



Cumann Síceolaithe Éireann

The Psychological Society of Ireland Mentorship Programme Toolkit

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1. Introduction

Mentoring is a process to aid career development and a common business practice which has proven benefits for mentors and mentees alike.^{1,2} The field of Psychology has benefited from mentoring relationships, although often these are informal arrangements between trainee and practicing psychologists or between newly practicing psychologists and more experienced practitioners.

The purpose of this Mentoring Toolkit is to:

- Provide an overview of the PSI supported Mentoring programme;
- Describe the concept of mentoring and the benefits of a mentoring relationship;
- Describe the mentoring process from establishment to conclusion;
- Provide some practical tools and tips to support mentors and mentees to get the best out of the mentoring relationship.

2. The Mentoring Relationship

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a developmental approach whereby an individual can avail of the support of a more experienced colleague, over a period of time, to assist their own professional and personal development.

It is a relationship in which a person with greater expertise, experience, knowledge, and wisdom, counsels, guides, teaches, and helps another person to develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes. It has been described as one of the broadest methods of encouraging personal and professional growth.

Clutterbuck & Megginson³ describe mentoring as “off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking.” The focus of a mentoring relationship is on the mentor and mentee working together to discover and develop the mentee’s abilities.

According to Kram⁴, the functions of a mentor are centred on two important areas; Career Development (e.g. advice, sponsorship, challenging assignments, fostering visibility) and Psychosocial Support (e.g. personal support friendship, acceptance, role-modelling).

2.1 What is the difference between Mentoring and Coaching?

Coaching is generally focused on specific skills development through a process that enables learning and development to occur and performance to improve.

Mentoring is more of an enabling and nurturing role, which supports an individual to be guided by a more senior colleague who can pass on knowledge and experience. It is about developing the whole person rather than training in particular skills³.

2.2 What are the benefits of Mentoring?

Mentoring has been shown to support career development and satisfaction. Research has shown that individuals who are mentored, often earn higher performance evaluations, higher salaries, and faster career progression.¹ Mentees get clear guidance, access to additional resources, and improve their self-confidence. Furthermore, the mentors themselves benefit “by deriving satisfaction from helping to develop the next generation of leaders, feeling rejuvenated in their own career development, learning how to use new technologies or becoming aware of issues, methods, or perspectives that are important to their field”.³

Mentoring has the potential to be of great benefit to PSI members; from early career psychologists who are at the start of their careers to well-established members who are considering a transition or meeting a new challenge and would welcome the opportunity to avail of advice and guidance from a more experienced member.

Mentoring can be considered **authentic professional learning**⁴—a type of approach that considers learning as continuing, social, active, related to practice, and situated within a community that supports learning. A strong mentoring relationship can offer a supportive environment where individuals can actively engage in working with others on genuine problems within their professional practice.

“I have benefited from the relationship in a number of ways including; job satisfaction, an opportunity to reflect and process my own journey, and staying connected to developments in my own field.”

(PSI Mentor who participated in the Pilot Mentoring Programme)

“Having the space to discuss my career development has been invaluable”

(PSI Mentee who participated in the Pilot Mentoring Programme)

Examples of Areas for Focus within Mentoring Relationship for PSI Members

- ❖ Curriculum Vitae
- ❖ Professional Development
- ❖ Making Applications to Postgraduate Study
- ❖ Making Job Applications
- ❖ Research
- ❖ Public Speaking
- ❖ Making Connections in Specific Locations
- ❖ Conferences & Events
- ❖ Early Career Psychologist Experiences
- ❖ Networking
- ❖ Skills Building
- ❖ Career Planning & Development
- ❖ Role Transition
- ❖ Problem-Solving
- ❖ Exit management
- ❖ Personal Development
- ❖ Social & Political Savvy

3. The Mentoring Process

The PSI Mentoring Committee will consist of the following members:

- A PSI Staff Member
- A Council Member
- Early Graduate Group and/or Student Affairs Group Member

