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# MENTORING HANDBOOK

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# MENTORING HANDBOOK

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## PREFACE

The Canadian Forces Leadership Institute is pleased to introduce the Mentoring Handbook. This publication is presented as part of our continuing effort to assist with the generation of effective military leaders. Specifically, the Mentoring Handbook provides the necessary background to assist Canadian Forces (CF) personnel of all ranks with an overview of what constitutes a mentoring relationship.

In this complex and ever changing world, the importance of mentoring has increased and individuals are seeking mentors to help guide their personal and professional journey, particularly through challenges and difficult situations they face in garrison and on operations in Canada and overseas. As such, the role of a mentor encompasses the desire to participate in someone's leadership, professional, career and personal growth.

In the CF, mentoring has always been an important characteristic of leadership. Senior officers and senior non-commissioned members often adopt an informal mentoring role by encouraging and challenging less-experienced members in their professional development. Mentoring is also beneficial for the CF as an institution because it has an impact on job satisfaction, effectiveness, productivity and retention.

In the end, leaders are responsible to ensure that all members can profit from a mentoring relationship since it contributes to organizational effectiveness. We hope that this handbook increases your awareness and expertise on the subject and provokes an interest that might prompt you to get involved in a mentoring role.

Bernd Horn  
Colonel  
Director,  
Canadian Forces Leadership Institute



## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

Have you ever experienced a mentoring relationship either as a mentor or as a mentee, or both? This handbook is designed to assist those interested in mentoring to understand the fundamental principles associated with effective mentoring relationships. Its main objective is to raise awareness on the subject of mentoring as an integral part of leadership. The CF, more than ever, realizes the importance of providing leadership development. One of the proven methods of leadership development is mentoring. A mentoring relationship offers a more holistic approach to learning and creates an environment conducive to receiving the appropriate development in the areas of leadership, professional, career, and personal growth.

Research indicates that mentoring provides significant benefits to mentors, mentees (or associates, protégés, apprentices) and organizations alike. This growing interest in knowing and applying mentoring is present in the CF. While there is no formal CF mentoring program at the time of writing, a number of mentoring activities have already been initiated at different levels of the organization (e.g., unit level, MOC level). Given the increased interest in mentoring, there is an increasing need to better understand the foundations of a mentoring relationship.

This handbook clarifies various concepts associated with mentorship, such as mentee and mentor; the difference between leadership, mentoring and coaching; mentoring benefits for mentees, mentors, and the organization; various forms of mentorships; the mentoring process; answers to frequently asked questions as well as common misperceptions and myths about mentoring. This handbook also provides some questions that you, as the reader, are invited to answer.

You are encouraged to seek more information about mentoring. A selection of sources is included at the end of this publication as further reading. Finally, this self-guide to mentoring might engage you further in a personal and professional development journey.

*“No matter what the situation or context, mentoring is a human endeavour that, like a butterfly, develops over time and maintains and transforms individuals, organizations, and cultures bringing hope and beauty to them all.”*

Frances Kochem  
The International Mentoring Association



## SHORT HISTORY OF MENTORING

Historically, the term “mentor” derives from Homer’s epic poem *The Odyssey* in which the Greek poet introduces a character named Mentor. He was the son of Alcumus and, in his old age, a trusted advisor and old friend of Odysseus, King of Ithaca. Before leaving for the siege of Troy, Odysseus appointed Mentor to be a surrogate father to his son, Telemachus and was entrusted as a guardian to protect the royal household. It is interesting to note that an assiduous reading of *The Odyssey* reveals that the goddess Pallas Athene took, in some occasions, the Mentor’s form. Therefore, the Greek mythology did not limit the role of a mentor to a specific gender.

Mentor, as a common noun, entered both French and English languages only in the early eighteenth century. It is the French author Fénélon in his work *Les Aventures de Télémaque* in 1699 that brought the term ‘mentor’ into the language. It is argued that today’s meaning of the word ‘mentor’ derives from Fénélon’s interpretations.

With the passage of time, mentoring has been associated with the concept of apprenticeship as a method for developing the personal and professional skills of employees. Young men were apprentices to master craftsmen, traders or a ship's captain who passed down their knowledge. Sometimes, personal relationships developed between a master (mentor) and an apprentice. This mentor-apprentice dyad has been subjected to different uses and adaptations in order to satisfy particular needs.

After World War II, mentoring was primarily applied to develop high potential personnel for managerial positions. It was only after 1960 that the importance of mentoring as a career development strategy benefiting all employees was recognized.

