

ROLE OF THE MENTOR

The main role of the mentor is to help the mentee obtain better insight into their own situation and the options available to them. It is more important to listen and provide a sounding board, allowing them to work things out for themselves while talking it through, not to make decisions for the mentee.

Mentors will help the mentee to define the goal they are trying to achieve, the steps that lead to that goal, potential barriers and how they plan to tackle these. It may be helpful to end the meeting with the mentee summarising (for themselves, more than for the mentor) what they have taken away from the meeting, and what they will do next.

Of course, mentors may have personal experience that is relevant to the situation. The reason the person is approaching a particular mentor may very well be that they want to hear about this experience. Mentors should feel free to recount these situations. It's important to bear in mind that everyone's situation is unique, and what worked for mentors may not be right for mentees. But by helping mentees talk through the issues, mentors may help mentees clarify what they need to do next.

Mentors are providing a sounding board and a source of alternative possibilities and information that mentees may not have had access to or considered before. All conversations are confidential, and it is important that this is explicitly agreed at the start of any meeting to ensure an open and free conversation.

The role of the Mentor is to:

- Listen
- Question, to elicit facts
- Share information, knowledge about organisation/occupation and informal networks
- Offer different perspectives
- Offer support and encouragement
- Draw on own experience when appropriate
- Confront and discuss current issues
- Take the lead in the early stages of the relationship

And to encourage the Mentee to:

- Listen
- Clarify understanding
- Share thinking
- Review and reflect on oneself
- Change assumptions
- Consider different perspectives
- Take responsibility for their own development
- Make decisions to maximise the outcomes of the Mentoring relationship