



MENTOR
HANDBOOK

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Introduction

*Talofa lava
Mālō e lelei
Kia orana
Fakaalofa lahi atu
Malo ni
Kam na Mauri
Ni sa bula vinaka
Halo olageta
Noaia
Taloha ni
and Pacific greetings*



Pacific navigators used the practice of “wayfinding” to traverse the vast Pacific Ocean. Master navigators used their knowledge and skill to connect to their environment, to read the sky using the moon, the stars, the sun, the clouds, the sea currents and water colours, and birds to guide their journey.

A navigational guide may appear like a star as a single point, as a group, or even from within those that we lead ourselves. Much like the Pacific navigators, we are guided as we follow our own journeys, like the frigate bird that uses the blue highways of the sky linking the Pacific together.

On our individual journeys we have many sources of information and guides to choose from. Which guide we choose to follow, for how long we choose to follow, and what we choose to ask is entirely up to us.

“The true gift of wayfinding is not arrival at a destination, it is who we become along the way”
— (Spiller, Barclay-Kerr, & Panoho, 2015).

*Welcome on board and we look forward to
journeying with you.*



Empowering and Supporting Pacific Judiciary

The value of people sharing skills, knowledge and experience in the workplace is globally recognised as a dynamic and effective way to support development and growth.

PJSP seeks to assist and enhance the growth of the judiciary and supporting roles by matching mentees with mentors who will empower and maximise skills and performance. The mentoring model is purposefully designed to ensure the lens and cultural integrity of Pacific peoples are embodied within and woven throughout.

Key Concept

“Mentoring is a natural, organic, fit-for-purpose strategy for growing Pacific leaders. All Pacific leaders have a head-start with mentoring.” (Sanga, 2010).

Mentoring is offering advice, information or guidance by a person with useful experience, skills or expertise for another individual or group’s personal and professional development.

Mentoring connects people in a mutually beneficial relationship which is nurturing and helpful, with mentors acting as a critical sounding board to the mentee over the course of the relationship. **The mentoring relationship is useful, caring and promotes the sharing of knowledge and exchange of cultural perspective.** The mentor invests their time, effort and know how to enhance the mentee’s growth, knowledge and skills. A successful mentoring relationship will prepare mentees for greater effectiveness in their roles and will increase the mentor’s ability to connect to individuals at different levels.

The mentoring programme is a way to connect people of different judicial forum, skills, cultures and different countries with one another. Mentoring is generally a 1:1 conversation so, learning is tailored, personal and adaptable to whatever is top-of-mind. **It is not prescriptive.** People will have very different reasons for getting involved - from improving on specialist skills, career progression, improving on specialist skills, understanding culture and processes, to developing solely within their own role.

The PJSP mentoring programme:

- enables Pacific judiciary and people in supporting roles to connect and grow in partnered relationships
helps people realise their own potential
- helps people feel valued, included and supported encourages skill transfer across organisations and across countries.

Purpose of PJSP Mentoring Programme

PJSP is a professional development initiative, designed to promote a stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific through support for the development of accessible, fair, responsive and efficient justice systems.

The mentoring programme is an important part of supporting Pacific judicial officers and others in the justice sector. PJSP's objective is to assist and enhance the growth of the judiciary and supporting roles by matching mentees with mentors who will empower and maximise skills and performance. The mentoring model is purposefully designed to ensure the lens and cultural integrity of Pacific peoples are embodied within and woven throughout.

Mentoring programme objectives

The overarching aim is to improve access to justice by empowering and supporting judicial officers and court staff in their court roles and as part of a wider community. Specific objectives include:



Practicality

Support professional development of judicial officers and registry staff.

Partnership

Create extensive networks and relationships to grow the influence of the mentoring programme.

Pasifika

Provide a programme that incorporates and responds to Pacific Island cultures and world views.

Purpose

Build towards Pacific to Pacific mentoring relationships and involving a wider selection of justice sector participants.

Mentoring – A Pacific Context

“Talanoa is a generic term referring to a conversation, chat, sharing of ideas and talking with someone. It is a term that is shared by Tongans, Samoans, and Fijians. Talanoa can be formal, as between chiefs and his or her people, and it can be informal, as between friends in a kava circle. Talanoa is also used for different purposes; to teach a skill, to share ideas, to preach, to resolve problems, to build and maintain relationships, and to gather information.