As societies became more complex and impersonal, in part due to the advancement of technology, the need for person-to-person mentoring became increasingly important. Organizations began to use mentoring as an important developmental tool for professional and personal skills and this developmental tool is quite prevalent today.



### MENTORING AND LEADERSHIP

In recent years, the CF has seen a shift in the way leaders convey their leadership. This shift is a reflection of the new complex environment in which CF members operate. More importantly, it is an indication that the CF has adopted a more holistic approach to leadership and has embraced a more "open culture" in terms of encouraging military members to "engage in broad inquiry, to think critically, and to venture and debate new ideas in the interest of contributing to collective effectiveness." (*Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, 2005, p. 126)

As a result, the importance of creating a learning environment which ensures that members are developed professionally and personally through knowledge and experience is increasingly recognized. Such learning environment allows future leaders to adapt themselves and be receptive to internal and external changes, as well as adopt and demonstrate a more transformational approach to leadership. Transformational leadership entails that members are committed to the values of the military and bring about significant change in individual, group or system outcomes. This double commitment suggests and calls for a learning process in which future leaders learn to identify themselves with this approach to leadership.

Mentoring is a proven learning process and leadership developmental tool. Indeed, to be effective, mentoring cannot be separated from the critical role of development. The question of mentoring in terms of leaders' development has to be addressed in regards to leadership, career, professional and personal development. According to *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (p.50), leaders are responsible for mentoring "people in apprenticeship positions and challenging assignments, and encourage and support subordi-

nate participation in educational, professional, and personal-growth activities over their career span.” Thus, leaders are entrusted with the duty to challenge, encourage and support subordinates. By participating in their leadership, professional, career and personal development, leaders as mentors embrace mentoring as a learning capacity in enhancing future leader’s abilities. Furthermore, by providing the appropriate mentoring relationship, leaders as mentors ensure that future leaders possess “capacities” that are needed for an effective CF.



## DEFINITIONS

Understanding the concept of mentoring requires the understanding of the rapport between a mentor and a mentee. This section provides the definitions of key terms related to mentoring.

*Mentoring* is a professional relationship in which a more experienced person (a *mentor*) voluntarily shares knowledge, insights, and wisdom with a less-experienced person (a *mentee*) who wishes to benefit from that exchange. It is a medium to long-term learning relationship founded on respect, honesty, trust and mutual goals.

Mentoring generally focuses on four long-term developmental areas, namely:

- √ Leadership development
- √ Professional development
- √ Career development
- √ Personal development

A *mentor* is an experienced, trusted person who is interested and willing to provide guidance in terms of leadership, career, professional, and personal development. A mentor motivates, encourages, and supports the mentee to the best of his/her abilities.

Mentors empower their mentees to find answers by sharing their knowledge and experience with them.

A *mentee* (or associate, protégé, apprentice) is usually described as a more junior individual with less experience who is highly motivated to learn, develop and grow professionally.

A mentee seeks out and is receptive to feedback and welcomes new challenges and new responsibilities.

*Coaching* is a short-term relationship in which one person (*coach*) is focused on the development and enhancement of performance, skills, effectiveness, and potential of another person (*coachee*).

A coach is more job-focused in directing a person to achieve a specific end result.

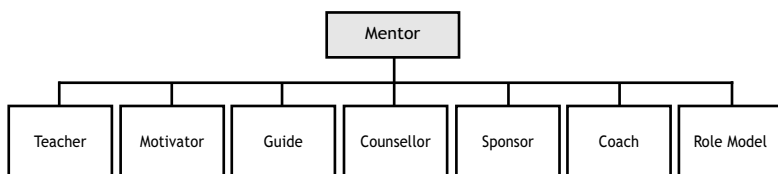
## 5 MENTORING AND COACHING

The terms mentoring and coaching have come to be used interchangeably and the meanings are often confused. Whatever developmental tool used (be it mentoring or coaching), it is important to understand the unique mentee needs and the suitable action to be taken. The chart below highlights some of the major distinctions between mentoring and coaching.

