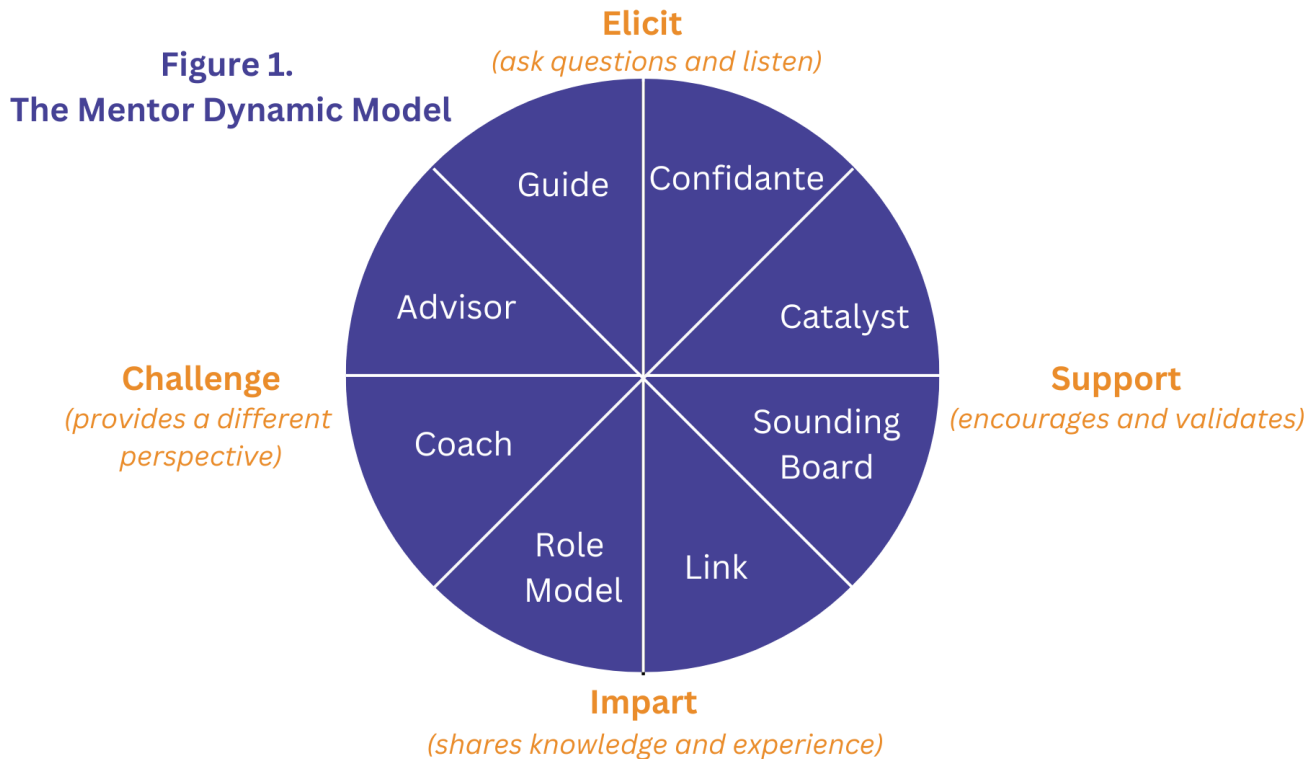
As the mentoring process progresses, mentees often seek autonomy and more independence from mentors. During this phase they may make decisions more independently and enjoy the gains they have made as a result of the relationship.

Mentor Considerations

- Where have I seen growth in the mentee?
- Do I see the dynamics of the relationship shifting?
- How can I support autonomy in the mentee and celebrate growth?

The Mentoring Dynamic Model

Mentoring relationships are complex, flexible and dynamic. The purpose is to both support and challenge, and the process involves eliciting and imparting. The Mentoring Dynamic Model describes both the purpose, processes and various roles of the mentor in the life of the mentee



