



ABC Mentoring Program



“Colleagues are a wonderful thing - but mentors, that’s where the real work gets done.”

Junot Diaz

Author, Professor and Pulitzer Prize Winner

“Find out who you are and do it on purpose”

Dolly Parton



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1.1 What's it all about?

- To support employees by having regular contact and support from more senior and experienced employees, to assist with skill development, career advice, practical work/life issues, and/or understanding organisational culture and politics etc.
- The mentor would be someone outside of the normal reporting line and can be a sounding board for the mentee: the mentee may be more comfortable in asking for help with someone not formally managing their performance.
- The ABC is committed to increasing the representation of people from diverse backgrounds so we encourage and support all employees to join the program particularly people from the Indigenous, CALD, Disability and LGBTQIA+ communities.

1.2 The recommended approach is to agree to meet for five sessions.

- There is the opportunity to review your partnership and goals during the fifth session and decide whether you would like to continue for a further couple of sessions.
- Some mentees and mentors may like a formal arrangement and others may be happy for things to progress more organically. Whatever your preference, here are some guidelines and ideas that may prove useful. We've even included some sessions plans and conversation starters.
- It will be up to both of you to determine the best path to follow depending on your goals, but **good communication is key**.
- The experience should be a two-way street and we encourage reverse mentoring: where the mentee shares insights and perspectives that create learning and understanding opportunities for their mentor.
- And don't forget, we're here to help.



1.3 What it's not about!

Before we start.. Let's make something clear. **Mentoring is NOT a counselling session, making things better, negative criticism, failing, or rescuing.**

The mentor does NOT:

- Give performance feedback
- Take on the role of a manager
- Interfere with the management process

1.4 The mentor's role

A mentor may:

- Act as a source of information and insight on the culture, goals and “bigger picture” of the department, division, or ABC as a whole
- Assist with personal goal setting, planning and logistics of a specific role
- Teach specific skills and facilitate self-directed learning
- Coach for effective behaviours and functioning in the organisation and
- Be a confidant(e) during challenges or transitions
- Give advice regarding career development or strategies for achieving professional goals
- See opportunities (like networking or sponsoring) and encourage reverse mentoring

- A mentor needs to: **listen, question and enable.** They are walking beside the mentee, role modelling the ABC Principles behaviours, assisting and supporting their mentee.
- Their role is not to tell, direct or restrict the person they are mentoring. They encourage mentees to take responsibility for their learning and development and to start to take the lead in discussion and goal setting.
- The mentor encourages, challenges, nurtures, and teaches in response to the mentees needs. The mentor guides the relationship, but the mentee is the driving force. It is a two-way relationship.



1.5 The Mentee's Role

- Mentees need to take the lead in the mentoring relationship and use the mentor as a sounding board to set and achieve their objectives in the mentoring process.
- They come up with their goals (including personal, work, short term, long term and relationship,) raise incidental needs they have and play a proactive part in the relationship.

1.6 Let's keep it private: confidentiality

An important element of building a relationship is confidentiality. The mentoring program content is confidential. Mentees may talk to mentors critically about their relationship with their managers or other members of their team. It is important for your relationship that this information is not passed on. However, if something has been raised that is of policy or legal concern, mentors and mentees should discuss an agreed approach to deal with this **and of course refer upwards**. But if in any doubt at all, you must refer immediately to the Mentoring Program Co-Ordinators or a People and Culture representative. You are not alone in dealing with issues.

1.7 So, what makes mentoring work?

- Respect
- Commitment
- Trust
- Good listening
- Good questions
- Time

1.8 Agree on this important process

- Having agreed goals, expectations and ground rules helps people stay on track, and makes it easier to evaluate the outcomes of the mentoring process.
- We recommend having an agreement about how the relationship will work and what it will achieved. A written agreement can be done simply over email following your initial meeting and does not mean that you both cannot change any aspects that don't seem to work – agreements can be amended by mutual consent at any time.
- A written mentoring agreement is like a life-jacket, not a straight-jacket. We can provide an agreement template on request.

