



Introduction to mentoring

Lesson 2: The stages of a formal mentoring relationship and the different types of mentoring

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Preparatory work – Reading

Informal mentoring and formal mentoring

Not all mentoring relationships are necessarily part of a structured programme. In fact, a high proportion of mentoring relationships happen in a natural way. We can distinguish two approaches:

- Informal mentoring
- Formal mentoring

Preparatory work – Reading

Informal mentoring

Informal mentoring is based on a natural relationship and spontaneous association. Often the mentee starts the process by contacting the person chosen as a mentor. But, sometimes it can be the other way round.

Preparatory work – Reading

Formal mentoring

A formal mentor does more or less the same thing as an informal mentor but, in a relationship of formal mentoring, the mentor has added responsibilities such as:

- Maintaining regular contact with the mentee's supervisor.
- Helping the mentee to develop relationships in the organisation and to understand how the organisation works.
- Helping the mentee to design the steps of a growth plan according to criteria established by the organisation.
- Writing regular reports on his/her progress so that challenges and contextual obstacles, whether personal or organisational, can be overcome.

Preparatory work – Reading

Formal mentoring

Formal mentoring implies an organised programme that anticipates a structured approach, firmly supported by the leaders of an organisation.

- There is a formal agreement.
- There are discussions about the goals, the expectations, the process, the frequency of the meetings, the duration of the agreement, etc.
- Usually the programme is supervised by a coordinator.

The supervisors make sure that the mentor and the mentee have enough time at work to invest in their mentoring relationship and that they have the necessary means to reach the objectives defined in the agreement.

Preparatory work – Activity no. 1

In your opinion, what are the advantages and the disadvantages of these two approaches?

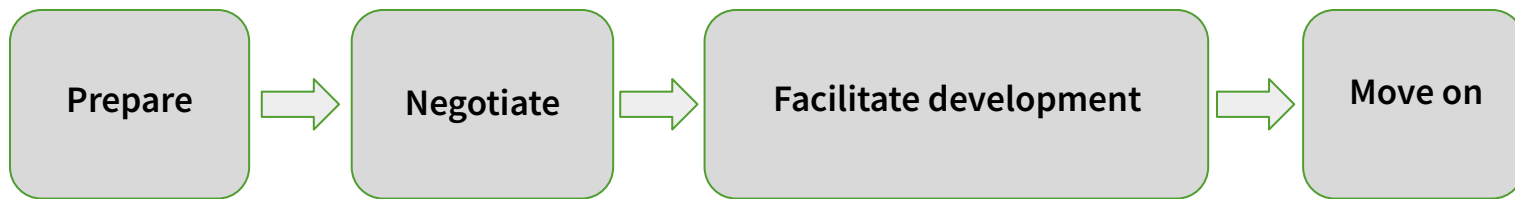
- Informal mentoring
- Formal mentoring

	Informal mentoring	Formal mentoring
Advantages		
Disadvantages		

Preparatory work – Reading

Stages of a formal mentoring relationship

In a formal mentoring relationship, we usually go through four stages :



At each stage, we must tackle important points for discussion and complete some tasks so that the mentoring relationship is fruitful.

Preparatory work – Reading

1. Prepare

1. Initiate a conversation.
2. **Take time to get to know each other and see whether the mentor and the mentee can work well together.**
3. Share personal mentoring experiences that can influence the relationship.
4. **Discuss the expectations, the goals and challenges.**
5. Discuss different personalities and learning styles.
6. **Speak with the mentor's and mentee's supervisors** and ask for their authorisation and support.

Preparatory work – Reading

2. Negotiate

1. **Negotiate how long the mentor and the mentee can spend on this mentoring relationship and when it will officially end.**
2. Discuss the frequency of the meetings.
3. Agree on the communication tools that the mentor and the mentee will use to stay in touch.
4. Discuss and set the “rules” of the relationship (confidentiality, limits, subjects etc.).

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Preparatory work – Reading

2. Negotiate – continued

1. **Discuss each person's responsibilities**
 - Who will initiate and schedule meetings?
 - Who will choose the subjects to be discussed?
 - Who will keep the mentee's supervisor informed?
2. **Formulate the main goal, the objectives (mentor + mentee together).**
3. **Work out a plan to move forward (mentor + mentee together)** bearing in mind the organisation's expectations and professional development plans.
4. With the above points in mind, complete and sign the mentoring agreement.

Preparatory work – Reading

3. Facilitate development

1. Make use of the available time by setting up a plan: **“Subjects we want to cover”** for planned meetings.
2. Help the mentee to make progress in his/her **development plan**.
(Further reading on these: [Building local capacity through mentoring: Lunsford pp9-20](#))
 - a. Give support
 - b. Challenge
 - c. Clarify the vision
3. **Encourage** each other.
4. **Face the problems** and dare to hold difficult conversations.
5. **Regularly evaluate progress** and **adjust the plan**, if necessary.
6. **Celebrate** even small steps in making progress.

Preparatory work – Reading

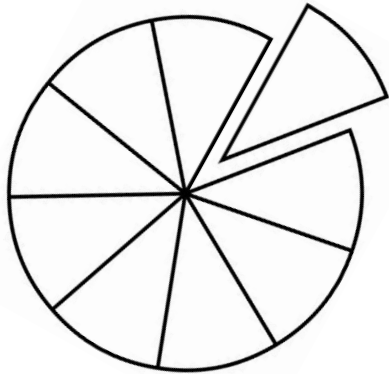
4. Move on

1. Review the journey travelled together.
2. Identify and **clearly express what the mentor and the mentee have gained due to this mentoring relationship** (even if there were aspects that were not satisfactory).
3. **Thank** each other.
4. **Celebrate!**
5. Discuss how your relationship will change now that the formal mentoring agreement has been completed.

Preparatory work – Reading

Different types of mentoring

Mentoring is not just an individualised relationship. There are different types of mentoring.



Please read page 10 in [Robust Mentoring](#) to find out more.

Preparatory work – Activity no. 2

What do you think are the **advantages and disadvantages** of these types of mentoring **in your context?**

- One-on-one mentoring
- Group mentoring
- Peer mentoring
- Mentoring constellation
- Team mentoring
- Hybrid



Preparatory work – Activity no. 3

Meditation: Jethro and Moses

Read Exodus 18.

- What was Moses' blind spot in this situation?
- What does this example teach us about the need for ongoing mentoring for established leaders? What may stand in the way of this type of relationship?

Food for thought

“Spiritual mentors invite us to recognise that God is always present in the world, and they work with us to help us discern his footprints. They agree with the ancient poet, quoted by the apostle Paul, who said, ‘For in him we live and move and have our being’ (Acts 17:28). We live in a God-filled world and our job is to awaken to his presence, notice what he is doing, and go with the flow of divine activity. Consequently, the work of the mentor, as Anderson and Reese point out, is ‘not to create but to notice, not to invent but to discern.’”

Horsfall, T. (2014) *Mentoring for Spiritual Growth: Sharing the journey of faith*. Abingdon: Bible Reading Fellowship



See you soon on Zoom!