Mentoring Guidelines
FOR MIDWIVES
2020

With support from UNFPA
Acknowledgements

ICM gratefully acknowledges the support from the Center for Mentoring Excellence in the development of ICM’s online mentorship programme “Starting Strong: Making Mentoring Work for You”, A 10 Module Course for Mentors and Mentees ©2019 Center for Mentoring Excellence.

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Introduction

Mentoring is a professional development tool used by many professions, including midwifery. Mentoring is a specific approach to professional support whereby the mentor and the mentee enter into a mutually agreed, equitable and reciprocal learning relationship.

The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) recognizes the value of professional activities that support and encourage reflective practice, quality improvement, life-long learning and teamwork amongst midwives. However, there are many different forms of professional support that all have different names such as supportive supervision, supervision, preceptorship, coaching and mentoring. These terms are often used interchangeably, leading to confusion about their meaning and their use within midwifery practice.

During 2018 and 2019, with support from UNFPA, ICM conducted a literature review and a survey to find out how these various definitions are used and implemented amongst its members and with the aim of gaining consensus on a definition of mentoring for the midwifery profession globally.

In these same years ICM also developed two mentoring programmes. First, as part of a project supported by the Sanofi Espoir Foundation\(^1\) ICM provided mentorship training for midwife educators experienced in Competency-Based Education (CBE) to mentor other midwife educators as they begin to use CBE methodologies in their teaching practices. Second, as part of a project supported by the Johnson and Johnson Foundation, ICM developed an online mentorship programme in collaboration with the Center for Mentoring Excellence\(^2\). Mentoring was an important component of a programme to support young midwives to further develop their leadership skills. The online programme helped both the young midwife mentees and their chosen mentors to learn about how best to conduct their mentorship relationship and to get the most out of mentoring.

Drawing on the literature review, the survey and its existing two mentorship programmes, ICM, with support from UNFPA, developed Guidelines for Mentoring for Midwives (2020) as a resource for Midwives Associations and partner organisations.

This document briefly describes the findings of the literature review and survey and sets out the Guidelines for Mentoring for Midwives.

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2 The Center for Mentoring Excellence ©
Literature Review

A broad and systematic literature search in Web of Science, PubMed, Google Scholar, Academia.eu, JSTOR, SOLO, Oxford Reference, ProQuest, ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, Wiley Online Library and Ovid was conducted to identify all available literature on midwifery mentorship using key search terms. Additional search strategies were used such as contacting researchers working in the area, analysing existing course curricula in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), consulting midwifery journals and handbooks, and researching via the world wide web.

The search terms used were mentors, midwives, midwifery mentorship, midwifery mentorship programmes, education, supervised, supervision midwifery, supportive supervision, clinical practice, clinical placements, student support, sign-off mentorship, and Nursing and Midwifery Council.

An initial search of the literature from 2008 onwards yielded a significant body of literature, comprising over 433 books and articles, and 266 course guidelines. From reading the titles, summaries, and abstracts it was evident that a proportion of this literature was unrelated or only marginally related to the review and was therefore not included.

Six main areas emerged from the literature:

- the role and qualities of a good mentor,
- the relationship between mentors and mentees,
- feedback from mentors,
- length of mentorship programmes,
- key distinctions between mentorship, supervision, and supportive supervision, and,
- environments conducive to mentoring.

The elements which distinguish successful midwifery mentorship programmes from those which are less successful were identified. A number of recommendations and models were drawn from the literature to assist with the development of comprehensive guidelines for mentorship in midwifery.

Terms such as mentor, advisor, supervisor, coach, preceptor, and sponsor were often used interchangeably in the literature and differed between countries and contexts.

Agreed definitions are needed for the midwifery profession to guide the practice of mentorship, preceptorship and supervision and the preparation of mentors/mentees, preceptors and supervisors.
ICM Survey of Midwives’ Associations

ICM invited Member Associations to participate in a survey in January 2019 in an effort to gain consensus on a definition of mentoring and to gain information about how mentoring, preceptorship and supervision was implemented in various countries. Of the 59 Member Associations that responded, 86% agreed with the following definition of mentoring.

