

Mentor Meeting Toolkit

There are many ways to structure a mentoring relationship. Some mentees benefit from a free-flowing exchange. The mentee may just need someone to talk to, or they may want to hear stories from you that offer insights for their own development. Other mentees have expectations that demand more structure. Mentor characteristics and qualities also play a role. Some mentors prefer to follow a concrete program outline to provide structure; others prefer a more open approach. For mentors who see benefits in a structured program outline, here is a step-wise plan and exercises to consider when working with your new mentee.

- **Pre-Work:** Start by reviewing your mentees current resume and job description, to learn more about them before meeting.
- **Session One: Introductions and Goals:** In the first session, get to know your mentee. Share your background and ask the mentee to do the same. Ask the mentee to share goals for the mentoring relationship, and their mentor expectations. What mentor qualities do they prefer? Include additional “fun” questions and ice breaker activities to help you get to know your mentee. You and your Mentor discuss and agree regarding the “fitness of the match” between you, and contact the Mentoring Program Committee if you feel a mismatch exists.
- **Session Two: Narrow Focus, Establish an Action Plan:** In the first session, you learned about each other and the mentoring goals. In this session, get feedback about what goal is most important to the mentee. Try to focus in on 2-3 problem statements that will set the state for future mentoring exercises. Here are some common examples:
 - I want to develop my skills in ____, so that I can ____.
 - I want to provide stronger and/or more effective feedback to ____
 - I want to position myself for a new position in my organization.
 - I want to build a stronger professional network.
 - I want to improve my relationship and/or reduce conflict with ____.
- **Session Three: Establish Mentoring Exercise:** In this session, establish a mentoring exercise and specific “homework” for the mentee. One mentoring best practice is to engage in concrete skills development, making mentoring exercises particularly important. First, the mentee should select one problem statement to work on. In this session, help the mentee develop a specific action plan that addresses that problem statement. Help your mentee visualize what they will do, with whom, by when. Establish key steps that will occur before your next meeting.
- **Step Four: Debrief Mentoring Exercise:** This session focuses on learning how the exercise went. If it went well, what went well, and what does that mean for the future? If it did not go well, what should the mentee try next? If the action didn’t take place, why not? The key is to

focus on incremental action learning. The mentee takes an action through an exercise, learns through that and then takes another action.

- **Step Five: Repeat:** Continue these learning exercises in future session, either building on the same problem statements with new actions or addressing different problem statements in sequence. This can continue as long as the mentee continues to find value.
- **Document Progress Made:** Keep a record of progress made to help with mid-year or mid-program reporting as well as Summary Report.

Concrete mentoring exercises help your mentee experience real-world successes on a problem important to them. Designing a mentoring program plan around these exercises provides a great structure for mentoring success.

Additional Resources:

- MSI/WiM-Virginia Virtual Learning – *under development*
- [WiM Monthly Virtual Learning Series](#)
- Articles
- Videos
- Etc.