



A DWF TOOLKIT

**YOUNG WOMEN INACTIVE
POLITICS:
MENTORSHIP MODULE**

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FOREWORD

Democracy Works Foundation in partnership with the Women's Legal Resource Centre (WOLREC), Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD) and Dan Church Aid/Norwegian Church Aid (DCA-NCA), with funding from the European Union (EU) implemented the Young Women in Active Politics (YWAP) Program that aimed at promoting inclusion of young women aged between 15-35 years in active politics through a mentorship approach.

Mentorship is a process where 'an individual with more experience in a given professional field, helps someone with less experience (the mentee) to grow professionally. The Mentorship approach is viewed as a critical activity that would build the capacity of young women, in this case, where the mentors would guide and help shape the professional growth and learning of the mentee, serve as a positive role model, share experiences on the journey that these seniors went through before accessing current positions with a clear intention to help beneficiaries or mentees build self-confidence and demystify gender stereotypes that prevent many females from exercising their full potential.

The program was premised on the basis that despite nearly 70% of the population of Malawi being 30 years and below, participation of young women in politics both as members and leaders remains limited. The participation of women in politics and decision-making positions has persistently remained low over the years, despite a number of efforts that have been implemented over the years to increase women's participation.

Furthermore, during election times, fewer women are able to secure the nomination of their parties to contest as candidates than men. All this points to the fact that women are not participating at the same level as men. With so few women in these party and political positions, Malawi is less likely to make significant progress towards the gender related international and regional convention, protocols and treaties including the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action nor is the gender gap likely to be closed in the foreseeable future.

Therefore, coming up with this module was to provide an overarching guidance to both seniors party members as mentors and the young women as mentees under the approach so that these women feel supported, encouraged and motivated to participate in political politics and political leadership positions.

Dr. Augustine Magolowondo
Chief of Party

1. UNDERSTANDING MENTORSHIP

Learning objectives

- To understand what mentoring is.
- To understand the purpose of mentorship.
- To help mentors understand their roles, their responsibilities, and the mentoring process.
- To demonstrate how mentorship is a mutually beneficial process to both the mentor and mentee

1.1. Who is a mentor?

A mentor is 'an individual with more experience in a given professional field, who helps someone with less experience (the mentee) to grow professionally.'¹ A mentor usually provides guidance and advice to a less experienced and often younger person.² Therefore, a mentor can help a mentee make the most of career opportunities and aid their personal and professional development by passing on valuable skills, knowledge and insights to the mentee to help them develop personally and professionally.³

1.2. Key aspects of mentorship

- ✓ Mentoring involves the exchange of information between two parties where one person who has real-world experience is sharing it with the other.⁴

'Mentorship is a collaborative learning relationship between two (or more) individuals who share mutual responsibility and accountability for helping the mentee work towards achievement of clear and mutually defined learning goals.'

Lois J. Zachary, Creating a Mentoring Culture: The Organization's Guide (San Francisco, California, Jossey-Bass, 2005).

¹ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

² ScreenSkills 'Guide for Mentors' available at [2019-05-29-guide-for-mentors.pdf \(screenskills.com\)](https://www.screenskills.com/2019-05-29-guide-for-mentors.pdf) (accessed 2 October 2021)

³ ScreenSkills 'Guide for Mentors' available at [2019-05-29-guide-for-mentors.pdf \(screenskills.com\)](https://www.screenskills.com/2019-05-29-guide-for-mentors.pdf) (accessed 2 October 2021)

⁴ UN Women 'Mentoring for women's empowerment Guide for workplace mentoring programmes' (2020)

- ✓ Mentorship involves the provision of guidance and the facilitation of learning moments in the mentorship journey.⁵

'Mentoring as a learning relationship that helps people take charge of their own development, release their potential and achieve results that they value.'

Mary Connor and Julia Pokora, Coaching and Mentoring at Work: Developing Effective Practice, 2nd ed. (Berkshire, McGraw Hill, Open University Press, 2012)

- ✓ Mentorship involves a process in which mentor helps a mentee to 'grow, develop, make decisions, and receive guidance for their careers' or profession.⁶

'Mentoring is a conversation that leads to insight, decisions, planning and action. It is used for both professional and personal development. It is an alliance that creates a space for dialogue that results in reflection, action and learning. It is about conversations that create insights and interaction with another that facilitates personal and professional development and strategic planning for individuals.'

Ann Rolfe, Mentoring Works (Sydney, Synergetic People Development Pty Ltd, 2012).

- ✓ Mentorship requires a mentor to provide support, serve as a sounding board for new ideas, share 'knowledge, encouragement, guidance, and constructive feedback to the mentee' and 'develop a genuine interest in the growth of their abilities and talents.'⁷

In sum, mentorship therefore involves the following core elements¹:

- ✓ Partnership or alliance
- ✓ Goals
- ✓ Learning
- ✓ Action or results

Source: UN Women 'Mentoring for women's empowerment Guide for workplace mentoring programmes' (2020)

⁵ UN Women 'Mentoring for women's empowerment Guide for workplace mentoring programmes' (2020)

⁶ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁷ Planning Institute Australia National Office 'mentoring program handbook for mentees and mentors'

1.3. The aim of mentorship

The purpose of mentorship is 'to tap into the existing knowledge, skills, and experience of senior or more qualified individual' and transfer 'these skills to less experienced individuals to advance their careers.'⁸

Thus, mentors who have worked in their area of expertise for some time and who have gained experience in a specific area are usually a good fit for mentees wanting to follow their same path. In such a scenario, the 'mentor can share what they know about their job/profession, how they fit into the profession and share insights about the career path in general.'⁹

Mentorship is therefore important because it provides individuals (mentees) with the opportunity to develop and become more competent in their roles as well as prepare for growth opportunities in the future.¹⁰

Generally, mentorship has the following aims¹:

- Promotion of learning
- Knowledge transfer
- Personal and professional development
- Career progression

Source: UN Women 'Mentoring for women's empowerment Guide for workplace mentoring programmes' (2020)

A mentoring relationship is all about growth and development which, at its best, impacts on both parties.

Clutterbuck (2008, p. 3)¹¹ describes the mentorship relationship in five phases:

- Phase 1: *Rapport-building* – mentor and mentee decide whether they want to work together and negotiate what each expects of the other.
- Phase 2: *Direction-setting* – mentor and mentee achieve clarity about what each aims to achieve from the relationship and how.
- Phase 3: *Progress-making* – having helped the mentee define and commit to personal change, the mentor must guide and support them as needed.
- Phase 4: *Winding down* – when the relationship has helped to deliver the desired outcomes or the mentee outgrows the mentor.
- Phase 5: *Moving on/professional friendship* – moving on from a formal mentoring relationship towards a less committed, more casual one.

⁸ Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com/what-is-the-purpose-of-mentoring/) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁹ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com/mentor-handbook/) (accessed 14 October 2021)

¹⁰ Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com/what-is-the-purpose-of-mentoring/) (accessed 14 October 2021)

¹¹ Available at [Week 4: Understanding mentoring: 3 The mentoring process - OpenLearn - Open University - MC 1](https://openlearn.open.ac.uk/courses/2021/understanding-mentoring/3-the-mentoring-process/) (accessed 29 October 2021).

1.4. What mentorship is not

- a) *Guarantee of a job or provision of money:* A mentoring relationship is not meant to provide any assurance of job or provision of finances for the mentee.¹² However, both parties may develop competencies and skills that improve overall professional and career performance.
- b) *Replacement for Formal Development:* Mentoring cannot take the place of formal training but rather should augment formal development activities.¹³
- c) *Management Replacement:* The mentor does not and should not take on the responsibilities of a manager.
- d) *Personal counselling:* Mentors are not supposed to provide personal counselling to mentees. Instead it is best for mentees to seek help on personal issues from a life coach or mental health professional rather than a mentor.

1.5. The types of formal mentorship

- a) *Traditional mentoring:* This type of mentoring takes the format of having one adult mentor one young person. It is also called 'one-to-one mentoring' which places one adult in a mentoring relationship with one young person.
- b) *Informal mentoring:* This is a spontaneous mentorship process that occurs serendipitously over a flexible time-period. In such a scenario, a mentor and mentee are drawn to each other based on mutual interests
- c) *Group mentoring:* Group mentoring involves one adult mentor forming a relationship with a group of up to four (4) young people. The mentor assumes the role of leader and makes a commitment to meet regularly with the group over a long period of time. Most interaction is guided by a curriculum/module.
- d) *Team mentoring:* This type of mentorship involves several adults working with small groups of young people in which the adult-to-youth ratio is not greater than 1:4.
- e) *Peer mentoring:* This arrangement places an accomplished young person in a mentoring position over other youth (peers) so that the youth mentor can inspire and motivate his/her peers.
- f) *E-mentoring:* This type of mentoring occurs electronically, largely though e-mail and the Internet. The pair communicate via the Internet at least once a week over a period of six months to a year.

1.6. What is the benefit of being a mentor?

Mentoring is "a mutually beneficial relationship".¹⁴ It may feel that a mentor has to give value to another person (mentee) and not receive some in return. However, that's not the case.¹⁵ Instead, the relationship between the mentor, and the mentee can be thought of as an exchange.¹⁶

¹² Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

¹³ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

¹⁴ Planning Institute Australia National Office 'mentoring program handbook for mentees and mentors'

¹⁵ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

¹⁶ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

Though being a mentor serves as a way to give back, it is also an important development and learning experience.¹⁷ Teaching others is the best way to learn about yourself (as a mentor). In the same way, mentors become more competent as leaders and communicators as they guide and help rising talent.¹⁸

Yes, the role of a mentor is to help their mentee grow and learn, but this is a great opportunity for the mentee to learn as well. In fact, being a mentor:

- Drives the mentor's self-awareness
- Expands the mentor's professional network
- Increases mentor's awareness of available talent in the subject area¹⁹
- Improves the mentor's communication and interpersonal skills²⁰
- Enhances the mentor's Leadership and management abilities
- A reinforcement of and confidence in the mentor's personal expertise
- An increase in the mentor's overall self-confidence and motivation

CASE STUDY

Following the pilot mentoring programmes in companies in Georgia, mentors reported they had gained or enhanced a number of skills, including:

- Active listening skills
- The ability to explain new and complex ideas
- Organizational skills such as developing meeting plans, information and materials
- Familiarity with new communication methods and approaches
- Improved facilitation skills
- The ability to analyse their own knowledge and behavior

UN Women 'Mentoring for women's empowerment Guide for workplace mentoring programmes' (2020)

a) *Mentorship enriches a mentor's leadership skills*

¹⁷ Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

¹⁸ Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

¹⁹ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

²⁰ UN Women 'Mentoring for women's empowerment Guide for workplace mentoring programmes' (2020)

Being put in the position of a role model can help mentors become better leaders and instill confidence in their leadership ability.²¹ The responsibility of helping guide someone's career and goals requires the mentor to guide, motivate and offer honest feedback in difficult conversations. All these skills are at the top of the required list for a leader.²²

b) Mentorship improves a mentor's communication skills

If you have ever had to explain something to somebody, you probably noticed that you had to think it through and clean up your explanation to make it easy for another person to understand.²³ In the same line of thinking, mentors become better communicators and listeners by virtue of being in a mentoring relationship.²⁴

c) Mentors gain new perspective

While the mentor is usually in the position of imparting knowledge to the mentee, a mentoring relationship can also help the more experienced mentor learn new skills. It is common that younger mentees can take on the role of mentor through a 'reverse mentoring model' to share technological advances, trends, or sharpen their skills (e.g. digital skills). This is an area where the mentee can also become a teacher, guiding the mentor to learn new skills or a new way of doing things.²⁵ The mentee can provide feedback that helps the mentor listen better before they jump to problem solving.²⁶

d) The joy of giving back and watching others attain their full potential

Mentorship provides the opportunity for the mentor to give back to society or their community by helping train new and upcoming professionals, making those around them more competent and satisfied. It is also a great opportunity to find up-and-coming talent. Mentorship is therefore helpful for both the mentor and mentee's networks.

e) Being recognized for the voluntary mentorship role enriches one's Curriculum Vitae

Mentors may also find mentoring as an invaluable opportunity 'to expand their curriculum vitae and engage in volunteer work, which may be valued by employers and an overall rewarding experience that can have a positive impact on someone else's life.'²⁷

²¹ Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

²² Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

²³ Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

²⁴ Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

²⁵ Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

²⁶ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

²⁷ UN Women 'Mentoring for women's empowerment Guide for workplace mentoring programmes' (2020)

1.7. Summary of key points

- ✚ A mentor usually provides guidance and advice to a less experienced and often younger person.
- ✚ The purpose of mentorship is 'to tap into the existing knowledge, skills, and experience of senior or more qualified individual' and transfer 'these skills to less experienced individuals to advance their careers
- ✚ Mentors also draw benefits from the mentoring relationship. A mentor will have the opportunity to share their wisdom and experiences, evolve their own thinking, develop a new relationship, and deepen their skills as a mentor.
- ✚ A mentoring relationship is not meant to provide any assurance of job or provision of finances for the mentee or to replace formal education

1.8. Self-assessment/exercise

2. UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL MENTORSHIP

Learning objectives

- Understand what political mentorship and how it differs from other forms of mentorship
- Understand how political mentorship is structured
- Understand best practices in political mentoring

2.1. What is Political Mentorship

Political mentoring usually involves two politicians – a mentor who is more experienced in an area of politics who mentors a mentee, who is typically (but not always) a politician from the same political party.²⁸

2.2. What is the purpose of political mentorship?

In general, political mentorship aims to support political mentees to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform and advance in their political roles. A political mentoring relationship can be about many different things including

- ✓ establishing and setting political goals,
- ✓ campaign tips,
- ✓ understanding the “unwritten rules” of Politics,²⁹
- ✓ networking³⁰
- ✓ providing information about what a role entails³¹
- ✓ ideas about how the role has been performed by others.³²
- ✓ access to information and ideas about how things are done in other places.³³

Most important, a mentee and a mentor should discuss what they will focus on in their mentoring process.³⁴ Political mentoring like other forms of mentoring is usually defined by the needs of the mentee.³⁵

²⁸ City London University ‘Political Mentoring Toolkit’ available at [Political-Mentoring-Toolkit-V1.pdf \(city.ac.uk\)](#) (accessed 27 October 2021)

²⁹ European Political Mentoring Network ‘Handbook for mentees’ (2014)

³⁰ European Political Mentoring Network ‘Handbook for mentees’ (2014)

³¹ City London University ‘Political Mentoring Toolkit’ available at [Political-Mentoring-Toolkit-V1.pdf \(city.ac.uk\)](#) (accessed 27 October 2021)

³² City London University ‘Political Mentoring Toolkit’ available at [Political-Mentoring-Toolkit-V1.pdf \(city.ac.uk\)](#) (accessed 27 October 2021)

³³ City London University ‘Political Mentoring Toolkit’ available at [Political-Mentoring-Toolkit-V1.pdf \(city.ac.uk\)](#) (accessed 27 October 2021)

³⁴ European Political Mentoring Network ‘Handbook for mentees’ (2014)

³⁵ City London University ‘Political Mentoring Toolkit’ available at [Political-Mentoring-Toolkit-V1.pdf \(city.ac.uk\)](#) (accessed 27 October 2021)

These are some of the reasons that political mentees have given for starting a mentoring arrangement:

- ✓ To find out what's required of me
- ✓ To learn about how things are done in other places
- ✓ To have someone to listen, advise but not judge
- ✓ To expand my network and learn more about my party
- ✓ To learn how to be more effective politically.

Source: City London University 'Political Mentoring Toolkit'

2.3. How is Political Mentorship different from other types of mentorship

Although political mentoring is similar to other types of mentoring, the political context introduces important challenges that are important in shaping how mentoring is best structured... Political roles have become increasingly complex and demanding.

Source: City London University 'Political Mentoring Toolkit'

a) Less rigid structure, more contextual flexibility

Political mentorship is less structured, much more mentee-driven and carefully suited to the political environment. This means that mentees need to have more control over the topics covered during mentoring sessions so that the mentorship focus is strictly needs-based and contextual.

Political mentorship also recognizes a more equal status between the individuals (mentor and mentee) involved. While a politician may have more experience, he or she does not have the right to determine what another politician should learn.³⁶ Political skill is shaped by ensuring a carefully contextual learning experience.

b) Entrenched accompaniment and solidarity strategies

³⁶ City London University 'Political Mentoring Toolkit' available at [Political-Mentoring-Toolkit-V1.pdf \(city.ac.uk\)](#) (accessed 27 October 2021)

Political mentees benefit a lot from mentors who take them in campaign trails, give them a seat to observe actual legislative or executive meetings, share opportunities for shadowing and allow them to speak and be recognised in public engagements. Exposure and visibility are important

Source: Myn Garcia 'Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership'

Transformative political mentoring is less about a “mentorship contract” more than it is about engendering solidarity and amplifying voice – particularly amongst young women in politics. This type of mentorship entrenches the kind of accompaniment that encourages women’s ‘belongingness’ and an exploration of “new” or alternative paradigms.³⁷ Thus, accompaniment requires commitment to a long-term process and personalized support.³⁸ This kind of mentoring inspires women and builds in them not only confidence but courage to break patterns, challenge patriarchal mindsets, disrupt the status quo and power imbalances within politics what can be both a rewarding and challenging journey.³⁹

Best practice

"Supporting our new colleagues in their first steps in their new positions in the municipalities, in a personalized way and from accumulated experience, is the bridge that unites individual and collective empowerment." *Virginia Woolf Basqueskola, Basque Country, Spain, EU*

- c) May require a longer-term continuous journey

Short-term mentoring arrangements in politics do not work. When the process is “projectised” to a short project life-span, the chances of success is minimal.

Myn Garcia 'Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership'

³⁷ Myn Garcia 'Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership'
Available at [Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership \(myngarcia.com\)](https://myngarcia.com) (accessed 29 October 2021)

³⁸ Myn Garcia 'Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership'
Available at [Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership \(myngarcia.com\)](https://myngarcia.com) (accessed 29 October 2021)

³⁹ Myn Garcia 'Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership'
Available at [Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership \(myngarcia.com\)](https://myngarcia.com) (accessed 29 October 2021)

Transformative political mentoring acknowledges that learning is a continuous journey and involves:

1. Building trust
2. Sustaining connectedness
3. Intergenerational dialogues and conversations
4. Allowing the political mentee to journey at her own pace
5. Helping the mentee navigate difficult spaces
6. Facilitating learning and unlearning⁴⁰

Embarking on and staying on course in a political journey can be challenging, and thus this necessitates sustained mentorship support- particularly for young women who can experience multiple forms of gendered challenges in their political journey.

2.4. Matching mentors to mentees in a political mentorship

- a) Cross party mentoring or same party mentoring?

Mentoring is normally arranged between mentors and mentees from the same political party.

As one mentee commented “I’m not saying that it isn’t useful to get different political perspectives, but most politicians will be less open when dealing with someone from a different political party than when dealing with someone from the same party.”

Source: City London University ‘Political Mentoring Toolkit’

In some instances, cross-party mentoring could be used to develop technical skills. E.g. to provide aspiring candidates with a better understanding of how the local council works from serving councilor’s perspective.

- b) Mentees given an opportunity to provide their preference

Once the list of mentors has been compiled by the secretariat of the mentorship programme, the project implementers can consider having the list of mentors made available to the mentees so as to give the

⁴⁰ Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network

mentees a chance to choose their pairings. Mentees can be asked to select at least 3 choices (i.e. first choice, second choice, third choice). The importance of having the mentee have an opportunity to choose a mentor shapes the mentee's trust in the mentorship and builds their sense of ownership in the mentoring arrangement.

- c) Mentorship programme secretariat do an intentional matching based on findings of a small assessment

Another approach that can be utilized is to develop a list of questions for the mentees, which requires them to answer questions relating to a self-assessment of their skills, knowledge as well as questions relating to their political details. The answers can then be used to carefully match the mentee's needs with a suitable mentor whose professional journey and skills aligns to the mentees needs. This methodology can also work well where the mentorship approach will be a group format

2.5. Best practices in political mentorship

- a) Garnering support from senior party leaders

One of the most important factors when organising mentoring for young political leaders is to acquire support from senior political figures within the political parties from which the political mentees emanate from. The mentoring approach needs to be endorsed at the highest political leadership structure of the party-⁴¹ which is also critical for sustainability of the mentorship initiative beyond a project lifespan. This is particularly critical as political mentorships often have to be undertaken over a longer period of time in order to be effective. Thus, having the mentorship understood and embraced by high political structures within the party will ensure continued support for mentees where a donor-funded mentorship project fazes out.

- b) Mentees accompanying and shadowing the mentor in political work and events.

'Mentees benefit a lot from mentors who take them on campaign trails, give them a seat to observe actual legislative or political executive meetings, share opportunities for shadowing and allow them to speak and be recognised in public engagements. This approach allows mentees to witness mentors in action, gain a first-hand experience in navigating difficult political spaces and affords them a reality check to political life.⁴² In addition, mentors can ask their mentees for their advice about a political project or problem on which they are working on in order to give them practical experience in addressing political situations.⁴³

- c) Conducting intergenerational dialogues and conversations to facilitate mutual knowledge sharing and learning.

This would include bringing together mentees and their mentor to share their experiences, tackle a project and learn together.⁴⁴ RSCD in India and WDG in Uganda have harnessed collaborative ways of learning

⁴¹ City University London: Political Mentoring Kit

⁴² Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network 'A Review of Mentoring Programmes for Women's Political Advancement and Leadership' (2021) Available at [Mentoring for women.pdf \(clgf.org.uk\)](https://www.clgf.org.uk/mentoring-for-women.pdf) (accessed 6 October 2021)

⁴³ Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/75-things-to-do-with-your-mentees/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

⁴⁴ Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network 'A Review of Mentoring Programmes for Women's Political Advancement and Leadership' (2021) Available at [Mentoring for women.pdf \(clgf.org.uk\)](https://www.clgf.org.uk/mentoring-for-women.pdf) (accessed 6 October 2021)

which includes women telling their stories and co-creating solutions.⁴⁵ This methodology has worked well. In addition, 'learning by doing alongside peers builds confidence particularly when complemented with a reflection and assessment sessions with their mentors.'⁴⁶

d) Raising the exposure and visibility of the mentee through facilitating connections with relevant women's political networks, women's rights and feminist organizations etc. Such important platforms provide safe spaces for young women to share their stories, be supported, build capacity, disrupt the status quo, eliminate barriers that are hindering the full participation of young women in leadership and provide capacity to prepare women to be high quality leaders.

e) Help your mentees develop a risk management approach. Mentors must work with their mentees to identify potential risks they'll face in the next few months. Then together, they can plan ways to minimize them.⁴⁷ This helps mentees to be more aware of potential challenges in their political career and aptly prepare for them, thus minimizing frustrations and feelings of quitting.

f) Mentors must be encouraged to apply contextual ingenuity in their mentorship approach.

Political mentees from various contexts outlined the following as effective political mentorship strategies:⁴⁸

- ✓ Mentorship support that helps them understand and navigate the "unwritten political rules" to propel their success;
- ✓ Mentorship support that helps mentees to identify learning opportunities with mentor's consistent commitment to the mentee's personal learning and development
- ✓ Mentorship support that provides new or different perspectives on key political issues
- ✓ Mentorship support that enables deep constructive engagement ('playing devil's advocate') when discussing decisions, new strategies or possible solutions
- ✓ Offering a space to talk
- ✓ Mentorship support that builds trust, creates a non-threatening environments and enables a safe space to engage and reflect on political ideas and challenges
- ✓ Mentorship support that assists the mentee to build their confidence and receive timely, honest and constructive feedback

⁴⁵ Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network 'A Review of Mentoring Programmes for Women's Political Advancement and Leadership' (2021) Available at [Mentoring for women.pdf \(clgf.org.uk\)](https://www.clgf.org.uk/mentoring-for-women.pdf) (accessed 6 October 2021)

⁴⁶ Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Commonwealth Women in Local Government Network 'A Review of Mentoring Programmes for Women's Political Advancement and Leadership' (2021) Available at [Mentoring for women.pdf \(clgf.org.uk\)](https://www.clgf.org.uk/mentoring-for-women.pdf) (accessed 6 October 2021)

⁴⁷ Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/75-things-to-do-with-your-mentees/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

⁴⁸ See generally City University London 'Political Mentoring Toolkit' The project involved interviews with 62 politicians who were mentors or mentees, and a survey of 215 elected members and officers. We asked them about how mentoring is structured, what works and doesn't work, different types of mentoring arrangements, and the impact mentoring has had.