The mentoring relationship is one of negotiated partnership between two registered midwives. Its purpose is to enable and develop professional confidence. Its duration and structure is mutually defined and agreed by each partner. A mentor listens, challenges, supports and guides another midwife’s work. A mentor does not always give answers but encourages the mentee to research, explore and reflect on her practice. The mentored midwife remains responsible and accountable for her own practice in accordance with statutory obligations of a registered midwife in her country.

However, comments to the survey indicated that mentoring was very often confused with supervision and preceptorship, as rather than an equal relationship between mentor and mentee, senior midwives were often appointed to supervise student and junior midwives. Although many respondents identified that the purpose of mentorship was to improve the performance of midwives and to improve quality of care, in some instances it was seen as a tool for orientation of new staff or supervision manage poor performance.
The following table sets out various terminology, other than mentoring, that arose through the literature review and survey responses. Common definitions are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADVISOR</td>
<td>An individual who focuses on specific problems and generally provides advice on school and/or health system policies and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COACH</td>
<td>An individual who focuses on the transfer of specific information or skill. Coaching is present focussed, boosting performance, but focussed on short term here and now.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDWIFE PRECEPTOR</td>
<td>A practising midwife who formally teaches and supports midwifery students within a midwifery practice setting. The midwife preceptor collaborates with midwife educators from pre-service midwifery education programmes to plan and provide student midwives with appropriate learning opportunities that will assist student midwives to develop and apply midwifery competencies. The preceptor often assesses student competence within the practice environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPONSOR</td>
<td>An individual who focuses on succession planning and leadership building, usually from a position of superiority in the institutional hierarchy.</td>
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| SUPERVISOR        | An individual who directs and oversees the work of another, usually a subordinate.  
Supportive Supervision: A process of helping staff to improve their own work performance continuously. It is intended to be carried out in a respectful and non-authoritarian way with a focus on using supervisory visits as an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills of health staff.  
Statutory Supervision: Supervision within a regulatory framework with the aim of public safety. Often the result of a disciplinary process.  
Professional supervision: a formal arrangement where professionals work with someone more experienced for oversight, development of new skills, critical and constructive feedback and maintenance of standards of professionalism – often used in counselling, social work, psychology. |

When establishing mentoring programmes for midwives it is important to recognise the differences between mentoring and other related professional development activities such as coaching and supervision. Mentoring has specific basic concepts and should be used for the purpose of reflective practice and professional development.
Definition of Mentoring

ICM has adopted the definition of mentoring developed by the Center for Mentoring Excellence as follows:

A reciprocal learning relationship in which a mentor and mentee agree to a partnership where they work together toward achievement of mutually defined goals that will develop a mentee’s skills, abilities, knowledge and/or thinking.

Mentoring has the following characteristics:

- The mentorship process promotes the maturation and success of the Mentee.
- The Mentor–Mentee relationship is a personal one, involving trust, shared control and responsibility, and mutual understanding.
- It can be a partnership relationship if the equal status of the two partners, the Mentor and the Mentee, is recognised.
- Both partners make different but equally important contributions to the relationship.
- The balance of power and control is negotiated and mutually satisfactory.

Mentoring is a process that aligns well with midwifery practice and approaches to care. The mentoring relationship reflects principles also found in ICM’s Philosophy and Model of Midwifery Care and ICM’s International Code of Ethics. These are respect, trust, equity, shared control, self-determination, participation and partnership. The same principles are found in ICM’s other Core Documents – Global Standards for Midwifery Education and Regulation, Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice, Bill of Rights for Women and Midwives and ICM’s various Position Statements.