1.9 So let's get started!

The first meeting is an opportunity to discuss an agreement that will guide both parties. It is helpful if both parties come to the meeting well prepared. Prior to the meeting, consider what you expect to gain and contribute, how you want it to work and any concerns you have. (We've attached a mentoring plan you might like to follow that includes some questions to ask.)

2.0 Things to consider:

- What are my goals for mentoring? (may include personal, shorter term, longer term, work-related or relationship goals, personal branding, developing a professional network)
- What are my expectations and what are my responsibilities?
- How often will we meet?
- How will we meet?
- How much time are we willing to invest in mentoring?
- What if mentoring doesn't work?
- How do we want to draw up our agreement?

2.1 Goals

What outcomes are desired? If skills development is the aim, what specific skills are sought? Eg; technical or softs skills? Know more about cultural awareness? Set a development plan? Set career goals? Write a career action plan? Or is there some other purpose in mind? For the mentee.. where do you want to be in 3-5 years and what are the obstacles in your way? Even with quite specific goals it is possible to remain flexible so that, as the relationship unfolds, additional or different goals can be agreed.

2.2 Roles, responsibilities and expectations

A frank discussion of expectations can prevent problems later on. A simple list of dos and don'ts can clarify the parameters of the partnership. Set some ground rules, rather than make assumptions, for example about when mentors can be contacted etc.

Please take a look at this important course on [Workplace Behaviours](#). It will inform you about bullying, harassment, how to resolve workplace complaints and let you know what resources are available to help.”

2.3 Time

Creating time is the number one challenge in mentoring. It is easy to be overambitious. On the other hand, people looking at busy schedules may feel as though squeezing in another commitment is almost impossible. A realistic approach with an agreement to re-evaluate the amount of time after a trial period is advisable. Although it is up to you, most mentoring partners aim to talk at least once, possibly twice, monthly with greater frequency in times of need. As well as talking with the mentor, it is likely that the mentee will need to schedule some time to work alone on tasks connected with their goals.

2.4 Set up your meetings for success

- You may be meeting face to face or you may have to use phone or video technology like Teams or Zoom. Select a location conducive to good talking and listening – somewhere where you both feel you matter, where you can listen and talk with ease and without interruptions – eg. finding an office or studio to take a call.
- The best mentoring arrangements are those that have a genuine rapport and understanding so allow time early in the relationship for this important exchange
- Prepare for the meeting – be aware what you want to get out of it – what information do you need beforehand – what is the continuity between meetings?
- Focus on the meeting – take notes to avoid misunderstanding
- Be punctual and commit to meetings
- Be open to new ideas and approaches
- Agree an agenda suitable to both of you
- Agree what you both mean by confidentiality
- Listen actively
- Build on what's already working well
- Challenge ideas, provoke new thought and give a new perspective
- Reflect on insights, on what is working, and what could work better
- Keep the relationship on a professional level: be open and honest about what's relevant to the relationship
- Encourage solutions
- Begin and end each meeting on a positive note
- Recap at the end of each meeting for both to be clear about action points

Remember we're here to help you, so you can check in anytime with the Mentoring Program Co-ordinators.

2.5 Planning and review

In planning your goals and then reviewing how you achieved them, you may want to use the following process:

Now: What is my current situation?

Vision: Where do I want to be?

How: What do I need to do to get there?

Result: What have I achieved?

2.6 Difficult Situations

It's good to discuss at your first meeting how you will handle any problems, difficulties or conflict that might arise so that you can mutually address any issues as soon as possible. Being clear about each other's expectations and establishing some clear boundaries will help with building the relationship. It may be that there are issues with the way the relationship is progressing. It may be that either party cancels meetings, there isn't much to talk about, or you find yourself not looking forward to or even dreading meetings. It happens!