MENTORING	COACHING
Long-term relationship usually lasting for a few years to several years.	Short-term relationship lasting until the individual acquires the skills and behaviours sought out.
Mentoring is an integral part of leadership.	Coaching is an integral part of mentoring.
Holistic: Focused on empowering the individual to build insights, self-awareness and unique ways of handling issues.	Focused on helping the individual develop specific skills or behaviours.
Mentors provide guidance in terms of leadership, career, professional and personal development.	Coaches observe the individual doing a specific task and provide objective feedback and encouragement.
<p><i>Mentors are sought when individuals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are keen to increase the pace of their learning;</li> <li>Recognize the need for constructive challenges;</li> <li>Want to build and follow through personal learning plans;</li> <li>Want to explore a wide range of issues as they emerge and become important.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Coaches are sought when individuals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are concerned about some aspect of their performance;</li> <li>Want to make some specific changes in behaviour;</li> <li>Want to acquire some specific skills.</li> </ul>

## 6 FUNCTIONS OF A MENTOR

Mentoring encompasses many functions. During the development of a mentoring relationship, a mentor may be called to be a teacher, a motivator, a guide, a counsellor, a sponsor, a coach and a role model. Because the mentoring relationship is usually mentee driven, these functions are determined by the mentee's needs. The chart below highlights some of the functions of a mentor. A brief description of those functions is also provided.



- *Teacher*: to help set realistic goals, to inform about professional obligations
- *Motivator*: to recognize strengths and areas of development, to empower.
- *Guide*: to share experience, to act as a resource person.
- *Counselor*: to listen, to assist in developing self-awareness, to encourage and support.
- *Sponsor*: to introduce the mentee to other key players in the organization.
- *Coach*: to develop strategies for leadership, to empower.
- *Role model*: to act as a person with integrity, one who's actions and values are to be emulated.

As you may have noticed, the aspect of coaching is included as one of the mentor's roles in the mentoring relationship. Although mentoring does encompass coaching as one of its processes, it is not synonymous with it. In essence, mentoring includes all the roles mentioned above at different times in the relationship.



## 7 HOW DOES FORMAL MENTORING DIFFER FROM INFORMAL MENTORING ?

How a mentor and a mentee develop a mentoring relationship is a key aspect of mentoring. This initial phase will determine how the relationship will evolve and which functions (e.g., teacher, guide...) the mentor will undertake. The more suitable type of mentoring relationship depends on the needs and goals to achieve by the parties involved. Formal and informal mentoring relationships are briefly described here. A third type is also described and is a "compromise" between formal and informal and called "semi-formal." This type of mentorship is often the most effective in large organizations.

### FORMAL MENTORING

Formal mentoring is a structured and managed relationship usually based on organizational needs and goals. There is a formal mentoring program coordinator and funds are allocated. There are some pressures to participate. Mentors and mentees are paired based on compatibility and competencies required for development. Mentoring training is usually provided for both parties. The mentee, mentor and the organization alike all benefit directly from this type of relationship. The outcomes are measured to ensure efficiency of the program and continued funding.

### SEMI-FORMAL MENTORING

Semi-formal mentoring includes many of the attributes of a formal program with the exception of matching mentors and mentees. It is more flexible but available to all personnel as part of the organization's developmental programs. There may be a program coordinator assigned and there may be funding.



## INFORMAL MENTORING

Informal mentoring happens spontaneously, *ad hoc*. There is a self-selection process between a person who believes in someone's potential, and an individual who views someone as a role model. The organization benefits indirectly.

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## DIFFERENT FORMS OF MENTORSHIP

There are different forms of mentoring relationships. As mentioned in the previous section, the more suitable type depends on the needs and goals to achieve by the parties involved as well as the resources of the organization.

## GROUP MENTORING

Group mentoring allows a group of people to share common experiences and support one another. The average group size is ten. This is often used when few mentors are available. An added benefit of this format is the development of peer mentorships between directors.

*E.g. An executive officer meets once a month with several directors of various departments to discuss specific developmental issues related to leadership, professional, career and personal development.*

## TRI-MENTORING

Tri-mentoring involves a mentor who shares his/her skills, experience and knowledge with a mentee who, in turn, acts as a mentor and shares his/her skills, experience and knowledge with another less experienced mentee. Occasionally, the three parties get together to share knowledge and experience.

*E.g. A senior officer, a junior officer and a non-commissioned officer (NCO).*

## REVERSE MENTORING

Reverse mentoring occurs when a person seeks out an expert who has less job experience than s/he does, but holds a wealth of information on a topic that is ever-changing and growing and often has a good understanding of the "pulse" of the organization.

*E.g. The commanding officer of a regiment and a junior NCO.*

## CROSS-FUNCTIONAL MENTORING

Cross-functional mentoring occurs between people from significantly different work backgrounds with the specific purpose of learning from each other.

*E.g. A human resources manager and an engineer; operations and support; Navy and Air Force; private versus government sector; AS-05 Manager and logistics master corporal.*

## E-MENTORING

E-mail mentoring is the result of technological innovation with attempts to implement mentoring in geographically dispersed organizations. It is usually best when the parties have initially met in person beforehand.

