

Mentoring handbook

We have established a mentoring scheme between professional women based in South Wales and female learners at Coleg y Cymoedd (the college).

Aims

To boost confidence, provide support, encouragement and guidance to teenage girls, who may not otherwise have role models in professional life.

Establishing mentoring relationships between learners and adults other than family, friends or teachers; to lend an external perspective and assist learners to achieve their potential and goals.

What does it involve?

A commitment to nine one-to-one mentoring sessions in an academic year (three per term). It is anticipated that at least the first meeting will be face-to-face, at the college, but other meetings could be held remotely perhaps using FaceTime or Skype.

It is anticipated that the mentoring relationship should last for one academic year but could be extended if both wish to continue.

The mentoring relationship

The mentor contributes to the relationship by being an informed listener and providing a perspective determined by experience. It is important to develop trust in the relationship.

A good mentor will use her interpersonal skills to put the mentee at ease and to develop a sense of confidence in the relationship and the supportive nature of the mentoring process. This should help mentees to disclose any perceived weaknesses and openly identify areas for improvement.

Mentoring is more about enabling than directing. The mentor should not normally provide answers; instead the mentor should ask questions that guide the mentee towards finding her own answers.

Role of successful mentors

1. identifying type of support required and how that can be met
2. reviewing progress
3. giving feedback
4. helping the mentee set targets and progress towards them
5. enabling – developing the mentees capacity for learning and achieving goals (e.g. by assisting them to find resources such as people, articles, events or web-based information)
6. set ground rules with the mentee of the first meeting - exchanging contact details that the mentor is comfortable to share and explaining when the mentee is able to make contact in between scheduled meetings.

Qualities of successful mentors

1. willingness to share skills, knowledge and expertise
2. positive attitude and ability to act as a role model
3. commitment the mentoring relationship
4. enthusiasm for the role
5. ability to give constructive criticism without undermining confidence
6. ability to listen without being judgemental

Confidentiality

The mentoring pair should treat their interactions and any information disclosed as confidential. This will enable the mentee to discuss their position frankly and openly.

If a mentor needs to contact college staff about information that a mentee has shared that concerns them, staff will adhere to the College Safeguarding Policy. Mentees can also contact college staff with general queries. Please contact Clair Mapp clair.mapp@cymoedd.ac.uk for further information.

DBS checks

As the learners will be aged between 16 and 18 it will be necessary to obtain DBS checks for all mentors. The college will cover this cost.

Key college policies

Safeguarding

It is important that all children, young people and vulnerable adults studying at the college are protected from the possibility of abuse. Students working closely with you as a mentor may feel confident to disclose more personal details about their lives. Any concerns or disclosures regarding illegal abuse should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer on the Nantgarw campus.

As a mentor you need to be aware that you should keep yourself safe from allegations of abuse.

Some tips:

- Arrange meetings in Public places or in college.
- avoid discussing personal problems either theirs or yours
- don't buy gifts or give money
- be professional at all times

Prevent

Prevent aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The college has a duty to safeguard its learners from the threat of being radicalised. Should you be concerned that a mentee is being drawn into harmful extremism or intolerance you should discuss your concerns with the Safeguarding officer on the Nantgarw campus.

Designated Safeguarding officer is Karen James, Campus Director, Nantgarw. Her direct line is 01443 663034, mobile 07584130926 or you can email her at karen.james@cymoedd.ac.uk.

Mentoring agreement

A mentoring agreement with clear boundaries for the relationship is to be signed by both parties. This and other documentation that can be used during the programme can be found on the Mentoring Scheme website. The use of the other documentation is optional.

The mentee and mentor should discuss the agreement at the first meeting. Topics to consider include:

- What each person is prepared to talk about, e.g. work/personal issues
- Contact arrangements, e.g. where and when to get in touch
- Times, frequency and location of meetings, with the next date scheduled in advance – the expectation is for one hour long meeting per month.

Once the relationship is set up, the college will only contact the mentor and mentee to confirm whether the relationship is continuing, in order to update the list of available mentors and to invite new applications.

The matching process

Learners will be invited to apply by filling in a questionnaire found on the college website. Tutors may identify learners they think will benefit from the programme and ask them to apply.

Pairs could be matched due to shared interests in the same career/area of study, but this may not be the only criterion, the objective is to boost confidence overall.

The applications will be forwarded to the mentors who will identify any learners they feel match their skills (professional or personal) and pairs will be agreed with the college.