WHAT POLITICAL MENTEES HOPE TO GAIN FROM THE MENTORSHIP PROCESS ⁴⁹	
<i>Political identity</i>	<i>Political confidence</i>
Clearer political aims	Improved confidence in performing their political role
Better knowledge of the political context	Knowledge of strengths and weaknesses
Improved political identity	Better awareness of their impact on others
More awareness of how to achieve political advantage	Clearer understanding of political expectations
Better able to communicate clear political vision.	Improved ability to influence others and build alliances
	Ability to think more broadly about problems and issues

⁴⁹ See generally City University London ‘Political Mentoring Toolkit’ The project involved interviews with 62 politicians who were mentors or mentees, and a survey of 215 elected members and officers. We asked them about how mentoring is structured, what works and doesn’t work, different types of mentoring arrangements, and the impact mentoring has had.

2.6. Summary of key points

- Political mentorship enables mentees to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform and advance in their political roles.
- Political mentoring is similar to other types of mentoring, but nonetheless requires a contextual understanding of the unique experiences and challenges often faced within the political arena;
- Best practices for political mentorship include:-
 - Endorsement of the mentorship initiative by political party leaders;
 - Hands-on experience through political shadowing;
 - Ingenuity informed by the unique political context which the mentee is operating within;
 - Facilitating strategic connections and networking opportunities for the mentees;
 - Conducting intergenerational dialogue, reflection and shared learning

2.7. Self-assessment/exercise

CONDUCTING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT – A CRITICAL FIRST STEP

Understanding the interests and needs of the political mentees is critical to successfully defining the objectives and benefits of the program. Taking the time upfront to step back and strategically assess what your mentees want and need is paramount to developing a program that will operate effectively.

Consider the following actions:

- ✓ Conduct a needs assessment (e.g., survey young women aspirants) to identify and understand what they want, both professionally and personally.
- ✓ Use the information gathered from the needs assessment to inform the development of your mentorship program objectives and benefits. This will ensure that your program is aligned with the needs of your target audience.

3. WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR

Learning objectives

- To understand the characteristics of a good mentor
- To understand the skills that mentors need in order to undertake effective mentorship roles
- To understand what mentors need to avoid in their mentorship roles

Becoming a good mentor takes time and experience.⁵⁰ Some people may be naturally skilled at talking to young people and motivating them to do well. They are, nonetheless, specific skills and qualities that enable one to be a successful and effective mentor.

- 3.1. Qualities of great mentors
 - a) They're motivated

Good mentors are those that not only have gained lots of knowledge and experience but are also motivated to share what they know with others.⁵¹ In particular, they must understand and respect the mentor-mentee relationship and take the mentoring program seriously.⁵²

'Having a wealth of experience, knowledge, and expertise is obviously important, but what good is it if the mentor keeps that information close to their chest? Good mentors have not only a willingness but a keen desire to share this information. They possess empathy and understand what it was like to be just starting out in their career or field. This drives them to pay it forward, so to speak, through mentorship'

Lean Bury '5 Attributes of a Good Mentor' (2019)

- f) They have great communication skills

One of the most critical factors in a mentoring relationship is good communication. Therefore, someone who has proven they can communicate positively and effectively will be a good mentor. This will be proven

⁵⁰ USAID Girls Mentoring Resource Guide Module 1: Becoming a good mentor Available at [Girls' Mentoring Resource Guide Module 1.pdf \(fhi360.org\)](#) (accessed 12 October 2021)

⁵¹ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁵² Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

in how they provide guidance and constructive feedback to their mentee.⁵³ In addition, they are often empathetic and can see things from another person's perspective.⁵⁴

Young people are still learning how to communicate successfully and they often rely on their mentors to take the lead and teach them how to communicate in this unique relationship.⁵⁵

Mentors must also pay attention to non-verbal communication such as eye contact, tone, facial expression and body language.⁵⁶

TIPS for mentors: non-verbal communication

Look at your mentee when she is speaking. She may not want to look at you, but you should make every effort to establish eye contact with her. Be aware of how you are sitting. Try to position yourself so that you are facing your mentee, as opposed to sitting side by side. Maintain good posture and lean slightly toward her if appropriate. Consider sitting in an open stance—do not cross your arms across your chest. It is okay to use your hands to talk if that's what you normally do. Be mindful of your tone of voice. Moderate your speech so that you are talking at a normal volume and speed. People tend to talk fast and at a higher pitch when we are anxious. Remember to take slow deep breaths when possible to control this tendency.

Source: Lisa Bottomley 'Mentoring – Part 5: Communicating with your mentee'

g) They enjoy learning

Mentors that enjoy learning and are well-informed about their field will make the best mentors. These are those individuals who continuously learn about the changes and innovations happening in the industry. They read journals and attend workshops and other training sessions to stay ahead of the game. A person who is up-to-date about the field will pass along that information to their mentee.⁵⁷

h) They are a team player

Mentors that enjoy learning and are well-informed about their field will make the best mentors. These are those individuals who continuously learn about the changes and innovations happening in the industry.⁵⁸

⁵³ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁵⁴ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁵⁵ Lisa Bottomley 'Mentoring – Part 5: Communicating with your mentee' Available at [Mentoring – Part 5: Communicating with your mentee - MSU Extension](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁵⁶ Lisa Bottomley 'Mentoring – Part 5: Communicating with your mentee' Available at [Mentoring – Part 5: Communicating with your mentee - MSU Extension](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁵⁷ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁵⁸ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

They read journals and attend workshops and other training sessions to stay ahead of the game. A person who is up-to-date about the field will pass along that information to their mentee.

g) They're Committed




Being a mentor can take time and energy.⁵⁹ To be an effective mentor, they'll need to be committed to putting in the extra time and effort required.⁶⁰

h) They have a positive attitude

Good mentors are positive people. A mentee would not be comfortable opening up about their goals and challenges to a mentor who doesn't seem to care?⁶¹ It's beneficial that the mentor sees the 'glass as half full' and has an optimistic view of what the mentorship partnership can achieve.

Tips for mentors

Try some of these:

-  Comment favorably on your mentee's accomplishments;
-  Communicate your belief in his or her capacity to grow personally and professionally and reach his or her goals; and
-  Respond to his or her frustrations and challenges with words of support, understanding, encouragement and praise. (Just knowing that someone else has been there can be tremendously helpful.)

Source: Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

Give them one-on-one sincere, frequent, specific praise. State at least four praises for every correction you offer. Create an inclusive environment that says: "I believe in you and know you're very able.

Source: Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/75things) (accessed 22 October 2021)

i) They love their field of work/career/profession

If your mentor isn't interested in their own position they're not going to have enthusiasm to grow with their mentee.⁶²

⁵⁹ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁶⁰ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁶¹ Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁶² Mentor Handbook' Available at Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

A mentor wants to help others succeed and knows the importance of telling someone everything they know. A mentor should feel secure in their position so they can be confident that the knowledge they impart is helping the new employee succeed. Demonstrating a positive outlook can also inspire others to work harder and help others as the mentor has helped them.

Source: Indeed Career Guide '10 Characteristics of a Mentor and Why They're Important'

3.2. Characteristics of a good mentor:

- a. Listens to mentee's concerns and does not do all the talking

Active listening can be distinguished from regular conversation in that the focus is on the person with whom you are speaking, not on yourself.⁶³ 'People seldom engage in active listening, because the most common human response to hearing another person's thoughts or expression of emotion is to apply the subject matter to one's own life, then reply with the goal of sharing our own perspective.'⁶⁴ It is therefore important for mentors to be mindful of these very common and often overlooked human tendencies, by making a serious effort to pay total attention to what the mentee is saying so that the mentor can more easily understand and process the mentee's perspective.⁶⁵

TIP for mentors

Focus on what your mentee is saying; do not worry about what to say next. That will come naturally as you follow along.

Source: Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET'

- b. Asks questions (without making the mentee uncomfortable)

A mentor should ask open-ended questions to help understand what the mentee is saying. Open-ended questions are questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," but require a thoughtful response. Such questions often start with these words: *what, how, and could*. "What else did she say to you?" "Could you have done something else?" or "How did that help you?"⁶⁶

⁶³ Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET' available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/2021-10-29-listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁶⁴ Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET' available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/2021-10-29-listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁶⁵ Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET' available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/2021-10-29-listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁶⁶ Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET' available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](https://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/2021-10-29-listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf) (accessed 29 October 2021)

Mentors should strive to ask one question at a time. If a mentor asks multiple questions and does not give the mentee a chance to answer, the mentee may become defensive or may only process the last question asked.⁶⁷ Adolescents in particular may need a little more time to think about an answer before they reply.

c. Doesn't judge (but provides constructive feedback or advice)

TIP for mentors

Emphasize questions over advice giving. Use probes that help your mentee think more broadly and deeply. If he or she talks only about facts, ask about feelings. If he or she focuses on feelings, ask him or her to review the facts. If he or she seems stuck in an immediate crisis, help him or her see the big picture.

Source: Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

It is important for a mentor to use a non-judgmental tone when sharing criticism or feedback with a mentee.⁶⁸ Judgement in a mentoring relationship can:

- Reduce rapport
- Provoke emotional responses
- Create resistance and resentment

Listening without judgement builds essential rapport. Feedback, without judgement is empowering.⁶⁹ Both are learned skills, both enable the mentees to make their own decisions and plans with support and guidance, and both create a communication style that can enhance the mentorship relationship.⁷⁰

d. Doesn't pick favorite students among mentees

This is particularly key where group mentorship is involved.

e. Respects the mentee's confidentiality;

A good mentor does not repeat what is said in confidence during mentoring sessions

⁶⁷ Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET' available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁶⁸ Indeed Career Guide '10 Characteristics of a Mentor and Why They're Important' Available at [10 Characteristics of a Mentor and Why They're Important | Indeed.com](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁶⁹ Ann Rolfe The Power of Feedback Without Judgement Available at [The Power of Feedback Without Judgement | Mentoring Works \(mentoring-works.com\)](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁷⁰ Ann Rolfe The Power of Feedback Without Judgement Available at [The Power of Feedback Without Judgement | Mentoring Works \(mentoring-works.com\)](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

TIP for mentors

Work hard to build trust. If you want a mentee to open up and talk to you, he must feel that he can trust you. Confidentiality is critical in the mentor/mentee relationship. Only if a mentee is threatening to hurt himself or others—or if he provides information about someone else being hurt—should you break confidentiality.

Source: Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET'

- f. Encourages mentee in her goals:

A good mentor encourages, inspires, and challenges the mentee to achieve his or her goals.⁷¹

A good mentor empowers mentee to make good decisions and supports her- 'A mentor's role is not to instruct or guide, but rather to offer experience and act as a sounding board, supporting mentees while they work through issues. This is done, in part, through sharing of experience. As such, mentors should be prepared to share stories about their past experiences, both good and bad, with their mentees to help them develop their own solutions and ideas. This can also include offering objective insights as an independent third party and introducing new ideas, techniques and stakeholders. In lieu of dictating the "correct" way to achieve a goal or fix a problem, the mentor should illustrate what they did in a similar situation, allowing the mentee to decide for themselves if that approach will work in their individual context (source: International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020))

- g. Helps mentee find solutions to her problems, but doesn't tell her the answers

TIP for mentors

Help your mentee see alternative interpretations and approaches.

Source: Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

- h. Respects the mentee's decisions

⁷¹ Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

It can be tempting to direct mentees towards solutions that have worked for the mentor, especially when they are experiencing challenges similar to those that mentor has experienced.⁷² However, the ideas and solutions that will be most appropriate to the mentee will be those that they generate for themselves.⁷³

It is the mentor's role to support the mentee in developing their own ideas and solutions through rapport building, active listening, effective questioning and constructive feedback.⁷⁴

TIP for mentors

Resist the temptation to control the relationship and steer its outcomes; your mentee is responsible for his or her own growth.

Source: Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

- i. Helps develop mentee's strengths and skills

TIP for mentors

Help your mentee reflect on successful strategies he or she has used in the past that could apply to new challenges.

Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

- j. Refers mentee to other people or resources when necessary

Mentors are usually in a position to provide visibility for their mentees.⁷⁵ This means opening the right doors that allow them to meet people and to demonstrate to different audiences what they can do.⁷⁶ Research has shown that when mentors vouch for mentees in this way, their work is much more likely to be well received⁷⁷

⁷² University of Sussex 'Organizational Development: Guidance for mentors' available at [Sharing experiences : Guidance for mentors : ... : Organisational Development : Schools and services : University of Sussex](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁷³ University of Sussex 'Organizational Development: Guidance for mentors' available at [Sharing experiences : Guidance for mentors : ... : Organisational Development : Schools and services : University of Sussex](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁷⁴ University of Sussex 'Organizational Development: Guidance for mentors' available at [Sharing experiences : Guidance for mentors : ... : Organisational Development : Schools and services : University of Sussex](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁷⁵ Linda Phillips-Jones 'Skills for successful mentoring: Competencies of Outstanding Mentors and Mentees' Available at [Skills for Successful Mentoring.pdf \(udel.edu\)](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁷⁶ Linda Phillips-Jones 'Skills for successful mentoring: Competencies of Outstanding Mentors and Mentees' Available at [Skills for Successful Mentoring.pdf \(udel.edu\)](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁷⁷ Linda Phillips-Jones 'Skills for successful mentoring: Competencies of Outstanding Mentors and Mentees' Available at [Skills for Successful Mentoring.pdf \(udel.edu\)](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

Examples of being resourceful:

- ✓ Support the mentee with professional connections to people who could help the mentee reach desired goals;
- ✓ give mentees assignments or opportunities that enable them to interact with important colleagues,
- ✓ suggest other resources for your mentees to pursue.

Source: Linda Phillips-Jones 'Skills for successful mentoring: Competencies of Outstanding Mentors and Mentees'

k. Respects the mentee's ethnic and religious background

Mentors and mentees often have differing backgrounds and lifestyles.⁷⁸ Differences may include race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, religion and culture.⁷⁹ All mentors need to be adept at working with cultural differences. When individuals fail to demonstrate an ability to respect and value diverse cultural backgrounds, they may harm the relationship.⁸⁰

A mentor's role is not to change his or her mentee's values. The mentor's primary responsibility is to honor the inherent worth each mentee brings into the mentorship program and respect his or her special cultural background. A difference in culture and in values is not something that needs to be fixed.

Source: [Lisa Bottomley](#) 'Cultural competency in mentoring' (2012)

l. Shows interest in the mentee's professional life, activities, and thoughts

Knowing more about the mentee helps the mentor understand how the mentee thinks and acts, what their passions are, career goals and others.⁸¹ Learning this information helps the mentor provide impactful

⁷⁸ [Lisa Bottomley](#) 'Cultural competency in mentoring' (2012) available at [Mentoring – Part 4: Cultural competency in mentoring - MSU Extension](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁷⁹ [Lisa Bottomley](#) 'Cultural competency in mentoring' (2012) available at [Mentoring – Part 4: Cultural competency in mentoring - MSU Extension](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁸⁰ [Lisa Bottomley](#) 'Cultural competency in mentoring' (2012) available at [Mentoring – Part 4: Cultural competency in mentoring - MSU Extension](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁸¹ Indeed Career Guide '10 Characteristics of a Mentor and Why They're Important' Available at [10 Characteristics of a Mentor and Why They're Important | Indeed.com](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

lessons and be a more effective teacher because they have a better understanding of the person they're mentoring.⁸²

Mentors should seek to understand the youth's own personal goals, desires, and values and not undermine the young person's capacity to make his or her own decisions.

Source: Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

m. Talks on a level that the mentee can understand

TIPS for mentors: what if the mentor cant understand what the mentee is saying?

If you are having a very hard time following what your mentee is saying, stop them and tell them so in a respectful, non-judgmental manner. Ask them for clarification or ask them to repeat the information. For example: "I'm a little lost; please tell me again..." or "would you mind repeating that?"

Summarize frequently to make sure you understand what you are being told. Start with: "Let me make sure I understand what you've told me." If you get the information wrong, your mentee will more than likely just correct you and keep talking.

Source: Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET'

n. Shares experiences with the mentee (when appropriate)

If a mentor wishes to share their experience, they must avoid being directive.⁸³ Instead they must ask the mentee if they would like to hear what the mentor has done previously to overcome a similar situation. In most cases the mentees will say yes. But if the mentees say no, the mentor must respect that decision and support the mentees in coming up with their own ideas.⁸⁴

Where the mentee allows the mentor to share their experience, the mentor must give advice with the caveat that what worked for the mentor might not be the right course of action for the mentee. In addition, the

⁸² Indeed Career Guide '10 Characteristics of a Mentor and Why They're Important' Available at [10 Characteristics of a Mentor and Why They're Important | Indeed.com](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁸³ University of Sussex 'Organizational Development: Guidance for mentors' available at [Sharing experiences : Guidance for mentors : ... : Organisational Development : Schools and services : University of Sussex](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁸⁴ University of Sussex 'Organizational Development: Guidance for mentors' available at [Sharing experiences : Guidance for mentors : ... : Organisational Development : Schools and services : University of Sussex](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

mentor must only provide advice on subjects on which the mentor is confident.⁸⁵ If it is beyond their experience or knowledge, the mentor must simply support the mentee to find other sources of advice.⁸⁶ A mentor is not expected to have all the answers.

TIP for mentors:

When requested, share your own experiences, lessons learned, and advice. Emphasize how your experiences could be different from his or her experiences and are merely examples. Limit your urge to solve the problem for him or her.

Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

- o. Systematically observes the mentee

“As mentors, we’d like to be a bird on the shoulders of our mentees and observe them as they leave our sessions and implement the strategies the two of us discuss. Although we may occasionally see them perform their skills “on the outside” and (with their permission) get feedback about their performance from others (such as their managers), we’re stuck with two main sources of data: what they tell us about their performance and what we actually observe happening in front of us in the sessions. Instead of seeing this as a limitation, work with these data. Observe your mentees carefully. Are they late to your sessions or always saying “Yes, but...” They’re probably also doing this with others, thus sabotaging their success. Note how they talk and act, have them practice skills (e.g., persuading or influencing) on you. Pay attention to your reactions, and give mentees honest feedback on how they present themselves”.

— Dr. Linda Phillips-Jones, Psychologist

3.3. Dos and Don'ts of mentorship⁸⁷

Knowing some of the do's and don'ts of mentorship can help keep both parties on the right track..⁸⁸

⁸⁵ University of Sussex 'Organizational Development: Guidance for mentors' available at [Sharing experiences : Guidance for mentors : ... : Organisational Development : Schools and services : University of Sussex](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁸⁶ University of Sussex 'Organizational Development: Guidance for mentors' available at [Sharing experiences : Guidance for mentors : ... : Organisational Development : Schools and services : University of Sussex](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

⁸⁷ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](#) (accessed 14 October 2021)

⁸⁸ Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysicists 'Mentee Roles and Responsibilities'

DO'S

- ✓ Engage the mentee by listening and goal-setting

A mentor should not shy away from giving advice. Providing constructive feedback helps bring the mentee closer to their goals. For example, if a mentee shares that their goal is to be a local councillor, a good mentor would take the time to understand why they want that position. That example is different from immediately outlining all the steps the mentee would need to follow to get that position.⁸⁹

Listening actively is the most basic skill you will use throughout the mentorship relationship. Active listening not only establishes rapport but creates a positive, accepting environment that permits open communication. By listening actively, a mentor will ascertain the mentee's interests and needs.

Examples of active listening include the following:

- ✚ Show interest in what he or she is saying, and reflect back important aspects of what he or she has said to show that you've understood;
- ✚ Use body language (such as making eye contact) that shows you are paying attention to what he or she is saying; and
- ✚ If you are talking to him or her by phone, reduce background noise and limit interruptions. Your mentee will feel that he or she has your undivided attention.
- ✚ When utilizing e-mail, answer within 24 hours if possible, and be sure your message is responsive to his or her original message.

Source: Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

- ✓ Point the mentee in the right direction

Mentors can encourage mentees to take advantage of any advice or opportunities that the mentors provide. Of course, mentors cannot know everything, so sometimes it is better to suggest any essential training for the mentee rather than taking that burden as a mentor. For example, the mentor may encourage a mentee to take a master class in resource mobilization to improve their strategies for sourcing resources to financially support their political campaign. The mentee would, in turn, report back with their newly developed skills.

- ✓ Celebrate with the mentee

Another important element of the mentor-mentee relationship is establishing a connection with one another. A mentor can and should celebrate with the mentee when a goal or accomplishment has been achieved. For example, a mentor may remind themselves to congratulate their mentee on applying what they learned during a mentorship on public speaking after a successful rally.

- ✓ Show them the ropes

From an intra-party political perspective, one of the most valuable factors of the mentor-mentee relationship is the opportunity to shape another mentee within the same political party of the mentor and

⁸⁹ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

encourage them to develop productive habits. Thus, by supporting the political aspirations of the mentee, the mentor can positively impact not just the professional growth of the mentee but also the political party long-term.

For example, a mentor may have their mentee shadow them as they conduct intra-party activities so that the mentee can better understand the intra-party operations- which eventually also benefits the political party's growth.

- ✓ Be a teacher and a guide

Essentially, the role as a mentor is to be a guide. The mentor is responsible for helping the mentee shape their professional development.

Tips for mentors:

You will develop your mentee's capacity for learning and achieving his or her goals by doing the following:

- 📚 Assisting him or her with finding resources such as people, books, articles, tools and web-based information;
- 📚 Imparting knowledge and skills by explaining, giving useful examples, demonstrating processes, and asking thought-provoking questions;
- 📚 Helping him or her gain broader perspectives of his or her responsibilities; and
- 📚 Discussing actions you've taken in your career and explaining your rationale.

Source: Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

The mentor should acknowledge the expectation to be a positive role model.

DONT'S

- ✗ Talk more than you listen (within reason)

Reserve discussing your own experiences or giving advice until after your mentee has had a chance to thoroughly explain his or her issue, question, or concern.⁹⁰

- ✗ Discredit their goals and ambitions

A great mentor will know how to balance providing critical feedback and supporting a mentee's goals. A mentor's role is not to approve or deny mentee's decisions but to help mentees make sure that they (mentees) have confidence in those decisions after discussing them with the mentor. For example, a mentor could discredit their mentee's goals by saying that they're not good enough and that they should have different goals instead, possibly goals more in line with the mentor's career trajectory.

⁹⁰ Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

TIP for mentors

Avoid discouraging responses (e.g Do not exclaim: “You want to vy for the PRESIDENCY?!”), Maintain a neutral (or positive) tone and body language

Avoid being judgmental. You may not agree with what your mentee is saying, but do not judge them in a negative way. This will derail the mentorship relationship, especially for adolescents. Instead, help the mentee to process why it might not be a good idea by using several open-ended questions. E.g. How do you think the approach will get you what you want?

✘ Provide vague or unactionable feedback

Few things are as frustrating as getting negative feedback that is unclear and does not provide actionable ways to improve. If a mentor becomes aware of a way of thinking, a behavior, or anything else that could have negative ramifications on the mentee, the mentor should acknowledge it. For example, a mentor may guide the mentee to see that the way a mentee approaches a problem is short-sighted and does not consider long-term consequences. The mentor can then probe the mentee through carefully thought questions to enable the mentee to identify long-term consequences.

✘ Be overly positive

A mentor must learn how to deliver feedback in a frank and blunt but gentle and sensitive way. The mentor should not simply provide complete positive feedback for the sake of it, as doing so would be a disservice to the mentee because it could negatively impact their future. The mentor should ensure that the mentee is aware and able to work on aspects that need improving so that the mentee can grow professionally. The mentee must understand that professional growth also encompasses the mentees ability to confront some negative mindsets or habits.

✘ Break trust

It is of the utmost importance for the mentor to respect the mentee’s privacy. A mentor should not share casually private details of the mentor-mentee relationship. For example, a mentor cannot share casually what challenges the mentee is facing without their permission. The mentee shared that challenge with the mentor in confidence. A mentor’s relationship with the mentee is built on trust. The mentor must respect that fact.

3.4. Summary of key points

- ✓ **Suggest:** “A mentor should never tell mentees what to do; they should say ‘well that’s quite interesting but have you also considered.....etc etc’”
 - ❖ A mentor helps mentees to help themselves. A mentor does not know all the answers, but helps mentees to find the answers to their questions.
 - ❖ Mentors need to urge mentees to be career/professionally self-reliant, taking responsibility for their own development rather than waiting for a mentor or others to develop them
- ✓ **Understand:** “A mentee needs to be confident that what the mentor says they are going to do at the beginning, they will deliver on. This will build trust and understanding. It’s important to show that the mentor has made the effort to understand the context from the mentees perspective.”
- ✓ **Confidentiality and sharing:** “If the mentor learns things that are confidential, the mentor must keep them utterly confidential. If the mentor wants to share something they have learned from someone they are mentoring, the mentor must make sure the mentee is happy with the mentor doing that.”
- ✓ **Experience:** “A mentor needs to be someone with more experience than the mentee - or at least have something relevant to guide the mentee on

Adapted from the City London University ‘Political Mentoring Toolkit’; European Political Mentoring Network ‘Handbook for mentees’ (2014) and Linda Phillips-Jones ‘75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try’

3.5. Self-assessment/Exercise

Do you have the qualities of a good mentor? Self checklist:

- ✓ I communicate in the ways (in person, phone, email, mail) we agreed. I communicate in the ways we agreed.
- ✓ I get back to my mentee within the timeframe we agreed. I get back to my mentor in the timeframe we agreed.
- ✓ Occasionally, I spontaneously contact my mentee to say hello or pass along information.
- ✓ I do not communicate more often than we agreed unless it is a special circumstance.
- ✓ I am an effective listener and remember what my mentee tells me.
- ✓ I monitor my nonverbal language to be sure it is conveying my meaning.
- ✓ I provide enough positive feedback to my mentee
- ✓ I graciously receive feedback from my mentee.