*E.g. The mentor is in National Defence Headquarters Ottawa and the mentee in Canadian Forces Base Shilo. Both are of the same military occupation.*



## WHY DO I NEED A MENTOR?

There are many reasons why an individual would seek a mentor. Before approaching a potential mentor, the person needs to identify what s/he hopes to gain from a mentoring relationship. The reasons chosen below are amongst a long list of reasons. Never forget that developmental needs are unique to each individual.

- Better understand the roles and expectations within the organization;
- Learn from previously successful experiences;
- Increase self-confidence;
- Learn how to deal with conflicts of interest;
- Increase organisational knowledge;
- Target developmental activities;
- Discuss alternate solutions on difficult ethical dilemmas and/or leadership situations;
- Receive career guidance.

The following questions serve as a self-reflection exercise. As part of that exercise, you may want to add your own questions and comments.

1. Are there aspects of my professional life in which I feel I am not reaching my full potential? My career? My leadership style? My personal development?

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2. How would mentoring most benefit me?

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Experienced persons gain a great deal from a mentoring relationships as well. Mentors receive feedback and new ideas from mentees. Being a mentor can be an exhilarating experience that enhances self-esteem and provides opportunities that may vary from one person to the other. Here are some examples of the benefits derived by mentors:

- Challenging discussions and fresh perspectives;
- Developing personal satisfaction;
- Contributing to someone's development;
- Sharing experience and knowledge;
- Reflecting on personal and professional achievements;
- Understanding of the leadership strength with the organisation;
- Providing opportunities to inspire and encourage;
- Contributing to the next generation in a positive way;
- Fulfilling own developmental needs;
- Fostering collaboration and collegiality;
- Passing on one's legacy before changing positions or retiring.

The following questions serve as a self-reflection exercise. As part of this exercise, you may want to add your own questions and comments.

1. What can I offer as a mentor?

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2. Are there any areas in my professional leadership journey that I wish to enhance through a mentoring relationship?

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## WHY WOULD AN ORGANIZATION NEED MENTORING?

Organizations recognize that workforce demographics have changed dramatically in recent years and find it difficult to recruit and retain qualified personnel. They also find that people exhibit a more flexible approach to work and are less faithful to the organizations for which they work. An organization might look at implementing a mentoring initiative for the following reasons:

- Passing on corporate memory;
- Enhancing knowledge transfer;
- Bringing new members up to speed faster and better;
- Increasing commitment to the organization;
- Decreasing attrition;
- Improving succession planning;
- Reaching individuals in remote and isolated regions;
- Increasing productivity;
- Strengthening the organizational image.

The following questions serve as a self-reflection exercise. As part of this exercise, you may want to add your own questions and comments.

1. How would you envision your organization (e.g., unit, group, MOC) benefiting from a mentoring initiative?

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2. Identify some potential obstacles and how they could be overcome.

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The roles and attributes of a mentee are essential for development and growth and provide the foundation for a successful mentoring relationship. Some key attributes of a mentee are: an eagerness to learn, being an active listener and soliciting feedback. A mentee should evaluate if the mentoring relationship is effective and useful. Here are some roles and attributes of a mentee.

ROLES	ATTRIBUTES
Committed to spend time with a mentor	Being an active listener
Setting realistic and challenging goals	Being open-minded
Committed to accepting responsibility for personal growth and self-development	Able to be introspective and willing to change
Dedicated to enhancing leadership, professional, career, and personal competencies	Able to assert self and express needs
Taking an active role for development to occur	Showing eagerness to take on new challenges
Dedicated to providing and accepting constructive feedback	Having a strong desire to learn
Committed to achieving outcomes	Having the confidence to take risks

1. Do you see yourself as exploring and challenging new ideas? Name one that you would find difficult to address.

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2. What attributes would you bring to a mentoring relationship that would contribute to its success? What are your strengths?

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You are encouraged to assess your readiness to be mentored with this quiz:

<http://www.coachingandmentoring.com/Assessment/ReadinessToBeMentored.htm>



### 13 ROLES AND ATTRIBUTES OF A MENTOR

Effective mentors wear different hats and make use of diverse skills to guide, support and motivate their mentees. A mentor may need to coach or counsel his/her mentee. A mentor will definitely need to know how to communicate effectively, listen actively and provide support in the way of feedback and motivation. Some skills are utilized more often than others but all are essential skills and will be used at some point during the mentoring relationship. It is important to understand that a mentor does not need to be expert in all areas but he/she should at least have a working experience and level of comfort with each of the following roles and attributes.