Roles of a Mentor

Confidante: Be trusted enough to share hopes, aspirations and struggles with

Catalyst: Sparks and encourages change, build motivation and enthusiasm

Sounding Board: Be someone to “bounce ideas” off of, use active listening skills

Link: Help connect the mentee to resources and people

Role Model: Be an example with your lifestyle, words and actions

Coach: Set goals and guide a change process

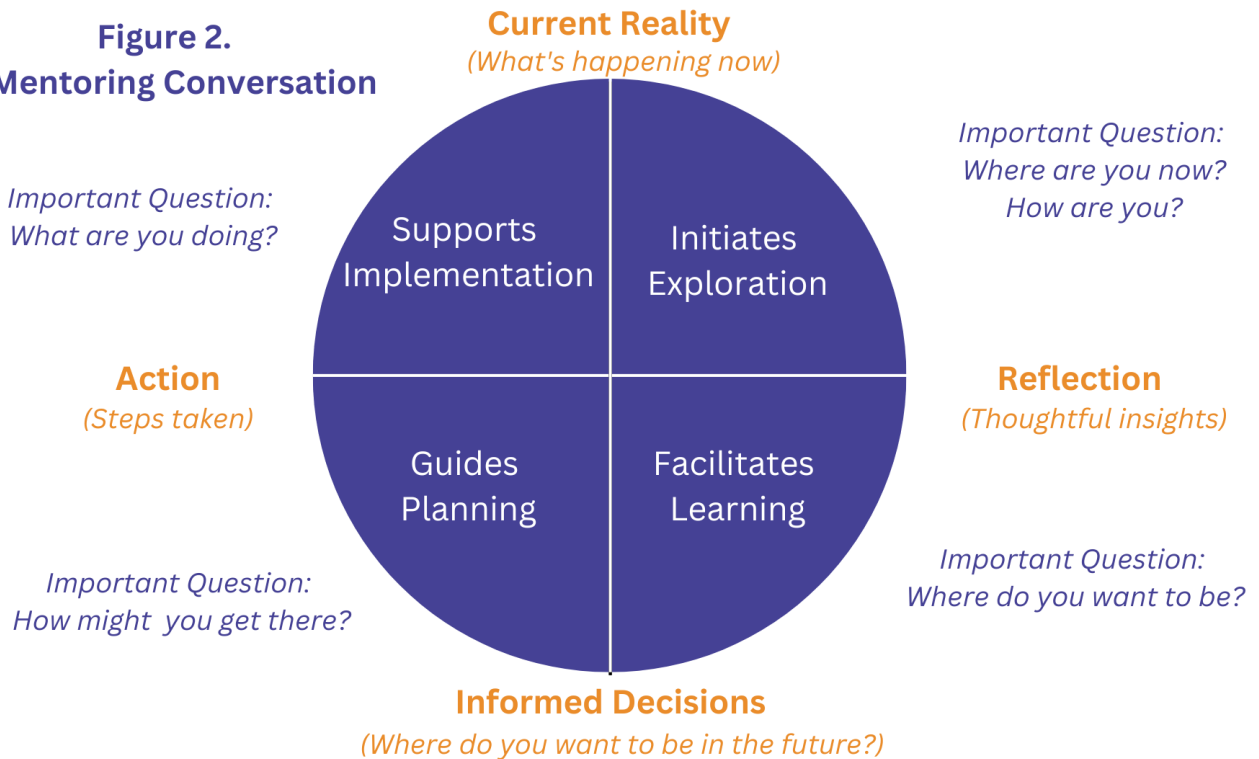
Advisor: Share knowledge, ideas, opinions from personal experience

Guide: Walk alongside, helps maintain focus on goals and offers encouragement

The Mentoring Conversation

Mentoring conversations need to encourage both reflection and action, and consider both the present situation and future possibilities. The Mentoring Conversation Model depicted below offers a framework that shows how mentors can ask reflective questions that produce constructive action.

Figure 2.
A Mentoring Conversation



Components of Mentoring Conversations

- **Initiates Exploration:** Mentors begin by asking questions to understand the mentees' current situation. The goal is to understand what is going on in the life of the mentee, challenges and successes, factors that have contributed to challenges and successes, as well as risk and protective factors. Mentors ask open-ended questions and create space for the mentee to share. They use active listening skills to let them know they are listening.
- **Facilitates Learning:** The mentor guides the conversation towards future hopes and explores the question, "Where do you want to be in the future?" It is important to give space for the mentee to elaborate, explore reasons why, and what it would feel like if the hope actually was a reality. Goals are usually formed around hopes for the future.
- **Guides Planning:** The conversation then explores steps a mentee could take to accomplish their goals. An action plan is made that includes needed community resources, steps in the process, a timeline and potential challenges.
- **Supports Implementation:** The mentor regularly checks in about how the mentee is doing emotionally, practically, spiritually etc. This provides space for them to consider how they are doing in regards to their goals as well as how they are doing internally.

✓ Active Listening Skills for Mentors

Body Language: Face the person and use your posture and facial expressions to communicate you care and are interested in what the person is saying. For example, nod occasionally, lean forward, smile and avoid closed body language such as crossing your arms.