Source: International Republican Institute ‘Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit’ (2020)

Case study: A mentee approaches a mentor. She is planning to run a campaign for the upcoming intra-party elections. The mentee asks the mentor to write campaign strategies for the mentee as the mentor has more experience in conducting campaigns. What should the mentor do to assist the mentee?

Answer: it is not the mentor's task to write campaign strategies for the mentee, but the mentor can give the mentee feedback on what the mentee has planned or developed. The mentor can also share your experience if applicable.

Other examples of steps to make the mentee self-reliant:-

- Don't write a CV for them. Instead, offer to review their CV and provide feedback on areas that need to be strengthened or what gaps exist.

4. MANAGING GROUP MENTORING

Learning objectives

- ❖ To understand what group mentorship entails
- ❖ To appreciate the different methodologies of ensuring the effectiveness of group mentorship
- ❖ To understand how to mitigate the challenges presented by group mentorship

4.1. What is group mentoring?

Group mentoring can look a lot like regular classroom training but it is **NOT**.

In classroom training, trainers deliver a specific set of pre-defined material. The trainer's job is to impart knowledge, provide practice for trainees, and test that the material has been properly retained and understood. Each student walks away with the same set of knowledge.

Mentoring groups function very differently. In order for a learning group to be defined as a mentoring group, it should include many of the hallmarks of one-to-one mentoring. For example: •

- ✓ Each mentee has his or her own unique learning objectives. •
- ✓ The relationship that forms between mentors and mentees goes beyond that of teacher and student.
- ✓ The group is a safe and confidential environment for both mentees and mentors to explore and share personal challenges
- ✓ Mentors guide rather than train
- ✓ The topics dealt with generally all outside the realm of classroom training.
- ✓ Both mentors and mentees benefit from participating in group mentoring.

Source: Industrial Commercial Training 'The Hows and Whys of Group Mentoring' (2011) Available at [The Hows and Whys of Group Mentoring \(nobscot.com\)](http://nobscot.com)

The most common conception of mentoring is a one-on-one relationship between a young, inexperienced mentee and an older experienced mentor.⁹¹ However, effective mentoring is so much more than just one-on-one mentoring. Group mentoring occurs where mentors and mentees meet in a group rather than in pairs.⁹² While it may challenge some people's mentoring expectations, group mentoring still has a lot to offer to both mentors and mentees.⁹³ If the environment is supportive and all participants are eager to

⁹¹ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](http://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

⁹² 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](http://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

⁹³ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](http://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

make it work, a group can be an ideal structure for mentoring.⁹⁴ Group mentoring can both reinforce skills and foster continuous learning, making it a winning situation for everyone involved.⁹⁵

In group mentorship, one mentor is matched with a small group (minimum 3; maximum 6) of youth or; a pair of co-mentors works with a slightly larger group (minimum 8; maximum 12) The co-mentoring approach has an advantage of ensuring fewer cancelled meetings when one mentor is unavailable.

Types of group mentorship

Standard group mentoring - one mentor working with a group of youth

Co-mentoring - where two to three mentors work with a larger group of youth

“Team” mentoring - where a group of mentors with specific and complementary skill sets work with a group of youth).

“Hybrid” models - where youth are paired with an individual mentor but participate exclusively in group activities with other pairs.

Source: MENTOR ‘Group mentoring supplement to the elements of effective practice for mentoring’ (2020)

4.2. Advantages of group mentoring

“Group mentoring is a flexible derivative of traditional mentoring, with added benefits.⁹⁶”

- a) Little need for ‘strong personal connection’ between mentor and mentee

According to researchers, group mentoring provides a safe venue for mentees who are uncomfortable meeting one on one with a more senior leader. Group mentorship eliminates problems relating to “personal chemistry” (or lack thereof)

Source: Industrial Commercial Training ‘The Hows and Whys of Group Mentoring’ (2011) Available at [The Hows and Whys of Group Mentoring \(nobscot.com\)](https://www.nobscot.com)

A strong interpersonal relationship between any one mentor and any one mentee is not very critical in group mentorship. One-on-one mentoring partnerships often depends on a strong rapport or “chemistry” between the mentor and the mentee. If the relationship is awkward or uncomfortable, the mentee isn’t likely to share much or be vulnerable with the mentor, and the success of the mentorship will be limited.⁹⁷ Where mentorship sessions are done in a group setting, there is less likelihood for having an awkward or

⁹⁴ Insala Group Mentoring in the Workplace (2019) <https://www.insala.com/blog/group-mentoring> (accessed 22 October 2021)

⁹⁵ Insala Group Mentoring in the Workplace (2019) <https://www.insala.com/blog/group-mentoring> (accessed 22 October 2021)

⁹⁶ Insala Group Mentoring in the Workplace (2019) <https://www.insala.com/blog/group-mentoring> (accessed 22 October 2021)

⁹⁷ ‘What is Group Mentoring?’ Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](https://www.mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

uncomfortable working relationship. Group mentoring avoids the issue of having two people working and conversing alone together who may not be comfortable doing so.⁹⁸

- b) Ensures more mentees benefit where mentors are limited

Group mentoring makes sure that the people who have the mentoring skills are accessible to as many mentees as possible.⁹⁹ Group mentorship programs reach large volumes of youth and therefore represent an opportunity to increase mentoring relationships for many young people.¹⁰⁰

- c) Mentees benefit from sharing ideas and struggles of others in similar positions

Mentees also get multiple perspectives at the same time during group mentorships, as there are different mentees available in the room. This experience can provide mentees with a richer, more complex understanding of various issues.¹⁰¹ Group mentorship allows for multiple viewpoints and cross disciplinary examination of issues and ideas. It creates additional learning opportunities through group projects and activities.¹⁰²

4.3. Is Group mentorship as effective as one-to-one mentorship?

- a) Mentees are still expected to develop individualized learning goals

Just like one-to-one mentorship, each mentee has their own learning and developmental goals, which may or may not be similar to the other mentees in the group.¹⁰³ Although structured as a group learning, each mentee works on his or her own unique learning needs and development goals.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](https://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

⁹⁹ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](https://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹⁰⁰ MENTOR 'Group mentoring supplement to the elements of effective practice for mentoring' (2020)

¹⁰¹ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](https://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹⁰² Industrial Commercial Training 'The Hows and Whys of Group Mentoring' (2011) Available at [The Hows and Whys of Group Mentoring \(nobscot.com\)](https://nobscot.com)

¹⁰³ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](https://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹⁰⁴ Industrial Commercial Training 'The Hows and Whys of Group Mentoring' (2011) Available at [The Hows and Whys of Group Mentoring \(nobscot.com\)](https://nobscot.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

To help mentees achieve these learning goals, mentors will then ask questions, share relevant stories, and complete learning activities.¹⁰⁵

b) Mentees still have safe spaces to engage

The group mentoring is a confidential forum, and can provide safe space for mentees to share their struggles.¹⁰⁶ A key responsibility of the mentor is to set up an environment in which mentees feel able to speak freely, without fear of judgement or repercussions; and this can be done through setting up (and adhering to) ground rules.

c) Opportunities for relationship building and networking

Group mentoring can accelerate network building for mentees as mentees are able to build relationships with their peers in group mentoring.¹⁰⁷ The solidarity built within a group mentoring cohort can be very meaningful to mentees.

Group mentorship offers an opportunity to gain access to a network that will offer support, important information, and contacts.

Source: *Insala Group Mentoring in the Workplace (2019)* <https://www.insala.com/blog/group-mentoring>

Some research is also starting to suggest that group mentoring may be particularly valuable for fostering young people's ability to access support resources and build their social networks (sometimes called "social capital"), and for building certain types of competencies, particularly those that involve interacting with peers.¹⁰⁸

d) Enhances communication skills

Mentors can further develop their communication skills. In a group setting, communicating in mentoring is done best through Socratic questioning, which is an important skill for mentors when mentoring for leadership.¹⁰⁹ Socratic questioning is used to invoke critical thinking. The Mentor leads by posing thought-provoking questions to the group of mentees.¹¹⁰ Mentees actively engage by asking questions of their own. The benefits of Socratic mentoring are that mentees learn to find answers to their questions inside

¹⁰⁵ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](https://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹⁰⁶ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](https://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹⁰⁷ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](https://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹⁰⁸ MENTOR 'Group mentoring supplement to the elements of effective practice for mentoring' (2020)

¹⁰⁹ 'What is Group Mentoring?' Available at [What is Group Mentoring? \(mentoringcomplete.com\)](https://mentoringcomplete.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹¹⁰ 'Socratic Mentoring: Do It' available at [Socratic Mentoring. Do it. | FINDAMENTOR.COM](https://findamentor.com) (accessed 29 October 2021)

themselves. The method allows for development of critical thinking habits and evolution of ideas and beliefs¹¹¹

Key principles of Group Mentorship:

Determine the goals. Define what you want to accomplish with mentoring. Groups should clearly identify what should be achieved, how achievements are tied to objectives, and how to measure success. They should also determine what is expected of both the mentors and mentees.

Develop an action plan. Regardless of the type of mentoring, an effective mentorship program begins with defined objectives and a plan. Determine how your mentoring sessions will be held and schedule time to make them happen. Also consider how you will form the teams,

Decide what will happen after. Your group mentoring sessions will not last forever. Whether participants want to continue sessions or not, you need to decide how it will happen.

Source: Adapted from Insala Group Mentoring in the Workplace (2019)

<https://www.insala.com/blog/group-mentoring>

4.4. Effective activities for group mentorship

- a) Emphasize active involvement and interaction for all group participants – This ensures that each participant is getting the same experience and the same opportunities to learn, reflect, and grow.

TIP - Use a lot of Action-oriented learning:

‘Learning-by-doing’ and practically trying out things in-order to get first-hand experience, which is then reflected upon so that participants can learn and do better next time. The reflection is crucial to enable learning based on the action that just took place.

Adapted from the Ghana Judicial Gender Based Violence Training Manual (2019)

- b) Offer opportunities for honest reflection and open safe sharing – This is what puts the “mentoring” in group mentoring. This work is what allows youth to truly be in a relationship with one another and to open up and share their authentic selves.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Socratic Mentoring: Do It’ available at [Socratic Mentoring. Do it. | FINDAMENTOR.COM](https://www.findamentor.com) (accessed 29 October 2021)

¹¹² MENTOR ‘Group mentoring supplement to the elements of effective practice for mentoring’ (2020)

TIP -Safe-space enables learning:

People learn better when they feel good in the environment or group they are part of. If some people are constantly afraid that others will think they are stupid or irrelevant, they will not dare to share things or try out something new. It is also normal for some people to feel insecure when they meet new people. It is therefore very important to create a learning environment where participants feel comfortable and confident that they can share freely without being judged. This requires that participants are all open and respectful to any differences there might be between them

- c) Role plays or other scenario-based opportunities to practice new skills or behaviors – A small, trusted group environment — with the support of adult mentors — offers an ideal space for youth to try out something new or practice a new way of acting or being. These activities, and the feedback of peers during them, can ground the lessons of the program in the day-to-day world of the mentees.¹¹³
- d) Facilitate knowledge-acquisition and skill-building – In addition to mentor and peer support, group mentoring programs can also offer a chance to simply teach content or provide information to youth. The mentor can guide discussions, answer group questions, and help mentees clarify values or choose a path of action.
- e) Allow youth to lead and take some ownership of the activities – Activities should be as youth-led as possible so that they are empowered to collaborate with one another, stretch themselves in meaningful ways, and feel an organic sense of ownership and belonging to the group.¹¹⁴

Encourage peer-to-peer learning which builds on the competencies, experience and skills of participants. Mentors have a lot of knowledge to provide mentees with, but everyone (both mentor and mentee) have a richer experience if everyone is able to share their experiences.

- f) Promote group cohesion and the development of positive group culture – This concept might very well be the core of making group mentoring work. Is the group a true group? Have these youth bonded with one another and their mentors to make something more than the sum of their individual relationships? Is there a sense of community and togetherness? Of shared ownership? The activities a program offers should emphasize the ways in which the mentees build something new together in a collaborative, collective experience.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ MENTOR 'Group mentoring supplement to the elements of effective practice for mentoring' (2020)

¹¹⁴ MENTOR 'Group mentoring supplement to the elements of effective practice for mentoring' (2020)

¹¹⁵ MENTOR 'Group mentoring supplement to the elements of effective practice for mentoring' (2020)

- g) Help them set up a small team to which they'll hold themselves accountable for their development- The small team of mentees (also known as the "personal board of directors") might meet as a group or simply offer one-on-one support.¹¹⁶

Tell the mentees to try this exercise amongst themselves:

'Bring and Takeaway' exercise. Tell the mentees to converse and ask each other the following:

What is one thing that you will **bring** to the table during the sessions (e.g. skills, etc)

What is one thing that you will **takeaway** (expectation or what you will learn).

This will be recorded on a piece of paper and used as a point of reference for the mentees to hold each other accountable

4.5. Managing challenges in group mentorship

- a) Establish ground rules

When working with groups of participants in any setting (including mentorship), it is a good idea for those involved to agree on 'ground rules' during the session.

This simple exercise suggests a way in which groups can come up with and agree a set of ground rules at the start of a group mentorship session. The mentor can say the following:

¹¹⁶ Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/~lphillips/75things/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

“We are now going to work together to establish a set of agreed ground rules for our group mentoring sessions. Ground rules can help us to feel safe expressing ourselves and can reassure us that what we say will be treated as confidential and not repeated outside of this session. By agreeing to a set of ground rules at the start, we will effectively form a ‘contract’ that can also be referred to throughout the rest of the mentorship session when necessary. You now have 10 minutes to brainstorm a set of key ‘rules’. Try to focus on making positive ground rules (dos) rather than focusing on prohibitions (don’ts). You might want to consider:

- ✓ How we address each other
- ✓ How we respect other opinions and allow time for everyone to contribute
- ✓ How to ensure confidentiality

After 10 minutes, I will ask you to stop your discussions and then ask someone to present the ‘rules’. Whilst this is happening, I will be collating a list of the main rules that everyone agrees on a flipchart/notepad. We will then leave this up for everyone to see during our group mentorship sessions.”

Adapted from the Ghana Judicial Gender Based Violence Training Manual (2019)

b) Address problems quickly

If a mentor observes one mentee engaging in unhelpful behaviour during a group session, the mentor must work to address it quickly. Speak to the mentee directly and invite him or her to reflect on the behaviour and how it can be changed to support the group’s goals.¹¹⁷ Conflicts can happen from time to time – even in the healthiest of teams – so encourage open discussion of the conflict and help guide mentees to a resolution, allowing your mentorship group to return to a state of positive group dynamics.¹¹⁸ Mentors should always be on the look-out for unacceptable behaviours such as bullying and be ready to address them right away. Mentors should reinforce positive behaviours like successful collaboration, sharing of ideas, trust and respect.¹¹⁹

c) Have open and safe channels for feedback

Check with your mentees from time to time on the quality of your mentoring relationships. Ask if you’re interacting often enough, their views of the help you’re providing, and how things could be improved.¹²⁰ Take time to observe, talk to mentees and figure out what is happening amongst the group to ensure healthy and thriving group mentorship session. Signs of conflict can be subtle, but mentor can detect them by being aware of the interactions within the group. Things to look out for include:

¹¹⁷ DeakinCo available at [6 strategies for managing and improving team dynamics - DeakinCo. | Powering workplace performance](#) (accessed 30 October 2021)

¹¹⁸ DeakinCo available at [6 strategies for managing and improving team dynamics - DeakinCo. | Powering workplace performance](#) (accessed 30 October 2021)

¹¹⁹ DeakinCo available at [6 strategies for managing and improving team dynamics - DeakinCo. | Powering workplace performance](#) (accessed 30 October 2021)

¹²⁰ Linda Phillips-Jones ‘75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try’ Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](#) (accessed 22 October 2021)

- Body language, such as leaning away from people.
- Facial expressions, such as frowning or gazing down.
- Tone of voice, such as a cutting, disparaging or dismissive way of speaking.¹²¹

TIP for mentors

Conduct a diagnosis and get to know your team

Observe your team at work and conduct individual interviews in a private, safe and confidential space.

As you do, stay aware of the common causes behind poor group dynamics.

- **Authority and groupthink** – Excessive deference to authority can have a stagnating effect on mentorship groups as mentees would rather agree with the mentor than offering innovative ideas and opinions. Groupthink can have a similar effect.
- **Blocking behaviours** – Aggressive, negative, withdrawing, recognition-seeking and even unnecessary joking behaviours can block the flow of information in the team.
- **Free riding** – Some team members taking it easy at the expense of other colleagues can lead to poor group dynamics and outcomes.
- **Evaluation apprehension** – Team members may hold back their opinions and ideas as result of feeling they are being judged harshly by other team members.

Other potential causes of poor group dynamics include poor communication and a lack of focus. Take time to observe, talk to team members and figure out what is happening amongst the team.

Source: adapted from DeakinCo available at [6 strategies for managing and improving team dynamics - DeakinCo. | Powering workplace performance](#)

4.6. Summary of key points

¹²¹ MindTools 'Resolving Team Conflict Face Differences, Strengthen Teams' Available at [Resolving Team Conflict - Team Management Training from MindTools.com](#) (accessed 30 October 2021)

- ❖ Group mentorship provides an opportunity for mentees to bring different experiences, perspectives and values to the group. This diversity can improve problem solving, spark innovation, and drive performance.
- ❖ However differences may occur in group mentorships which can lead to misunderstanding, conflict and resentment. Mentors therefore need to be proactive in identifying and resolving conflict in the mentorship group, as well as in keeping the group dynamic to be healthy and productive

4.7. Self-assessment/exercise

5. YOUR FIRST MEETING?

Learning Objectives

- ✚ To appreciate the key conversations that can be undertaken when initiating the first mentorship meeting;
- ✚ To understand how to create a mentorship agreement;
- ✚ To understand how to develop SMART mentorship goals

5.1. Kick-starting the conversation

At the beginning of the mentoring sessions, mentors can initiate and enjoy some small talk and ask mentees to give an update on their lives, projects, and objectives.¹²²

Examples of questions to get mentors acquainted with mentees ('Likes and dislikes' icebreaker exercise)

- ✚ Share five things you like.
- ✚ Share five things you like.
- ✚ List three most important strengths that you possess, and three strengths you'd like to have.
- ✚ Which of these strengths do you want to work on most? (Think about how you can help them as their mentor.)
- ✚ What are your hobbies or interests?
- ✚ Where do you most like to spend your time – indoors or outdoors? Why?
- ✚ How would you describe yourself? - Outgoing, quiet, social, happy, etc.

The mentor can then proceed to ask more questions that are aligned to uncovering the mentee's professional background and career aspirations¹²³:

- ✓ What is your educational and professional background (including your current role and how long you have been doing what you are doing)
- ✓ What are your short-term career goals? Long-term career goals?

In order to ensure that the conversation is a two-way process, the mentor can offer to tell the mentee their career story in some detail. This can focus on:

- ✓ How did the mentor start their career?

¹²² Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/~lphillips/75things/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹²³ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://www.togetherplatform.com/mentor-handbook/) (accessed 14 October 2021)

- ✓ What changes did the mentor make along the way? Include high and low points and how these learning experiences helped the mentor¹²⁴

Having had a sense of the professional and career overview of both the mentor and the mentee, the mentor can further ask questions to get a sense of what the mentee is expecting in the mentorship relationship.¹²⁵ Such questions include:

- ✓ What do you see as my role as your mentor?
- ✓ What ground rules should we set (e.g., confidentiality, openness, honesty)?
- ✓ What topics are off-limits (e.g., personal lives)?
- ✓ What do you think will be challenging about this relationship?
- ✓ Are there any topics of urgent interest?
- ✓ What topics do you want to cover in our conversations?
- ✓ What do you hope to gain from this relationship?
- ✓ How do you prefer to communicate between meetings?
- ✓ When is the best time for you to meet?

5.2. Creating a mentoring agreement

Ideally, the first mentorship meeting should be face-to-face where the mentor and mentee/s discuss professional backgrounds, experiences, interests, and expectations. It is also at the first meeting that the mentor and the mentee will also make agreements about confidentiality and the frequency of contact.¹²⁶

At the beginning of the mentorship partnership, spending time clarifying what you can legitimately expect to give and get through mentoring is essential.¹²⁷ It is especially beneficial to discuss, negotiate, and agree upon expectations.¹²⁸

Mentoring is a two-way street. Both mentors and mentees must understand each other's expectations to make the relationship beneficial, fun, and positive!

A mentor and the mentee should therefore discuss their individual expectations for the relationship.

¹²⁴ Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/~lphillips/75things/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹²⁵ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com/) (accessed 14 October 2021)

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¹²⁷ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com/) (accessed 14 October 2021)

¹²⁸ Mentor Handbook' Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com/) (accessed 14 October 2021)

Here are some expectations to agree upon:

- Be willing to discuss failures and successes
- Demonstrate a genuine interest in being helped by a mentor
- Demonstrate application of learning obtained through the relationship
- Exhibit a desire to improve in a specific area or learn a new skill
- Identify professional development goals, priorities, and career interests
- Listen actively
- Provide honest feedback
- Seek ways to achieve objectives and contribute ideas for solving particular problems
- Time Commitment Obligations
- Be accountable for scheduling meetings
- Be respectful of each other's time and schedule
- Commit the requisite time and energy to prepare for meetings
- Do the necessary pre-work for mentoring conversations
- Follow up on action items identified during development conversations
- Informally communicate regularly with your mentee
- Attend mentoring-related meetings and events
- Maintain privacy/confidentiality of development conversations
- Provide input to assess and improve the mentoring program
- Take advantage of organizational resources

Source: *Mentor Handbook* Available at [Mentor Handbook \(togetherplatform.com\)](http://Mentor Handbook (togetherplatform.com))

After agreeing to expectations of the mentorship program, the mentor and mentee should co-design a structured Mentorship Plan/agreement.¹²⁹ Writing a mentoring agreement will ensure that both parties clearly understand their responsibilities and expectations.¹³⁰ While a mentoring relationship is not something bound in written law, it may help to explore the terms of the mentoring relationship in advance. The plan will help the mentor and mentee define mentorship goals, identify corresponding indicators that measure progress toward meeting these goals and determine the steps needed to meet set indicators. Following these practices will better ensure a productive, rewarding experience for the mentor and mentee.

Where the mentee is a child (minor), the mentors should be sure to discuss the mentoring agreement with their mentee's parents or guardians.

¹²⁹ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

¹³⁰ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

a) Discuss with mentees what they want to accomplish

Mentees should discuss with their mentors what they want to accomplish through the mentorship program. The output of the discussion should be one or more broad aspirations that will act as a starting point for setting more concrete goals for the mentorship program.¹³¹ e.g. A broad aspiration can be 'I want to be a Member of Parliament.' The mentee and mentor then have to develop concrete steps to achieve that broad aspiration-

b) Translate the mentee's aspirations into SMART goals

The mentor and mentee should translate the mentee's broad aspirations set in Step One into S.M.A.R.T. goals for the mentorship. By setting clear and actionable goals, the mentorship is more likely to be effective in achieving change.

c) Develop indicators/benchmarks

After outlining mentorship goals, mentors and mentees should co-develop a set of indicators, or benchmarks, to measure progress toward meeting their goals.

d) Establish timelines

On the timeline portion of the mentorship agreement/plan, mentors and mentees should work together to determine when the mentee should work toward meeting each indicator and then shade in the proposed months. The last month shaded is when the mentee anticipates meeting the indicator.

e) Outline roles and responsibilities

The mentor and mentee should outline roles and responsibilities for each indicator. These roles and responsibilities can also be thought of as action items that need to be accomplished to meet mentorship goals

5.3. How to create S.M.A.R.T. goals for their mentorship agreement

REMEMBER: It is also likely that the mentee will ask the mentor how the mentor set and achieved their own goals. The mentor should be cautious not to impose their goals to become the mentee's goals. But the mentor's insights on how they developed, tracked and attained their goals will help the mentee in their process of developing the goals

a) Specific

When goals are too vague, they are hard to turn into strategies. The more detailed the mentee can be about what they want to accomplish, the more focused the mentorship can be on setting up a plan for how to get there.

e.g. Mentee Aspiration: Become a politician

¹³¹ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

Make It More Specific: Join a political party/register your own political party.

b) Measurable

Whatever goal the mentee wants to achieve should be measurable. Defining goals that can be measured can also be used to assess progress, which often is an important motivating factor in mentorships achieving their intended outcomes

e.g.