ROLES	ATTRIBUTES
Spending time with more junior personnel	Being an active listener to concerns and issues, while making a genuine attempt to understand the mentee
Helping mentee set realistic goals	Respecting confidentiality
Challenging the mentee and stimulating learning	Able to share realistic perspectives, experience and wisdom
Building self-confidence	Non-judgmental
Encouraging the mentee to make the most of his/her abilities and personal style	Respecting the direction the mentee wishes to take, not imposing one's opinions, interfering or taking control
Assisting the mentee in developing self-awareness	A successful leader and "people person"
Establishing a non-judgmental and risk-free environment	Dedicated to professionalism and setting a good example
Acting as a role model	Open to new ideas and approaches

1. What can I bring to a mentoring relationship? What are my strengths?

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2. What aspects of myself should I work on in order to become a better mentor and leader?

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*“Many people have gone further than they thought they could because someone else thought they could.”*

Unknown



ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF  
A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

In a mentoring relationship, the mentor and the mentee are willing to commit time and energy to make it work. The following elements are absolutely essential to a successful mentoring relationship.

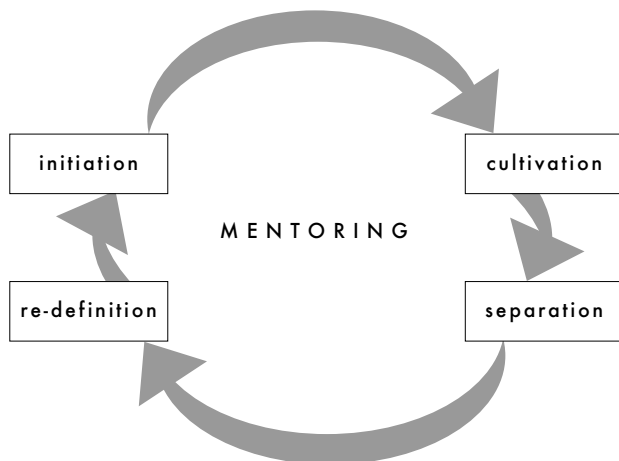
VOLUNTARY	No one can be forced into a mentoring relationship.
CONFIDENTIALITY	Information discussed between a mentor and a mentee is strictly confidential. Both parties will share more if they do not fear a breach of confidentiality.
RESPECT	Respect is established when the mentee recognizes the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the mentor and when the mentor appreciates the success the mentee has reached to date and the mentee's desire to develop to his/her full potential.
TRUST	Trust is learned and built gradually. Mentors and mentees should build trust through communicating and being available to each other, reliable and loyal.
COMMUNICATION	Communication is a two-way street. Mentors and mentees need to talk and actively listen. They also need to discuss mutual expectations.
COMMITMENT	Set time aside to meet outside or during the working hours. Both mentor and mentee have to agree with the frequency and duration of meetings.

NO FAULT CONCLUSION	Understand that either party can withdraw from the mentoring relationship at any time. It is not necessary to provide an explanation. However many issues can be resolved if both partners discuss how the relationship is going and review mutual expectations from time to time.
MENTEE DRIVEN	A successful mentoring relationship is based on the mentee's needs. It is those needs that determine, as an example, the matching process, and/or provide guidance on how the relationship will evolve. The mentee should be proactive in contacting the mentor and not wait for the mentor to take him/her by the hand.



## THE MENTORING PROCESS

Mentoring relationships evolve and change over time. As they move from one phase to another, different affective and developmental experiences take place. The proposed conceptual model from Kram (1983) identifies four predictable phases during a mentoring relationship.



### 1. Initiation

In the first phase of the mentoring relationship, it is important for the mentor and the mentee to clarify goals, objectives, process and the length of the engagement. It does not matter how the relationship was initiated (sponsored by the organization or initiated informally by both parties), it is key that these terms are discussed upfront. This gives the engagement a structure where both parties have a common understanding of mutual expectations, the plan of action and desired outcomes.



## 2. Cultivation

Guided by the objectives, the two parties work together to build the mentor-mentee relationship. This is when most of the true mentoring takes place.

## 3. Separation

At this stage, the two parties decide to end the mentor-mentee relationship, for whatever reason. They could both agree, but this may not necessarily be the case. They could agree that the mentee has met the objectives set at the outset. The mentee may no longer need mentoring or the mentor may be unable to provide additional mentoring.

## 4. Re-definition

During the last stage of the mentorship, the two parties discuss the nature of their relationship moving forward. The relationship may take a peer-like or friendship aspect where sporadic informal contact and mutual support is encouraged, or it ends entirely.