Its aim is to support the matching of available mentors with interested Mentees and provide guidance to support the development of a good Mentoring relationship.

a. Establishing a Mentoring Panel:

The PSI Mentoring Committee will develop and manage a list of available mentors. Members who are interested in becoming mentors will register their interest via an application on the Mentoring Programme page under groups on the PSI website. They will be required to provide some information to assist in the matching process (e.g. specialty, areas of interest, location, etc.).

b. Matching Mentors with Mentees:

When an individual (mentee) decides they want to enter into a mentoring relationship they are advised to:

- Register their interest in becoming a mentee/mentor on the Mentorship Programme page.
- Complete a short questionnaire that will give a brief overview of the mentee's current role, career goals, and any specific areas of focus for the mentoring relationship.
- The PSI Mentoring Committee will contact the mentee with contact details for the mentor in a timely manner after the mentee's application has been approved.
- If no such mentor is available. The mentee will be added to the mentee waiting list and will be contacted when a suitable mentor comes available.

A record of the match and commencement date will be held on file by the PSI Mentoring Committee.

c. Starting the Mentoring Relationship:

It is important to establish a good foundation for the mentoring relationship and the first meeting is key to getting that foundation in place.

The purpose of the first meeting is for the mentor and mentee to get to know each

other, establish the guidelines for how they plan to develop the mentoring relationship, and agree on the next steps. The 'First Meeting Checklist' below identifies the main areas to focus on:

"The first meeting checklist was a great guide for us"

First Meeting Checklist

Get to know each other:

- Share information about your personal and professional life
- Learn something new about your mentee / mentor

Establish Guidelines – Discuss and agree the following:

- Broad goals for the mentoring relationship
- Expectations of roles of Mentor & Mentee
- When and where to meet
- How often to meet and how meetings will be scheduled
- How to communicate between meetings
- A broad agenda for meetings
- Ground-rules to guide your discussions
- How you will measure success

Mentoring Contract

- Capture the main items agreed in a Mentoring Contract

Confirm Next Steps

- Agree any specific action to be followed up from the first meeting
- Schedule date, time and venue for next meeting

By its nature, a mentoring relationship is inherently flexible and is likely to vary significantly depending on the Mentee's needs and the interpersonal styles of both parties in the relationship. Best practice recommends that the mentor and mentee draw up a Mentoring Contract. This document is an informal arrangement and may be revised over time as the relationship develops. The intention of the document is to make sure that both parties are clear about the expectations and responsibilities

involved in the relationship. A Mentoring Contract Template is provided below. This template can be modified to suit the needs of each mentoring pair. There is no requirement to share this document with the PSI Mentoring Committee. It is recommended that the mentor and mentee consider the areas for agreement in advance of the first meeting, discuss these in detail at the first meeting, and finalise and sign the Mentoring Contract at the second meeting.

Mentoring Contract Template

Type of support the Mentee would like to get from the Mentor.	
Expectations of the Mentor from the Mentee.	
Expectations of the Mentee from the Mentor.	
Frequency of Meetings.	
Meeting Location.	
Meeting Duration.	
Scheduling of Meetings.	
Ground rules for discussions(e.g., confidentiality, openness, challenge etc.)	
If problems arise, how will they be dealt with?	
How will we know when the Mentoring relationship has served its purpose and can be wound up?	
Other important points	

Signed

Mentee _____ Date _____

Mentor _____ Date _____

d. Ongoing development:

In each meeting, the Mentee will discuss their progress, what has been successful, and where they have had obstacles. The mentor will use his/her experience to provide suggestions and guidance to the Mentee. At the end of each meeting, the pair will agree on actions to assist the Mentee. Those actions will then be reviewed at the next session.