As Talanoa is context specific, the language and behaviour used in a Talaona can change with the context and the people that are involved in it. But most importantly, Talanoa is a skill, with associated knowledge about usage,

form and purposes. The skill of Talaona is embedded in the values and the behaviour that are associated with the Talanoa, and it is the context of the particular talanoa that determines the appropriate behaviours and values for it.”

– The Kakala Research Framework, Seu'ula Johansson Fua.

The underlying principles for mentoring remain the same in any context. From a Pacific perspective, mentoring is a commonly used method to support learning and sharing. It resonates with Pacific people because of its similarity to the Māori tuakana/teina (older/younger) philosophy, which is common across many Pacific cultures.

In the Pacific, relationships built on trust are the bedrock of business. More time may be required from the start to invest in the foundations of a strong relationship. Be cautious about being too direct early and take things slow. In broad terms, a Pacific operating context may involve:

- A Western approach to business
- A strong adherence to and influence from faith and spirituality
- A cultural context based on a village structure

During mentoring, conversations around the topics of gender, age and cultural status may arise. It is important to recognise that not all nations necessarily share the same context or social approaches to these topics – **the mentee is the master of their own context.**

Values

Community: recognising the importance of relationships by fostering a sense of connection between participants. By taking part in this programme there is an opportunity to acknowledge important relationships and contribute to positive outcomes for participants and the wider community.

Reciprocity: understanding that there are opportunities to learn from each other, both mentors and mentees contribute and interact meaningfully with the programme, with mutual appreciation for the programme's aim. Everyone involved has an opportunity to receive value from the programme.

Respect: ensuring a positive and inclusive environment where relationships operate with understanding and people feel safe to express their identity, language and cultural values.

A Cohort Approach

The PJSP mentoring programme follows a cohort approach. This means that a group of mentoring relationships will start at the same time as one another.

Cohorts will come together separately as a mentor group and mentee group for training and in communities of practice during the mentoring journey to share experiences. Supporting each other in the cohort provides the opportunity to sharing what's working well for some, and to help each other with problems and challenges.

Mentoring – what's it for?

What mentoring provides for mentors:

- Gaining fresh perspectives and an expanded network of colleagues from a more diverse range of backgrounds
- Satisfaction of transferring skills, knowledge and expertise
- Developing and practicing a more personal style of leadership
- Opportunity to enhance mentoring and communication skills
- Opportunity to re-examine own practices, attitudes and values
- Understand and apply principles of leadership within a framework of personal ethics and values.
- Build your resiliency to manage change.
- Develop a sense of confidence and belief in yourself and your ideas.

What mentoring provides for mentees:

- Provides regular opportunities to reflect on themselves, their future, and their longer-term goals
- Opportunity to enhance or develop new skills and strategies
- Gain greater clarity and new perspectives
- Taps into a rich source of experience, knowledge, and networks
- Helps navigate through complexity, conflict, or times of change
- Opportunity to receive feedback on actions, approach and behaviours

Mentoring mode

Mentoring may take several forms. Some of the more recognised modes are peer to peer, group and business. These modes have been described in more detail in the following training resources.

To begin our journey, we have selected a combination of the peer to peer and corporate models as the initial best fit for our participants, both mentee and mentor.

In the judicial context, this involves knowledge sharing and a supporting relationship between people within the same role and using the same skill sets. A professional relationship is fostered in which an experienced person assists another in developing special skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced personnel's profession and personal growth.

Both participants are wrapped with support from the PJSP team

The specific and unique needs of the mentee are always at the centre of the relationship and will dictate the type of mentoring that responds to their needs.

We hope to grow and adapt our offerings tailored to meet those requirements and to source mentors willing and capable to work in that way. as we learn more about each other's needs and grow our own capacity.

The mentoring session



This is a suggested outline of a typical mentoring session.

'Check in' and catch up

Identifying a focus for the session - setting an agenda and establishing timing.

What?

Clarifying the issue and a goal for the session (see goal setting and IGROW sections)

So what?