## COMMON MISPERCEPTIONS AND MYTHS

Misperceptions and myths undermine the efforts to implement a coordinated mentoring initiative and are often detrimental to those involved in mentoring relationships. Here are some popular misperceptions and myths.

- *You need to be in a senior position to be a mentor*

It does not matter what is the seniority level of the mentor. An effective mentor helps mentees achieve their long-term professional goals and aspirations. If an individual is able to accomplish this, s/he can be a mentor, regardless of the position in the organization. It is, in fact, common to have peer mentors.

- *A good mentoring relationship simply needs a good mentor*

It takes two to tango - and two to form an effective mentoring relationship. It does not matter how good the mentor is, if s/he is doing all the work, the relationship will not succeed. Both parties need to be committed to the process and to the outcome.

- *Mentoring takes place naturally*

There are a handful of people who are naturally gifted at assisting others to reach their goals. With this exception, mentoring takes planning and perseverance to be effective - it does not just happen.

- *Mentoring has to be face-to-face*

With telephones and emails, mentoring no longer has to be face-to-face. Many successful mentoring relationships take place where the mentor and mentee

have never met. However, it is the ideal situation to meet face-to-face during the first few meetings before relying on technology for communicating.

- *A good boss is a good mentor*

A mentor's responsibilities may be similar to those of a good supervisor. However, while supervision emphasizes immediate tasks and short-term needs, mentoring stresses the professional and long-term needs of an individual. Mentoring is an integral part of leadership, even though it is often absent or lacking in supervisory relationships.

- *Mentoring involves favouritism*

For a number of reasons, those unable or unwilling to participate in a coordinated mentoring initiative may be jealous of the relationship the mentee has with his/her mentor. For instance, when mentors arrange new opportunities for mentees, this may be perceived as favouritism. Proper orientation ensures that this is kept to a minimum. Mentors, however, should not be involved or interfere with career matters such as performance appraisals, promotions and transfers.

- *A good mentoring relationship needs chemistry*

Mentors and mentees in a number of coordinated mentoring initiatives were asked to rank the need for special chemistry in the relationship they had just formally wrapped up. The majority ranked special chemistry #12 (least needed) out of 12. In a formally coordinated program, the relationship operates out of commitment and a desire to improve/develop. Keep in mind that each person has unique needs and some people may not insist on "chemistry" with their counterpart.

- *Mentoring is a one-way process*

Learning goes both ways and the mentor usually learns as much from the mentee, so the growth is reciprocal.

- *High profile people make the best mentors*

Prestige and success can be good qualities, however, good advice, exemplary leadership styles, strong work ethics are qualities that vary with individuals. Good mentors are people who challenge the mentee according to his/her needs, readiness, and aspirations.

- *Mentor-mentee expectations are the same for everyone*

Individuals seek mentors for similar reasons: resources, visibility, enhanced skills, role model and counsel. But each individual brings different expectations. The key is to understand where the mentee is now, not where he or she should be. Furthermore, mentors must be very cognizant not to develop clones of themselves and respect their mentee's choice.

The following questions are important and are briefly addressed here in order to avoid barriers to mentoring relationships.

- *Who can participate in a mentoring relationship?*

Anyone can participate in a mentoring relationship, either as a mentor or as a mentee, or both, depending on individual's particular needs and experiences. In fact, a person can be a mentor in one relationship while simultaneously being a mentee to a more experienced mentor.

- *How do I find a mentor?*

A person should spend time thinking about their needs before seeking for a mentor. The key is to find a mentor who is willing to devote the necessary time and is respected by the mentee; who acts as a role model; whose behaviours and values can be emulated and from whom the mentee can learn.

- *As a mentor, do I select my mentee?*

A mentoring relationship is more likely to succeed if the mentee chooses a preferred mentor. However, either party may initiate the mentoring relationship. Often the mentee attracts the attention of the mentor through excellent performance or similar interests. Similarly, the mentee may seek out a more experienced individual to answer work-related questions and explain the informal politics of the organization.

- *What rank difference should there be between mentor and a mentee?*

The mentor is usually two levels above the mentee (especially when the program is designed to support succession planning). However, the most important consideration is the fact that the mentor is usually more experienced (e.g., a chief warrant officer mentoring a senior captain).

- *What is discussed in a mentoring relationship?*

Every mentoring relationship is unique. Each relationship is based upon the personal styles of each partner, the commitments they have agreed to, and the strengths both bring to the relationship. The topics of discussion will largely depend on the mentee's needs and the issues that the mentor feels are important for a long-term professional development.