Mentee Aspiration: Become a politician

Make It More Specific: Join a political party/register your own political party

Make It Measurable: Become a member of Parliament

c) Attainable

Goals should be attainable. As such, mentors and mentees should consider what obstacles they might face, as well if they can overcome challenges. If it does not seem possible to overcome certain obstacles, the goal should be adjusted to be more attainable.

e.g.

Mentee Aspiration: Become a politician

Make It More Specific: Join a political party/register your own political party etc

Make It Measurable: Become a member of Parliament (or councillor etc)

Make Sure It Is Attainable: Become a member of Parliament representing VumaVuma Constituency in BakuBaku District

d) Relevant

Mentees should consider whether their mentorship goal is relevant. In other words, mentorship goals should align with the mentee's values and larger, long-term professional or personal goals

e.g. Mentee Aspiration: Become a politician

Make It More Specific: Join a political party/register your own political party etc

Make It Measurable: Become a member of Parliament (or councillor)

Make Sure It Is Attainable: Become a member of Parliament representing VumaVuma Constituency in BakuBaku District

Make It Relevant: Become a member of Parliament representing VumaVuma Constituency in BakuBaku District to specifically address access to water challenges.

e) Time-Bound

Mentees should set a timeframe for accomplishing their mentorship goal.

Mentee Aspiration: Become a politician

Make It More Specific: Join a political party/register your own political party etc

Make It Measurable: Become a member of Parliament (or councillor)

Make Sure It Is Attainable: Become a member of Parliament representing VumaVuma Constituency in BakuBaku District

Make It Relevant: Become a member of Parliament representing VumaVuma Constituency in BakuBaku District to specifically address access to water challenges.

Make It Timebound: Become a member of Parliament representing VumaVuma Constituency in BakuBaku District by contesting in the 2025 parliamentary elections and specifically address access to water challenges by 2027.

5.4. Summary of key points

Kick-starting the first meeting

- ✓ Get to know each other a little better (e.g., interests, ideas, experiences)
- ✓ Share mentoring objectives, and explore how the mentor can help the mentee to achieve them
- ✓ Discuss expectations
- ✓ Decide how mentoring will work in practice (how often do you want to meet or talk by phone, and who contacts who?)
- ✓ Agree what your main focus and objectives will be for the next meeting
- ✓ Set a date, location and time for your second meeting.
- ✓ Develop SMART goals and indicators for the mentee

Source: City London University 'Political Mentoring Toolkit'

5.5. Self-assessment/exercise

Answer the following questions to help create a SMART Goal or Objective.

- ✚ What are you hoping to accomplish? How
- ✚ will you accomplish it?
- ✚ When will you accomplish it?
- ✚ Why do you want to accomplish it?
- ✚ How will you know when it is accomplished? Are you
- ✚ willing and able to do this now?
- ✚ What barriers can you expect? What
- ✚ is your baseline?
- ✚ What do you want for an outcome?
- ✚ By what specific date do you want to accomplish your goal?

6. STRATEGIES FOR THE MENTOR TO BUILD THE MENTORSHIP RELATIONSHIP AND STAY ENGAGED

Learning objectives

- To outline the key strategies that mentors can utilize to enable the mentorship relationship to grow and remain sustained;
- To help mentors develop skills to facilitate communication and collaboration among mentees;

6.1. Ensure meetings are well planned

After the first meeting, subsequent meetings should at least follow the following structure:

- 📅 Update each other on what's been happening and how that relates to the mentee's mentoring objectives
- 📅 Reflect on how you've used what you learnt from the last session or thought about how you might apply it
- 📅 Discuss current challenges and how your mentor might help
- 📅 Keep track of whether you are meeting your objectives and whether these need to change
- 📅 Be open about discussing a possible end date for mentoring
- 📅 Review how your mentoring relationship has progressed – what have you learned, how have you changed, what has not worked and what obstacles have you encountered?

Source: City London University 'Political Mentoring Toolkit'

6.2. Consistent communication

The best mentor-mentee pairings communicate frequently and openly. Traditional, in-person mentoring meetings have many benefits for mentor and mentee relationships — most notably, for developing trust.¹³² This is largely due to the importance of nonverbal communication. However, it is not always feasible or practical to have in-person meetings. For example, if the mentor or mentee is traveling — or in more recent times, if there are quarantine restrictions — in-person meetings are not an option. Mentors may also not be able to meet in person as regularly as a mentee might prefer. Virtual tools allow for continued mentoring outside of the traditional meeting setting. They should be considered an important way to ensure engagement and, in turn, a mentorship's success¹³³

¹³² International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

¹³³ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

6.3. 'Monthly happenings'

Develop a 'monthly happenings' sheet to review during your mentor meetings, where the mentor can discuss with the mentee the following questions¹³⁴:

- ✓ What was the high point of the month?
- ✓ What is one new thing you learned since I saw you last?
- ✓ Whom did you get to know better this month?
- ✓ Did you make a major change in your life?
- ✓ How could the month have gone better?
- ✓ Identify three decisions or choices you made this month to advance your political ambition.
- ✓ What did you learn about yourself this month?

¹³⁴ Adapted from 'Mentor & Mentee Monthly Activities' available at [Monthly Activities List.pdf \(pcsb.org\)](https://www.pcsb.org/Portals/0/Assets/2021/09/2021-2022%20Mentor%20and%20Mentee%20Monthly%20Activities%20List.pdf) (accessed 23 October 2021)

TIP For mentors

Have “mentoring sessions” or meetings at least once every month. Help your mentees manage these meetings by arranging times, proposing agendas, and summarizing follow-up actions

6.4. Job shadowing

Have regular sessions where the mentee “follows” the mentor throughout the day to see what political work looks like from a practical point of view. For younger mentees, this kind of experience can be invaluable. They will gain more respect and appreciation of the political work involved in it, and gain valuable insight into the skills and behaviors necessary for success.¹³⁵

A mentor can also invite the mentee to some of the mentor’s key meetings. These might include non-confidential political or constituency meetings. In such instances, it is important to prepare the mentees beforehand, and debrief the meetings with your mentees afterward.¹³⁶

6.5. Being resourceful

Mentors have an already-established network of peers and professional contacts that can be leveraged to make connections for their mentee. Mentors helping their mentee establish relevant, meaningful relationships is often one of the most important results of a mentorship.¹³⁷ Additionally, mentors can introduce mentees to potential partners and collaborators- another key element of networking. In some cases, connections made through mentor introductions would have taken years to build without them. Mentors have already built trust and credibility with professional contacts and partners. As such, these collaborators may be more willing to provide technical support individuals for whom the mentors have vouched or have trained themselves. In addition to relationship building, connecting mentees with other sources of knowledge and professional development opportunities — such as regional conferences or associations, or access to resource libraries — is a key component of being a successful mentor. Individuals being mentored are looking for advice and guidance, but it is unlikely they will find one mentor with all the answers.¹³⁸ If a mentor does not have the skillset to provide their mentee with the feedback and guidance they are seeking, they can connect their mentee with someone from their network who can assist them.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ MentorCliq ‘10 mentoring activities you can try today’ Available at [10 Mentoring Activities You Can Try Today \(mentorcliq.com\)](https://www.mentorcliq.com) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹³⁶ Linda Phillips-Jones ‘75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try’ Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹³⁷ International Republican Institute ‘Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit’ (2020)

¹³⁸ International Republican Institute ‘Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit’ (2020)

¹³⁹ International Republican Institute ‘Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit’ (2020)

6.6. Discuss emerging news or events related to the mentee's goals

In most cases, the mentoring relationship and the mentee's goals are not totally unique. News, studies, surveys, etc may hit the headlines and be excellent fodder for mentoring relationship discussions. It is recommended that the mentor should scan the news (and have the mentee do the same) for information related to the mentoring goals that can help bolster the success of the relationship and give the mentor and mentee more to think about.¹⁴⁰ This keeps the mentorship relationship relevant.

6.7. Keep the mentorship professional but enjoyable

Relationship building could include talking about the relationship, as well as about the mentor and mentee's interests and backgrounds. (With youths, it's usually good to start doing something together)

Source: Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](#) (accessed 22 October 2021)

6.8. The mentor must show interest and concern for the mentee

Mentors can demonstrate such interest and concern by learning and using mentee's names during group mentorship sessions, carefully considering and answering every question, and inviting specific mentees who appear to be having unique challenges which may not be adequately addressed during the group mentorship sessions so that they may further discuss those problems and potential solutions. A mentor also can express concern and interest by giving due consideration to mentee complaints regarding the mentorship process, taking remedial action when the complaints are valid, and carefully explaining their position when the complaints are not valid.

8.6. Building trust¹⁴¹

The presence or absence of trust make or break the success of a mentorship respectively. Without trust, neither the mentor nor the mentee will feel comfortable being candid asking for or sharing feedback, confident that roles and responsibilities are being taken seriously, and motivated to do the work to ensure

¹⁴⁰ MentorCliq '10 mentoring activities you can try today' Available at [10 Mentoring Activities You Can Try Today \(mentorcliq.com\)](#) (accessed 22 October 2021)

¹⁴¹ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

the mentorship is successful. Trust building requires a mutual investment, which necessitates a time commitment by both the mentor and mentee to communicate frequently and openly. The role of the mentor is to create a safe and trusted environment so that the mentee feels comfortable to ask the questions that are considered obstacles to the mentee's career and/or personal and professional growth.¹⁴²

As a result, there are additional steps that mentors need to take to develop trust with a mentee. These steps include, but are not limited to:

- a) Guaranteeing confidentiality from the beginning. Mentors should assure their mentees that their exchanges are secure and confidential.
- b) Being honest and transparent. By mentors sharing their career story and personal journey, mentees will be more comfortable talking about the challenges they currently face.

¹⁴² UN Women 'Mentoring for women's empowerment Guide for workplace mentoring programmes' (2020)

- c) Eliminating fear and intimidation. The mentoring relationship should be an open dialogue and present a time to be candid. Unless a question breaches the expectations set in the mentorship Agreement, mentors should always answer their mentees' questions and encourage them to ask more.

Behaviors that build trust:The mentor-mentee relationship requires a high level of trust with the intention of creating an experience through which the mentee is learning about self-reflection and different approaches to various situations.

- ✓ Listening proactively and with an open mind
- ✓ Sharing experiences openly
- ✓ Being vulnerable
- ✓ Following through on action items
- ✓ Actively seeking out different perspectives
- ✓ Demonstrating a positive outlook
- ✓ Honoring and respecting confidentiality

Behaviors that impede trust

- ✗ Interrupting others and not paying attention
- ✗ Being overly competitive
- ✗ Withholding information or being exclusive
- ✗ Not matching behavior to words
- ✗ Being closed to new ideas
- ✗ Operating from a negative perspective

- ✗ Revealing information gained in confidence

Source: *UN Women 'Mentoring for women's programmes' (2020)*

8.7. Let the mentee set the agenda

A key difference between mentoring and teaching is that unlike a student, the mentee sets the agenda for what is to be achieved, rather than the mentor or teacher.¹⁴³ Additionally, rather than teaching, the mentor's role is to provide guidance and support to their mentee based on their technical expertise. The mentor will have experience in certain areas and models of best practice, but the priority is to deal with the issues facing the mentee. When these issues have been resolved and learning goals have been reached, the relationship in this context will come to a successful end.

- Give your mentee voice and choice in deciding on activities. Provide a range of activity choices for youth. Youth feel more invested in the relationship if they can exercise some control.
- You should also let the mentee have control over what you talk about and how you talk about it. Be sensitive to their cues. Don't push your mentee for information or hit them with rapid-fire questioning.
- Most importantly, respect the trust your mentee places in you. Respond to them in ways that show you see their side of things, giving advice sparingly.

Source: The Corporation for National and Community Service

8.8. Summary of key points

- ✓ Trust is built over time. The mentor will increase trust by keeping the conversations and other communications with the mentee confidential, honoring scheduled meetings and calls, consistently showing interest and support, and by being honest with the mentee. (Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003))
- ✓ Mentors and mentees should also make a concerted effort to get to know each other on a professional level by actively looking for shared experiences they can both discuss and relate to, or even engage in together outside of formal mentorship meetings.
- ✓ Allow the mentee to have some say in the relationship and allow them to share without fear of getting lectured or judged. This will set the tone for a positive relationship.

¹⁴³ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

8.9. Self-assessment/exercise

Trust self-assessment for mentors and mentees

___ I've talked about the topics of trust and confidentiality with my mentee/mentor.

___ I'm beginning to trust my mentee/mentor more and more.

___ I'm becoming less guarded than when we first got together.

___ I share important relevant information about me with my mentee/mentor.

___ My mentee/mentor seems to be trusting me more and more.

___ I welcome and keep in confidence the information he/she shares with me.

___ My mentee/mentor can count on me to be honest.

___ He/She can count on me to follow through on my promises.

___ I avoid any trust-breaking behaviors such as canceling appointments without compelling reasons, talking negatively about others, or making excuses about why I don't follow through. *Source:*

Who is holding the rope for you? Building Effective Mentoring Relationships Mentoring Workbook

7. SOME ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND APPROACHES THAT MENTEES REQUIRE FOR POLITICAL SUCCESS

Learning objectives

- To outline some of the essential skills and approaches that mentees may require for political success;
- To showcase how mentors can support mentees to acquire some essential skills for their political success

7.1. Continuous learning and Personal development

Continuous learning, also known as constant learning, is the concept of always expanding your knowledge to gain new skills and expertise.

Source: Emma O'Neill, Product Marketing Specialist at LearnUpon

Personal development is the ongoing act of assessing one's life goals and building skills and qualities to reach one's potential.¹⁴⁴ Self-development can contribute to a person's maturity and professional growth.¹⁴⁵ Many people strengthen their personal development skills throughout their lives to better themselves and reach their goals. They can do this through education, training, advice from a mentor, self-help and more.¹⁴⁶

Politics is one of the highly competitive areas of work. In a rapidly changing political space, embarking on continual learning helps politicians to adapt quickly. Be it new technologies, practices, legal and political developments etc.¹⁴⁷ The ability to adapt also results in less roadblocks during transitions to new practices meaning less disruption to one's political career. It also helps one to remain relevant within the political space. Thus, it is especially important for mentees to continually develop essential skills and acquire new knowledge that would support them to advance and remain relevant in their political career. Continuous learning and development can play a big role in making a real difference to one's competitive advantage.

¹⁴⁴ Indeed Career Guide '9 Ways To Improve Your Personal Development Skills' available at <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/improve-your-personal-development-skills> (accessed 7 January 2022)

¹⁴⁵ Indeed Career Guide '9 Ways To Improve Your Personal Development Skills' available at <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/improve-your-personal-development-skills> (accessed 7 January 2022)

¹⁴⁶ Indeed Career Guide '9 Ways To Improve Your Personal Development Skills' available at <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/improve-your-personal-development-skills> (accessed 7 January 2022)

¹⁴⁷ Emma O'Neill 'Continuous Learning: A Guide for Your Business' Published on January 21, 2020 available at <https://www.learnupon.com/blog/continuous-learning/> (accessed 7 January 2022)

Personal development skills can be soft or technical skills¹⁴⁸ that can help mentees become competitive candidates in their political endeavors. Mentors can therefore support mentees to advance their personal development by:

- ✦ Encouraging mentees to develop a self-analysis on areas for improvement and what necessary skills they need to possess in order to advance in their political career
- ✦ Encouraging mentees to develop a personal development plan which outline the skills they currently have and the skills they need to develop to achieve their vision. Having clarity around the 'what', 'why' and 'how' is essential to beginning a mentee's journey to self-improvement.¹⁴⁹
- ✦ Encourage mentees to gather feedback from other respected colleagues on areas in which they need to improve- that are in line with their goals;
- ✦ Support mentees to also understand that learning can also be done informally through constant observation and reflection of their political environment.

TIP

Show your mentees how to pull learning from people and situations they experience, even those that seem, on the surface, irrelevant to them.

Source: Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu) (accessed 22 October 2021)

NOTABLE QUOTES

"Perhaps the most crucial skill of all when it comes to personal growth is learning how to create a learning environment wherever you areTreat people in ways that make them want to coach you, support you, give you feedback, and allow you to make mistakes. Seek out feedback on your impact and information on what you might do differently. Experiment. Take time to reflect, absorb, and incorporate." —

Source: Morgan W. McCall, Jr. High Flyers, page 229

Examples of skills that politicians can continue to build upon in their political career include:

- Public speaking and presentation skills
- Writing and research skills
- Technological skills and knowledge of social media
- Networking skills
- Resource mobilization
- Crisis management and problem solving
- Networking
- Financial management and investment
- Conducting lobbying and advocacy

¹⁴⁸ 9 Ways To Improve Your Personal Development Skills Available at [9 Ways To Improve Your Personal Development Skills | Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) (accessed 7 January 2022)

¹⁴⁹ '5 Strategies for Enhancing Your Personal Development' Available at <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/rhubarb/enhance-personal-development.html> (accessed 7 January 2022)

- Community engagement

Mentors must be able to demonstrate to mentees that personal development is a lifelong process and that there are always opportunities for professional improvement and growth that are in line with one's political goals and aspirations.

7.2. Public speaking

Politicians are often required to speak in public. This is because political speech is a way of expressing one's opinion on political or social issues.¹⁵⁰ For politicians, public speaking is critical because it helps them spread their messages and learn more about voters' minds. If a politician is not a good speaker, it is unlikely that people will vote for them.¹⁵¹ Therefore, one of the most critical skills a politician can have is public speaking because it allows them to communicate their ideas effectively.

However, public speaking is sometimes challenging for politicians because they need to maintain their composure and establish trust with the audience while also demonstrating their expertise on the subject.¹⁵² To succeed as a politician, one needs to have confidence, and this is something that can only come from being well-prepared. Mentees can therefore benefit from being supported with developing or improving their public speaking skills. Mentees must be ready to speak in front of large crowds, win debates, and network with supporters.

¹⁵⁰ [Public Speaking for Politicians: Tips for Improving Public Speaking Skills for Leaders \(politicalmarketer.com\)](https://politicalmarketer.com/public-speaking-for-politicians-tips-for-improving-public-speaking-skills-for-leaders/)
(accessed 28 October 2021)

¹⁵¹ [Public Speaking for Politicians: Tips for Improving Public Speaking Skills for Leaders \(politicalmarketer.com\)](https://politicalmarketer.com/public-speaking-for-politicians-tips-for-improving-public-speaking-skills-for-leaders/)
(accessed 28 October 2021)

¹⁵² [Public Speaking for Politicians: Tips for Improving Public Speaking Skills for Leaders \(politicalmarketer.com\)](https://politicalmarketer.com/public-speaking-for-politicians-tips-for-improving-public-speaking-skills-for-leaders/)
(accessed 28 October 2021)

EXERCISES THAT MENTORS CAN SUPPORT THEIR MENTEES IN DOING SO THAT THEY IMPROVE THEIR PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

a) Observe mentees giving presentations. Get permission to give them feedback—privately.

OR if they are comfortable, ask them to video record themselves on their phone and let the team see and respectfully critique the video. It would be important to set ground rules to ensure that the feedback provided by their peers is constructive and not derogatory.

b) tell mentees to use the 30 Seconds Filler-Free exercise

Filler words like “uh” “um” and “you know” not only make one’s talk more difficult to listen to, but they also make one seem less prepared and authoritative. For this exercise, tell the mentees to record themselves giving a talk on any topic for 30 seconds, taking care to omit all filler words. Whenever they use a filler word, them to start over and try again. Let them do this exercise ten times, filler-free.

c) Learn From the Pros

Look for speeches that are widely accepted as exceptional. Watch it with your mentees through critical lens. Analyze the narrative structure the speaker uses, what makes their delivery effective, how their visuals enhance their talk and other components that make their speech extraordinary.

d) One Minute Off-the-Cuff

For this exercise, have a mentee set a timer on their phone for one minute and let them record themselves giving an impromptu speech on any topic that interests them. The only rule is that they CANNOT prepare for it in any way. This is designed to get the mentees more comfortable speaking off-the-cuff and minimize the anxiety that comes from being afraid that they won’t have anything to say.

e) Tell a Photo Story

Storytelling is critical to engaging an audience and helping them retain the information that one is sharing. To practice developing narratives, let the mentees find an interesting photo and record themselves presenting a story about it in a compelling way.

f) Self-practise behind a mirror

Encourage the mentee to stand in front of a mirror when they are at home and practice. They must practice to speak slowly and clearly, how to use gestures to emphasize points, and how to showcase passion in their voice range and demeanor

7.3. Problem solving

Mentors must support mentees to develop problem solving skills, including how to find and use available resources to solve problems and achieve goals. Mentees should be able to understand that it is okay to have uncertainties during certain phases of their political career. However, mentees need to be guided that it is important to be proactive in problem solving as opposed to waiting for chance.

A mentor has to model this important skill of problem-solving to mentees. The mentor can use the following process to help mentees learn to identify and solve problems.

1. Ask the mentees to identify or clarify a problem. Urge the mentees to be specific. Sometimes what seems like one problem is actually two or more separate problems. Focus on one at a time.
2. Have the mentees outline several possible solutions to the problem. Let the mentees consider positive and negative aspects of each.
3. Let the mentees identify the best solution- whilst the mentor also gives guidance.
4. Let the mentees identify steps to implement the solution.
5. If possible, let the mentees implement the solution, making adjustments as necessary.
6. Review the final outcome. Analyze why or why not the solution worked and what mentees learned from the experience.

Adapted from Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology 'Problem-Solving Skills'

It is important for mentors to observe how mentees conceptualize issues and problems. If the mentee is trying to solve a problem of some kind, the mentor must try to help the mentee identify what the problem really is, then vocalize possible solutions or alternatives.¹⁵³ The mentor must encourage the mentee to choose one solution or alternative and put forth a serious effort to try to achieve it.¹⁵⁴ Remember: it's important not to tell her what to do, but instead help her to think through her own possible solutions or alternatives—as well as any consequences—before choosing one.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET' available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](https://www.counseling.org/files/2021/10/listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf) (accessed 29 October 2021)

¹⁵⁴ Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET' available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](https://www.counseling.org/files/2021/10/listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf) (accessed 29 October 2021)

¹⁵⁵ Lynn E. Linde, EdD 'Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET' available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](https://www.counseling.org/files/2021/10/listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf) (accessed 29 October 2021)

TIPS for mentors

Understanding how your mentees think: Have them explain how they made decisions and what they considered along the way, then note any patterns and inconsistencies that need work. Also ask thought-provoking, open-ended questions that help your mentees think in new ways. (“What if that didn’t happen?” “Imagine this scenarioWhat would you do?”

Source:Linda Phillips-Jones ‘75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try’ Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](#) (accessed 22 October 2021)

If the mentee chooses a possible solution or alternative that will likely result in a negative consequence, the mentor must help the mentee to process why it might not be a good choice by using several open-ended questions.¹⁵⁶ For example: instead of saying, “If you do that, you’ll get in trouble,” the mentor can say “If you do that, what do you think might happen? How will that help you get what you want?”¹⁵⁷

7.4. Drawing lessons from set-backs or recovering from a political loss

When women suffer a political loss, they need support to process what they have gone through. Mentors should not be expected to undertake counselling sessions but may be in a position to refer a mentee to a certified counsellor to speak to the issue of depression- where need be.

Politics can be a highly emotive affair and instances of political set-back and losses. Mentees need to be alerted of this possibility and provided with skills on how best to cope with political losses and set-backs

When women suffer a political loss, they need support to process what they have gone through. Mentors should not be expected to undertake counselling sessions but may be in a position to refer a mentee to a certified counsellor to speak to the issue of depression- where need be.

- a) Help mentees understand that failures happens and it is ok

Mentees should understand that they may encounter failure in their political career. Mentees should be assisted to perceive failure as a launching pad as opposed to a setback.

¹⁵⁶ Lynn E. Linde, EdD ‘Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET’ available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

¹⁵⁷ Lynn E. Linde, EdD ‘Listening & Communication Skills for Mentors - TIP SHEET’ available at [listening-amp-communication-skills-for-mentors-final2e3926f16116603abcacff0000bee5e7.pdf \(counseling.org\)](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

TIP: A mentor may share their own story of failure or a well-known story of a successful politician who experienced failure. Then ask the mentees to identify strategies that the politician or mentor may have used to overcome the failure and succeed

- a) Advise mentees to focus on the lessons learned (turning losses into an empowering experience).

Focusing on who or what is to blame or even feelings of guilt will not be as constructive as reflecting on lessons learned and on maintaining any relationships from the campaign.