Exploring the issue to gain new understandings, stimulate analysis and reflective learning. (See listening skills section)

Now what?

Determining future actions

'Check out' and review

The role of the mentor

The mentor is required to be a:

- Sounding board
- Critical confidant
- Sharer of knowledge
- Encourager
- Career and work/life balance advisor
- Role model
- Networker

The mentoring partnership

In a mentoring partnership, mutual trust, respect, and confidentiality are vital. The mentee and the mentor need to feel comfortable spending time together and prepared to make a time commitment to the mentoring relationship.

At the beginning of any mentoring partnership, it is important to clarify expectations, establish boundaries, and develop a mutual understanding of how the mentoring partnership will work.

The way this is done in the PJSP mentoring programme is by entering into [a mentoring agreement](#).

A mentoring agreement lets you both know the purpose of the mentoring relationship and what you can expect from each other. This will improve the quality of the development opportunity and help you avoid dissatisfaction due to misaligned expectations.

[A mentoring relationship enables the mentor and mentee to:](#)

- strengthen the lessons already learned
- develop new strengths
- be empowered and see their own strengths
- check assumptions
- work with people from different contexts and backgrounds
- increase personal and professional networks; and
- generate workable solutions together in a mutually respectful way.

In cross cultural mentoring relationships, mentoring agreements can also help you to outline and agree on your approaches to any cultural differences. Some examples of such statements in mentoring agreements are:

- *'We identify and celebrate our differences'*. This statement enables conversation about individual differences and how they may affect our mentoring relationship.
- *'Differences are not good or bad, they are just differences'*. This statement enables agreement on, and commitment to, being non-judgemental about individual and group differences.

Together, you might come up with other statements based on specific situations or questions. For example:

- How do we talk about differences without worrying about causing unintentional offence or self-censorship?
- What happens when one says something that the other finds offensive?
- What topics are off-limits?

What makes a good mentor?

Responsibilities:

- Takes responsibility for identifying and achieving their development goals.
- Is open to learning from the mentee.
- Listens, clarifies, and asks questions.
- Encourages goal progression.
- Appreciates and shares different perspectives.



- Works in collaboration with the mentee to manage the partnership meetings and set the agenda for the meeting focus.
- Prompts the mentee to find their own solutions.

Skills and Qualities:

- Non-judgemental.
- Accessible and approachable.
- Gives and receives constructive and honest feedback.
- Committed to mentee journey.
- Respects confidences.

Your commitment

As a participant in this programme, you show your commitment by:

- attending a training workshop for mentors
- signing a [mentoring agreement](#) at the start of your mentoring partnership and sending a copy to the Programme Coordinator
- attending your agreed mentoring meetings
- coming prepared to each meeting with a focus for the mentoring conversation (for example, reviewing the mentees progress towards goal achievement, exploring options for challenges and problems)
- participating in 3 Community of Practice (CoP) meetings during the 9-month programme time frame
- participating in health check interviews with the Programme Co-ordinator
- completing the exit interview at the end of the 9 months.

Confidentiality

The mentoring partnership is a private relationship between the mentee and mentor. Information about the relationship will not be shared by the mentor outside of the mentoring programme.

It is up to the mentee about how much information they wish to share. They may wish to discuss the mentoring experience and goals for their professional development.

Mentors and mentees will be asked to participate in short evaluation surveys to contribute to continuous improvement of the programme processes and materials.

During the relationship, if you feel that the mentoring agreement has been broken or breached please talk to the Programme Co-ordinator.

How the PJSP mentoring programme works

The following model illustrates the PJSP mentoring programme processes:



Supported application from mentee

PJSP seek applications from judiciary and within the justice sector from the Pacific. Any application must first be discussed and endorsed by the Chief Justice or organisation. This reduces any possible conflicts and provides the mentee with the necessary internal support to engage in the mentoring programme.

The mentee may be able to gain suggestions from their organisation about possible mentoring goals but is not to be used as

a performance management tool and is up to the mentee about what and who they share information with.

Mentee interview and induction

The mentee will first meet with the Programme Co-ordinator online via Microsoft Teams or Zoom to begin an administrative relationship for mentoring support.