The topics are unlimited, but here some examples:

- √ leadership issues
- √ ethical dilemmas
- √ coping with difficult situations, people and stress
- √ balancing work, family and health
- √ feedback on performance

- ✓ organisational issues and politics
- ✓ understanding organisational culture

- *How often should we meet and for how long?*

The mentor and mentee decide on how often they will meet. Meetings should be scheduled regularly (two or three times a month). The frequency of contact is usually discretionary for both parties. However, the bottom line is to balance the work schedule and the needs of each person. The usual length of meetings is anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour, but it can easily take longer if the parties do not meet regularly.

In most instances, a one-year agreement with the option for renewal is most appropriate in formal or semi-formal mentoring initiatives. Agreeing to an end date for the mentoring relationship will help prevent dependency and possessive behaviour.

- *Do we meet during working hours or after hours?*

Mentoring is a professional development activity and it should be recognized as such. In this regard, mentees in formal or semi-formal mentoring programs (i.e. sanctioned by the organization) should be able to meet with their mentors during work hours, and recognition initiatives should take into account the efforts of mentors as key agents of professional development. However, mentor and mentee often meet over their lunch hour because of different factors: time constraint, workload, etc.

- *How long does a mentoring relationship usually last?*

While some relationships last for years, it is common for a mentee to outgrow his/her mentor and seek another. Sometimes it is a good idea to set “milestones” to review the relationship, to allow both parties to discuss where they are at and what their ongoing needs may be. This also gives either person an “out” should things move on or the relationship does not meet the developmental needs of either person.

- *Is mentoring in a formalized format “real” mentoring?*

A formal relationship is “real” mentoring because it is entered into as a voluntary agreement between two parties in order to accomplish a specific purpose. Each party understands the need to build the relationship. The commitment of both parties is essential and documented in the form of a written agreement or learning plan, which contains their own ground rules for the partnership, statement of roles, expectations, learning objectives and discussion topics.

Often, once the “formal” aspect of the mentoring relationship is over (in formal or semi-formal mentoring initiatives), the mentoring relationship continues to develop informally and usually becomes even richer in terms of learning over the years.

- *Is it best to have a mentoring relationship between two people of the same gender or the same cultural background?*

Not necessarily. The purpose of mentoring is to learn. Choosing a mentor of the opposite sex or from a different cultural background can provide new opportunities for professional development and personal growth. That relationship can also provide the right setting for learning different techniques of communicating, teaching and coaching to better adapt to the cross-gender and cross-cultural experience. Furthermore, it offers to both parties the opportunity to grow professionally and personally regardless gender or race.

- *Why can't my supervisor or manager be my mentor?*

Most supervisors do mentor somewhat, but the most effective mentor is usually not the first or second level supervisor. The mentor does not evaluate the mentee with respect to his or her current work, does not conduct performance reviews of the mentee, and does not provide input on promotions.

There are drawbacks to the supervisor mentoring his or her subordinate. One is a perception of favouritism, based on the time that can be required in mentoring. In addition, mentees are often reluctant to being open about their developmental needs and weaknesses to their direct supervisor. The mentee has to feel free to discuss issues openly and honestly, without worrying about possible negative repercussions on their performance appraisal and their career.

- *Can someone have more than one mentor?*

Yes, especially when a mentee has needs in more than one area. Forming relationships with several mentors that you can turn to for advice is wise. However, it can be difficult to find the time and energy for multiple mentoring relationships. Quality relationships can be hard to manage if the mentee spreads him/herself too thin. If the mentee is new to this type of relationship, it is recommended to begin with only one mentor before seeking additional mentors.

However, we can have multiple mentors for other needs (e.g., family, health and fitness, spirituality), unrelated to work.

- *What do we do if our mentoring relationship does not work?*

A mentoring relationship can be terminated at anytime.

In formal and semi-formal mentoring programs, mentors and mentees are usually matched based on similarities in personality, learning styles, competencies and interests. This is not always infallible and sometimes one or both partners may feel uneasy in the relationship, or may not be able to achieve the level of rapport necessary for rich communication. Under such circumstances it may be necessary to terminate the relationship.

The success of the relationship will depend on the effort and commitment each partner puts in. Many problems can be avoided by discussing expectations at the onset of the relationship.

- *How do we know that it is time to end a mentoring relationship?*

The mentee should not become dependent on the mentoring relationship for “survival”. It is important for the mentor to manage the development of the relationship and the dependence of the mentee, and discuss situations where it is becoming obvious that a relationship should be ended. Wherever possible, it is important that the partners reflect on the development and lessons learned to allow for a smooth and planned closure rather than ending on a sour note. Again, discussing mutual expectations will avoid uncomfortable situations.