Sensitively discuss the situation with the other person. It's important that after giving it a go, there is recognition that sometimes personalities are just different, and if it isn't working, recognise it up front.

Try to resolve any conflict in a positive way by:

- Dealing with issues early
- Taking responsibility for your feelings
- Separate the person from the behaviour: be positive about the person but clear about problematic behaviour
- Be assertive: not aggressive or passive
- Use a third party if that would be helpful in resolving an issue
- Give the mentee time to talk: don't lecture or be moralistic



2.7 Some issues and possible solutions:

Punctuality:

“My mentor/mentee always arrives at least 15 minutes late for our scheduled meetings. What should I do?”

- Agree upfront on what should be done if either party is going to be late
- Remember that rescheduling ahead of time is an option
- Refer back to what you had both agreed on
- Use it in one of your sessions to practice giving feedback and negotiating

Inappropriate expectations of the other’s role

“The mentee asked me to find them a job in my Team during the first meeting.”

- Take time out to clarify the relationship and address expectations
- Use it in one of your sessions to practice giving feedback and negotiating

The fit might not be right

“The mentee’s goals are completely different to what skills and support I can offer.”

- Discuss concerns with your mentee
- Does the mentee need more intensive support than you can provide?
- Make a decision about whether you are the right Mentor/mentee pairing
- Let the co-ordinator know so other matches can be worked out

One feels the other is not making the mentor relationship a priority.

“My mentor/mentee never calls me back.”

“I sent three emails and I haven’t received an answer yet.”

“My Mentor/Mentee has twice cancelled our meeting at the last minute.”

- In your first meeting, communicate and agree to how long it might take for you to return calls and emails
- Let the other person know if the coming period will be especially busy
- Be forgiving
- Discuss expectations. Are they realistic?
- Are there any underlying issues affecting your relationship?
- Assess whether current demands on your time allow you to continue to meet your obligations
- Use it in one of your sessions to practice giving feedback and negotiating

2.8 Alarms bells

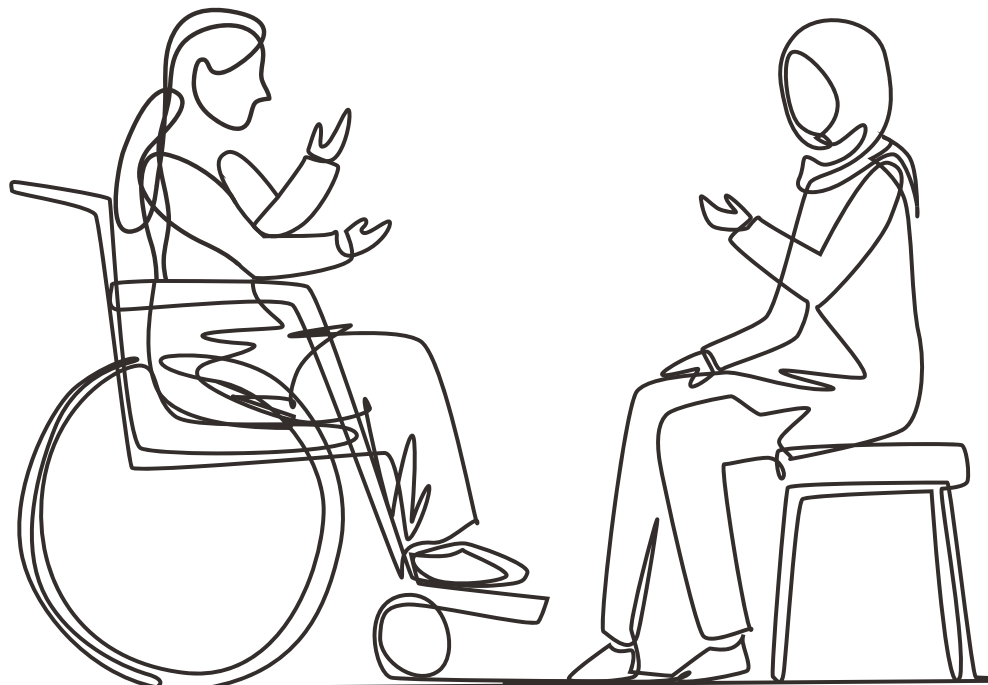
If any issue crops up that you feel uncomfortable about e.g. issues of self harm, fraud or inappropriate behaviour, or if you are in any doubt at all, you must refer immediately to the Mentoring Program Co-ordinators or People and Culture representative. You are not alone in dealing with issues.