This will be a one on one 'interview' with the Programme Co-ordinator to explain the process, answer mentee questions, obtain information to use for mentoring matching and ensure the mentee is ready for their training session.

Mentor-mentee selection and matching

The matching process is managed by the Programme Co-ordinator who compiles the information to complete the Expression of Interest (EOI) form. The mentees' EOI describes the support they are looking for, which helps in matching them with a 'good fit' mentor.

An EOI is also compiled from mentors detailing the skills and experience they offer and areas they can support a mentee in.

This enables a seamless matching process. As much as possible, the mentors are matched with their equivalent with regard the mentees' work environment and job requirements.

A panel is formed to ensure the matching process is done correctly and that both the needs of the mentees and mentors are considered.

The Programme Co-ordinator then meets with each participant to explain who they have been matched with and why this mentoring partnership is a good fit.

The mentee will be supported by the Programme Co-ordinator to contact the mentor and set up the first mentoring meeting.

Mentoring training

A number of training workshop will be facilitated for the participants to attend either one on one or in groups. These will be delivered online via Zoom or using Microsoft Teams platform.

The training will occur after the matching process has been completed and before the mentoring partnerships commence.

A mentoring toolbox of resources is provided to enhance the mentoring conversations and support the participants in their mentoring sessions.

A resource repository has been created that includes:

- Mentor handbook including training resources
- Reflective journal for the mentee
- Copy of Mentoring Agreement.

Monthly mentoring meetings

Required Resources

- Mentoring Agreement
- Mentee Journal
- Mentor and Mentee's handbook

Getting it clear — the first meeting is critical to set the purpose, outcome and process

Establish the relationship

- Build rapport
- Start the way you intend to progress the relationship

Exchange background information

- Mentor: experience mentoring, professional experience, background, areas of interest and expertise
- Mentee: role, organisation, work history, learning needs, strengths, hopes and dreams

Discuss arrangements for meeting

- How often, how long, where, changing times or arrangements, priority, records, how formal or informal?
- Contracting issues: confidentiality, conflict of interest, no-go areas, limits and boundaries to the relationship. How available will the mentor be?

Finalise the mentoring agreement

- The mentor will forward a copy of the agreement to the Programme Co-ordinator. Does anyone else need to be informed?

Possible additional topics for discussion

- How will we measure progress?
- When and how will we check if the relationship is right?
- Are we agreed that openness and trust is essential? How will we ensure that this happens?

Goal setting

The mentee comes to mentoring with a reason and purpose. As part of their induction they begin to shape their thoughts around what they want to achieve and how you as a mentor can assist them.

Help the mentee to identify and refine their goals and the things they would like to achieve (you will probably need to regularly come back to refine these goals)

- What does the mentee want to achieve?
- What would they be saying if they achieved this?
- What would their future look like if this was achieved?
- How attractive is this goal to them?
- On a scale of one to ten, how important is this to you?



Make sure the goals are a stretch, motivational, realistic and within the mentee's own sphere of influence.

Most importantly, determine what the mentee needs from you and how you can help the mentee to achieve their goals.

Encourage the mentee to record their goals and document any variations or changes in their journals. One of the measures of success for the mentoring programme will be the mentee's development through achieving their goals so it is important to us that their journey is captured.

Community of Practice meetings

Communities of Practice (CoP) enable participants to take collective responsibility for managing and building the knowledge they need.

In the PJSP Mentoring Programme, the mentors and the mentees will form CoP groups respectively and meet three times during the programme time frame, for a minimum of one hour each. This will be via an online platform such as Zoom, or Microsoft Teams arranged by the Programme Co-ordinator.

The CoP meetings will provide opportunities for mentors and mentees to share their mentoring experiences, explore strategies which they can trial or implement in their mentoring practice, and talk through any issues and challenges they are experiencing in the mentoring partnership and/or the programme.

The mentees will be expected to use the time between the CoP meetings to work on achieving their goals.

Health Checks

The Programme Co-ordinator will check in and follow up with the participants individually at monthly intervals to make sure the relationship is working to its best potential.

These health checks will allow participants to share any concerns independent of the mentoring relationship and to seek additional support if required.