The first meeting

The first meeting will be held at the college; the purpose initially will be to get to know each other. It will be important to set the parameters of the relationship including:

1. confidentiality
1. duration of meetings and frequency
2. venue for meetings - whether face-to-face or remote
3. method of contact between meetings
4. times the mentor is not willing to be contacted
5. how to cancel meetings
6. goal setting
7. whether notes will be taken – this may be useful for measuring progress against goals

Skills you can help your mentee with

Communication

Communication is an essential part of everyday life and present throughout business activities, including coaching, negotiating, influencing, giving presentations and providing feedback.

Effective listening

- Encouraging your mentee to develop active listening is important for interviews as it shows the speaker their message is being both received and fully understood.
- Ask your mentee to think about:
- Decoding the language they hear, as well as the language they see, i.e. body language
- Asking questions to clarify points they do not understand and checking to see that they have received the message correctly.

Interpersonal skills

Practice communicating key messages - in a role play interview/presentation, ask your mentee to consider the following:

- Being clear on what they want to get across
- Think about what their audience wants to hear
- Understand what impact their message will have
- Think about what questions could arise
- Practice their non-verbal communication – encourage your mentee to think about the impact of their body language including: posture, hand gestures and expression.

Career Skills

The methods used to get a job (CV, cover letter, application form, and interview) and the essential skills needed to manage your career.

Preparing for interviews

Ask your mentee to think about how they would answer interview questions. Suggest the following points to help them throughout an interview situation:

- Preparation - encourage your mentee to be familiar with the job description, to prepare answers to standard interview questions and to think about the areas they are likely to be questioned about
- On the day - advise they arrive at least 10 minutes early
- During the interview – listen carefully to the questions, speak clearly and don't use jargon, be aware of your body language, don't dwell on the negatives, ask the interviewers questions.

Application forms

- If possible, ask your mentee to complete a practice job/UCAS application form
- Encourage them to identify skills from all aspects of life – work experience, voluntary work, hobbies, involvement in clubs/societies, coursework
- “Talk-up” skills – e.g. ‘I had to carry out research for assignments using electronic databases, the internet, books and interviews’
- Research the company or university you are applying to, so you can talk about it during an interview
- Match skills, qualifications and personal qualities to the job/course description and person specification
- Attend careers fairs/employer presentations

Potential topics for discussion

- Share career stories. Career start, changes made along the way, high and low points. What experiences were helpful?
- Discuss mentee's personal vision: What would she like to achieve over the next few years?
- Talk about news and current events, their hobbies, part time jobs, what they like/dislike about their course.
- Discuss mentee's strengths and how to enhance their growth (mentee can find information from comments in performance reviews, informal feedback from supervisors or tutors). What do people say you do best? Mentor can add his/her observations.
- Discuss mentee's growth areas and possible plans for working on them.
- Discuss how feedback will be given and received, and what, if anything, either would like to avoid doing.

Activities you can use

Ask your mentee to picture their perfect week and write it down. What are they doing, where are they living, how do people talk about them? Discuss the comments with your mentee and what they can learn/apply from them

- Identify/refine 1-3 objectives to work on together - preferably skills pertaining to growth areas
- Conduct informal networking by introducing mentee to people who could prove helpful to their future careers
- Help mentee find work experience Debrief with mentee afterward
- Exchange and discuss potentially useful articles
- Review and discuss mentee's CV and offer suggestions for improvement
- Review and discuss a letter, proposal or other document written by mentee
- Discuss external non-job activities in which mentee is developing a skill set (a community project, etc.)
- Talk about what you have appreciated about your mentoring relationship with one another so far
- Discuss a role model that has been influential in each of your lives. What impact have they had on you?
- Mentee can identify risks, difficulties or stress she may face in the next few months (deadline, conflicts, fears, etc.), and plan with mentor way to minimise them

Ending the scheme

It is intended that the mentoring relationship will last for one academic year but can be extended if both parties agree.

A review of the relationship will take place every three months to see how the relationship is progressing.

It will be important for the mentoring pair to be clear about circumstances in which the relationship will end including:

1. the relationship is fulfilled its purpose because the mentee has achieved her goal

2. one or both of the parties do not feel that they are developing a valuable relationship
3. either party has a change of priorities, location or other commitments which make continuing the relationship difficult

Agreement should be reached at the beginning as to how the relationship will be ended – e.g. will there be a termination meeting?

Evaluation and feedback

If you have any feedback about the mentoring scheme, please contact Sian Davies. She will pass your comments on to the college in the review meetings.

You may also be asked to attend review meetings during the year. If you are unable to attend you can email your feedback instead, to Sian and Clair.