

Mentoring – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between mentoring, coaching and counselling?

Mentoring assumes that the person who is your mentor has already achieved or has some prior knowledge of what you are setting out to achieve. In such a role, mentors are more experienced in the area the mentee wants support with and they can share opinions, information and advice because of their experience in that area.

In coaching, the coach is not typically experienced in the area the client wants to improve on. The coachee is viewed as the 'expert' in their life and the coach's role is to support what is working and make it even better. The coach's questions and feedback help to open up new perspectives and self-awareness that help stretch the coachee to reach that next level of performance.

Counselling typically hinges on making a diagnosis of what is wrong and prescribing a method or series of steps that have been proven to work for other patients. Counsellors tend to focus on the past, trying to help the client uncover the root cause of why something is happening or why someone is feeling a certain way.

What is the time commitment?

Each mentoring session could be anywhere between 30 minutes and 2 hours; the length of the session and the frequency of meeting should be discussed at the first session and will be dependent on the mentee's objectives and the availability of the mentor and mentee. The formal length of the scheme is 12 months (although the actual length of the mentoring relationship depends on the mentor and mentee and what they want to achieve).

You will also be asked to take part in an initial event to help you get the most out of mentoring and asked to participate in a review of the scheme.

What happens in a mentoring session?

The mentor and mentee work together to make progress on the mentee's mentoring goals. It is useful to see it as a semi-structured conversation that will involve listening, questions, advice and suggestions, brainstorming solutions, considering options and actions.

At the start of the mentoring relationship, you will need to think about what the gap is that you would like mentoring to fill, for example, understanding of how something works, how to do something, who to speak to, how to improve or achieve something.

It's useful to set some goals as you begin to work together. This will give focus and ensure that the mentoring is valuable. These goals will be reviewed regularly to ensure a continued focus to the meetings.

What can I get out of being mentored?

There are lots of benefits to being mentored, they include

- Receiving impartial advice and encouragement
- Benefiting from a supportive development relationship
- Assistance with problem solving
- Improved self-confidence, knowledge and skills

What can I get out of being a mentor?

There are also lots of benefits to being a mentor, including

- An opportunity to reflect on and develop your own practice
- It uses your experience, making it available to a new person
- It enables you to practice communication and interpersonal skills
- It provides personal satisfaction through supporting the development of others

What happens if I change my mind?

If at any stage in the process you are no longer able to participate in the programme then please let us know by emailing catherine.eve@cforlp.org.uk.

Once initial matches are made you will be asked to confirm that you are happy to proceed, this is in case there is a potential conflict of interest between the matched pair.

What would a WiN mentor offer that a professional/technical mentor would not?

This will be a mentoring scheme to support personal development rather than professional or technical development.

Should I tell my employer?

This will be different in every situation. Unless you are planning to do your mentoring during work hours then there is no obligation to tell your employer. However, if the mentee works for a competitor or you share sensitive or commercial information relevant to your current employment then we advise you tell your employer.

Where should we meet?

Where you meet is up to you, somewhere convenient to you both and where you won't be disturbed is best. If your employer is happy then this might be at your place of work, alternatively it could be at a café or you may prefer to use skype or the telephone.

What paperwork is required?

Before the mentoring begins we ask that you complete the mentoring commitment form which outlines the commitment both yourself and your mentee will make to the process.



To help promote the mentoring scheme we may ask you to help us put together a case study. There is no obligation to provide this information but we would appreciate any support you can provide in promoting and improving the mentoring scheme.

Should anyone take notes?

That is for each mentor and mentee pair to decide for themselves. There is no obligation to keep notes of the sessions, however it is good practice and supports reflection and learning.

What about confidentiality?

Mentoring is based on trust and openness, and what you discuss with your mentor is confidential unless there is a perceived risk to you or to others. If you choose to share information of your mentoring experience with us for review or promotional purposes then we will make sure both mentor and mentee are happy before we use it.