Principles of Mentoring

The following principles underpin a successful mentorship programme/relationship:

Relationship

- Mentorship should be voluntary for mentor and mentee
- Mentoring is a relationship, broken into specific and distinct parts
- Ongoing communication between the mentor and mentee is essential to productive mentoring

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3 Center for Mentoring Excellence ©
4 Lois Zachary, Make mentoring work for you, Center for Mentoring Excellence®; Julia Wilkinson, Five Golden Rules for Effective Mentoring
• Effective mentorship requires openness and trust, authentic, honest conversations and commitment to the relationship

Synergy
- Mentoring benefits both the mentor and the mentee
- Successful mentoring relationships require equal engagement and responsibility, reciprocity, partnership and collaboration

Development and Leadership
- Mentoring is grounded in adult learning
- Mentoring benefits professional growth, either work-related or individual, at all levels of career development
- Mentor nurtures the mentees’ capacity for self-direction with compassion and thought
- Successful mentoring is mentee-led (choice of mentor, goals etc.)
Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring has benefits for the mentee, the mentor and for the organisation/profession. The table below provides a summary of some benefits for each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MENTEE</th>
<th>MENTOR</th>
<th>INSTITUTION / PROFESSION</th>
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| - A safety net  
- Career support  
- Increased visibility  
- An opportunity to test out ideas  
- Candid feedback  
- Less stress  
- Skill enhancement  
- Quicker learning  
- Increased self confidence  
- Help in navigating the organization  
- Increase in productivity  
- Increased job satisfaction  
- Cultural knowledge | - Opportunity to share experience and wisdom  
- More knowledge about operations and best practices in other parts of the organization  
- Expanded perspectives  
- Reconnection to people in the organization  
- Expanded generational and cultural perspectives  
- New ideas, insights and learning  
- Strengthened mentoring, leadership and interpersonal skills  
- Sense of purpose and fulfillment from seeing others develop | - Creates and strengthens networks  
- Accelerates transition  
- Increases engagement, job performance and productivity  
- Supports and expands diversity  
- Manages knowledge  
- Enhances career development  
- Increases commitment, trust and collaboration  
- Attracts and recruits new talent  
- Promotes job retention  
- Facilitates alignment of organizational culture |

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**Types of Mentoring**

Generally mentoring falls into two styles. Both are good – and some mentoring arrangements include both. Many mentees have more than one mentor to be able to benefit from both types of mentoring.

**FORMAL**

This is mentoring that is conducted under an organisational structure. It is structured, has defined eligibility, and there are established parameters for carrying out mentoring activities. There are clearly articulated expectations, goals and outcomes.

**INFORMAL**

This is mentoring that is unstructured, casual and needs based. Informal mentoring is often seen between midwives in day to day practice as they seek to benefit from another’s experience through opportunistic discussions. Informal mentoring occurs at one’s own pace.

**The Mentoring Cycle**

Mentoring, although often a long-term relationship, follows a cycle or process that can repeat itself when the mentoring needs change. Both the mentor and the mentee have distinct roles and responsibilities in each phase of the cycle.

The following graphic demonstrates the critical phases of the mentoring cycle.

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Phase 1
Preparing for Mentoring

The preparation phase is an essential element of the mentoring cycle, and key to establishing a successful mentoring relationship. Mentoring requires a growth mindset because its purpose is learning. Both the mentor and mentee have distinct roles and responsibilities.

Mentor
Preparing for mentoring

To prepare for mentoring it helps to reflect on your journey and to increase your self-knowledge of what limiting beliefs you may have about yourself. By focussing on what events have influenced your past development, both positively and negatively, you create insight that is essential to preparation for mentoring.

The most important key to these insights is knowing your WHY and being able to communicate it. Understanding ‘why’ is a stronger motivator for undertaking mentoring than knowing the WHAT and the HOW of professional growth and will help with goal setting.

The most difficult ‘whys’ to find are those tied to your emotions. Keep asking ‘why’ until you are linking to an emotion – why, why, why again until you have established the values that link to your development – this is the most powerful motivation in mentoring.

Having a mindset that is open to learning is fundamental to mentoring. A growth mindset accepts mistakes as a part of learning and recognises that abilities and intelligence can be developed. A growth mindset sees failure as an opportunity to learn and feedback as a gift. A growth mindset can be inspired by others success.

Both the mentor and the mentee need to be aware of their own motivations and both are 100% responsible for actively pursuing growth5.