TIP for the mentee in managing loss/failure:

Ask yourself what the three biggest lessons you learned were and what you can put in place to mitigate against another possible loss or failure.

Mentees should also be encouraged to own their mistakes which can actually enhance their image as it shows confidence, accountability and integrity.¹⁵⁸

- b) Separate failure from your identity

Help the mentees understand that a setback or failure in their political career is not a reflection of who they are as an individual. By understanding that failure is just part of the process and not part of their identity, they can maintain the confidence to continue pursuing your goal.¹⁵⁹

- c) Re-strategize

It's important for mentees to understand that failure should not make them timid¹⁶⁰ or stagnant. Though it is important to take some time to absorb the lessons of one's failure, it is equally to eventually get right back out there and try again. Mentees should utilize the lessons learned to redefine or strengthen their strategy.

7.5. Resource Mobilization

Resource mobilization describes the process an individual or an organization uses to acquire and put to use those things they need to implement activities and pursue their mission. Resources are more than just money. Resources include human resources such as skills, experience and ideas. Resources also include physical resources such as facilities and equipment, Social or Political resources also constitute resources, such as partnerships, good will, reputation, favorable policies, building valuable contacts and networks.

¹⁵⁸ Travis Bradberry "8 Ways Smart People Use Failure To Their Advantage" available at [8 Ways Smart People Use Failure To Their Advantage \(forbes.com\)](#) accessed at 7 January 2021

¹⁵⁹ Indeed Editorial Team '5 Productive Ways to Cope With Failure' available at [5 Productive Ways to Cope With Failure | Indeed.com](#)

¹⁶⁰ Travis Bradberry "8 Ways Smart People Use Failure To Their Advantage" available at 8 Ways Smart People Use Failure To Their Advantage (forbes.com) accessed at 7 January 2021

Resource mapping: Resource mapping guides organizations through a process of actively exploring and connecting with the resources one requires so as to identify where one can focus their networking and resource mobilization efforts.

Resource mapping can be done in several different ways. In general, it includes at least three elements:

- a) An understanding of the resources one requires over a period of time

Formal or professional networks	Informal or personal networks
<p>Who do I know through existing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners • Donors • Referral sources <p>Who do I know through former</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners • Donors • Referral sources <p>Who do I know through current or past programs?</p> <p>Who are my former colleagues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do they work for now? • Does their organization fund projects? • Who are their funders? <p>Who do I know through past jobs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where to they work? • Who do they interact with regularly? <p>Who have I met at conferences?</p> <p>Who do I know through coalitions or task forces I participate in</p>	<p>Who in my family works in a similar field of work?</p> <p>Who in my family has a connection to someone working in a similar field of work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does my family member know someone working for a donor, implementer, NGO, or vendor? <p>Who do my friends work for?</p> <p>Do the parents of my child's friends/spouse's colleagues work in a similar field of work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do they work for? • Who do they know? <p>Also think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbors • Classmates (grade school through University) <p>Others</p>

- b) An inventory of current and projected resources possessed
- c) An assessment of potential resources available in the funding landscape

Identifying funders: At first a mentee might think "I do not know anyone". A mentor should encourage the mentee to think about people the mentee knows from:

- Current/past jobs
- Current/past programs
- Colleagues they went to school with
- Place of worship
- Coalitions/task forces they have participated in
- Family, friends, neighbor

Source: ITECH 'Mapping and Mobilizing Resources'

Just because the mentee had a connection with a person or institution does not mean that it would be appropriate for them to ask that person for help. The point of this exercise is to help the mentee think through ways that you could access donors if you chose to.

It is also important for the mentee to understand that the donor landscape will change over time. There may be shifts in policy, practice, and even staff. To be ready, organizations must keep up with trends in policy and practice that are relevant to their work.

Funding plan: The mentor should support the mentee to develop a tool designed to help you see where you stand now and determine program areas in need of funding and resources over a three-year period. The mentee can list down programs that they are implementing at present and the activities they intend to pursue over the next three years. The mentee can further indicate the funding and resource needs of the activities/programs. This should reflect the sum of monies and the equipment they ought to have in order to achieve the mentee’s key results over a three-year period. It is advisable to showcase the most realistic financial projections. The mentee must specify the amount of funds and in-kind resources that they already have. The funding plan should also indicate the sources of funds and resources (i.e. individual contributors, donor agencies and funding partners, political parties etc), as well as when until when the money and resources will be available.

Example of a simple funding plan:

Activity	Resources required	Resources available	Resource gap	Resource providers	Timeline		
					Year 1	Year 2	Year 3

Ingenuity: This is an open exploration of the donor community and should not be limited to those funding your current area of focus or expertise. In other words, think about donors outside your current field. For example, if you work in health, which donors fund agriculture? There may be opportunities to overlap with an agricultural project

7.6. Community Mobilization

As aspiring politicians, mentees will most likely be expected to undertake various activities aimed at organizing masses of organized or unorganized participants in order to accomplish political aims.¹⁶¹ In addition, politicians will have to work collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people¹⁶² Thus, mentees will need to strengthen their community engagement and mobilization skills. Mentors need to support mentees to realize that community engagement works best where it is an ongoing cumulative process – thus enabling relationships and trust to build and strengthen over time. It is

¹⁶¹ Political Mobilization Strategies in Taiwan's Sunflower Student Movement on March 18, 2014: A Text-Mining Analysis of Cross-National Media Corpus

¹⁶² See definition available at ATSDR ‘What is Community Engagement’ available at [Chapter 1: What Is Community Engagement? | Principles of Community Engagement | ATSDR \(cdc.gov\)](#) (accessed 13 January 2022)

a continuous process that aims to generate the support necessary for long-term change.¹⁶³ Mentees should not implement community engagement as a one-off event- especially for mentees who are seeking an elected office. It is particularly not strategic for mentees to start community engagement and mobilization efforts only when elections are imminent. Thus, it is important that mentors encourage mentees seeking an elected office to start strategizing and implementing community mobilization efforts way before the electoral period (this can be even 3 to 4 years before the election).

7.6.1. Some tips for effective community mobilization and engagement

a) Have a clear strategy of engagement

It is critical to know and understand communities in order to effectively work with them in all phases of one's political career.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, mentors can therefore support mentees to reflect through the following questions so as to help the mentee in the planning and design of community engagement:

- What level of community participation is hoped to be achieved?
- How will they identify the community stakeholders?
- What communication strategy would be effective in mobilizing the community?
- What resources would be needed?
- What limitations or risks exist and how can I mitigate against them?

b) Ignite passion

Mentors can be particularly critical in helping mentees learn tips on how to engage community members in a way that ignites passion in them. This can be done through mentees not only accompanying mentors to rallies, campaigns, community meetings but also supporting the mentors in strategizing and organizing such events so that mentees appreciate what is involved in community mobilization. Furthermore, mentees must learn how to undertake research about the community she seeks to engage and be well acquainted with the underlying aspects that the community members are largely passionate about. This can feed into her community mobilization strategy.

An activity for a mentee running for an elected office

A mentor can help the mentee develop a central message which is the heart of a campaign. The central message is a short message describing exactly what the mentee stands for. This is what the mentee wants to convey to potential voters. The central message basically consists of three elements: problem, solution and direction.

Source: Alfred Mozer Stichting International Foundation for Social Democrac 'Becoming a better politician: Political skills manual' (2009)

c) Establish simple steps to connect

¹⁶³SSIR 'Community Engagement Matters (Now More Than Ever)' available at [Community Engagement Matters \(Now More Than Ever\) \(ssir.org\)](https://www.ssir.org/) (accessed 13 January 2022)

¹⁶⁴ World Health Organization 'Community Engagement' available at PowerPoint Presentation (who.int) (accessed 13 January 2022)

In order for mentees to learn how to mobilize people or the community, they need to stay in contact with their communities. This does not necessarily always have to be done through complex processes or resource intensive activities. Many communities in Malawi thrive on social networking. Thus, mentees should be encouraged to attend social events such as weddings, community meetings, church functions, funerals etc. Mentees need to know how to establish relationships, build trust, work with formal and informal leaders and seek their commitment for mobilizing the community.¹⁶⁵

Tip for mentees:

Engage people if you expect them to be engaged.

Another important aspect for establishing connection is for mentees to take time to understand the culture of the community they wish to engage with and ensure that

their conduct or communication methodology is in alignment with or respectful of that culture. This enables or facilitates community trust.

Understand the community's culture, perception, economic condition, social networks, political and power structures, norms, values, demographic trends, history, past experience

Source: World Health Organization 'Community Engagement' available at PowerPoint Presentation (who.int) (accessed 13 January 2022)

Though many areas in Malawi are rural, there is a gradual growth in technological advancement. Mentees can therefore explore any technological opportunities that exist which they can use to their advantage. This can be something as simple as sending regular whatsapp messages which updates community members on work done or ongoing activities. There is also a growing number of young people (often in urban areas) with access to social media. Mentees can utilize such platforms to connect with the younger populace. Community engagement does not require a single approach. Mentors must challenge mentees to continually think of better and effective methodologies for engagement over a continuous period of time.

d) Use less self-centered language

It is important for community members to know that they matter and that their participation/input is valued in the mentee's political agenda. The goal is to encourage intended communities not just to participate in a mentee's political initiative but also to champion it. In order to achieve this, community members need to feel included and to own the process. For example, mentees must avoid language that says 'I will do this for you,' and instead use 'we will achieve this together.'

¹⁶⁵ World Health Organization 'Community Engagement' available at PowerPoint Presentation (who.int) (accessed 13 January 2022)






Communities often feel motivated to participate and support political processes which they feel they are a part of; and where they have something meaningful to contribute.

e) Consultation and collaboration

Community members are not passive actors. Community members are agents of change and they also have skills and knowledge which can inform the policies or strategies that the mentee seeks to implement. Mentees must not simply engage the community with a one-sided approach in which the mentee drives the agenda and prioritization of issues. The mentees must also learn to consult the community as part of a process to develop policy, or build community awareness and understanding.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, collaborating with the community by developing partnerships to formulate options and provide recommendations is also an important and successful strategy for community engagement. This builds shared leadership and empowers the community to make decisions and to implement change. Involving the community through a range of mechanisms to ensure that issues and concerns are understood and considered is part of the community engagement process.¹⁶⁷ Community members are more likely to support a politician who ensures their meaningful participation in actions and decisions affecting them. In such engagement, mentees must recognize and respect diversity; and ensure that the most vulnerable are reached and engaged as well.

7.7. Summary of Key Points

Some of the essential skills and approaches that a mentee needs to acquire and apply in order to attain political success involve the following:

-  To take initiative to continually learn, increase their knowledge and develop their skill-set in key areas that are relevant for their professional growth
-  To continually improve their public speaking skills so that they engage confidently with different audiences at various levels;
-  To understand that political setbacks and failure are inevitable, and therefore to use such setbacks as an opportunity to learn and re-strategize;
-  To have a comprehensive time-bound plan of identifying and mobilizing resources to attain political goals;
-  To engage effectively, meaningfully and regularly with communities.

¹⁶⁶ World Health Organization 'Community Engagement' available at [PowerPoint Presentation \(who.int\)](#) (accessed 13 January 2022)

¹⁶⁷ World Health Organization 'Community Engagement' available at [PowerPoint Presentation \(who.int\)](#) (accessed 13 January 2022)

8. WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN MENTORING ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN (AGYW) IN RELATION TO A MALE DOMINATED PROFESSION

Learning objectives:

- To understand how best to create a supportive and empowering mentoring environment for AGYW
- To understand the dangers of gender stereotyping language and what measures can be undertaken to prevent the same
- To outline some systemic challenges that AGYW face when navigating their political career and what supportive strategies mentors can implement to support mentees in such cases

8.1. Why safe mentorship spaces for AGYW only is critical

Evidence has shown that AGYW are particularly susceptible to challenges related to their physical and mental health, body image and self-esteem.¹⁶⁸ Many AGYW also face systemic barriers that can negatively impact their personal growth and development including, but not limited to, feminized poverty, marginalization and sexism. They may have experienced Gendered discrimination, harassment and violence resulting into:¹⁶⁹

- Lowered expectations of women and their capabilities.
- Fewer opportunities provided to women, including skills-building and leadership opportunities.
- Lack of or limited access to technology and internet compared to men.
- Gender roles and norms which undermine women's active participation (as compared to men) in a mentorship program or to express themselves freely as compared to a man
- Other factors that may lead to a confidence gap between women and men

Adolescent girls and young women therefore benefit from gender-specific and gender-positive group mentoring programs.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Canadian Women's Foundation 'Girls Group Mentoring Mentoring Toolkit' (2015)

¹⁶⁹ Planning Institute Australia National Office 'mentoring program handbook for mentees and mentors'

¹⁷⁰ Canadian Women's Foundation 'Girls Group Mentoring Mentoring Toolkit' (2015)

AGYW group mentoring programs work to create a supportive environment where girls can make connections that foster their strengths and support them through challenges.

AGYW group mentoring programs celebrate individuality while providing safe spaces for girls and women to connect and share their voices and common experiences. When AGYW are given tools, space and encouragement, they are empowered to develop their voices in their communities and navigate the challenges of adolescence.

Source: Canadian Women's Foundation 'Girls Group Mentoring Mentoring Toolkit' (2015)

AGYW mentorship programs must aim to build resilience with deliberate strategies to help women

- ✓ *Gain Confidence:* Mentoring sessions should aim to make AGYW feel more confident, and therefore ensure deliberate measures to have AGYW participate freely. Mentors must aim to be constructively positive, encouraging and genuinely complimentary.
 - ✓ *Find their Voice:* Mentoring sessions should provide safe platforms that support AGYW to find their voices, speak up more and stand up for themselves.
 - ✓ *Build leadership and conflict management skills:* Mentoring sessions should act as learning platforms for the AGYW mentees to build conflict management and leadership skills.
 - ✓ *Acquire a sense of Belonging or Connectedness and Increase Community Connections:* mentorship sessions should serve as a larger network they can connect with outside of the group and can feel empowered to take action on issues in the community –
- Source: Canadian Women's Foundation (2014)*

“What is key is collaboration, truth telling, shadowing-taking mentees to events and conferences- and reaching out to connect and build a strong community of women and allies among male politicians...”

Source: Canadian Women's Foundation (2014)

In addition, AGYW-only mentorship programming offers a variety of benefits and positive impacts for AGYW because¹⁷¹

- ✓ AGYW often have unique needs and interests from men and therefore often prefer a space of their own
- ✓ AGYW are more likely to be themselves in front of other girls
- ✓ AGYW are more comfortable sharing and opening up in front of other girls
- ✓ AGYW are more likely to discuss certain topics with other girls (e.g. work/family balance, self-esteem,)
- ✓ AGYW worry less about being undermined or belittled when mentors create safe spaces for them

¹⁷¹ Adapted from Canadian Women's Foundation 'Girls Group Mentoring Mentoring Toolkit' (2015)

- ✓ Having female role models and mentors provides positive reinforcement for the AGYW and creates immense potential for growth, acceptance and support.

Female-only spaces can create space for discussion that encourages AGYW to question stereotypes. This creates an atmosphere where girls can build the skills and confidence needed to challenge oppression for themselves and others.

Source: Canadian Women's Foundation 'Girls Group Mentoring Mentoring Toolkit' (2015)

8.2. What is a harmful gender stereotype

A stereotype is a widely accepted preconception or bias about a person or group.¹⁷² Gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men. For instance, our society has a set of ideas about how we expect men and women to act, including how a man or woman should dress, behave, and present themselves.

Stereotyping therefore consists of 3 key elements:

- ✚ a preconceived belief formed before full knowledge or evidence is available
- ✚ about the attributes, characteristics or roles (e.g. nurturing, breadwinner etc)
- ✚ of a social group or subgroup (e.g. lesbians, women, men etc).

A gender stereotype is harmful when it limits women's and men's capacity to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives and life plans.¹⁷³ Stereotyping is a form of discrimination.

Harmful stereotypes can be both hostile/negative (e.g. women are irrational) or seemingly benign/innocent (e.g. women are nurturing).

¹⁷² Planned Parenthood 'What are gender roles and stereotypes?'
<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/what-are-gender-roles-and-stereotypes>

¹⁷³ What is gender stereotyping?
<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate/mod/oucontent/view.php?id=133060§ion=4>

Stereotypes about women both result from and are the cause of deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices against women. Unfortunately, laws cannot legislate away deeply ingrained attitudes about the roles of men and women. In other words, gender stereotypes acquired by girls and boys in early childhood end up affecting their choices in school, work, and other sectors of society which block progress towards equality.¹⁷⁴ Gender stereotyping presents a serious obstacle to the achievement of real gender equality and feeds into gender discrimination.¹⁷⁵

Mentors should avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes

Mentoring programs have an obligation to provide training in gender sensitivity so as to raise mentor's awareness of their own biases and blind spots (Liang & Grossman, 2007; Sanchez & Colon, 2005)

This should involve both initial training and ongoing supervision as new situations arise so that mentors can openly acknowledge any biases that they may hold and to remain open and nonjudgmental.

Source: Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

8.2.1. Common stereotypes in politics

- a) Women are more likely to be blamed for political failures

Whenever women are working with men on a male gender-typed role like politics, men are more likely to be credited for joint successes and women are more likely to be blamed for joint failures.¹⁷⁶ Generalized harmful statements are then perpetuated, like 'that's why women can never succeed in politics.' Such misconceived statements are rarely made for men in similar or worse situations.

- b) Men are often promoted on potential, women are promoted for proven performance

Research shows that women are held to stricter standards for promotion (including elevation within political ranks). The research has found that promoted women have higher performance ratings than promoted men, and performance ratings are more strongly related to promotions for women than for men.¹⁷⁷ Thus and in order for women to succeed in politics, they are held to a much higher standard of competence than men.

- c) The backlash effect: being attacked for countering stereotypes

When women counter their stereotype and break expectations about how they "should" behave, they face repercussions.¹⁷⁸ If they defy these stereotypes and behave "like a man" (e.g. by showing dominance, ambition and rationality), they will be penalized by a backlash effect. They are perceived to be dominant

¹⁷⁴ 'Gender Stereotypes and how to fight them' available at

¹⁷⁵ Council of Europe 'Preventing and Combating Sexism Recommendation' CM/Rec (2019)1

¹⁷⁶ World Economic Forum 'How to beat gender stereotypes: learn, speak up and react' available at [How to beat gender stereotypes: learn, speak up and react | World Economic Forum \(weforum.org\)](https://www.weforum.org/articles/how-to-beat-gender-stereotypes-learn-speak-up-and-react) (accessed 12 January 2021)

¹⁷⁷ World Economic Forum 'How to beat gender stereotypes: learn, speak up and react' available at [How to beat gender stereotypes: learn, speak up and react | World Economic Forum \(weforum.org\)](https://www.weforum.org/articles/how-to-beat-gender-stereotypes-learn-speak-up-and-react) (accessed 12 January 2021)

¹⁷⁸ World Economic Forum 'How to beat gender stereotypes: learn, speak up and react' available at [How to beat gender stereotypes: learn, speak up and react | World Economic Forum \(weforum.org\)](https://www.weforum.org/articles/how-to-beat-gender-stereotypes-learn-speak-up-and-react) (accessed 12 January 2021)

women and are 'less likeable' than men. They are often labelled to be intimidating, bossy or aggressive.¹⁷⁹

8.2.2. What mentors need to do?

- a) Help AGYW be proud of themselves. Reinforce the mentee's strengths and celebrate them regularly. Let the mentee know that she has many great skills and abilities that she can use throughout her life. Give her opportunities to use those skills whenever possible.

'A mentee-centred approach can be specifically beneficial in promoting women's empowerment and professional development. Such an approach recognizes that power dynamics exist in mentoring relationships and that, although a mentor may have more work experience, the mentee can play a key role in setting the goals and agenda for the mentoring sessions. This approach enables the mentee to drive the sessions to ensure they meet the mentee's goals.'

UN Women 'Mentoring for women's empowerment Guide for workplace mentoring programmes' (2020)

- b) Encourage goal setting, self-sufficiency, and independent thinking. Talk to your mentee about her goals and dreams and help her see how she can work toward them. Do some personal goal setting together, helping her to choose goals that are meaningful for her regardless of what others expect of her. Sometimes girls rely so much on what others think that they lose sight of their own goals, values, and beliefs. As a mentor, you can encourage your mentee to get in touch with the things that really matter to her.
- c) Do not entrench harmful gender stereotypes. Mentors can also counterstereotype by explicitly reversing a harmful gender stereotype. For example, if someone says to the mentee 'you are so tough like a man!' A mentor can reverse the stereotype by saying 'my mentee is a tough, strong and resilient young woman. I am proud of her qualities and temperament which suit her so well as a young woman.'

¹⁷⁹ World Economic Forum 'How to beat gender stereotypes: learn, speak up and react' available at How to beat gender stereotypes: learn, speak up and react | World Economic Forum (weforum.org) (accessed 12 January 2021)

While men are generally portrayed as having agency characteristics such as competence, achievement-orientation, inclination to take charge, autonomy and rationality, women are associated with communal characteristics such as concern for others, affiliation tendencies, deference and emotional sensitivity. These characteristics are not only different, they tend to be oppositional: lay people on average believe that men should not be excessively warm (communal) and that women should not be excessively dominant (agency)

Source: World Economic Forum 'How to beat gender stereotypes: learn, speak up and react'

a) Encourage mentees to move confidently into male-dominated areas of politics and to speak up. The mentor can help mentees understand that they need not be embarrassed or at agony for exhibiting healthy behaviors and conduct that are generally perceived to be 'male.' Mentees should be encouraged to do the best that they can in order to achieve heightened political success. However, mentees must also be alerted that there are dangers associated with challenging gender stereotypes. People may not like to have their viewpoints of gender roles challenged and they may react in a negative or aggressive way. Mentees must therefore be advised that if their instinct tells them that a situation is too risky, their own safety is the priority.¹⁸⁰

8.3. Addressing violence against women in politics

Violence against women in politics is a form of gender-based violence. It is any act, or threat, of physical, sexual or psychological violence that prevents women from exercising and realizing their political rights and a range of human rights. Violence against women in politics often has the intent to force women to resign or withdraw from political life.¹⁸¹ There have been many reported incidences of violence and intimidation against women in politics within Malawi.¹⁸²

8.3.1. Types of violence against women in politics:

Sexual violence: including sexual harassment, unwanted advances and sexual assault, rape, sexualized threats, altered pornographic or sexualized images intended to publicly question women's competencies and shame them.¹⁸³

Psychological violence: including threats, character assassination, stalking, online abuse as well as economic violence such as denial of salary or political financing, property theft or damage.

Physical violence: including assassinations, kidnappings, beatings – often with the intent to force women to resign or withdraw from political life.

¹⁸⁰ Plan International 'Challenging gender discrimination- a how to guide' Available at <https://plan-international.org/girls-get-equal/calling-out-discrimination> (accessed 12 January 2021)

¹⁸¹ UN Women 'Guidance Note: Preventing Violence Against Women In Politics' (July, 2021)

¹⁸² Inge Amundsen and Happy Kayuni 'Women in Politics in Malawi' (2016). Also see 50/50 campaign reports

¹⁸³ UN Women 'Guidance Note: Preventing Violence Against Women In Politics' (July, 2021)

Both mentors and mentees need to undergo a session organized by the mentorship program secretariat in order to better understand what violence against women in politics is and where one can seek help from should they experience any form of violence.

