

**DOD Mentoring Resource Portal**

---

**MENTOR GUIDELINES**

Mentor/Mentee Relationship Management

## MENTOR GUIDELINES

### Purpose:

To offer a set of standards to guide Mentors towards a successful mentoring relationship.

### Audience:

Mentors

### Context:

After matching selected Mentors to Mentees, the Mentoring Program Coordinators should provide general guidelines to the Mentors on how to have a successful mentoring relationship. This guide should be accompanied by some sort of training.

### How to Use

- **Step 1:** Customize the guide and make any adjustments to fit specific DOD Component/Agency mentoring needs.
- **Step 2:** Add additional information specific to your DOD Component/Agency, such as additional guidelines for successful mentoring relationships.
- **Step 3:** Share the guide with the Mentors.

### Common Terms

The following are common terms associated with the DOD Mentoring Resource Portal:

*Mentor*, also known as Advisor, is a trusted counselor or guide who is involved in the development and support of one who is less experienced.

*Mentee*, also known as Protégé or Learner, is the more junior person being mentored.

*Mentoring Program Coordinator*, also known as Mentoring Program Manager, is responsible for the overall management of the mentoring program.

### Information Source Disclaimer

Most of the information on this mentoring resource was obtained and adapted from [WHS Director of Administration and Management Enterprise Mentoring, Tools for Advisors](#). All content is provided for informational purposes only.

## 1.0 TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE MENTOR

### Roles and Responsibilities

Development of Mentees depends on exploring career aspirations, strengths and weaknesses. Collaborating on means to “get there,” implementing strategies, and evaluating along the way. The Mentor provides the “light” for the Mentee to follow. Sharing your wisdom and past experiences is what the Mentee looks for from you. Ideally, your mentoring activities will need to include 1-4 hours a month, to include face-to-face meetings every 1-2 months, and periods of reflection.

Here are a few roles and responsibilities to help you in the process:

- Support the Mentee’s development of professional and interpersonal competencies through strategic questioning, goal setting, and planning
  - Create a supportive and trusting environment
  - Ensure the Mentee coordinates activities and learning plans with his/her supervisor
  - Agree to, and schedule uninterrupted time with the Mentee
  - Stay accessible, committed, and engaged during the length of the program
  - Actively listen and question
  - Give feedback to the Mentee on his/her goals, situations, plans and ideas
  - Encourage Mentee by giving them genuine positive reinforcement
  - Serve as a positive role model
  - Provide frank (and kind) corrective feedback if necessary
  - Openly and honestly share “lessons learned” from your own experience
  - Keep discussions on track
  - Respect Mentee’s time and resources
- Participate in the Scheduled Activities and Events.
- Take online courses related to mentoring.

## 2.0 IDEAS TO ASSIST THE MENTEE

**Shadowing Events:** Include them in any when possible such as presentations, off-site events, training, speaking events, luncheons, etc. Look for opportunities to include the Mentee in what you do. The Mentee will be able to observe you and how you demonstrate your strong competencies.

**Hands-On Training:** Find opportunities to share specific knowledge and introduce the Mentee to new work within the organization.

**Introducing:** Look for opportunities to introduce the Mentee to key players or to others to broaden their perspective on the Organization.

**Listen more than talk:** The most common problem in communication is not listening! Focus on active listening by following these rules:

- The Four Rules of Active Listening
  - Seek to understand before you seek to be understood.
  - Be nonjudgmental
  - Give your undivided attention to the speaker
  - Use silence effectively

### 3.0 EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING TIPS FOR MENTORS

As a Mentor, it can be very easy to want to just jump in and solve the Mentee's problems for him/her. However, your role is to help the Mentee think for him/herself, and to do so, this involves you asking thought-provoking questions. Help your partner self-discover. Questions should usually be open ended questions: Questions that can't be answered with a one word answer. We want you to be a Questioning Coach. Using questions to help the Mentee reflect on their experiences and learn from yours. Being a Questioning Coach gives you, the Mentor, an opportunity to:

- Uncover additional facts and information about the Mentee
- Confirm Mentee's goals, aspirations, and needs
- Explore strong feelings about situations
- Define problems and possible solutions
- Discover Mentee's commitment to their growth

#### **Exploratory questions – to assess the real issues and gain greater understanding:**

- What are the most interesting aspects of your job?
- Why did you pick this to concentrate on?
- What do you want to gain?
- What do you want to be known for?
- What do you understand the issue to be?
- What tells you that your assessment is correct? What are other people's perceptions of this issue?
- What assumptions are you making here?
- What other ideas do you have?
- How long has this been as issue?
- What did you learn from past experiences that you didn't expect to learn?
- What are the reasons behind an issue?
- Have you tried to resolve this issue before? Why or why not? If yes, what was the result?
- What choices do you have?
- What progress have you made?
- What other ideas do you have?
- How are you using the things/ideas we've spoken about?
- What results are you looking for?

#### **Empowering questions – to assist the Mentee to think for him/herself:**

- What are the skills you want to develop?
- What strategies come to mind when looking at a situation?

- What do you see as possible solutions here?
- What outcomes are you after here? Are these outcomes reasonable given the circumstances?
- What resources are available to help you move forward?
- What key players do you need help from?
- What forces may help and/or hinder you?
- What other information do you need to arrive at a solution?
- What are the pros and cons of each solution?
- What is the first step you need to take to achieve your preferred outcome?
- What alternative strategies should you develop?
- How will you know you have mastered or successfully enhanced a competency?
- How will you apply your new skill?

Ask more questions to really understand the responses you've been given. Rephrase the answer to ensure you have heard the reply correctly. Most importantly—Ask more questions & give fewer answers. Remember, he who speaks the most, learns the most.

#### **4.0 GIVING FEEDBACK – CHECKLIST FOR MENTORS**

Think of feedback as a teaching/counseling opportunity. Exhibit positive or neutral body language.

##### **Do use:**

- Good Eye contact – no scary stares
- Interested/neutral facial expression
- Nodding of head to show understanding or agreement
- Calm tone of voice
- Even voice volume
- Sitting slightly forward
- Relaxed arm & hand placement
- Use “I” statements. Give examples from your experience
- Ensure feedback is specific.
- Give the other person an opportunity to ask questions or share their viewpoint.
- Listen – carefully not only to the words but to the feelings and body language of the speaker.

##### **Do Not use:**

- Reduced eye contact, scowling, or narrowing of eyes
- Tense or aggressive posture
- Rocking, pen bouncing, hand wringing, or your specific version of nervousness/defensiveness
- Hands on hips or tightly clenched
- Arms tightly crossed across chest
- A blank expression
- Don't say, “but” or “however”.
- Avoid statements that describe someone instead of their actions
- Don't become defensive. Don't interrupt when the other person is responding.

Allow time and privacy for feedback- avoid/minimize distractions, set aside an uninterrupted time for your feedback session.

**Help the Mentee plan for next steps. Ask questions such as:**

- What is a step you can do to reach your desired outcome?
- What are some ways you can think of to resolve this challenge?
- What resources are available to you?
- What can I do to help you?

**Tips for Being a Good Listener**

Be an “active” listener. That means doing the following:

- Give the employee your undivided attention.
- Stay off your phone, off your computer, and avoid disruptions.
- Hear the person out. Avoid interrupting.
- Be aware of your non-verbal cues such as nodding, smiling, and maintaining eye contact.

To ensure that you heard the person correctly

- Paraphrase
  - “As I understand . . .”
  - “So, you’re saying that . . .”
  - “Let me see if I got that . . .”
- Summarize
  - “So, your three concerns are . . .”
  - “There seem to be a few issues . . .”
  - “So, our main goals this time are . . .”