Carol Dweck6 identified six steps to preparation for mentoring as follows:

• Reflect on your journey
• Know your WHY
• Adopt a growth mindset
• Be open to overcoming beliefs
• Survey your skills
• Meet your partner

6 ibid
Mentee

Preparing for mentoring – choosing the right mentor

To Before embarking on a mentoring journey, it is essential to find and choose the right mentor.

Mentoring is a learning relationship where there is a need to work collaboratively to achieve mutually defined goals. It is a partnership that requires agreement and commitment. It helps if the mentee understands both the type of mentoring being undertaken and the distinctions between mentoring and other kinds of professional support. It is not necessary for a mentor to be familiar with the mentee or their work, nor to be able to work alongside the mentee in a physical setting. The goal is personal growth and professional development; therefore, there is no requirement for a mentor to have familiarity with the mentee’s workplace and sometimes this is also an advantage.

It is a good idea to determine the qualities the mentee is looking for based on the ICM definition of mentoring outlined above. For example, the following questions and advice can help guide the choice of mentor:

1. **Reflect** on past experiences and who were the people who guided, supported and strengthened your growth in the past? Who could you collaborate with and trust, reach agreement on goal setting, develop a strong partnership with?

2. **Understand** your motivations, identify what you need to learn.

3. **What are the qualities** you want in a mentor? Someone who challenges you, is a good listener, has specific experience? Reflect on what has worked well in the past.

4. **Find your mentor through your current network** – look for successful people who have achieved what you want to achieve. Brainstorm a list of people who you already know and who might know others.

5. **Follow up with people**

6. **Let others know you are looking for a mentor and stay in touch with people**

7. **Think broadly** – external is fine

8. **Be enthusiastic, interesting and likeable**; behave as though you want to be mentored

9. **Be realistic** – create a checklist of possible mentors. Are they able to invest the time in you? Will they challenge you? Do they have the ability to listen?

10. **Don’t pick someone who is too easy on you**. Mentors push mentees and stretch you out of your comfort zone; you are not looking for a friend

11. **Don’t pick someone you like or who is convenient or with whom you already have a close relationship**.

12. **Avoid asking someone who is your direct line manager or someone you report to, to be your mentor**. It confuses the situation and may be a conflict of interest. The mentor-mentee conversations should be about your professional development rather than work issues in general and having your manager as your mentor may also limit your willingness to take risks. It may also cause jealousy in the workplace with other colleagues if you were to have exclusive time and support from your manager in the mentor role.
13. Have an exploratory conversation – do they have time, are they a good fit, are they willing and sincere enough to invest in you?

14. It is more likely your potential mentor will see you as genuine and conscientious and open to feedback, if you are sincere about your commitment to being mentored. When you ask someone to be your mentor be specific about what you want to learn and why and explain why you think they are a good fit. Practice what you want to say with a friend or colleague.

**Mentor & Mentee**

**Shared responsibilities**

*Getting to know each other*
Take the time to get to know one another, share mentoring stories, share assumptions, goals, hopes and dreams, learning styles; be clear about one another’s wants and needs. Clarify your assumptions about your role as a mentee and mentor.

Be willing to be vulnerable and move outside your comfort zone.

*Plan for success*
Set aside the time to do the work, always have the next meeting dates on the calendar and plan how this is going to occur (in person/skype/zoom).

Keep focussed on achieving the goals.

Check in frequently to stay on track.

Commit to success, the process and both of you. The payoff will equal the investment in time you both put in.

*Bridging the differences*
During the getting to know each other process it is important to find things in common and also to look for differences. To work out what things about you both are hidden or not visible that are an important part of your personality. It is helpful for both the mentor and the mentee to cultivate an authentic relationship through exploring similarities and differences. Think of the differences between how you are at home and at work, including any cultural dimensions. The following prompts may be useful:

- Are you direct or indirect?
- Do you prefer authority or autonomy?
- Are you emotionally restrained or expressive?
- Do you prefer to work collectively in a team, or do you prefer individual achievement?
- What learning style resonates most with you?
- Are you accommodating, analytical, people oriented, practical, outspoken, like to take charge or prefer to listen?
Phase 2