8.5.2. Guiding principles for a mentee who has experienced politically motivated Gender Based Violence¹⁸⁴

Where a mentor becomes aware that a mentee has experienced gender based violence as a result of their political engagement, the mentor needs to ensure that they adhere to the following appropriate guiding principles:

- a) Do no harm principle – in every action taken or every action intended in relation to a GBV survivor (who is also the mentee in this instance), the guiding principle should be that no harm should be suffered by the GBV survivor as a result of that action. If the mentee is a child, any decision made by the service provider must be in the best interests of the child.
- b) No decision is to be made without the informed consent of the GBV survivor. Where the GBV survivor is a child and thus lacks the required maturity to make an informed decision, the mentor must seek consent from the parent/guardian/appropriate adult/ accompanier/probation officer/child protection worker etc. as appropriate.
- c) Where it is essential for the mentor to get preliminary essential information from the mentee regarding what happened, the mentor must conduct discussions in a private setting. If it is absolutely necessary that other key persons be available during that preliminary discussion, the mentor must ensure that they should be of the same-sex as the survivor (if that is what the GBV survivor wants). The mentor must also be a good and attentive listener and listen without making judgment. They must not laugh, show disrespect or disbelief. The mentor must be patient, meaning that the mentor must not press for information if the survivor doesn't want to share any more. The mentor must respect the survivor's boundaries and must not do or say anything that could be construed as inappropriate. The mentor must ask only relevant questions and must avoid having the survivor repeat her story multiple times.
- d) The mentor must NEVER blame the GBV survivor for the violence.
- e) In whatever actions/decisions the mentor undertakes in relation to the mentee and the violence suffered, the mentor must prioritise survivor safety and security.
- f) No criminal case, however minor the injury or damage caused, should be mediated. By law, all incidents of defilement, rape, incest, sexual assault and sexual abuse (including of children) are criminal offences and MUST therefore be reported to the Police. Police should not encourage survivors and their families to withdraw a case of defilement, rape, incest, sexual assault and sexual abuse from the criminal justice process. Such cases must be referred to the court.
- g) The mentor must always observe the guiding principles of confidentiality, safety, respect and dignity

8.5.3. List of public institutions where one can report incidences of GBV

- a) Health Services/Including One Stop Centres- All survivors who are suspected victims of abuse should receive a medical evaluation by a health provider who has received training in the diagnosis

¹⁸⁴ Extracted from the Malawi Government Referral Pathways (with support from the Tithetse Nkhanza program)

and treatment of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse. Health Services provide the following roles:

- ✦ Obtain consent for examination
- ✦ Full physical examination
- ✦ Laboratory investigations
- ✦ Recording injuries and registration in health system and health passport
- ✦ Immediate medical stabilisation/treatment of acute injury and pain
- ✦ Prevention of HIV transmission (HIV-PEP) within 72 hours
- ✦ Prevention of Hepatitis B transmission (HBV-PEP) within 72 hours (where available)
- ✦ Prevention of pregnancy (emergency contraception within 72 hours)

b) Social Welfare/ Probation Services undertakes the following roles:

- ✦ Interviewing role so as to gather information (assessment/facilitate disclosure)
- ✦ Therapeutic role (facilitating the healing)
- ✦ Empowerment role (teach safety skills)
- ✦ Protection role (safety of the survivor)
- ✦ Monitoring role (monitoring and follow up)
- ✦ Advocacy role (informing and counselling)
- ✦ Facilitate collaboration (link up with other stakeholders such as the Police, hospital and the Court as well as NGOs in providing shelter or accommodation for the survivor)
- ✦ Prepare a Court Social Report
- ✦ Providing psychosocial support such as counselling to the victim and the family
- ✦ If the victim is a child or person with mental disabilities, the social workers is expected to attend meeting and interviews where other stakeholders are engaging the victim

c) Victim Support Units (VSU): has the aim of protecting, promoting and upholding the rights of survivors of various forms of criminal and civil activities, especially those of vulnerable women and children.

They offer:

- ✦ Counselling
- ✦ First aid
- ✦ Referrals cases to other institutions within 5 days.

- ✚ Risk and safety assessment—done by VSU & Probation officer
- ✚ Liaise with social welfare on provision of shelter
- d) Criminal Investigations Department (Cid): Their role includes:
 - ✚ Investigation and arrest of alleged perpetrator
 - ✚ Safety, security and protection of survivors and witnesses
 - ✚ Witness tracing
 - ✚ Compiling Apprehension Reports

These services should be provided within 48 hours and the matter referred to other service providers within the Police.

- e) PROSECUTION: Their role includes:
 - ✚ Pretrial activities
 - ✚ Docket preparation
 - ✚ Facilitating disclosures
 - ✚ Obtaining court dates
 - ✚ Liaising with probation officers for social inquiry reports
 - ✚ Witness tracing in collaboration with CID
 - ✚ Serving disclosures to the accused
 - ✚ Ensuring that the Apprehension Report is brought before a Magistrate
- f) Judiciary Their role includes:
 - ✚ Opening case file
 - ✚ Set date for case and notify all parties
 - ✚ Hearing case
 - ✚ Recommend legal aid in cases where the complainant is vulnerable, of insufficient means and needs assistance navigating the legal procedures.
 - ✚ Assessing and analysing evidence
 - ✚ Delivering judgment - ancillary orders such as compensation to the survivor, psychosocial support and counselling, social and economic support to the survivor can be ordered by the Court.
 - ✚ Adjudication: Judgment should include ancillary orders such as compensation for damages or injury suffered by the survivor, sentencing
 - ✚ Enforcement of judgment at instigation of survivor
 - ✚ Any person who is not satisfied with the judgment of the court or the way the process was handled can appeal to a higher court e.g. from magistrates court to High Court to Supreme Court.
 - ✚ The courts also have internal oversight functions under sections 360 and 361 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Code which empower any Resident Magistrate or any Judge of the High Court to call for and examine any record of criminal proceedings before a lower court to satisfy itself that those proceedings were conducted lawfully and correctly. If they were not, the resident

magistrate is empowered to send the court record to the High Court and the High Court can having been satisfied on review that there was an irregularity or illegality or impropriety can quash the original decision and make an alternative decision or send the matter back to the lower court to rehear the matter.

- g) National Human Rights Institution: The Malawi Human Rights Commission: The Malawi Human Rights Commission (the Commission) is an independent national human rights institution (NHRI) established by the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi under sections 129 with the primary function of “protection and investigation of violations of the rights accorded by the Constitution or any other law”

The Malawi Human Rights Commission performs various functions including:

- ✚ Providing human rights information to the Government and the people of Malawi
- ✚ Conduct investigations
- ✚ Carry Alternative dispute resolutions such as mediations
- ✚ Carry out strategic litigation
- ✚ Advise on available options to the survivors and referral

- h) Legal Aid Bureau: The Legal Aid Bureau is established under section 3 of the Legal Aid Act to provide legal services such as mediation, legal representation and sets out options to survivors who cannot afford private lawyers. It is the only such institution in Malawi.

Mentees can also be alerted that there are also women’s rights non-governmental organisations which may provide other GBV-related services in order to meet the specific needs of the community (e.g. shelter or places of safety for survivors to be accommodated before, during and after trial, reintegration and rehabilitation services for survivors which may include services aimed at providing the survivor economic autonomy).

8.6. Balancing family and political life (work/life balance)

One of the unique challenges that women have to go through is to balance family or child-care responsibilities amidst an extremely demanding political career. Due to social norms and patriarchal beliefs, women are often expected to assume the majority (if not all) of child-care and household responsibilities. Thus, a lot of women find it difficult to successfully pursue a political career amidst family demands. The situation is further compounded when it relates to young women who are joining politics as it often coincides with the time in which they are starting their families- and thus may have small babies who rely exclusively on them for care.

Mentorship programs therefore need to take these factors into consideration when engaging adolescent girls and young women as mentees. Some practices that mentorship programs can take into consideration when engaging with AGYW as mentees are as follows:

- a) Reasonably accommodate their needs

Mentees with child-care responsibilities (including single mothers or young women who are heads of their households) need to be reasonably accommodated so that they can effectively participate in the mentorship program.

Mentees with babies and young children should be allowed and encouraged to participate in the mentorship program. They must be permitted to attend the sessions with their babies/children should they wish so and should they not have options of alternative child-care support.

Scheduling of mentorship sessions or activities should be done in consideration of mentees with family/household/child-care responsibilities. This means that mentees with such responsibilities need to be consulted on what would be the most appropriate time to meet or hold mentorship activities. Mentorship programs also need to ensure that program sessions or activities end in good time.

b) Engage mentee's families where possible

There is a lot of negative misconceptions and stereotypes against women who choose to actively participate in politics. Women engaging in active politics are often termed to be 'promiscuous' and 'unruly' as politics is generally misconstrued to be a 'man's profession.' Women in active politics therefore rarely have the necessary social support from their families. The aggressive nature of politics has also contributed to families and the community being skeptical in supporting women's political participation.

Mentorship programs targeting young women in active politics therefore need to engage with families and community opinion leaders in transforming negative social norms and perceptions regarding women's participation in politics. This can be done through on-going community and family engagement sessions that include information on the intention of the mentorship program and the importance of women's active political participation. In the long run, this would facilitate an enabling environment for young women to safely participate in political activities- including the mentorship program. It may also drum up support for the women's political participation. However, caution must be exercised to ensure that such engagement sessions with family members does not result in further harm for the mentee. The mentorship program secretariat must therefore have clearance from the mentee to reach out to family members regarding the mentorship program as the mentees are the ones best placed to determine how family members (especially male spouses) would react to the engagement.

8.6.1. Tips that mentors can utilize to support mentees in family and political life¹⁸⁵

Whilst the desired goal is to advance gender equality in which the responsibility of child-care or household chores does not fall entirely on women, social norms change is a process which may not be immediately realized during the tenure of a mentorship program. Thus, it is imperative that mentors support mentees who have household and child-care responsibilities- alongside political aspirations- to successfully manage and balance the competing demands. Some tips that mentors can share with the mentees can include the following:

a) Share personal experiences about work/life balance

The mentor can share their experiences of managing family/child-care responsibilities alongside political work. Mentors must however be careful not to sound condescending whilst sharing their experiences. They

¹⁸⁵ Everwise 'Work Life Balance Tips from Mentors' Available at <https://www.geteverwise.com/career-success/work-life-balance-tips-from-mentors/>

must not downplay or undermine the mentee's situation. Instead, mentors must be able to acknowledge the challenge that the mentee is experiencing. The mentor can then share their experience and how they managed the situation- without dictating what the mentee must do. The mentee must be able to reflect and decide on her own what would work in her situation.

b) The process of prioritization

The mentor can support mentees with tips on how to differentiate between 'critical' tasks and 'important' tasks." That way mentees can determine critical deadlines or push back less urgent tasks so that they can meet family responsibilities.

c) Blocking out personal time

In recognition of the societal norms prevalent in Malawi, many women exercise a lot of child-care and household responsibilities. Thus, simultaneously juggling political roles alongside family commitments can be overwhelming. Mentees should however not be made to feel guilty for having to take time off in order to meet family or child-care obligations. Mentors can advise mentees that it is ok to block out personal time so that their overall time is not consumed with political obligations. A careful balancing of family obligations and political demands enables one to be more productive.

Customer loyalty expert Mary Ann Felix advises that to "set clear cut boundaries for yourself and respect them. Ask yourself ahead of time when it's okay to work late or take work home. Strive to set a start and quitting time, if at all possible." Setting definitive times to start and leave may help keep work from seeping into personal time.

d) Flexi-working arrangements

Though traditional working methods continue to constitute the main methodology of working, flexi-working modalities are increasingly becoming acceptable. Through advancement in technology, working methodologies are more fluid and many are able to discharge some (if not all) of their work obligations at home. However and in the Malawian context where 80% of the populace resides in rural areas, it may not be easy to undertake certain tasks remotely- particularly those tasks that relate to community engagement. Nonetheless, other political tasks that do not require community mobilization can also be undertaken at home (e.g. formulating one's campaign strategy, following up on sponsors; budgeting etc). Mentees can be advised on how best to make the most of felxi-working arrangements.

e) Learn to Say "No"

Mentors can also guide mentees about the dangers of "over-committing herself." Overcommitment easily results in under-delivering, producing substandard work and missing deadlines. This can lead to further frustration from constituents or political peers and other key stakeholders. Mentees should be advised to be realistic about their capacity and not take on more than they can handle in light of their current personal and professional obligations.

f) Time management

For one to accomplish a work-life balance she needs to master time management.

Effective time management is simply developing a system that allows you to keep those goals in sight throughout the day and make conscious efforts to minimize (or plan) the diversions.

Mentors can guide mentees on available tools that mentees can use in order to better manage their time. Such tools include using a good calendar, creating daily tasks or to-do lists, or using planning software. This can help mentees to stay organized and ensure that they are productive during the working hours, and thus leading to more time to attend to other personal family commitments.

g) Exercise self-care

A political career can be stressful and this can be compounded if the mentee has huge family responsibilities. Thus, mentees need to be advised that taking care of themselves is an important part of being a happy and productive individual. Self-help includes engaging in any physical, mental, spiritual and emotional activity that brings one relaxation and enjoyment. It can including reading books, engaging in exercise, listening to music, hiking, family time etc

Mental health is important to improve stressful times and improve productivity. A mentor should encourage mentee to prioritize their mental health.

8.7. Summary of key points

- ❖ Mentor must generate a safe and open environment by proactively committing to gender inclusion, dignity and respect.
- ❖ AGYW mentorship programs must aim to build resilience with deliberate strategies to help mentees gain confidence; speak up more and stand up for themselves; build leadership and conflict management skills; and acquire a sense of belonging or connectedness
- ❖ Mentoring programs have an obligation to provide training in gender sensitivity so as to raise mentor's awareness of their own biases and blind spots; and ensure that mentors do not entrench harmful gender stereotypes during mentoring sessions/activities;
- ❖ Mentors need to reinforce the mentee's strengths and celebrate them regularly. Let the mentee know that she has many great skills and abilities that she can use throughout her life. Give her opportunities to use those skills whenever possible.
- ❖ Due to negative social norms, female mentees face specific and systemic obstacles in achieving their political aspirations that are different from males. These include being victims of gender based violence due to their political work; and having to balance significant family and household responsibilities alongside their political career. In order to be practical and relevant, mentorship programs should also support mentees navigate these systemic challenges and provide appropriate resources for the mentee's benefit.

9. MENTORSHIP FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS - INTERSECTIONALITY AND MULTIPLE DISCRIMINATION

Learning objectives

- To understand what intersectionality and multiple discrimination is;
- To understand how mentorship programs can take into account the needs of marginalized women and girls and ensure their meaningful participation

9.6. Understanding intersectionality and multiple discrimination

An individual's experiences are based on multiple identities that can be linked to more than one ground of discrimination.

Intersectionality is a situation where multiple factors – such as sex, socio-economic status, education, and nationality etc. – are considered to affect the individual's identity, experiences, and status in society at the same time. Intersectionality shows that while all women are generally subjected to inequality and discriminatory practices, some women are affected even more harshly due to other factors such as race, poverty or disability.¹⁸⁶

'Women experience disadvantage and discrimination based on their sex and gender and that is inextricably linked to other identities, factors and experiences such as a race and poverty.¹⁸⁷' A number of factors that certain categories of women face make them to face higher risk social exclusion compared to other women.

Multiple discrimination occurs when persons belong to several disadvantaged groups at the same time and find themselves in situations of discrimination on more than one ground. Multiple discrimination is connected to the fact that each individual has complex multiple identities and is not simply 'a woman' or 'a disabled person' or subject to any other single definition.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Howard University School of Law 'Feminism and Intersectionality' available at <https://library.law.howard.edu/civilrightshistory/women/intersectionality> (accessed 3 January 2022)

¹⁸⁷ Meghan Campbell 'CEDAW and Women's Intersecting Identities: A Pioneering Approach to Intersectional Discrimination' Working Paper Vol. 2, No. 3 February 2016

¹⁸⁸ http://www.era-comm.eu/oldoku/SNLLaw/11_Multiple_discrimination/2013_Koldinska_EN.pdf

An example of multiple discrimination would be where a person is a woman, is black and has a disability. Their skin colour, sex and disability each present a separate category of disadvantage and when all these categories interact, they cause a heightened impact. For instance, a black woman with a disability might face triple disadvantage if seeking employment.

Another example is the case of an Iranian muslim woman who cannot find a job because:

- she wears a headscarf
- she comes from a *muslim* country
- her skin colour is not white
- she is a woman

A person can also experience discrimination on more than one occasion for different reasons. For example, a disabled person of immigrant origin may suffer discrimination in job seeking due to their disability on one occasion and be discriminated against in the business industry due to their ethnicity on another occasion.

People with multiple identities that increase their vulnerability and marginalisation may require a multiple approach to protect their right to be treated equally and to their human rights in general

9.7. Addressing intersectionality and multiple discrimination within mentorship programs
Mentorship program should be particularly attuned to the challenges and obstacles faced by vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and take special measures to protect these.¹⁸⁹ A human rights-based approach requires that special attention be paid to those who belong to the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups in society.¹⁹⁰ This entails guaranteeing non-discriminatory treatment as well as adopting proactive measures to enable those suffering from structural discrimination to (amongst others) meaningfully participate in available opportunities.¹⁹¹

When mentees belong to a vulnerable group, a mentor should be prepared to face different challenges that may affect the successful implementation of their mentorship.¹⁹² These contextual challenges and obstacles can be structural and social. Structural challenges can be related to digital connectivity and (lack of) access to transportation.¹⁹³ For example, 'access to an internet connection, electricity or roads can affect the communication between the mentor and a mentee residing in a rural area as well as the success of the action plan.'¹⁹⁴ These impediments also often disproportionately affect people who belong to vulnerable populations. Social challenges are also more common when working with vulnerable groups.

¹⁸⁹ 'Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups' Available at <https://socialprotection-humanrights.org/inclusion-of-vulnerable-groups/> (accessed 3 January 2022)

¹⁹⁰ 'Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups' Available at <https://socialprotection-humanrights.org/inclusion-of-vulnerable-groups/> (accessed 3 January 2022)

¹⁹¹ 'Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups' Available at <https://socialprotection-humanrights.org/inclusion-of-vulnerable-groups/> (accessed 3 January 2022)

¹⁹² Planning Institute Australia National Office 'mentoring program handbook for mentees and mentors'

¹⁹³ Planning Institute Australia National Office 'mentoring program handbook for mentees and mentors'

¹⁹⁴ Planning Institute Australia National Office 'mentoring program handbook for mentees and mentors'

Prejudices and cultural stigmas can often translate into discrimination, invisibility or unequal treatment that may affect a mentorship's success.¹⁹⁵

9.7.1. Conduct an assessment

These diverse realities of mentees from vulnerable populations require the mentor to conduct a primary assessment of the different obstacles and opportunities influencing the success of the mentorship. Through an assessment, mentors will have a better understanding about what capacities will most effectively help the mentee to achieve their goals.

The mentor needs to have some form of understanding of the environment in which the mentee is operating. The structural and social barriers that vulnerable mentees face will inform how the mentor and mentee set mentorship expectations and goals. The mentor and the mentorship program secretariat can read, research or find out about the mentees' unique situation (e.g., teen mother, resides in hard-to-reach areas, illiterate, living with a disability etc) It is important for the mentor to understand the mentees that they will be connecting with. This will ensure that the mentees in vulnerable situations will be best supported when their unique backgrounds and experiences are recognized and appreciated.¹⁹⁶

However, the mentor should keep in mind that, even with an assessment, such mentees can still face specific challenges associated with membership in vulnerable groups.

Nonetheless, it is an important principle to be mindful of the cultural nuances, gender and its intersectionality and to harness ownership by the mentee.¹⁹⁷ For example, the pace of the mentoring process must be in step with that of the mentee's political journey with clear goals and accountability. For example, a mentor can reflect, 'what does mentoring look like for young urban women as opposed to women in rural grassroots communities?'¹⁹⁸

9.7.2. A one size approach does not work

A one-size-fits-all approach cannot be used to ensure successful mentorships with all vulnerable groups. Rather, it is important to understand the unique challenges and varying best practices for engaging mentees from different populations.

A mentee can also face challenges stemming from membership in multiple vulnerable groups. While far from exhaustive, the following list enumerates some of the fundamental factors to consider when beginning a mentoring relationship with a mentee from a vulnerable population

- ✚ Minors: If the mentee is a minor (under 18 years of age), the mentor should obtain written authorization from a parent or guardian for the mentee to participate in the process.
- ✚ Economic vulnerability: Many young people have limited access to financial resources for non-essential activities. It is important to design a mentorship based on the economic capacities of the young people and contemplate if it is possible to budget funds for communication tools and transportation that may be associated with mentoring activities.

¹⁹⁵ Planning Institute Australia National Office 'mentoring program handbook for mentees and mentors'

¹⁹⁶ Canadian Women's Foundation 'Girls Group Mentoring Mentoring Toolkit' (2015)

¹⁹⁷ Myn Garcia 'Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership' available at [Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership \(myngarcia.com\)](https://myngarcia.com) (accessed 29 October 2021)

¹⁹⁸ Myn Garcia 'Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership' available at [Transformative Mentoring: Advancing Women's Political Leadership \(myngarcia.com\)](https://myngarcia.com) (accessed 29 October 2021)

- ✦ Social risk: When working with young people living in a context of social risk (poverty or insecurity), it is important to consider that they may have reserved or defensive attitudes that limit the communication processes in mentoring. It is important to be flexible and sensitive when asking questions about the mentee’s environment, family circle or friends, in order not to cause discomfort.
- ✦ Youth mentees: Youth mentees may find it difficult to trust and openly communicate with mentors, who are typically much older. In addition to the diligent practice of trust-building behaviors and activities, mentors may find it helpful to invite someone in both the mentor and mentee’s network of friends or peers to facilitate the first mentorship meeting.
- ✦ Young women and girls with disabilities: Mentors should enter the mentoring relationship with the mindset that the barriers faced by mentees with disabilities are societal and structural, rather than residing in the person. Therefore, when working with people with disabilities, the mentor must select places or physical spaces based on the universal or inclusive design model. When this is not possible, mentors must make use of reasonable accommodations that allow the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities.

9.7.3. Inclusion and diversity

Social inclusion is understood as a process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, so that they can achieve their full potential in life.

Source: DESA (2009) Creating an Inclusive Society: Practical Strategies to Promote Social Integration

For a mentee to bring their best self forward in a mentorship program, a sense of belonging must first be established.¹⁹⁹ Diverse representation in mentorship programs help mentees feel like they belong.²⁰⁰ Seeing one’s own demographic characteristics reflected in mentorship programs and content can be a motivating factor for many mentees , as they can be strong role models for mentees.²⁰¹

Many marginalized groups do not see themselves reflected in the media or in the world around them, so we must ensure their needs and identities are not overlooked in a girl’s group or oversimplified by dominant assumptions. As a group facilitator, program coordinator or mentor, it is also critical to have an understanding of your own power and privilege within systems (Clarke, 2011).

¹⁹⁹ Sharon Florentine ‘Diversity and inclusion: 8 best practices for changing your culture’ available at Diversity and inclusion: 8 best practices for changing your culture (cio.com) (accessed 10 January 2021)

²⁰⁰ Ji Su Lee and Eli Fogle ‘Diverse Representation: Learner Impacts and Strategies in Online Courses’ available at 10 January 2021

²⁰¹ Ji Su Lee and Eli Fogle ‘Diverse Representation: Learner Impacts and Strategies in Online Courses’ available at 10 January 2021

Mentors should ideally be representational of the mentees that they serve and mentorship content should be contextual- drawing out specific issues that are prevalent and applicable to the mentees.

What mentorship programs should consider?

“You have to look at everything through the lens of, ‘Have I created conditions where every person can contribute in their unique, meaningful way and feel safe and secure doing that?’

Source: Sharon Florentine ‘Diversity and inclusion: 8 best practices for changing your culture’ available at Diversity and inclusion: 8 best practices for changing your culture (cio.com) (accessed 10 January 2021)

9.8. Summary of key points

- ❖ A number of factors that certain categories of women face make them to face higher risk social exclusion compared to other women.
- ❖ Multiple discrimination occurs when persons belong to several disadvantaged groups at the same time and find themselves in situations of discrimination on more than one ground.
- ❖ Mentorship program should be particularly attuned to the challenges and obstacles faced by vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and take special measures to protect these
- ❖ When mentees belong to a vulnerable group, a mentor should be prepared to address different challenges that may affect the successful implementation of their mentorship

9.9. Self-assessment

Ask mentors to reflect on what strategies they can implement to ensure inclusivity in their mentorship sessions. Possible answers can include:

- ✚ Person-first language in instances where they have a mentee with a disability
e.g. Make sure to put the person first, not the disability. “the PERSON/CHILD with a disability”
not “disabled person/child”
 - ✚ Avoid using labels: Labels are debilitating. Labels make people more aware of the difference
 - ✚ Positively acknowledge differences: Find ways to celebrate/include differences when appropriate and possible
 - ✚ Accessibility: Ensure that facilities are accessible to everyone. Be sure to provide reasonable accommodations
 - ✚ Prior assessment: Make sure to assess mentee’s needs before they arrive for a mentorship session or activity. Questions can include: Do you need any special accommodations?
- Source: Office of Human Resources, West Virginia University ‘Diversion and Inclusion Activities*

Learning Objectives

- To outline the roles of mentees
- To clarify the responsibilities that mentees have in the mentorship relationship

A mentee is someone who has identified a specific personal or professional goal and who believes that the guidance and help of a mentor – and being held accountable to the mentor – can help them achieve their goal.²⁰²

A mentor will leverage their experience to give the mentee guidance on their career or life now and in the future.²⁰³ However, the mentee undertakes a substantial role in ensuring that he/she realizes his/her profession goal.

- a) A mentee should take initiative

The mentee should take the initiative to ask for help or advice and to tackle more challenging assignments.²⁰⁴

A mentee should:

- Define her own goals
- Be open
- Set the agenda
- Listen and investigate
- Be pro-active

Source: European Political Mentoring Network 'Handbook for Mentees' (2014)

- b) A mentee should be courteous and respectful

A mentee should always act with courtesy and respect towards their mentor.