A learning Log can be maintained by the Mentee for ongoing reflective practice purposes and can be reviewed at meetings.

e. Concluding the Mentoring Relationship:

All mentoring relationships reach an endpoint. After a fixed period, or on the agreement of both parties, the pair should have a final close-out meeting where they review how the mentoring relationship went and suggest future goals and actions. In addition, the PSI Mentoring Committee will request that both parties:

- inform the committee when the mentoring relationship has concluded
- indicate if they are interested and available for future (new) mentoring relationships
- complete a feedback questionnaire to help guide improvements in the overall process

4. Guide for Mentors

Mentors provide developmental support and guidance to Mentees in a number of ways, and every mentoring relationship will have a unique tone and focus depending on the parties involved and their specific needs and expectations. Some typical ways that a mentor supports a mentee include:

Supporting the identification and realisation of goals: Setting goals is key to the mentoring process and the mentor has an important role in ensuring goals are specific and realistic. Encourage your Mentee to break their goals up into manageable chunks and explore useful activities that will facilitate the goal's ultimate realisation.

Sharing your Experiences: Sharing stories can facilitate the building of rapport, while also allowing the Mentee to experience how you learned key professional lessons.

Providing Feedback: Delivering feedback is part of your role as a mentor and it can assist with overcoming challenges. When delivering feedback make sure to do so in a respectful manner. Ask your mentee whether they are ready to talk about the issue and then outline what you think is going on and what steps might assist with getting back on track.

Listening, Asking Questions, and Offering Perspective: Show your mentee that you are genuinely interested in them by using the skills of active listening. The mentoring relationship should allow the mentee to develop their own career values and needs. Asking open-ended questions will give you a deeper insight into what your mentee is looking for and will allow you to offer more individualised mentoring support.

Acknowledging Successes: Make sure that you celebrate even small successes. Mentoring should be a positive experience for both the mentor and the mentee. It can be all too easy to focus on the challenges while forgetting the steps we have made in achieving our goals.

Feldman offers the following advice to Mentors:⁵

Mentors Do's & Don'ts

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen actively• Support & facilitate networking and brokering• Teach by example• Be aware of role conflict• Encourage and motivate Mentees to move beyond their comfort zone• Promote independence• Promote balance• Celebrate success and convey your joy• Encourage reciprocity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fix the problem• Take credit• Take over• Threaten, coerce, or use undue influence• Lose critical oversight – allow friendships to cloud judgement• Condemn (mistakes or lack of agreement are not career-altering disasters)

5. Guide for Mentees

Taking a proactive approach to the relationship is strongly recommended. “In a mentee-driven partnership, the mentee determines the pace, route, and destination. The mentor is then able to offer insights and counsel that is focused on the mentee’s objectives.”⁵ Some ways a Mentee can do that involve considering the following questions:

- Are my objectives clear and well-defined?
- Am I comfortable asking for what I want?
- Am I open to hearing new ideas and perspectives?
- Do I allow myself to be open and vulnerable?
- Am I receptive to constructive feedback?
- Am I able to show I value and appreciate feedback?
- Am I willing to change or modify my behaviours?
- Do I consistently follow through on commitments?
- Do I make an effort to instill trust?
- Do I openly show appreciation and gratitude?

Feldman offers the following general advice to Mentees:⁵

Mentees Do’s & Don’ts

Do	Don’t
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take Initiative; • Be respectful of your mentor’s time; • Clarify goals and expectations; • Practice self-reflection; • Clarify your values; • Look for opportunities to teach your mentor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be passive – don’t wait for the mentor to initiate interactions; • Be late or disorganised; • Stay in the comfort zone; • Stay in a mentoring relationship when it is no longer helpful.

6. Concluding Comments

This guide is designed to enable the mentoring process within the PSI.

It is aimed at enhancing the ongoing learning & development of psychologists in the PSI, both Mentees & Mentors.

The process will be overseen by the Mentoring Committee and reviewed regularly to ensure consistency and currency.

For any queries please contact the Mentoring Committee via email at mentoring@psychologicalsociety.ie



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