Negotiating: establishing agreements - negotiating & setting the structure

Establishing agreements together is essential for establishing parameters and identifying what both parties need to have a mutually beneficial mentoring relationship. In this phase the mentor and the mentee together put structures in place and set ground rules. This may include decisions about how often and where do you want to meet, how do you want to handle interruptions, what if someone is late or needs to cancel, how you will communicate. Consider the following:

- Do we want an agenda and who sets it
- Does every meeting have the same structure
- Who takes the notes, are they shared
- What meeting preparation is required
- Is feedback sought and discussed as you go or will feedback discussions be scheduled

Generally, it is better to meet more frequently in the initial phase; face to face is always better, but Skype and WhatsApp work well if this is not possible. It is advisable to have a set agenda and share this ahead of time and to take notes. Always have the next meeting date and time planned, and above all, write down agreed ground rules ahead of meeting.

Confidentiality

In order to have trust in the relationship, it is critically important to have clear understanding about what confidentiality means to both partners. Mentors may have a close friend or confidante who knows the mentee, or vice versa. This may mean they know something that influences directly or indirectly the organisations they work in. Is there agreement to share some information with others? Can we disclose what we talk about and how we relate together? If there is a need for one to advocate for the other in their absence is this ok? Is it ok to share positive information?

Boundaries

These will depend on cultural, personal and on-or-off limit discussions, but the following factors undoubtedly influence the mentoring relationship and should be identified and discussed early on.

For example, -Time and availability, unscheduled meetings, how quickly will you respond and what is reasonable, what if something is urgent?

Topics – what is off limits? How wide or narrow should the discussions go? – personal or just work? What if I want to vent about something that has occurred at work?

Triggers – try to identify what is touchy and off limits and what is going to create a negative response from you both. Is being late or unreliable a trigger? What if you fail to deliver what you say you will? Identify and discuss the things that will really impact your trust and respect for one another.
Goal setting

This is the most important activity to inspire action and enable the growth of the mentee. These goals are a powerful motivator in keeping focussed on the big picture. The clearer the mentee’s goals are, the stronger their desire to achieve them. It is useful to have some guidance on goal setting and what is achievable, using SMART (Specific; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Realistic; Timely) goals approach may help you.

The table below provides a checklist for SMART goals.

SMART GOAL CHECKLIST

Is it Specific?
What are you trying to accomplish?
Is it concrete and clear?
Is it Measurable?
Is the goal quantifiable?
How will you know when you have achieved it?
Is it Action Oriented?
What results should you be able to see when it is accomplished
What concrete things will the mentee be able to do as a result of accomplishing the goals?
Is it Realistic?
Is achievement of the goal within the mentee’s control?
Are there other resources that need to be available in order to achieve the goals?
Is it Timely?
Is it achievable within the timeframe of the mentoring relationship?
Do you have timeframe attached to the goal (and the milestones along the way)?

Other questions to ask could be:
- Will these goals help you grow personally or professionally?
- Will these goals require you to make a personal investment of time, energy or effort?
- Will these goals help you feel a sense of pride and satisfaction when you accomplish them?

Finally, “from – to” statements are helpful in being able to measure progress and achievements. Initially it is best to work on only a few goals at a time, and over time create new goals or remove goals that are no longer important. By defining goals and writing these down, it will be possible to set benchmarks and criteria for knowing when and how these can be achieved.

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Phase 3
Enabling growth – facilitating learning

To enable growth and facilitate learning mentors should ensure they do not direct or project their own path or prescribe what the mentee does. Mentoring is a mentee-driven process. The mentee chooses the goals and the mentor’s job is to facilitate this by offering perspective and wisdom – they don’t need to have the answers but need to know the questions. Mentors can provide support by:
• offering trust (this has to be built),
• listening,
• providing structure,
• expressing positive expectations,
• challenging perspectives and visions,
• acting as an advocate,
• sharing themselves (experiences and wisdom),
• making the mentoring relationship and process special, and
• making it about the mentee.