We acknowledge that there are times when additional support and guidance beyond your mentor relationship is needed. Eg personal matters related to health, family or financial concerns or work challenges beyond the scope of your relationship. There is always support and your first stop would be the Mentor Co-ordinator who can refer you on. There is also the [ABC Employee Assistance program](#) or Manager Assist

2.9 Closing the relationship

Mentoring relationships can last for a long or short time, depending on the achievement of goals or other things that may impact the relationship eg; people may move jobs. So there may be a natural closure for the relationship. It's important to end on a positive note, with affirmation and acknowledgement of what both of you brought to the process and the key things you achieved.

Most mentoring relationships are successful if both parties keep in mind the need for trust, respect and effective and open communication. You also need to commit to the time needed but your effort will pay off for all parties and the ABC as a whole!



First Meeting

The best mentoring arrangements are those that have a genuine rapport and understanding so allow time early in the relationship for this important exchange.

- What are our goals for mentoring? What is the desired outcome of the program?
- What roles do we take, what are our expectations of one another, and what are our responsibilities?
- How often shall we meet? When? What notification is needed if you can't make the meeting?
- Communication methods and distance communication strategies
- What do we do if mentoring isn't working how we wanted it to?
- Do we want to draw up an agreement?
- Confidentiality
- Actions to take if problems occur
- Other items...?

Icebreaking – getting to know you

- Share your background, experience and interests

Top issues of concern – what can be addressed this time and in the future

- What are your major focus areas for discussion and assistance?

What would they like to focus on in the time before the next session?

- What is the “homework” from this session?
- What is the focus for next session?

Touch Base

- Quick check in with each other to see how you are



Regular Meetings

Focus for this session <ul style="list-style-type: none">- List priorities to discuss today- to capture what's important and apportion your time
Follow up from the last session <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What happened?- What went well?- What could be improved/ what are the lessons learned?- Next steps
Today's priority / issues for discussion
Next Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none">- What is the homework from this session- What is the focus for next time?
Review of goals overall – how are they progressing?
Any other items to discuss? <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Any housekeeping issues (times of sessions, communication, etc)
Touch Base <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Quick check in with each other to see how you are
What were the initial goals / desired outcomes?

Final Meeting

What changes need to be made (if any)?
What issues have they identified and resolved?
How are they progressing towards achieving their overall goals?
What strategies and actions do they still need to do to help achieve the goals?
Acknowledgements of each other <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Something practical or positive brought to the relationship by the other person

Extra resources:

For mentors:

<https://hbr.org/2009/03/five-questions-every-mentor-mu.html>

<https://www.business.com/articles/questions-for-mentoring-success/>

<https://prod.wp.cdn.aws.wfu.edu/sites/35/2018/03/Good-Questions-to-Ask-Your-Mentee.pdf>

<https://hbr.org/2009/03/five-questions-every-mentor-mu.html>

<https://prod.wp.cdn.aws.wfu.edu/sites/35/2018/03/Good-Questions-to-Ask-Your-Mentee.pdf>

For mentees:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jomiller/2018/03/25/40-questions-to-ask-a-entor/?sh=21c87644261b>

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/this-working-life/twl-22-january-2019/10867350>

That's it from us for now. Don't hesitate to contact the Mentoring Program Co-ordinator at ABCMentoring@abc.net.au if you have any concerns or queries.

