Techniques, strategies and skills in mentoring

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What makes mentoring successful

- **“The Success Triangle”** Drahosz and Rhodes, Dynamic Mentoring, 1997

- **Expertise** - how effective is mentor at mastering the expertise required of their job or career field.

- **Building relationships** - how effective is mentor at building relationships and connections with others.

- **Navigating the organization** - how effective is mentor at understanding and navigating the organizations and its formal and informal structures.
Crucial mentoring skills

- Technical Expertise
  - Human Resource Management
  - Problem Solving
  - Technical Knowledge
  - Time Management

- Building Relationships
  - Communication
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Client Focus
  - Leadership
  - Teamwork

- Navigating the Organization
  - Adaptation to Change
  - Diversity
  - Organizational Savvy
Feedback giving skills

- Give regular feedback and avoid delay
- Choose the right time
- Ask the mentee to self assess first
- Own the feedback you give
- Limit the amount of information
- Concentrate on what can be changed
- Be clear and specific
- Give balanced constructive feedback
- Give praise before criticism
- Give feedback on observed behaviour, not on the person
- Offer a description rather than a judgement
- Think of the language you are using – use questions rather than statements
- Offer support and challenge
- Explore alternatives
- Note how the feedback is received
- End on a positive note

REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
Sida
Mary is your employee who is always sending her reports on time but with errors.

How would you give her a constructive feedback?
Mary, over the last few weeks I have noticed the timely sending of your reports, though with a number of errors. Am concerned about this because when the reports have errors our customers don’t get the correct bills. I need your reports to be correct 100% of the time. Mary, what can we do to resolve this problem?
Facilitation skills

- Adopt a facilitative approach!
- Verbal Facilitation Skills
  - Open-ended questions – *questions that cannot be answered “yes” or “no”.*
  - Acknowledge contributions – *Responds positively to student comments.*
  - Paraphrase – *Clarifies and demonstrates understanding of student comments.*
  - Focus the group – *Reasserts the agenda when the group is off track.*
  - Active listening – *Demonstrates active listening skills.*
  - Student names – *Responds to students by name.*
  - Guidelines – *Communicates guidelines and consequences during activities.*
  - Tone – *Uses an energetic and positive tone of voice.*
  - Authenticity – *Provides genuine comments, tells students when the answer is unclear.*
- Nonverbal Facilitation Skills
  - Attentiveness – *Turns body toward student when they are speaking, maintains appropriate eye contact, handles distractions well.*
  - Body Language – *Uses nonjudgmental facial expressions, body placement is open and relaxed, maintains an appropriate level of personal space.*
  - Silence – *Allows adequate response time after asking a question.*
  - Presence – *Maintains a visible presence around the room during activities.*
Conflict resolution skills

- Develop a supportive not defensive environment
- Don’t judge
- Keep the open mind
- Do not be condescending
- Do not speak down to or insult the intelligence of your mentee
- Be specific and avoid speaking in generalities
- Explicitly express why you feel there is conflict
- Listen openly and accurately to feedback
- Understand the meaning behind the messages you are giving and receiving
- Seek to identify a common goal through compromise
- Discuss the issues (use facts rather than opinions)
- Stay focused on solution
Asking questions

- To empower the person
- To work from their own model of the world
- To help the person reflect on and explore the situation
- To help the person find their own solutions and to take ownership
- To move the person forward
- To help them learn how to help themselves better
- Keep them simple (one idea per question, simple language, short)
- Pause and give the other person a chance to reflect and answer
- Prompt (repeat or paraphrase the question, recall information related to the question)
- Deal with wrong answers in a sensitive and constructive way
Demonstrate good listening/follow-up skills

- Most people tend to talk more than they listen and interrupt people more than we should.
- Ask open-ended questions to get your mentee to open up as much as possible.
- After you have listened fully to a response, ask good follow-up questions to demonstrate genuine interest.
- If you do not understand something, try to paraphrase it to be sure you understand what the person is trying to say.
- After you’ve discussed an issue in one conversation, be sure to ask how the situation has progressed next time you write an email or talk.
- Don’t assume that what worked for you will work for your mentee; rather, try saying something like, “My experience was….What do you think will work for you?”
You are always a Role Model!
Be aware of your influence mentees will learn what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour from you such as:
- Dealing with problems constructively vs. gossiping
- Following rules & policies vs. ignoring rules
- Being professional vs. unprofessional
Role modelling is a valuable way of learning, that is not always recognised.
What is needed to be a role model:
- Professional skills
- Good behaviour
- Ability to cope with difficult situations
Tips for role modelling:
- Recognise and discuss your fears especially relating to making mistakes
- Imagine a film crew are filming you as a marketing tool for your profession – would you change anything?
- Imagine every conversation is being taped - would you say anything differently?
- Ask the mentees what their observations and impressions are after spending time with you. What behaviours do they see that are consistent to all? What are the differences that they have observed?
EXERCISE
15’…. Work in small groups on mentors’ skills