- c) A mentee should actively listen

²⁰² Insurance Institute Available at [The mentor and mentee | mentoring ADVANTAGE | CIP Society \(insuranceinstitute.ca\)](https://www.insuranceinstitute.ca) (accessed 27 October 2021)

²⁰³ Matthew Reeves, Together Platform [What is the Purpose of Mentoring? | Together Mentoring Software \(togetherplatform.com\)](https://togetherplatform.com) (accessed 14 October 2021)

²⁰⁴ Canadian Society of Exploration GeoPhysicists 'Mentee Roles and Responsibilities'

A mentee should use active listening skills during discussions with the mentor. The mentee must be careful not to interrupt, unless they need to clarify a point and they see no other opportunity or pause. A mentee must take notes when appropriate.²⁰⁵

To be an active mentee, one must be aware of three factors:

- ✚ Listening
- ✚ Asking
- ✚ Telling

Positive developments start in your shared experiences and perspectives. Therefore, focus on how best to listen, ask and tell.

European Political Mentoring Network 'Handbook for Mentees' (2014)

d) Prepare the goals and objectives the mentee has for her career.

It is important that a mentee tells the mentor about themselves, their thoughts and opinions, so that the mentor knows who the mentee is and what to expect from the mentee.²⁰⁶

It is important that the mentee discusses with the mentor what aspect of her development is in focus and which of the goals the mentorship should work towards. It is also possible for the mentee to be working towards several goals at the same time and some goals can change in the course of the mentoring process.²⁰⁷ The mentee should therefore be working steadily towards their goals. The clearer the mentee's idea of what they would like help with, the easier it is for the mentor to help you.²⁰⁸

e) 'Ask Ask Ask'

EXERCISE FOR A MENTEE: 'express yourself clearly.' This exercise will help you to be clear and straightforward in what you say. For example, the mentee and mentor can talk about political aspirations. First, you have exactly two minutes to tell her about them. Your mentor is not allowed to say anything, but she listens and keeps check on the time. After this you are both silent for two minutes. You then tell her about your aspirations again, but this time you have one minute to do so. The mentor still keeps check on the time. You now both spend the next two minutes in silence. You then tell your mentor about your plans again – this time in 30 seconds. Each time you talk to her you will do so more clearly and your goals will be more precise

Source: European Political Mentoring Network 'Handbook for mentees' (2014)

²⁰⁵ Canadian Society of Exploration GeoPhysicists 'Mentee Roles and Responsibilities'

²⁰⁶ European Political Mentoring Network 'Handbook for mentees' (2014)

²⁰⁷ European Political Mentoring Network 'Handbook for mentees' (2014)

²⁰⁸ European Political Mentoring Network 'Handbook for mentees' (2014)

Help your mentees feel valued and respected by you by asking frequent questions about their views, activities, and backgrounds.

Source: Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/~lphillips/75things/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

A mentee has to be prepared to ask for specific guidance and advice on their goals, plans and strategic ideas. The more specific they can be, the easier it will be for the mentor to help the mentee.²⁰⁹ The mentee must not ask questions for the sake of it but must ask good questions with a clear purpose for the questions.²¹⁰

TIP for mentees:

When talking with your mentor, it is important to ask open questions – questions that cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. By doing this you make sure that your dialogue constantly gives you new opportunities to explore your mentor's knowledge and experience. For example, ask your mentor about a particular challenge in becoming an MP, the decisions they had to take along the way, the approaches they use to challenges in their work. Etc This will give you access to your mentor's hands-on experience. And it is from this type of information that you can derive inspiration for your own development. When you ask a question, always remember to give your mentor time to answer – do not be afraid of silence, it can be necessary and it will give both of you space for thought.

Adapted from: European Political Mentoring Network 'Handbook for mentees' (2014)

It must also be clear to the mentee that having a mentor is not an opportunity to vent all of the mentee's frustrations. The mentor's role is as a teacher and a guide. So though the mentee can share their struggles and challenges, it must be intentional in a bid to attain specific guidance and not simply to complain.

²⁰⁹ European Political Mentoring Network 'Handbook for mentees' (2014)

²¹⁰ Canadian Society of Exploration GeoPhysicists 'Mentee Roles and Responsibilities'

Self-assessment for the mentee to help the mentee develop specific relevant questions in which to seek guidance from the mentor:

- ✚ What are my goals?
- ✚ How can a mentor help me meet my goals? Consider the specific areas for which you require mentoring.
- ✚ What skills do I need to learn or improve?
- ✚ What are my competency levels and skills as an inspiring politician

In addition, a mentee must also take the initiative to ask for feedback. Feedback, although difficult to hear at times, is critical to the professional growth and development of the mentee. Thus, a mentee should not be defensive to constructive feedback. Honest feedback gives you the mentee an opportunity to improve themselves and help them to move towards fulfilling your potential. A mentee must demonstrate that they are open to hear new ideas and suggestions to bring out the best. In addition, a mentee can tell the mentor how they prefer to get feedback (for example, direct, with humor, softened).

- f) A mentee should respect the mentor's time

The mentee should always be considerate and respect the mentor's time as they do their own time. This includes:-

- ✚ Fulfilling the commitments that the mentee has made to the mentor
- ✚ Being thorough, but succinct in the explanations, experiences and comments.
- ✚ Return phone calls promptly
- ✚ be on time with commitments or meetings. If a mentor offers a specific time frame of availability, a mentee should respect his/her wishes by following through.

- g) Seriously consider mentors advise

The mentee should seriously consider all advice or suggestions received from the mentor. The mentee may also wish to demonstrate that they have followed advice or commitments for action at every opportunity. If the mentee disagrees with the advises or ideas, then the mentee can discuss it with the mentor directly.

- h) Keep a log-book

Either during or after a meeting with the mentor, it is a good idea for the mentee to write a logbook – i.e. a report of the meeting. The mentee might want to note down any new thoughts and ideas that came out during the meeting. have had and what you would like the next meeting to focus on. It does not have to be a very long report, just a few notes, headings or single words that will make it easier for the mentee to remember the meetings with the mentor – what you agreed, for example, that you should prepare for the next meeting etc. A logbook can be seen as a memo to yourself²¹¹

- i) Respect professional boundaries

²¹¹ European Political Mentoring Network 'Handbook for mentees' (2014)

The mentee should not intrude into the mentor's personal life or expect to be close friends. In addition, any romantic involvement is inappropriate. It is important that the mentoring connection does not give the appearance of inappropriate conduct.²¹²

j) Ready to move on?

The mentee should prepare themselves to move beyond your mentoring connection, once it has served its purpose. The mentee must do their part to ensure that the mentorship ends on a positive note. The mentee should keep the door open to return to the mentor for assistance or advice at a future time- should the mentor be available. In any case, the mentee may just wish to have the mentee's contacts to share progress and express gratitude.²¹³ The mentee may also be required to fill out an evaluation form.²¹⁴

²¹²Canadian Society of Exploration GeoPhysicists 'Mentee Roles and Responsibilities'

²¹³ Canadian Society of Exploration GeoPhysicists 'Mentee Roles and Responsibilities'

²¹⁴ Canadian Society of Exploration GeoPhysicists 'Mentee Roles and Responsibilities'

12.1. Summary of key points

A few do's and don't's for mentees

Do...

- ✓ Make time for mentorship relationship
- ✓ Agree needs and objectives with your mentor
- ✓ Be open to new ideas and willing to learn
- ✓ Listen to advice and feedback with an open mind
- ✓ Learn with and not just from your mentor
- ✓ Commit to maintaining regular contact
- ✓ Be courteous and respectful to the mentor
- ✓ Take responsibility for your professional growth

Don't...

- ✗ Expect your mentor to have all the answers
- ✗ Rely on informal chats
- ✗ Forget that mentors learn from mentees too
- ✗ Expect your mentor to chase you
- ✗ Have a romantic relationship with the mentor

Adapted from: City London University 'Political Mentoring Toolkit'

12.2. Self-assessment/Exercise

MENTEE CHECKLIST- let mentees assess themselves

- ✓ I am an effective listener and remember what my mentor tells me.
- ✓ I monitor my nonverbal language to be sure it is conveying my meaning.
- ✓ I track my mentorship progress with goals and actionable outcomes
- ✓ I am resourceful to finding solutions to challenges and do not expect the mentor to solve the challenges for me (but just to provide guidance)
- ✓ I provide enough positive feedback to my mentee.
- ✓ I receive the right amount of positive feedback from my mentor and I use the information to reinforce my habits.
- ✓ I give my mentee enough corrective feedback.
- ✓ I continue to ask my mentor for corrective feedback and am not defensive when it was received.
- ✓ I remember to give my mentor positive feedback, as well as give them suggestions for improvement.

Adapted from: International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

11. CONFLICT MANAGEMENT DURING THE MENTORSHIP

Learning objectives

- To understand what conflict management is;
- To understand the different types of conflict management skills;
- To understand how to apply effective conflict management strategies during the mentorship program

11.1. Defining Conflict management

Conflict management is the practice of being able to identify and handle conflicts sensibly, fairly, and efficiently.²¹⁵ Conflict often arises from a clash of perceptions, goals, or values.²¹⁶ 'It is human nature to disagree, and disagreements are healthy when approached correctly.'²¹⁷ For example, conflicts can clear the underlying tensions and bring out issues so the team can deal with them and learn from them. Since conflict is unavoidable, it is imperative to manage conflicts effectively.²¹⁸

However, just because conflict can produce a beneficial outcome does not mean they are comfortable. Unresolved conflict can result in the breakdown of a group.²¹⁹

'For any team that strives to attain its goals, conflict is inevitable. Although differences will occur, the outcome doesn't have to be negative. Conflict can provide opportunities. Conflict challenges us to think harder, to be more creative, to develop greater understanding, and to search for alternative avenues that are more efficient, more effective, and more productive'

Source: Mary Scannel 'The big book of conflict resolution games' (2010)

²¹⁵ PeopleHum 'Conflict Management' Available at <https://www.peoplehum.com/glossary/conflict-management> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²¹⁶ Mary Scannel 'The big book of conflict resolution games' (2010)

²¹⁷ Alison Doyle 'Conflict Management: Definition, Skills, and Examples' available at <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/conflict-management-skills-2059687> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²¹⁸ Clarke University 'Tips for Managing Conflict' Available at <https://www.clarke.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/counseling/articles-advice/tips-for-managing-conflict/> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²¹⁹ Mary Scannel 'The big book of conflict resolution games' (2010)

11.2. Conflicts in the mentorship program

Mentorship programs often wrongfully assume that once a mentoring relationship has been formed, the strength of the bond will mitigate against potential misunderstandings and miscommunications that may arise as a result of various vulnerabilities that some mentees may have.

Source: Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

Mentoring relationship, like any other interpersonal relationship, holds the potential for disappointment, misunderstanding, conflict, and various types of communication breakdowns, which can have negative consequences for both parties if they are poorly managed.²²⁰ Both the mentors and the mentees may come from different geographical locations with dissimilar cultural and intellectual backgrounds, as well as various viewpoints. In an environment where people may have different outlooks toward the same problems, disagreements are bound to happen.²²¹

Mentorship programs are obliged to inform mentors of common and predictable challenges and phases in mentoring relationships, and to provide sufficient training and case management to prevent small lapses

"Many mentors enter the relationships with idealized notions of the experience, in some cases fueled by program promotional material and messages that highlight the joys of mentoring without discussing the everyday challenges and potential vulnerabilities of youth (Spencer, 2007). Mentors can become easily discouraged, even exasperated, if they interpret a mentee's lack of engagement as deliberate..."

Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

from becoming insurmountable obstacles.²²²

An example of a common conflict in the mentorship program would be instances where a mentor or mentee is unresponsive to professional requests within the scope of the mentorship.

11.3. Addressing conflicts in the mentorship program

Engaging in conflict doesn't have to be negative or counterproductive. In fact, it can be positive. Conflict can be helpful in making necessary changes within an environment.

Source: Mary Scannel 'The big book of conflict resolution games' (2010)

- a) Understand/clarify the source of the conflict

²²⁰ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

²²¹ Available at <https://www.hrcloud.com/blog/7-tips-on-how-to-manage-and-resolve-conflict-in-the-workplace> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²²² Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

The first step in resolving conflict is clarifying its source. This involves understanding the cause of the conflict so as to enable the mentor and the mentees to understand how the conflict came to be in the first place.²²³

b) Constitute a safe environment

To have a constructive conversation regarding a conflict, a mentor needs to find an environment that is safe for parties affected to talk and have an honest communication regarding the issues at hand. The mentor must find a safe and private place to talk and ensure that each party gets enough time to air out their views regarding the matter.²²⁴

c) Dealing with conflicts within a reasonable time

Conflicts that are allowed to fester and grow will ultimately diminish productivity and damage group morale.²²⁵

A mentor can encourage mentees who are in conflict to deal directly with the person they are in conflict with.²²⁶ A mentor should avoid venting to others as this tends to escalate the conflict and fuels rumors. If rumors are already part of the conflict, A mentor can encourage mentees to work out a plan to put an end to the gossip.²²⁷ A mentor should not quell rumors.

d) Avoid unnecessarily escalating conflicts

A mentor's response to the conflict can escalate or decrease the intensity of the conflict.²²⁸ For example, the mentor must ensure that they (or the mentees) do not use inflammatory language such as profanity, name calling, and exaggerations that escalate the conflict. Where mentees have utilized inflammatory language, the mentor must restate the inflammatory language in a more objective way.²²⁹

A thoughtful response to conflict strengthens the team and sets the stage to resolve the conflict. We get a chance to know our team better, to build trust, and to create clearer communication

Source: Mary Scannel 'The big book of conflict resolution games' (2010)

²²³ Available at <https://www.hrcloud.com/blog/7-tips-on-how-to-manage-and-resolve-conflict-in-the-workplace#A> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²²⁴ Available at <https://www.hrcloud.com/blog/7-tips-on-how-to-manage-and-resolve-conflict-in-the-workplace#A> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²²⁵ Alison Doyle 'Conflict Management: Definition, Skills, and Examples' Available at <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/conflict-management-skills-2059687> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²²⁶ Clarke University 'Tips for Managing Conflict' Available at <https://www.clarke.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/counseling/articles-advice/tips-for-managing-conflict/> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²²⁷ Clarke University 'Tips for Managing Conflict' Available at <https://www.clarke.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/counseling/articles-advice/tips-for-managing-conflict/> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²²⁸ Clarke University 'Tips for Managing Conflict' Available at <https://www.clarke.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/counseling/articles-advice/tips-for-managing-conflict/> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²²⁹ Clarke University 'Tips for Managing Conflict' Available at <https://www.clarke.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/counseling/articles-advice/tips-for-managing-conflict/> (accessed 6 December 2021)

A mentor can advise the group that its ok to 'agree to disagree.' Each person has a unique point of view and rarely agrees on every detail and both the mentors as well as the mentees need to have a good understanding of this.²³⁰

People are wired to react with fear and distrust when their beliefs are challenged. While fear can be a powerful motivator, it also encourages people to narrow their perspective — the opposite desired effect for creating a more inclusive mentorship program. Elevating the power of shared experiences and storytelling to do so — creates greater potential for positive change.

Source: Cited in Sharon Florentine 'Diversity and inclusion: 8 best practices for changing your culture' available at Diversity and inclusion: 8 best practices for changing your culture (cio.com) (accessed 10 January 2021)

e) Try not to personalize conflicts

When conflicts arise, it is important for the mentor to separate the person/s from the problem, and the mentor must encourage the mentees to do the same whenever they are approaching a conflict within the mentorship program. The mentors must view the problem (or help the mentees to view the problem) as a specific behavior or set of circumstances rather than attributing negative feelings to a particular person within the mentorship program. 'This approach makes the problem more manageable and hopeful than deciding you "can't stand" this person any longer.'²³¹

11.4. Best practices to minimize conflict

a) Effective communication

Whilst communication can both remedy conflict, communication can also instigate conflict. Hence, it is imperative to utilize effective communication in a mentorship relationship. A lack of open communication tends to drive conflict underground, and can create an enabling environment for misunderstanding and hostility to fester.

²³⁰ Clarke University 'Tips for Managing Conflict' Available at <https://www.clarke.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/counseling/articles-advice/tips-for-managing-conflict/> (accessed 6 December 2021)

²³¹ Clarke University 'Tips for Managing Conflict' Available at <https://www.clarke.edu/campus-life/health-wellness/counseling/articles-advice/tips-for-managing-conflict/> (accessed 6 December 2021)

That also means understanding how your teams work best, and when tension and discord are actually beneficial. “Recognize that sometimes the easy and fast way is not necessarily the right way, and that sometimes teams function best when there is a bit of tension, disagreement, back-and-forth,” “Obviously, you cannot let things devolve into personal attacks, but know the difference between a healthy, stimulating exchange of every person’s ideas and a situation where people are being disrespectful because of who another person is.”

Source: Cited in Sharon Florentine ‘Diversity and inclusion: 8 best practices for changing your culture’ available at Diversity and inclusion: 8 best practices for changing your culture (cio.com) (accessed 10 January 2021)

b) Managing commitments and expectations

Both mentees and mentor ought to be thoughtful and forthright about the commitments they make to the mentorship relationship and to avoid setting up false expectations.²³² Expectations include the nature, promptness, or frequency of communication that both the mentor and mentee expect to receive.

However, openness in commitments can also extend to what may seem like simplistic issues. For example, mentors must avoid neglecting to inform their mentee of travel plans which may lead to last minute cancellation of mentorship sessions. It is also professional to return telephone calls. Mentors should be reminded about how important their obligations are to their mentees, and the meaning that is placed on their availability. Last minute changes or cancelations of activities, which may seem perfectly justifiable to a busy mentor, can be deeply frustrating to a mentee.²³³ Minor disappointments and tardiness can accumulate in ways that erode trust and closeness.²³⁴ They can lead to misunderstandings, which may go unresolved and contribute to feelings of hurt and resentment on the part of the youth, mentor, and parents.²³⁵

c) Observing

²³² Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange ‘First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships’ (2009)

²³³ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange ‘First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships’ (2009)

²³⁴ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange ‘First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships’ (2009)

²³⁵ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange ‘First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships’ (2009)

The mentor can reflect what the mentee is saying or how she looks to help her manage her emotions. Try to identify the key emotion being expressed. Examples: “You look really angry. What’s up?” or “Sounds like you are really upset about what happened.”²³⁶ It is appropriate to acknowledge a discrepancy between things your mentee says, or what he says and how he looks. Examples: “You’re telling me you’re not angry about what happened, but you’re tense and look angry.”²³⁷ Or “You said that you didn’t care what your friend did, but now you’re telling me how hurt you are.”²³⁸

11.5. Summary of key points

- ❖ ‘It is human nature to disagree, and disagreements are healthy when approached correctly. However, unresolved conflict can result in the breakdown of a group
- ❖ To have a constructive conversation regarding a conflict, a mentor needs to find an environment that is safe for parties affected to talk and have an honest communication regarding the issues at hand.
- ❖ Whilst communication can both remedy conflict, communication can also instigate conflict. A mentor’s response to the conflict can escalate or decrease the intensity of the conflict Hence, it is imperative to utilize effective communication in a mentorship relationship.
- ❖ Both mentees and mentor ought to be thoughtful and forthright about the commitments they make to the mentorship relationship and to avoid setting up false expectations

11.6. Self-assessment/Exercise

²³⁶ Lisa Bottomley ‘Mentoring – Part 5: Communicating with your mentee’

²³⁷ Lisa Bottomley ‘Mentoring – Part 5: Communicating with your mentee’

²³⁸ Lisa Bottomley ‘Mentoring – Part 5: Communicating with your mentee’

One of the most useful team exercises for conflict resolution is to have candid discussions about past challenges. Simply gather in a group, then ask volunteers to share stories. It is a good idea for mentors to start the discussion, to show team members the format and to remove the stigma of admitting mistakes.

While sharing the story, the mentor should touch on the following points:

- ❖ What was the cause
- ❖ What escalated the situation
- ❖ How was the issue resolved
- ❖ What I did well
- ❖ What I learned or what I could have done differently
- ❖ how the problem might be solved today.

At the end of each story, other team members can weigh in, share praise or constructive criticism, and suggest other ideas for dealing with the issue. This exercise encourages honest self-reflection and communication for conflict management.

12. ETHICAL AND SAFEGUARDING CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Learning objectives:

- ❖ To outline the key ethical principles to be observed in a mentorship relationship
- ❖ To demonstrate how mentors and mentees can establish and adhere to professional boundaries during the mentorship relationship
- ❖ To understand the do-no-harm obligation and what it entails for the mentorship program
- ❖ To ensure that mentors understand and adhere to safeguarding measures during the mentorship relationship.

12.1. Ethical principles

All mentors and mentees need to be oriented on ethical and safeguarding adherence. Good intentions alone are not enough to ensure that mentors will build relationships with their mentees that are helpful and not harmful.²³⁹ Lack of attention to ethical issues has many pitfalls, and could ultimately lead to poor and even harmful decisions.²⁴⁰ Thus, the following ethical principles ought to be adhered to:-

a) Respect

Both mentors and mentees have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. This includes engaging with each other politely.

Ridiculing a mentee or calling a mentee derogatory comments such as “stupid” is inappropriate in all circumstances. Mentees expect a mentor to listen to, carefully consider, and give thoughtful replies to their ideas even in instances where such ideas may be different from the mentor. A mentor who demeans mentees, either directly through comments or indirectly through tone of voice, facial expressions, or posture, loses students' respect. Worse still, such reactions from the mentor can adversely affect a mentee's self-esteem and personal growth.

IMPORTANT

Failing to ensure respect can increase feelings of helplessness and shame amongst mentees, and reduce the effectiveness of the mentorship interventions

b) Confidentiality

Confidentiality means not disclosing any information at any time to any party without the informed consent of the person concerned.²⁴¹ For example, it is inappropriate for mentors to require mentees to reveal highly personal information in a class discussion. Mentors also expect mentees to respect their privacy.²³⁹ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

²⁴⁰ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

²⁴¹ UNICEF 'Survivor-Centred Approach' Available at

<https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/15831/file/Module%202.pdf> (accessed 27 October 2021)

Why is confidentiality important?

- ✓ Confidentiality promotes safety, trust, dignity and empowerment.
- ✓ Mentees have the right to choose to whom they will, or will not, tell their story
- ✓ Breaching confidentiality inappropriately may put the mentees and others at risk of further harm (e.g. risk of stigmatization, ridicule)
- ✓ If mentors do not respect confidentiality, other mentees will be discouraged from participating in the mentorship program

Adapted from UNICEF.

There can be exceptions to confidentiality, and it is very important that the mentor knows what the limits are- particularly in instances where children are involved. Some mentorship programs may have mentees that are under the age of 18 years. Therefore, limits to confidentiality include:

- ✚ instances in which the child mentee confides in the mentor about threats of ongoing harm to the child mentee (including sexual exploitation and abuse); and where the need to protect the child mentees overrides confidentiality;
- ✚ Situations in which laws or policies require mandatory reporting of certain types of violence against children. E.g. Section 36 (1) of the Child Care Protection and Justice provides *that if a member of the community believes on reasonable grounds that a child is physically, psychologically or emotionally injured, abandoned, or exposed, or is sexually abused, he/she shall immediately inform a chief, a police officer or a social welfare officer. A member of the community who fails to comply with subsection (1) commits an offence and shall be liable to a fine of K 10,000 and to imprisonment for three months*
- ✚ Situations in which the mentee is at risk of harming themselves or others, including threats of suicide.

c) Do not harm

"Do no harm" aims to avoid exposing people to additional risks through the mentorship program.

'Rarely acknowledged is the potential for harm that poorly implemented mentoring relationships can render. Because a personal relationship is at the heart of mentoring interventions, inconsistencies, misunderstandings, and terminations can touch on youth's vulnerabilities in ways that other, less personal, approaches do not'

Source: Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

Although mentors serve to "empower" youth mentees, there is usually a power imbalance between mentors and mentees. The power imbalance arises sometimes due to age difference, or differences in class or status. Mentors may not even be aware of the social inequities driving these differentials or how these can play out in interpersonal relationships (Fisher, 1997).

Examples of scenarios in which a mentee can be exposed to harm under a political mentorship program:-

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- ✗ Requiring the mentee to accompany the mentor to a political rally where it is well-known that violence will occur or that there is significant risk of violence likely to occur;
- ✗ Requiring the mentee to meet the mentor late in the evening which would require the mentee to walk back during late hours;
- ✗ Requiring the mentee to run personal political errands for the mentor that would expose the mentee to harm
- ✗ Requiring a child mentee to meet the mentor for sessions at premises which are not child-friendly i.e. nightclubs, bars

Here are other possibly harmful actions to avoid in mentoring relationships:-

- ✗ Promising too much.