Giving feedback
Constructive two-way feedback is everything in mentoring; it facilitates learning, drives mutual accountability, and enables growth. It provides mentees with support, offers guidance in creating and articulating a vision, and challenges mentees to take the next steps in their growth and development. Feedback also lets mentors know when they have gotten off track, overstepped, missed the point, or provided needed and welcome support.

When feedback is given effectively it nurtures the relationship. It is a vehicle for growth, not a focus on right or wrong and should not create guilt or shame.

For this important aspect of mentoring to be effective it is essential to understand why, when and how to give feedback.

Review the dos and don’ts of feedback in the box below.

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Starting Strong: Making Mentoring Work for You. A 10-module Course for Mentors and Mentees in ICM’s Young Midwife Leader Programme ©2019 Center for Mentoring Excellence
Feedback do’s and don’ts

• Timing is everything. Wait until the relationship is established and you are both familiar with one another

• Make sure there is adequate time with no interruptions

• Allow time for the feedback to be absorbed

• Be sensitive to the mood and receptivity and work responsibilities of the mentoring partner

• Ensure privacy and confidentiality

• Provide feedback frequently. This ensures your feedback is timely and closely related to the events it refers to. Stay balanced.

• Provide positive comments that reinforce behaviour and constructive comments that help recipient of the feedback learn how to improve.

• Be sincere. If positive feedback is forced, it loses value and undermines your credibility

• Keep it two-way. Feedback should be a conversation, not a lecture. Make sure your mentoring partner is engaged, understands and accepts the input.

• Limit feedback to one or two items your mentoring partner can do something about.

• Provide adequate time for your mentoring partner to reflect on what they heard before determining what actions they will take. Some people are more introspective and need more time to process. Talk about the value of feedback. Let your mentoring partner know to expect it.

• Be culturally sensitive – ask in advance how they want to be given feedback. Ask what their level of comfort is in receiving feedback, how do you prefer to give feedback? How do you like to receive feedback, what works for you and what doesn’t?
Types of Feedback

Positive Feedback – Reinforces the positives and encourages and reinforces desirable behaviours. Tailor the feedback specifically on what is good and give examples. Offer a constructive way to repeat the behaviour.

Hard feedback – Directly address the uncomfortable emotional or behavioural issues that impede progress. Don’t let your own negative triggers get in the way, remain calm. Begin with the end in mind. State your intention in giving the feedback. Consider appropriate emotions. Timing is everything – hard feedback should be real time and given as soon as possible. Think about ways you can offer support. Be mindful of your tone and body language, words matter so choose wisely.

Shielded feedback – Often done to shield the person from hard truths but is ultimately ineffective and confusing.

Tempered feedback – Feedback is filtered, and sugar coated, incomplete and ineffective. It creates misunderstanding, erodes trust and discourages authenticity.

Asking for and receiving feedback

Asking for and receiving feedback is an important responsibility of the mentee. It is one of the most effective ways to feel ‘in control’ of your work and professional and personal development. You can ask for feedback from your mentor anytime you need it. The following points will help you in asking for feedback:

- Let the mentor know you would like feedback so that she/he has time to prepare.
- Be specific about what you would like feedback on. Prepare a set of questions you could share before you meet.
- Ask ‘open’ questions. These questions will often begin with the word ‘Why’ or ‘How’.

Receiving feedback is another skill the mentee needs to acquire. When we receive feedback we usually go through three stages – we react, we reflect and we respond. For feedback to be useful it is important that we take time to analyse and reflect on the feedback before responding.

The mentor may also proactively ask the mentee for feedback and the same guidelines can be followed for asking and receiving.

Staying on track

To keep the mentoring process on track it is useful to schedule accountability conversations every 3 to 4 months. Remember, some check in is better than none at all.

Accountability keeps us on track therefore it is good to have regular conversations to check in about how you are doing. There are a number of ways to capture accountability conversations

- Note taking
- Keeping a journal
- Identifying take away messages
Writing down what commitments were made

These practices help to capture what you have talked about and things you want to come back to. By sharing notes with one another, it can help to identify what your takeaway from the meeting is. You can use these notes to review progress and to stay accountable to the commitments made. A mentoring journal can also be helpful – to provide reflection, stimulate thinking, remember specific information, your feelings about the conversations and serve as a diary of progress.