## CONCLUSION

This handbook has provided a brief overview of the various concepts associated with mentoring. Understanding these concepts and applying them will greatly ensure successful mentoring relationships. Whether the mentoring relationship evolves informally or within a formalized or semi-formalized program, it is a valuable tool for leadership, professional, career and personal growth.

Mentoring is an integral part of transformational leadership. Its aim is to fully develop the potential of future leaders. Being a mentor is a way to contribute to the development of more junior members. Having a mentor prepares and assists members to stay in touch with the core values and vision of the organization. Such relationships allow the sharing of skills and knowledge, and the transfer of organizational values and culture. Mentoring relationships can also promote, complement and augment existing professional development. Moreover, it is a self-renewing tool. Over 90 percent of individuals who have received good mentoring become mentors in turn.

By encouraging the development of skills and abilities required of transformational leaders, the CF increases the effectiveness of individuals and the organization as a whole.



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## ANNEXES

### *Annex A: Deciding on a Mentor*

Before selecting a mentoring partner, a mentee should ask him/herself the following questions.

Is this someone who is skilled, qualified and able to provide me with expert guidance?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Is this someone who takes pride in the organization, who relishes challenges and understands the mission, vision, and values of the organization?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Is this someone I respect?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Is this someone I can trust to discuss sensitive or confidential issues?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Is this someone who is patient and has the time to work on my leadership, professional, career and/or personal development?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Is this someone who is a good role model?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Is this someone I feel will listen and understand me?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Is this someone who will challenge me?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Is this someone who will provide encouragement?

☐ Yes  
☐ No

Is this someone who will provide me with wise counsel?

☐ Yes  
☐ No



## *Annex B: The Mentee's Pledge*

As a mentee, I am dedicated to learning, developing and growing. In doing so, I must actively undertake the following obligations when necessary:

I will assess my leadership, professional, career, and personal development needs and set mutually agreeable goals with my mentor.

I will respect my mentor.

I will reflect on the what, where, when and how necessary to achieve my goals.

I will embrace new challenges with a positive attitude and open mind.

I will accept advice from and provide feedback to my mentor.

I will accept feedback from my mentor and reflect on suggestions made.

I will share answers/solutions to any issues or barriers that may become present during the mentoring relationship.

I will openly and honestly communicate with my mentor.

I will clarify what my expectations are of my mentor and the relationship, from the on-set of the mentorship.

I will initiate and maintain contact and arrange meetings when necessary.

I will realize that the initiative is not a guaranteed path to promotion.

I will communicate with my mentor at least twice a month.

*"The beginning is the most important part of the work."*

*Plato*

### *Annex C: The Mentor's Pledge*

As a mentor, I will oversee the leadership, professional, career and personal development of my mentee. As a mentor I will motivate, encourage and support my mentee to the best of his/her abilities. In doing so, I must actively take on the following responsibilities as needed:

I will work with my mentee to set realistic goals to develop his/her leadership, professional, career, and personal competencies.

I will actively listen and have an open mind.

I will agree to respect the confidentiality of the relationship.

I will ask my mentee probing questions to encourage forward thinking.

I will provide clear explanations.

I will act as a sounding board rather than attempt to provide solutions and be a trouble-shooter.

I will provide guidance to my mentee that is objective, confidential and impartial.

I will provide feedback, advice and suggestions, when requested by my mentee.

I will empower my mentee to deal with mistakes and setbacks.

I will respect the aspirations of my mentee, even if they differ from my own.

I will work with my mentee to help him/her build self-confidence and motivation.

I will stimulate creativity, discussions and analysis through activities.

I will help my mentee expand his/her network.

I will communicate with my mentee at least twice a month.

*"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."*

*Ralph Emerson Waldo*

## *Annex D: Mentor/Mentee Mentoring Agreement*

This agreement outlines our mutual goals, responsibilities and expectations and serves as our commitment to this mentoring relationship.

Expectations of the Mentor:

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Expectations of the Mentee:

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Goal(s) of Mentee:

For each goal clearly outline: the goal itself; the action plan; and expected results.

Goal # 1

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What the mentor can do:

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What the mentee can do:

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Confidentiality: \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency of meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of time the mentor will dedicate per month: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of time the mentee will dedicate per month: \_\_\_\_\_

Other terms of agreement:

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We agree to a no-fault conclusion of this relationship if, for any reason, either one of us wishes to end the mentorship. No questions asked.

Mentor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Annex E: Learning and Development Plan

Mentee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(An effective goal is specific, measurable, challenging and realistic)

Goals	Action Steps	Resources Required	Target Dates