Formal mentoring partnerships concluded

At the conclusion of the formal 9-month programme time frame, you may agree to continue meeting in your mentoring partnership. The mentee should contact the programme co-ordinator to inform them about this decision.

The mentee may decide that they would benefit from further mentoring support from another mentor. Sometimes the mentoring relationship ends sooner than the expected programme period. This can be for several reasons, such as:

- When the objectives of the mentoring support have been achieved it is usually time for the partnership to end. For example, the mentee has achieved their targeted skill development or career goals.
- If either the mentor or mentee feel the results and/or the mentoring partnership is no longer productive.
- The mentee's situation may change where they shift roles and no longer need the mentoring support that was originally sought.
- The mentee may need a new mentor as their needs have changed and their current mentor can no longer offer the support and guidance required.

If the mentor or mentee think the partnership needs to end before the 9-month programme time frame, the Programme Co-ordinator needs to be informed of this. They will work with the partners to decide what the next steps are.

Exit Interview

At the conclusion of the 9-month programme, the Programme Co-ordinator will arrange a one-on-one interview with both the mentor and the mentee.

We will gather your feedback and reflections on your experience as a mentor or a mentee and your perceptions of its effectiveness and success. We want your views on what could be changed or improved in the programme. Your feedback is vital to help PJSP ensure the

effectiveness and sustainability of the mentoring programme in the future.

Programme Evaluation

Regularly evaluating the progress and outcomes of the mentoring support and activities is a critical part of this mentoring programme. There are several evaluations the mentor and the mentee can complete to track the progress and effectiveness of their mentoring partnership. These evaluations will ensure that the purpose and benefits of the mentoring are being achieved.

Self-Evaluation

As a mentee, reflecting on your progress and evaluating how the mentoring is supporting you in achieving your goals will ensure you are gaining maximum value from the mentoring, and developing your leadership capabilities. Self-evaluation prompts you to ask yourself questions such as:

- What benefits am I gaining from the mentoring?
- What changes am I making?
- How do I know the mentoring is supporting me in achieving my goals and improving my practice?

Monitoring Evaluation

Tracking the progress of the mentoring partnerships will involve the following evaluation methods:

- Informal check-ins conducted by the Programme Co-ordinator with the mentors and mentees at three and six-month points following commencement of the mentoring partnerships.
- Regular self-evaluations undertaken by the mentors and mentees.

7 simple skills

Skills that make the most difference

Purpose

Hold the purpose, manage the process and make sure it's good value for time.

Start fast: *What's on your mind? What do you want out of the conversation? What would you like from me?*

Finish strong: *What are you taking out of this? What have you learned?*

Listen

Give your undivided attention and listen with interest. Listen all the way through.

Reflect

Restate what you hear in your own words, either during the conversation or at the end. Listen for feelings (I feel...), verbs (I'm experiencing...), meaning, themes and possibilities.

Notice

Be present in the moment and notice what's happening for you as you listen, what's happening for them and what's happening in the conversation. Based on what you notice, choose what to do (or not do) next

Ask a few great questions

Ask questions that will cause the person to think and reflect, not questions that will satisfy your own curiosity or need to know. Start with 'what' not 'why'.

Positive feedback

Say what impresses you about their approach, actions or attitude. Point out their strengths as a person and as a professional.

Share an alternative perspective

- Provide alternative perspectives: 'I can see another way of looking at that.'
- Provide reflective rather than evaluative feedback 'I notice...' or 'it seems to me that...' rather than 'I don't like the way...'
- Reframe unhelpful assumptions or interpretations: 'It could be fear, or it could be healthy caution'
- Share some of your own responses: 'As you say that I find myself thinking...'

Share your own stories or experiences as a tool for learning.

The IGROW model



A framework for mentoring and coaching sessions helping to work people through the issue, goal, reality, options and way forward. The focus is on getting individuals **to self-review and to arrive at their own conclusions.**

Issue

Ask them what they would like to discuss

Goal

Identify what they would like to achieve (you will probably need to come back to refining this goal)

- What do you want to achieve?
- What would you be saying to yourself if you achieved this?
- What would your future look like if this was achieved?
- How attractive is this goal to you?
- On a scale of one to ten, how important is this to you?



