

DOD Mentoring Resource Portal

TYPES OF MENTORING

Information for Supervisors Portfolio

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Purpose:

The roles of Mentors may vary greatly depending on the type, focus, and structure of the mentoring relationship. The purpose of this resource is to provide a list of mentoring approaches accompanied by a general description.

Audience:

New and Experienced Supervisors

Common Terms

The following are common terms associated with the DOD Mentoring Resource Portal:

Mentor, also known as Advisor, is a trusted counselor or guide who is involved in the development and support of one who is less experienced.

New Supervisor, also known as New Supervisor or Learner, is the more junior person being mentored.

Mentoring Program Coordinator, also known as Mentoring Program Manager, is responsible for the overall management of the Mentoring Program.

Information Source Disclaimer

Most of the information on this mentoring resource was obtained from the following sources: [Navy Personnel Command \(NAVPERSCOM\) Mentoring Program Handbook](#), [WHS, Director of Administration and Management, Mentoring Program Guide](#), [OPM Best Practices: Mentoring](#). All content is provided for informational purposes only.

TYPES OF MENTORING

Experienced Supervisors and New Supervisors can utilize multiple approaches in a single mentoring relationship. Mentoring relationships work best when participants are flexible. Use whichever approach is most convenient to the mentoring relationship. At the start of a relationship, discuss your desired approaches and agree on your modes of interaction.

1.0 INFORMAL MENTORING

Informal mentoring, also referred to as traditional mentoring, focuses primarily on the New Supervisor and her/his goals (both personal and career). This type of mentoring promotes the examination of the New Supervisor's career path through goal setting. The Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor work together to devise an action plan that sets career goals that will lead the New Supervisor to succeed in his/her new role. Informal mentoring not only encourages the New Supervisor to establish career goals but also advocates setting personal goals. The overall development of the individual is the focus of informal mentoring.

Informal mentoring is a natural process; that is, the Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor often pair together by their own internal forces. Internal forces, such as mutual respect, shared experiences, and common interests, are the ingredients that create the relationship. If no prospective Experienced Supervisor comes to mind, a New Supervisor should have access to a list of Experienced Supervisors and their respective professional experiences to choose a potential informal Mentor. Mentoring Program Coordinators normally develop and manage this capability.

Informal mentoring can last for years – although friendships that are formed through this type of mentoring can last a lifetime. Another characteristic of informal mentoring is that it can involve interaction between the Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor away from the workplace. This type of mentoring relationship may result in the Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor spending time together outside of the office. Informal mentoring is usually successful because the two parties have a genuine concern for each other's well being. Friendship, rather than job requirements, keeps the two parties together.

2.0 FORMAL MENTORING

Formal mentoring, also known as planned/structured mentoring, primarily focuses on organizational goals and how the New Supervisor's goals fit into the organization. Organizational goals increase productivity, eliminate turnover and reduce absenteeism. This type of mentoring usually has a defined timeframe and is tied to a developmental program and concentrates heavily on the needs of the organization, yet benefits both the organization and the New Supervisor. This type of mentoring promotes a "formal business" approach to the relationship, therefore, there is little or no social interaction. The Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor rarely see each other outside the office.

When participating in a formal mentoring program, New Supervisors should be offered a list of potential "suitable" Experienced Supervisor Mentors. These matches are based on similar attitudes, work assignments, characteristics, and specific self-selected criteria. The Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor develop a formal mentoring agreement plan, or contract, that outlines expectations and obligations. Both participants sign the agreement to formalize and clarify the relationship from its inception. The participants actively seek and obtain training to understand their roles as Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor. The Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor monitor the mentoring relationship against the program to ensure compliance with the formal partnership plan. The program is evaluated to determine the results, such as advantages, cost effectiveness, and difficulties.

Note: Some mentoring relationships develop into a combination of both informal and formal - mentoring relationships are not mutually exclusive.

3.0 SITUATIONAL MENTORING

Situational mentoring is usually short-lived and happens for a specific purpose such as preparing for a board or a new assignment.

4.0 ONLINE MENTORING (ALSO KNOWN AS E-MENTORING OR VIRTUAL MENTORING)

Online mentoring affords an opportunity to establish and engage in a mentoring relationship that does not depend on the individuals to meet in person. This type of mentoring uses videoconferencing, the Internet, and e-mail to mentor individuals. This is beneficial for those who are unable to leave their workplace and for those who live in rural or remote communities. Online mentoring is usually less expensive compared to face-to-face mentoring and provides New Supervisors with more choices to find Experienced Supervisors Mentors. Even with virtual mentoring, it is recommended the Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor meet face-to-face at least once.

5.0 COLLABORATIVE MENTORING (ALSO KNOWN AS TEAM/GROUP MENTORING)

Mentoring encompasses more than just one-on-one relationships. Mentoring relationships can include any number of New Supervisors and Experienced Supervisors. Virtual Tools can support the creation of engagements based on career progression, specific topics, or situations. Once an engagement is created, others can be invited or join to create a collaborative space where knowledge and experience can be shared with the group. Please explore the functionality of a virtual tool available to your organization that allows you to have discussions, schedule meetings, ask questions, or poll the group.

Collaborative Mentoring is not confined to the Virtual Tool. You can use virtual capabilities to easily connect with your colleagues but also schedule teleconferences or in-person meetings with your knowledge sharing

group. Knowledge sharing strengthens each employee involved as well as the organization. We encourage you to create and join engagements based on your strengths and search out engagements to develop your skills even further.

6.0 SPEED MENTORING

This mentoring approach is for individuals to receive information from one or more Experienced Supervisors in a time-controlled environment. Modeled after the 'Speed Dating' concept, both parties are provided the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences. New Supervisors benefit from the wisdom of their Experienced Supervisors, who in turn, benefit from the fresh perspectives New Supervisors bring.

7.0 FLASH MENTORING

Flash Mentoring is a new concept in mentoring which is growing in popularity. It is a low budget and simple option to recruit busy executives and other senior staff to become Mentors without investing a lot of time. The only requirement is one-hour or less of an Experienced Supervisor's time to meet with a New Supervisor. During the one-hour session, Experienced Supervisors can share lessons learned, life experiences and advice to New Supervisors. After this meeting, Experienced Supervisors and New Supervisors can decide if they would like to continue the relationship. The matching process is simple. Experienced Supervisors and New Supervisors are matched with little or no criteria. New Supervisors may recruit their own Experienced Supervisors. Once a New Supervisor is assigned an Experienced Supervisor, it is the New Supervisor's responsibility to contact the Experienced Supervisor within an established timeframe. After the initial meeting, the Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor decide whether or not to continue the relationship. Some of the activities mentioned in the formal mentoring program section should be addressed in this type of program. At a minimum, basic instructions on roles and expectations should be given to both the Experienced Supervisor and New Supervisor. Follow-up after the meeting and an evaluation form should also be included in this type of program.

8.0 PEER MENTORING

This mentoring approach is usually a relationship with an individual within the same grade, organization, and/or job series. The purpose of peer mentoring is to support colleagues in their professional development and growth, to facilitate mutual learning and to build a sense of community. Peer mentoring is not hierarchical, prescriptive, judgmental or evaluative.

9.0 REVERSE MENTORING

Reverse Mentoring is the mentoring of a senior person (in terms of age, experience or position) by a junior (in terms of age, experience or position) individual. Reverse mentoring aims to help older, more senior people learn from the knowledge of younger people, usually in the field of information technology, computing, and Internet communications. The key to success in reverse mentoring is the ability to create and maintain an attitude of openness to the experience and dissolve the barriers of status, power and position.