Making unrealistic promises will almost always disappoint mentees. You could contribute to a negative view of mentoring. A better way: Be very careful about what you agree to do, how often you say you will do it, what you tell your mentees they will gain as a result of your mentoring time together, and what your relationship will look like once the formal mentoring part ends. Be conservative in the beginning, and add more later provided you have the interest and time to deliver on new promises. Keep the door open for them to call or write you in the future, but be realistic about how much you can offer in response.

- ✗ Discouraging dreams.

As mentors, you should provide mentees with advice, guidance and support for them to pursue their goals. A mentor should not discourage a mentee. For example mentors should not say this in relation to political mentees: "Politics!! Why? You have no idea what headaches you're setting yourself up for!" Instead help the mentees to take some initial steps and do their own research in order to make their ultimate decisions.

- ✗ Comparing unfairly.

A mentor should not compare mentees with themselves at their ages or stages of life. In addition, a mentor should not compare a mentee with the especially enjoyable and successful mentees that they have mentored in the past. In both instances, the mentor will simply be generalizing about what may not be true. Even if the mentor may keep such information to themselves, their thoughts may influence beliefs about each mentee and therefore influence how the mentor acts around the mentee. Instead, a mentor should prepare to be pleasantly surprised by each mentee, and treat each as unique in their own way.

- ✗ Misusing power.

As a trusted and respected mentor, the mentor has more power to influence the mentees. A mentor can positively or negatively affect mentee's critical life decisions, beliefs about themselves and others. Many mentees will want to please the mentor at all costs. Because mentors are so important to mentees, what

²⁴² Adapted from The Mentoring Group 'First, Do No Harm' available at [The Mentoring Group First Do No Harm.pdf \(ndi.org\)](#) (accessed 30 October 2021)

mentors say and do will matter greatly. Mentors must watch what they say, especially about their abilities, character, and futures. It is okay to mention potential challenges, but let mentees try anyway and make their own mistakes.

d) Non-discrimination:

All mentees have an equal right to the best possible assistance during the mentorship programme without unfair discrimination on the basis of:

- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ ethnicity or tribe
- ✓ Religious or political beliefs
- ✓ Status or social class, etc.

In addition, differences in cultural backgrounds and values may lead mentors to hold or unintentionally act on cultural biases. Instead, mentors should receive initial orientation and ongoing supervision to avoid making assumptions about mentees' that are based on, or insensitive to, the latter's social class, gender, or disabilities.²⁴³

Mentors may express beliefs or opinions that are at odds with the values, and beliefs of their mentee, creating conflict for the young person. Mentors should thus strive to refrain from religious or political proselytizing, raise their own awareness of power dynamics in cross-age and cross-cultural relationships, and seek consultation from mentoring programs to effectively negotiate these differentials

Source: Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

Examples of harmful or insensitive stereotypes include the following statements:

- ✗ I know people from your tribe do not like going to school so you really must be lucky to have come this far;
- ✗ Let's find a man to help us with the budget, since we ladies are not good with numbers;
- ✗ I know girls are always emotional but try to keep your emotions at bay during the rally
- ✗ Please remember to act like a lady during the party meeting. Speak softly and calmly at all times. Don't be aggressive like a man.

²⁴³ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

Mentors must be aware of their own biases, as an important way to be professional. This principle calls for mentors to exercise good judgment and to take precautions to ensure that the potential biases inherent in their own backgrounds do not lead to prejudicial treatment of their mentee

Source: Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

12.2. Establishing appropriate professional boundaries

It is essential that mentors and mentees identified under the program are well aware of appropriate boundaries within the mentorship relationship.

Boundaries provide defined limits around relationships wherein certain behaviors are deemed appropriate and others inappropriate in light of their nature and context.²⁴⁴

Examples of inappropriate behavior in a mentorship program:-

✘ Having mentorship sessions in the mentor or mentee's bedroom. Ordinarily, mentorship sessions should not be held at either's private houses unless there are reasonable justifications for doing so. In the event that such sessions are held at the mentor or mentee's private house, they must be conducted at an open space (e.g. verander, sitting room) and should have other parties around.

✘ Lending money from a mentee. Even if the roles were reversed (i.e. mentor lends money to mentee), it is generally not advisable for mentors and mentees to enter into financial obligations/relationships with each other.

✘ Directly offering mental health counselling support to the mentee. The mentor is not a professional counsellor, and even if they were, it would not be appropriate to offer such counselling services beyond the mentorship agreement. The mentor may however provide information for the mentee to get the mental health services they require. In the case of a child, the mentor can provide urgent referral to appropriate child protection services (e.g. social welfare officers, child protection workers etc).

Maintaining clarity about the boundaries of the mentor's role is not always easy. Mentors should be mindful of situations in which mentees make disclosures or raise concerns that would be better handled by a family member or professional and suggest that the mentee take his or her concerns up with them. Training and supervision can assist mentors in recognizing the boundaries and limits of their expertise and to seek assistance from program staff of a mentorship program when needed.

Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

²⁴⁴ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

12.3. Respecting mentee's self-determination and autonomy in personal decision making
Respect for self-determination involves behaving in ways that enable rather than interfere with mentee 's' ability to exercise their own reasoning and moral judgment.²⁴⁵

Except in extreme situations (e.g., abuse, neglect, endangerment), mentors should seek to understand and respect the decisions and lifestyle of a mentee (Beauchamp & Childress, 2008).

12.4. Safe exit in the event of premature end of the mentorship program
As many as half of mentors in mentorship programs end prematurely, most often at the request of the mentor.²⁴⁶ Premature endings of mentorship partnerships are sometimes unavoidable, for instance in instances in which a mentor is unexpectedly relocated or the mentee's family decides to leave the area. However, many instances also occur when the mentor abruptly stops any involvement and contact with the mentee without any explanation. Evidence has shown that such abrupt terminations can lead to adverse impacts on the mentees as mentors may not be aware of the influence they have had or how the termination will be interpreted.²⁴⁷

Should a termination become inevitable, mentorship programs must provide clear termination guidelines, and mentors should be held accountable to them. Transitions in mentoring relationships should always be planned, and the mentee should be given ample notice and explanation.²⁴⁸

12.5. Observe reasonable physical boundaries

TIP: Choose to err on the side of caution when it comes to observing physical boundaries

It is best to err on the side of caution, as there are many ways to show affection and closeness that do not involve physical contact or even benignly crossed boundaries.

Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

12.6. Reporting safeguarding and ethical concerns

Safeguarding is the responsibility of organisations to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children and adults at-risk nor expose them to abuse or exploitation.²⁴⁹ Safeguarding in the mentorship program is particularly critical if the mentees may include minors (mentees under the age of 18). Thus, it is imperative that the mentor's actions under the project do not expose the child or any other mentee to abuse or exploitation either directly or indirectly. Mentors will therefore be required to adhere to all safeguarding principles. Every mentorship program should also have a focal safeguarding contact to which reports of safeguarding can be made. Other stakeholders who may be aware of the mentorship programme (including community members and party members) must be made aware of the contact of

²⁴⁵ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

²⁴⁶ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

²⁴⁷ Citing Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Herrera et al., 2007; Karcher, 2005; Slicker & Palmer, 1993 in Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

²⁴⁸ Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange 'First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships' (2009)

²⁴⁹ 'Safeguarding Resources' Available at [Safeguarding resources | Bond](#) (accessed 10 October 2021)

the safeguarding officer so that they can report any incidences that they feel may constitute a safeguarding matter.

In addition, abuse and exploitation does not always occur as a result of actions by an active participant of a mentorship program (like a mentor) but it may occur through the action of other members of the community. In such scenarios, this may not constitute a safeguarding issue but a protection one. Thus, mentors need to be oriented where they can report or refer such matters safely should they be made aware of such incidences (since the mentee may have built a trusted partnership with the mentor and thus feel that the mentor is the safest person whom the mentee can confide in on sensitive matters of abuse or exploitation). The role of the mentor in such instances is to refer the matter safely to appropriate authorities such as the social welfare department, victim support unit or the one stop centre for their further action. The safeguarding officer must also be made aware of any such referrals.

12.7. Summary of key points

- ❖ Safeguarding is the responsibility of organisations to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children and adults at-risk nor expose them to abuse or exploitation during the mentorship programme
- ❖ Rarely acknowledged is the potential for harm that poorly implemented mentoring relationships can render. To redress this problem, a set of ethical principles must be developed and all mentors/mentees must be oriented on the same;
- ❖ A mentor also has the ethical obligation to do no harm. This encompasses the more extreme forms of harmful behavior, such as sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation.
- ❖ Professional boundaries must be acknowledged and protected in order to maintain the mentorship relationship on a healthy basis and make both parties feel physically and emotionally safe.

12.8. Self-assessment/exercise

The mentorship program secretariat should facilitate an orientation for mentors on the different aspects of safeguarding and the code of conduct in order to ensure that the mentors are equipped to deal with safeguarding issues if and as they arise in their mentorship role. The secretariat should also provide staff with access to materials and resources to support their understanding and implementation of safeguarding, as well as share experiences and examples of good practice in implementing safeguarding measures across different roles and contexts.

13. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Learning Objectives

- ❖ To appreciate the importance of regularly monitoring progress of the mentorship;
- ❖ To understand what steps mentors and mentees can undertake to assess the mentorship relationship
- ❖ To understand the tools that program secretariat can utilize to evaluate a mentorship programme.

Over time, the nature of the mentoring relationship may vary and support needs could change. Therefore, it is important that mentors and mentees constantly reevaluate mentorship goals, monitor progress made toward achieving them, and explore aspects of the mentorship that may have helped or hindered progress.

In addition there are numerous other aspects of a mentorship that should be reviewed to determine if changes in the relationship need to be made.²⁵⁰ In particular, it is essential to review the levels of communication and trust in the mentorship relationship. Mentors and mentees should have a conversation about ways they can improve their level of trust and communication, with the aim of having all criteria met by the end of a formal mentorship program.²⁵¹

13.1. Monitoring tools

Think through the type of information you need and which tools will provide this. For example, if the mentorship programme needs detailed stories from mentees on how the mentorship has helped them, a survey with tick boxes is unlikely to give you the information you need.

The mentorship programme secretariat must also be mindful of who they are collecting information from and what methods are appropriate. If they are collecting sensitive information from mentees, for example, a group discussion probably will not be appropriate.

Tools the mentorship programme can think about using include²⁵²:

- ✓ records and forms such as case notes, registration forms, feedback forms, meeting minutes;
- ✓ observation sheets to observe interactions between people or record change in behaviour or attitudes of mentees
- ✓ questionnaires to be completed online, on paper or over the phone
- ✓ interviews which can be structured around specific questions or unstructured
- ✓ group discussions such as focus groups or meetings

²⁵⁰ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

²⁵¹ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

²⁵² Sourced from KnowHow 'how to collect monitoring information for your mentoring or befriending project' available at [How to collect monitoring information for your mentoring or befriending project — NCVO Knowhow](#) (accessed 30 October 2021)

- ✓ participatory/visual tools such as photographs, videos, relationship maps, body maps, comments wall

13.2. Reviewing the mentorship agreement/plan:

It is important to periodically review the mentorship Learning Agreement/plan to determine whether expectations are being met. If not, the exercise of reviewing the agreement can be an initial step of getting a mentorship back on track. In instances where expectations shift, it may be beneficial to adjust the Agreement. In these cases, it is important that the mentor and mentee discuss the shifts together.²⁵³

It is advisable that in each mentorship meeting, time should be set aside to talk about progress made toward meeting the concrete goals defined in the mentorship agreement/plan. Based on this conversation, mentors should use check-ins with their mentee to ensure the plan is still relevant, as well as to assist the mentee in revising or adding to the plan, if necessary.²⁵⁴

The following is a step-by-step outline for a mentee-led conversation focused on reviewing the mentorship plan.

The Mentee:

- ✓ Describes in detail actions successfully taken to reach their mentorship goal.
- ✓ Outlines in detail challenges faced in trying to reach their mentorship goal.
- ✓ Sets action steps to meet goals to complete before the next meeting.
- ✓ Provides constructive feedback to the mentor on how they can best help moving forward.

The mentor

- ✓ Positively reinforces mentee success and, if needed, provides constructive feedback.
- ✓ Asks how they overcame challenges or, if necessary, facilitates a brainstorming session to help identify feasible solutions
- ✓ Provides feedback on best practices related to outlined action steps and discusses resources available.
- ✓ Humbly takes feedback into consideration and discusses how they will actualize feedback leading up to the next meeting.

TIP

Reflecting on your mentoring practice, noting use of the key mentoring skills, observing progress made in the relationship, and requesting feedback from the mentee are excellent ways to assess whether the mentee is employing the necessary skills.

Source: Center for Health Leadership & Practice 'A guide for mentors' (2003)

²⁵³ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

²⁵⁴ International Republican Institute 'Civil Society Organization Mentorship Toolkit' (2020)

13.3. Monitoring compatibility through feedback survey

Example of mentor/mentee compatibility evaluation: Ndazona is in a mentoring program at her political party with Chifundo who is the Party Secretary. Ndazona aspires to be an MP. Midway through the program, both Ndazona and Chifundo are required to complete a participant feedback survey. Ndazona is able to provide her thoughts on how the program met expectations, what aspects of the program could be improved, and if she believes that Chifundo was the ideal mentor for her. Chifundo's input includes questions on what the most and least satisfying aspects of the program were and whether she believed that Ndazona was making progress toward her goals. Following the evaluation, the program secretariat decides that Ndazona would benefit from a different mentor. This evaluation in no way reflects negatively on Chifundo, since matching a mentor with a mentee is challenging and involves subjectivity and personality traits.

13.4. Support mentees to learn how to informally measure their "baseline" and progress on acquisition of knowledge or skills, or on changes in attitude.²⁵⁵

Examples of self-measures for mentees:

For a skill such as writing clearly, show them how to choose a number (say 3) on a scale of 1 to 10 that describes where they are now, then a second number (say an 8) for where they'd like to be by the end of your mentoring partnership. Although the numbers are subjective, they'll give you and your mentees a relative measure of progress

Source: Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/75things/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

13.5. Focus group discussions

The program secretariat can also have an ongoing focus group meeting where the mentors and mentees meet as a group and discuss the skills they have learned, what new skills they would like to learn, and their own unique skills they would be willing to share with others. This ongoing monitoring and evaluation helps ensure that the mentoring program is effective and that all the employees benefit from being mentored and mentoring.

13.6. Separate discussions with mentee and mentor

Monitoring programmes need ongoing support and monitoring- particularly during the early stages- to ensure that the mentorship partnership does not terminate prematurely. Monitoring can be done by programme secretariat through having separate engagements with mentors and mentees to understand the "on-the-ground" progress of the mentorship process and any feedback on the effectiveness of the program generally.²⁵⁶ The idea of having engagements separately with the mentor and the mentee is to

²⁵⁵ Linda Phillips-Jones '75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try' Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/75things/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

²⁵⁶ 'Measuring the Effectiveness of a Mentoring Program' Available at [Measuring the Effectiveness of a Mentoring Program - Training Industry](https://www.trainingindustry.com.au/2021/04/04/measuring-the-effectiveness-of-a-mentoring-program/) (accessed 4 October 2021)

allow both parties to speak freely should any feedback relate to a concern of the other party. It will therefore be important for programme secretariat to create a safe space where both mentors and mentees can give honest feedback about the progress of the mentorship and discuss their concerns without fear of any form of retaliation.²⁵⁷ Such feedback sessions need to be purposefully done- meaning that they have to be routinely prepared for (e.g. monthly or quarterly feedback sessions with the programme secretariat). However and besides the allocated time for the feedback sessions, mentors and mentees need to be informed of how they can also get in touch with the programme secretariat impromptu regarding any fundamental issues relating to the mentorship.

13.7. Mentorship end of programme evaluation

If the mentorship has been initiated as a result of a specific program, the mentorship programme, secretariat can ask all participants of the mentorship program to give feedback on the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship.²⁵⁸

The formats for the feedback could include:

- ✓ a simple questionnaire where the participants answer specific questions about the programme
- ✓ a written report from each participant
- ✓ an interview of each of the participants

The mentor can also be evaluated in the same way, which would include additional specific mentoring criteria.

²⁵⁷ 'Measuring the Effectiveness of a Mentoring Program'

Available at [Measuring the Effectiveness of a Mentoring Program - Training Industry](#) (accessed 4 October 2021)

²⁵⁸ NIBusinessInfo 'Use mentoring to increase staff performance: Mentoring programmes: monitoring, evaluating and reviewing' Available at [Mentoring programmes: monitoring, evaluating and reviewing | nibusinessinfo.co.uk](#) (accessed 29 October 2021)

13.8. Summary of key points

- It is important to evaluate the mentoring programme to ensure that it is achieving its aims. Monitoring information should be collected regularly and systematically so that one can proactively check that the mentoring project is running as it should be.
- Before one embarks on monitoring progress, one needs to be clear on what the mentoring programme does and what it aims to achieve.
- Some mentoring programmes find it useful to gather baseline information at the start of a mentorship and then collect information at regular intervals to see how the mentee has progressed.
- Take deliberate effort to appropriately choose monitoring tools that will work for the mentorship programme and the users.

13.9. Self-assessment/exercise

Create a Mentoring Log

The mentor and mentee can create a shared space to track progress and achievements which can help direct the mentoring relationship toward shared goals. This activity will give the mentor and mentee a space to track progress, set new goals, and share insight, growth and resources in one centralized spot. It will also help identify gaps in knowledge or skills that the mentoring pair can then address by providing more opportunities to learn or practice. Mentor and mentee can therefore:

- Create a shared document or simple log to capture the types of mentoring activities you accomplish together. What have you done to move the project forward this week? What are immediate action steps you should take in the next week?
- Routinely review the log together as a way to reflect and set future goals and project

14. END OF THE MENTORSHIP PARTNERSHIP

Learning Objectives

- To outline some of the reasons that can result into a premature ending of a mentorship relationship
- To identify what measures can be put in place to address challenges that can contribute to a premature ending of a mentorship relationship
- To understand what processes need to be followed when a mentorship relationship ends prematurely
- To understand what processes need to be followed when a mentorship relationship comes to a scheduled end

14.1. Premature ending of the mentorship relationship

The mentorship program is a voluntary process. Thus the mentorship agreement and the orientation sessions need to be clear to the mentor and mentee that they can withdraw from the mentorship program at any time. However, both the mentee and mentor also need to be informed at the introductory session that it is important for such withdrawal to be done in a professional manner to achieve appropriate closure. Thus, the party wishing to end the mentorship partnership must duly inform the programme secretariat. They are also encouraged to include reasons for the withdrawal. Project secretariat may then decide to reach out to the withdrawing party to garner further insights as a learning effort in order to improve any future mentorship partnerships.

14.2. Signs that a mentoring relationship is not working

Things to look out for:

- ✓ mentee/mentor cancels appointments, fails to turn up or regularly rearranges last minute
- ✓ mentee/mentor consistently fails to make progress on actions identified in meetings
- ✓ mentee/mentor appears distracted in sessions or cuts sessions short

Should the above occur, the mentor can ask the mentee for feedback on how they are finding the mentoring arrangement (that is in instances in which it is the mentee who is exhibiting such behavior). It might be that they think everything is going well or have similar concerns. Either way, the mentor will have more information to help decide how to proceed.

Other mentors might feel shame at their failure to connect with a mentee but there is no need to feel ashamed. If a mentee makes a habit of saying “I don’t know” or shrugging during conversation with the mentor, the mentor can try a couple of different techniques. For example, silence can be very effective, so the mentor should not rush to say anything for 30 seconds or so, and see if the mentee offers an answer. The mentor can also gently probe the mentee by saying, “Well, if you did know, what would you say?” Or “Can you guess?”

Source: Lisa Bottomley ‘Mentoring – Part 5: Communicating with your mentee’

Jean Rhodes, Belle Liange ‘First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships’ (2009)

It is also important for the mentor and mentee to acknowledge the challenge. This means that one ought to be honest and tell the other party that something is amiss with the mentoring arrangement. Without sounding too accusatory, one can also proceed to give factual examples e.g. ‘you have cancelled a number of appointments. Is there something we both need to explore or do to get the relationship working more effectively?’ Either party should avoid blame and be clear and objective with their statements as much as possible.²⁵⁹ For example you could say:” I would like to offer you some thoughts on how I’m feeling that this mentoring is going. It seems that when we meet, you come across quite distracted and don’t look very interested. Is that right? Is there anything that I could be doing differently?”

The fact is that some mentoring relationships do not work out. It is not beneficial to leave a mentee or mentor hanging or prolong the arrangement unnecessarily when nothing constructive is happening. In that scenario, the mentor may instead have a constructive discussion about how the mentee can progress beyond the mentoring arrangement. The mentorship programme coordinator must also be informed so that they will be able to identify an alternative mentor, if need be. In some instances, one may consider asking the mentorship programme coordinator to meet with both the mentor and the mentee in order to discuss possible ways forward. Sometimes an impartial intervention can help the parties get back on track.²⁶⁰

14.3. Scheduled end of the mentorship program

Ideally the ending of a mentoring relationship is anticipated and planned for by agreeing to a timeline in advance.²⁶¹

- a) Prepare in advance for D-Day (Departure Day). Prepare for the end of your formal mentoring relationship: take stock of lessons learned, directions taken, and what is still needed to be accomplished.²⁶² It’s important for the mentor to start preparing the mentee for this and to start

²⁵⁹ University of Bristol ‘Mentoring skills: Ending a mentoring relationship’

²⁶⁰ University of Bristol ‘Mentoring skills: Ending a mentoring relationship’

²⁶¹ University of Bristol ‘Mentoring skills: Ending a mentoring relationship’

²⁶² Available at [Inspire and Be Inspired: 20 Mentor / Mentee Activities - WITI](#)

talking about what alternative support or resources they might access after the end of the mentoring relationship²⁶³

As the mentorship completion date nears, a mentor should ask, “What do we still need to accomplish before we end our formal partnership?” “How do we want our relationship to be (extended formal, informal, friendship, other) after our official close?”²⁶⁴

There are several things that would be good to consider when ending a mentoring relationship:

- ✓ Reflect on the mentorship—what have you learned?
- ✓ Talk about the future—what will both of your next steps be?
- ✓ What parting words and/or feedback do you have for each other?
- ✓ When thinking about possible future contact be realistic about the extent of your contact with each other.
- ✓ Will the mentee update the mentor on their progress?
- ✓ Thank and acknowledge each other’s contributions.
- ✓ Are you both happy to close the relationship? If you would like to carry on, then set the expectations - how long will this be for and what is it you would like to gain from the continuation of the relationship

Source: University of Bristol ‘Mentoring skills: Ending a mentoring relationship’

- b) Have an official “ending” of your formal mentoring relationships. If there is no formal program event), invite your mentee to a final get-together or a closing phone call.²⁶⁵
- c) Document the outputs of the mentorship relationship: When terminating the mentorship partnership the mentor must complete the “Mentor’s Form for Mentorship Termination”, similarly the mentee must complete the “Mentee’s Form for Mentorship Termination”.

²⁶³ University of Bristol ‘Mentoring skills: Ending a mentoring relationship’

²⁶⁴ Linda Phillips-Jones ‘75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try’ Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/75things/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

²⁶⁵ Linda Phillips-Jones ‘75 things to do with your mentees: Practical and Effective Development Ideas You can Try’ Available at [75 Things \(udel.edu\)](https://www.udel.edu/75things/) (accessed 22 October 2021)

14.4. Summary of key points

- 🎨 Agreeing an end date at the beginning of a mentoring relationship can shape the mentor and mentee's work together, giving it structure, purpose and a timeframe. The time the mentor and mentee work together will depend on what the mentee wants to achieve through the mentoring and can be anything from three months to a year.
- 🎨 Sometimes, it is necessary to end a professional mentorship early. Perhaps the mentee's goals have changed, and the mentor is not the right person to help the mentee with their career goals anymore. Or, perhaps the mentor has a change in their life that makes it impractical for the mentor to continue to support the mentee. Whatever the reasons, it is necessary to courteously but directly and candidly discuss the mentorship partnership if either party feel that there is need to end the partnership.
- 🎨 If the mentorship partnership comes to a scheduled end, it's important to reflect on what has been learned and the mentor may wish to provide advise on further areas that the mentee can continue to work on. The Mentor/mentee ma decide to continue an informal mentorship outside of a formal program.

14.5. Self-assessment/Exercise

At the end of mentorship partnership, the mentor may wish to give the mentee a note that outlines the following:

- The mentor's favorite memory of their time together,
- What the mentor first noticed in the mentee,
- what the mentor sees in the mentee today, your hopes for your mentee, and
- what the mentor admires most about the mentee.



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