Reality

What's happening at the moment?

- What's happening now?
- Who is involved?
- What is their perception of the situation?
- What is stopping you from achieving what you want to?
- What holds you back?
- What else is relevant?
- What do you think is really going on?
- Given what we've discussed, are there any refinements you would make to your goal? (If yes, go back to Goal)

Options

What possibilities are open to them?

- What's one option? What else? What else? What else? (ask at least 3 times, followed by:
- Which of these options would you choose?
- What approaches have you seen used in the past?
- If our roles were reversed, what would you tell me to do?
- What would be the most outrageous thing you could do?
- If I gave you an injection of insight and courage, what would you do?

- What criteria will you use to judge the options?
- Which seems the best against those criteria?

Way forward – the actions

- What are the next steps?
- What might get in the way? How will you deal with that?
- Who or what do you need to support you?
- How will you enlist that support?
- What is it you are going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- How will I know that you've done it?

Wildcard questions

- When you hear yourself saying this, what are you thinking now?
- What does that mean to you?
- What is the question I need to ask you now?
- What needs to happen for you to do something about your situation?

Types of Mentoring

Mentoring may take several forms, some of the more recognised modes are:

Basic Mentoring

Offering of advice, information or guidance by a person with useful experience, skills or expertise for another individual's personal and professional development

Peer to Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring involves knowledge sharing and supportive relationships between people of the same level.

Group Mentoring

Involves a group who engage in mentoring relationships to achieve specific outcomes or goals.

Reverse Mentoring

A relationship in which a senior person seeks to gain business insights from a less experienced, often younger person.

Corporate Mentoring

A professional relationship in which an experienced person assists another in developing special skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced personnel's profession and personal growth. A synonym is business mentoring.

Speed Mentoring

The mentee presents a specific situation or set of questions to place before a panel of mentors to obtain their individual feedback and insights. The mentoring relationship is immediate and brief.

Sharing expertise without over-relying on 'telling'

What are the problems with advice (or giving people the answer) when you are in a mentoring role?

There are three key reasons why advice often fails to have the effect we are intending – to help the person solve their problem or learn how to do it themselves.

1. Our chances of having an idea that is really useful to the other person are slim.

We have a strong tendency to think everyone else's brain is exactly like ours. Our idea will most often reflect what we would need to do if it were our problem but may not be a good match for their skill set, personality, level of experience, or confidence.

2. People are far more likely to act on ideas they have come up with themselves.

This is especially the case for intelligent, independent thinkers. David Rock in his book 'Quiet Leadership', proposes that if you have exactly the idea someone needs to hear, don't tell it to them. You could be doing them a real disservice.

3. The dilemma someone first puts forward is rarely their main issue.

If they were clear on their central challenge or question within their dilemma, they would have probably solved it themselves already. It is important as a prerequisite to solving that you help them think things through.

The good news is, we can help people think better without relying on 'telling' if we slow down a little, hold back on the advice, and use techniques that enable people to come up with their own solutions themselves.

So, what do we do instead of 'telling'? There are four techniques we have found make the most difference when someone asks us for advice.

1. Permission getting

If we are going to move in to a 'teaching' mode, rather than a coaching mode the first thing we need to do is ask for permission. This prevents the person feeling defensive, or 'small' in the exchange.

'Would you like a few ideas from me?'

'I could maybe add a few points in here about that if you are interested?'



'There's a few things I have learnt about this over the years if you would like me to share them with you.'

2. **Assessing the nature of the problem**

The more technical someone's problem or question is, the more useful it might be to share expertise and information. If someone has forgotten the procedure to change the toner in the photocopier, a short demonstration or description is a useful response.

If the problem is complex, or contains people or process-related elements, advice is less likely to help. Things are not always as they seem and sometimes people need a good vent rather than advice.

3. **Make it a collaboration**

View every request for advice as an invitation to problem solve. If you want people to learn to do things on their own when you are not there, advice will be the most counterproductive approach. Use skilful questions and other tried and tested problem-solving techniques to facilitate their thinking and collaborate in a problem-solving process. Two heads are better than one.