Best practices

*Best practices for mentors*

- Take time to get to know your mentee and develop an authentic relationship.
- Create a level of comfort to encourage openness and trust.
- Draw on and share your past experiences, including the challenges you have faced.
- Expand your mentee’s thinking and help them think differently.
- Openly address issues that are getting in the way of your mentee’s success.
- Ask more questions instead of just giving answers and advice.
- Tap into resources and tools that can help your mentee grow.
- Focus on maximizing strengths rather than just addressing weaknesses.
- Provide “gentle tension” that pushes your mentee out of their comfort zone.
- Help your mentee become more visible, vocal and influential in their leadership.
- Share what you are learning from the experience.
- Hold your mentee accountable for results.

*Best practice for mentees*

- Get to know your mentor and develop an authentic relationship.
- Create a level of comfort so you can be open and build trust.
- Share your past experiences and ask your mentor to do the same
- Identify issues that you think are getting in the way of your success.
- Draw on mentoring best practices to keep your relationship on track.
- Ask questions but don’t expect your mentor to give you answers and advice.
- Tap into resources and tools that will help you grow.
- Focus on maximising your strengths rather than just addressing your weaknesses.
- Be prepared to get out of your comfort zone. This will require you to expand your thinking and be willing to see things differently.
- Focus on ways to be visible, vocal and influential in your leadership.
- Share what you are learning from the experience.
- Hold yourself accountable for results.
Phase 4

Coming to Closure

Most mentoring relationships are time-bound. Even when mentoring is long-term, the mentorship cycle could be undertaken more than once, each time addressing different growth needs.

Phase 4 marks the end of a structured mentoring relationship. It is a significant milestone and creates a new boundary where the relationship is redefined (What will your future relationship be?). It offers a learning conclusion, a celebration of success. Make it special! As mentor or mentee, you could for example, offer a note of thanks, a small memento, and an expression of appreciation.

Learning conclusion

A learning conclusion is a planned, highly focused, no-fault conversation about the specific learning derived from the mentoring experience. This is when you take a look at what worked well in the relationship, what you learnt about yourself, about mentoring and what you would do differently.

Other questions to ask could be:

- How will you apply what you learned?
- How has it contributed to your growth and development?
- What can you do to sustain your learning and keep the momentum moving forward?
- Both mentor and mentee can reflect on what is the most valuable thing you learned? How has this impacted on you?
- You can discuss how you can both build a mentoring culture around you – decide how you are going to go forward. Will the mentee become a mentor? Will the mentor find a new mentee?
Conclusion

ICM’s mission is

To strengthen Midwives’ Associations and to advance the profession of midwifery globally by promoting autonomous midwives as the most appropriate caregivers for childbearing women and in keeping birth normal, in order to enhance the reproductive health of women, their newborns and their families.

ICM considers mentoring an important tool for the professional development of midwives, and as such it helps us in achieving our mission. Mentoring helps the mentee to grow in her/his midwifery competency, but also in other aspects that are key for a strong midwifery profession, such as leadership skills, quality improvement and professionalism.

This guideline provides midwives and organisations with a basic introduction to mentoring, and the key aspects ICM believes are essential for professional development of midwives. Mentorship is distinctly different from supervision or preceptorship. When developing or implementing a mentoring programme for midwives we hope these guidelines will help you achieve a successful programme. If you are a mentor or a mentee, we hope these guidelines will help you to be clear about your role and what practices you can use to make mentoring work well.

This is by no means a complete guideline, and we urge you to further research or investigate mentoring practice and tools.

Keep in mind that mentorship is a reciprocal learning relationship in which a mentor and mentee agree to a partnership where they work together toward achievement of mutually defined goals that will develop a mentee’s skills, abilities, knowledge and/or thinking.

“The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches but to reveal to him his own”

– Benjamin Disraeli
Further Resources

Articles from the Center for Mentoring Excellence

Brigham and Women’s Hospital (USA) Mentoring Curriculum and Toolkit


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