Minimal Encouragers: Use brief, positive prompts to keep the conversation going and show you are listening. For example, “umm-hmmm”, “oh?”, “I understand”, “then?”, or “and?”.

Restating: To show you are listening, repeat every so often what you think the person said, not by parroting, but by paraphrasing what you heard in your own words. For example, “Let’s see if I’m clear about this...”

Reflecting: Instead of just repeating, reflect the speaker’s words in terms of feelings or meaning. For example, “This seems really important to you...”

Emotion Labeling: Putting feelings into words will often help a person to see things more objectively. To help the person begin, use “door openers”. For example, “I’m sensing that you’re feeling frustrated... worried... anxious. Is that correct?”

Summarizing: Bring together the facts and pieces of the problem to check understanding. For example, “So it sounds to me as if...” or, “Is that it?”

Validation: Acknowledge the individual’s problems, issues and feelings. Listen openly with empathy and respond in an interested way. For example, “I appreciate your willingness to talk about such a difficult issue.”



Clarifying: Ask questions to better understand what the person is communicating and draw out additional information. For example, “When did that happen?”

Encouraging: Ask questions to convey interest in what the person is saying and encourage them to keep talking. For example, “Can you tell me more about...?”

Probing: Ask questions to draw the person out and get deeper, more meaningful information. For example, “What do you think would happen if you...?”

Effective Pause: Deliberately pause at key points for emphasis. This will tell the person you are saying something that is very important to them.

Silence: Allow for comfortable silences to slow down the exchange. Give a person time to think as well as talk.

Giving Feedback: If you have the other person’s permission and it seems appropriate, let them know what your initial thoughts are on the situation. Share pertinent information, observations, insights and experiences.

✓ Things to Avoid

- “Why” questions. They tend to make people defensive.
- Quick reassurance. Avoid saying things like, “Don’t worry about that” or, “It will be okay.”
- Advising. For example, “I think the best thing for you is to move to assisted living.”
- Digging for information. Avoid forcing someone to talk about something they would rather not discuss.
- Patronizing or condescending. For example, “You poor thing, I know just how you feel.”
- Preaching or judging. For example, “You should...” or “You shouldn’t...”
- Interrupting. Interrupting shows that you aren’t interested in what someone is saying.
- Distractions. Distractions show you care more about something else than what the person is saying.

Cultural Humility

Another important practice for mentors is cultural humility. The concept of cultural humility was originally developed to address inequities in the healthcare field and is now used in many disciplines, including education, public health, social work, and mental health to increase the quality of interactions between staff and volunteers at programs and their diverse community members (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998).

Cultural humility has been described as the ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented.¹⁶ In the context of relationships, this means maintaining an openness to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the other and a willingness to learn from them. It also requires each person to acknowledge that their understanding of another person’s culture and experience is limited. All people have unconscious stereotypes of others and tend to use stereotypes as a “safety net” to help explain behavior (Cuellar, 2017).

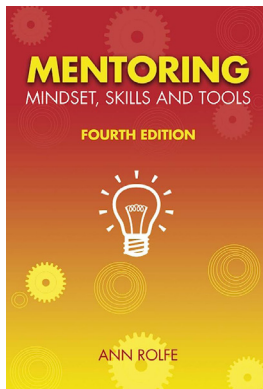
Cultural humility goes beyond reflecting on one’s own values, beliefs, and social position within the context of the present moment. It also requires that a mentor be aware of and sensitive to historic realities, such as legacies of violence and oppression against certain groups of people.

In mentoring relationships it is essential that the mentor adopt a posture of cultural humility. This requires them to actively explore unconscious biases and to promote justice, develop strong mentoring relationships and advocate for the mentee.

The three tenets of this approach are:

- 1) a life-long commitment to self-evaluation, critique, and learning**
- 2) a commitment to fix power imbalances where none ought to exist and promote justice**
- 3) a commitment to develop partnerships with people and groups who advocate for others**

Helpful Resources



Mentoring Mindset, Skills and Tools 4th Edition by Ann Rolfe

Mentoring Mindset, Skills and Tools is written for both for mentors and mentees, so you can literally be on the same page. It is based on decades of experience and explains the essential ingredients of mentoring conversations and relationships that work.

Mentoring Works offers free webinars and educational materials on mentoring at mentoring-works.com



Becoming a Better Mentor: Strategies to Be There for Young People.

Edited by Dr. Carla Herrera and Michael Garringer

This resource will help mentors and other caring adults adopt a true “mentoring mindset” and build your skills for supporting young people.

Retrievable at Retrieved from www.mentoring.org/resource/becoming-a-better-mentor

Citations

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