4. **Timing**

Our ideas land on a much better place if people have had the chance to do their own thinking first. Be curious, discuss their thinking, their existing knowledge and at an appropriate point, ask permission to share some of your own ideas or experience.

Tool for sharing information and expertise

Use the tool below to share expertise without raising defences.

1. Find out exactly what the person wants to know.
Person: 'Can you tell me more about X or Y?'
Expert: 'So what exactly would you like to know about X or Y?'
2. Find out what they know already about this topic or question.
Expert: 'So what do you already know about X or Y?'
3. Then share your expertise (knowledge, information, experience) relevant to their topic or question, being guided by their responses to question 2.
Expert: 'There are three things that might be useful...'
4. Find out if that has been helpful and how they are applying this new information to their existing knowledge or original question.
Expert: 'So does that answer your question?' or 'Is any of that useful?'

Try this out next time your mentee asks you for information or wants to tap into your expertise or try the faster, corridor version:

Mentee: 'What do I do about?'

Mentor: 'So what have you thought about already?'

Effective questions

Clarifying questions

- In what way? What specifically...?
- How many...? What exactly...?
- Who exactly? How does...?
- When was this?
- What do you mean by...?
- Can you give an example?
- What makes you say that?
- How do you feel about that?

Questions not answers

Questions encourage and support individual ownership of performance, allow mentees to provide much of their own feedback, and enable self-monitoring and directing around growth and changes.

Closed questions

Use more ask than tell. Closed questions can be answered with the words 'yes' or 'no', or with a specific piece of information such as a number.

Examples

- Do you know how to do a job analysis?
- Did you manage that OK?
- Do you feel that you have got the hang of that now?
- Did the stakeholder give you the details you needed?

Open questions

When you are in a mentoring situation and want to invite someone to talk more, open questions (which cannot be answered 'yes', 'no', or with a specific number) will work better. Open questions usually begin with words like: What, How, Who, When, Which, Why, Where, or the phrase 'Tell me about'.

Examples

- What do you already know about job analysis?
- When is the best time for this?
- How did you feel about doing that?
- How did that go?
- What did the stakeholder say?

Testing or integrating questions

- So, what are the potential benefits of doing that?
- So, what advice would you give to yourself?
- So how do you think he'd react if you asked for his advice at the beginning of the project rather than halfway through? What's the worst thing that could happen?
- So, what might you do to get a different result? So, what would happen if...?

- Have you considered the option of...?
- How would it be to?

Confirming or checking questions

- So, are you saying that you want to...?
- So, we've agreed this is probably a case of...?
- So, the best option at this point looks like...?
- So, do you want to start with...?

Probing or exploring questions

- So why is this important?
- So, what's the most urgent thing for you right now?
- So, what do you need from this?
- How come...?
- What might have contributed to that? What specifically is the problem?
- How much of the problem could be due to? Are there other aspects to this problem? What have you done already about this? What's the worst thing about this for you?
- So, what has been contributing positively to this?

Prompts to 'get off the dance floor and on to the balcony'

Mentor the person, not the problem by using questions like:

- How does this relate to your development goals?
- So, what's the REAL challenge for YOU in this?
- What does this tell you about your strengths/weaknesses/career development aspirations?

Challenging questions

- What do you think about that now looking back?
- So, to what extent do you think your behaviour might have contributed to that?
- So how do you think your colleague may have felt about that?
- So, what went wrong do you think?
- So how come?
- So, what does that require you to step up to?
- So how was that for you and what did you learn about yourself?
- What's most important here?
- What professional/ethical issues does this raise for you?
- How would you have rather that turned out?
- So, what would you like to learn/explore about that?

The art of feedback

Feedback is letting people know how they are doing

- For the purpose of enabling them to improve their performance.
- Reinforcing desired behaviours.
- Communicating discrepancies between expectations, intentions and reality.
- Developing new capacities.



Useful:

- Be sure your intention is positive.
- Describe the behaviour objectively.
- Be specific when describing behaviour.
- Give it as soon as possible after the event.
- Let the person know what effect their behaviour has on you, others, or the situation.
- Only comment on behaviours that are within your agreement to do so.
- Only comment on behaviour that can be changed.
- Don't give too much feedback at once, it can be overwhelming.
- Give it at the appropriate time in an appropriate place.
- Feedback is most effective if:
 - o It has been asked for.
 - o It is given by someone you respect.
 - o It has a balance of positive and improvement feedback.Options and support for improvement are also offered.

Not Useful:

- Personal attacks, judgements and statements about the person rather than the behaviour.
- Put downs.
- Generalising – 'always', 'never', 'inconsiderate'.
- Given in front of others or in public places.
- Too infrequent e.g. only once a year.
- Aggressive or emotional outbursts.
- Incorrect or unfair feedback.
- No chance for the receiver to comment on the issues.
- Unexpected or information is a big surprise.
- Only negative with no information about how to improve.
- Embarrassing or humiliating encounters.
- Unsolicited feedback.
- Unsubstantiated feedback – can't give examples.

Feedback skills for mentors

The purpose of feedback is to enable mentees to improve their aspirations in relation to their own goals.

It can reinforce desired behaviour, highlight the need for changes in behaviour, and develop new capacities in a mentee.

In a mentoring relationship it is useful to encourage and guide the mentee to give or find their own feedback. There are times when the mentee may really want your opinion and input. Tips for this situation include the following.

Find out what the mentee specifically wants feedback on

'What exactly would you like my comments on?'

Use your feedback to inform not advise

'What exactly would you like my comments on?'

To aid reflection and help a mentee manage their feelings, check how the feedback matches the mentee's own thoughts, feelings, and perceptions

'Are any of the points I raised useful to you?'

'Does that fit your own experience? How so?'

Caution

An 'off-line' mentor is usually not in a place to directly observe a mentee's performance. Therefore, mentor feedback can only be in response to

- What the mentee tells the mentor
- The mentor's own direct experience of the mentee

If the mentee asks

'Do you think I'm right?'

'Do you think I am good at managing?'

Ask yourself

What might be the possible reasons for seeking feedback?

(Self-esteem, uncertainty, lack of feedback in the workplace...)

Have I got enough information to provide a useful response?

'From what I know of you I can only say....'

'I've only been working with you in this way for... so let's discuss how you can get the feedback you want on this.'

Feedback that makes a difference

Participatory feedback

Encourage the mentee to assess themselves. This promotes and enhances self-awareness.

'How do you think you are progressing with...?'

'What are your feelings with regards to...?'

Perception checking

To see how the feedback matches the mentee's own perceptions.

'I noticedI wondered.....'

For example, I noticed that you said three times she's a well-intentioned person and I wondered if that is what is stopping you from speaking to her?

Challenging statements

The intention is to help the mentee to be more aware of behaviour or values that actually (or potentially) contribute to the problem or issue as well as those that block their potential for achieving career goals.

Some useful phrases are:

'I have a concern that.....'

'I'm uneasy about.....'

'I'm wondering why.....'

'It seems to me that.....'

Example

Your mentee says he is going to give Peter, the team leader in another department, a piece of his mind.

Mentor: *'I'm concerned that if you do that it may damage your relationship with John (the team leader's manager) and have some negative consequences for the project.'*

Mentee: *'I don't care, he's had it coming and it's about time someone did something about it.'*

Mentor: *'Now I'm concerned that you are going to act without regard for the consequences. You did have a goal of developing your skills to have positive relationships with colleagues this year.'*



Confirmatory or positive feedback

This provides a positive learning environment of the mentee and to be effective needs to be genuine *and specific*.

'I like the way you...'

'I really appreciated it when you...'

'You have excellent skills in...'

Cause and effect feedback

'It seems to me that when you....., it causes.....'

'I wonder if you tried..... whether it might result in.....'

'Feedforward' instead of feedback

See more in the next section. Focuses on the future rather than the past and involves giving suggestions for the future that reinforce the possibility for change. People don't take it as personally and it is especially suited to skilled or successful people (see the section on feedforward near the end of this booklet for more information)

'What makes you effective is...'

'What would make you more effective is...'

Example

'What I believe is really helping is your ability to see the big picture. One suggestion I would have is to try running your ideas past other people and getting their feedback before coming to your final conclusions.'

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"Nāku te rourou, nāu te rourou ka ora ai te iwi."

