



Social Recovery
Reference Group
AUSTRALIA

Human and Social Recovery Professional Development Mentoring Program

Mentor Handbook

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Acknowledgement

This program is based upon the South Australia Department for Communities and Social Inclusion mentoring program and adapted for the Social Recovery Reference Group.

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1. Introduction

Mentoring is the support provided by one person to another to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, skills and analytical thinking. It is a development approach, which has proven to be a cost-effective and invaluable way to assist and grow employees.

The aim of the Human and Social Recovery Professional Mentoring Program (the 'Program') is to encourage those participating in recovery activities across Australia and New Zealand to be proactive in their approach to their own professional development in the area of human, social and community recovery. The Program relies upon member agencies of the Social Recovery Reference Group (SRRG) and human and social and community recovery leaders in Australian and New Zealand to support and share their knowledge and experience with others. All participants are invited to share their experiences and learn from each other, demonstrating behaviours that build trust and respect.

Mentoring agreements can be formal or informal:

- Formal agreements can be short or long term (1-12 months). In this case the relationship is formally established to assist individuals with professional development, whether it is specific skill development, career management or to broaden networks.
- Informal agreements are usually short-term (1-3 months). This type of mentoring ranges from a series of catch ups in a short period of time, spontaneous help from a mentor or attending mentoring events. There is usually no ongoing relationship.

The **mentoree** is the person who takes responsibility for their mentoring program by having a clear goal, a preparedness to manage their program and to be open and responsive to growth and challenges. The mentoree drives the mentoring agreement processes and actions.

The **mentor** in most cases will be a more experienced person who can challenge the person being mentored, pass on knowledge and experience, and assist to expand their networks. They may also be a peer. The mentor is also likely to benefit in terms of skills enhancement, increased organisational knowledge, positive recognition and renewed enthusiasm.

Mentoring handbooks have been developed for mentors and mentorees wanting to participate in the Program in a formal capacity. The purpose of this **Mentor Handbook** is to provide guidance in, and an understanding of, the principles behind the mentoring program and to clarify your role as the mentor.

A crucial component of a successful mentoring program is that the mentoree takes responsibility for their decisions and actions, and both parties understand the role of the mentor.

2.0 Making a difference

The decision to be a mentor can be a rewarding one. It is a positive contribution to progress an employee's professional and personal development with the aim to encourage a more productive working environment. Mentoring is about transferring useful information, competence and experience to mentorees, to build their confidence and aid their development. It is also an opportunity to enhance your own development, strengthen and extend your networks. The involvement of a mentor can make a big difference in the development of a colleague!

2.1 Understanding the mentor role

The roles of the mentor and mentoree are outlined in the Program Overview. The mentor's role is listed here as well. This is to:

- Maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the discussions in the partnership
- Co-design and commit to the mentoring agreement and plan
- Enable focus upon the goals of the partnership
- Provide honest and constructive feedback to the mentoree
- Challenge the mentoree and encourage critical and analytical thinking
- Avoid providing solutions but to ask reflective questions to enable the mentoree to consider alternative solutions to issues
- Share knowledge, skills and experience freely with the mentoree
- Provide guidance and recommend, and offer where possible, opportunities to practice through professional development experiences where possible.
- Provide feedback on the Program to the National Consultant

The mentor's role is **not** to provide solutions but to ask reflective questions to enable the person being mentored to consider alternative solutions to issues.

2.2 Acknowledgement of your contribution

Participation as a mentor is a recognised development activity therefore you should seek to align your mentoring contribution with your own professional development plan in your own organisation. In addition, while mentoring will only require a small amount of time and attention away from their direct responsibilities, it will also be necessary for mentors to have approval from their manager to participate in the Program.

2.3 Induction

The National Consultant, Disaster Recovery will provide an induction to the Program on behalf of the SRRG. The purpose of the induction is to outline the process, relationship boundaries and broaden your mentoring scope to equip you with tools to effectively challenge and question mentorees. Induction questions will be provided to provide a baseline for evaluation at the conclusion of the mentor-mentoree relationship. Once mentors have been inducted, their mentoring profiles will become available for distribution to prospective mentorees.

The involvement of a mentor can make a big difference in the development of a colleague.

3. Making the commitment

1. Discuss joining the mentoring program with your manager and make contact with Program contact person. If your manager approves your participation as a Mentor their approval will usually be sufficient to accept your application.

Being a mentor is an important role. The workload and time commitment required for mentoring, and your contribution to the organisation, should be incorporated in your own professional development plan.

2. Complete and submit the Mentor Registration Form, providing information relating to your position, skills, experience and your preferred mentoring categories (one or more). Broad mentoring categories have been identified within which you will need to list your specific areas of expertise, experience or knowledge that you can contribute in a mentoring situation:
3. Your induction will assist in identifying constructive mentoring tools available for your use.
4. The National Consultant, Disaster Recovery will complete a profile for distribution to potential mentorees. Your profile is developed from the answers you provide in the registration form. It must include a brief overview of your career, your role(s) in your organisation and your strengths in your chosen categories. You also need to provide a photo that accompanies the Mentor profile.
5. The mentoree is responsible for initiating and driving the mentoring relationship. Be mindful when contacted by a potential mentoree that they have been brave to initiate contact with a more experienced, and often more senior person to ask for their time and commitment. They have asked you because they respect your position, skills, experience and knowledge, and want to learn.
6. It is suggested that you take no more than two mentorees at any one time.

4. The successful mentoring program

The decision to participate in mentoring can be life changing if the mentor and mentoree come into the program positively; the mentoree with a willingness to take charge of their personal and professional growth and development, and the mentor with a readiness to challenge and grow.

4.1 The responsible relationship

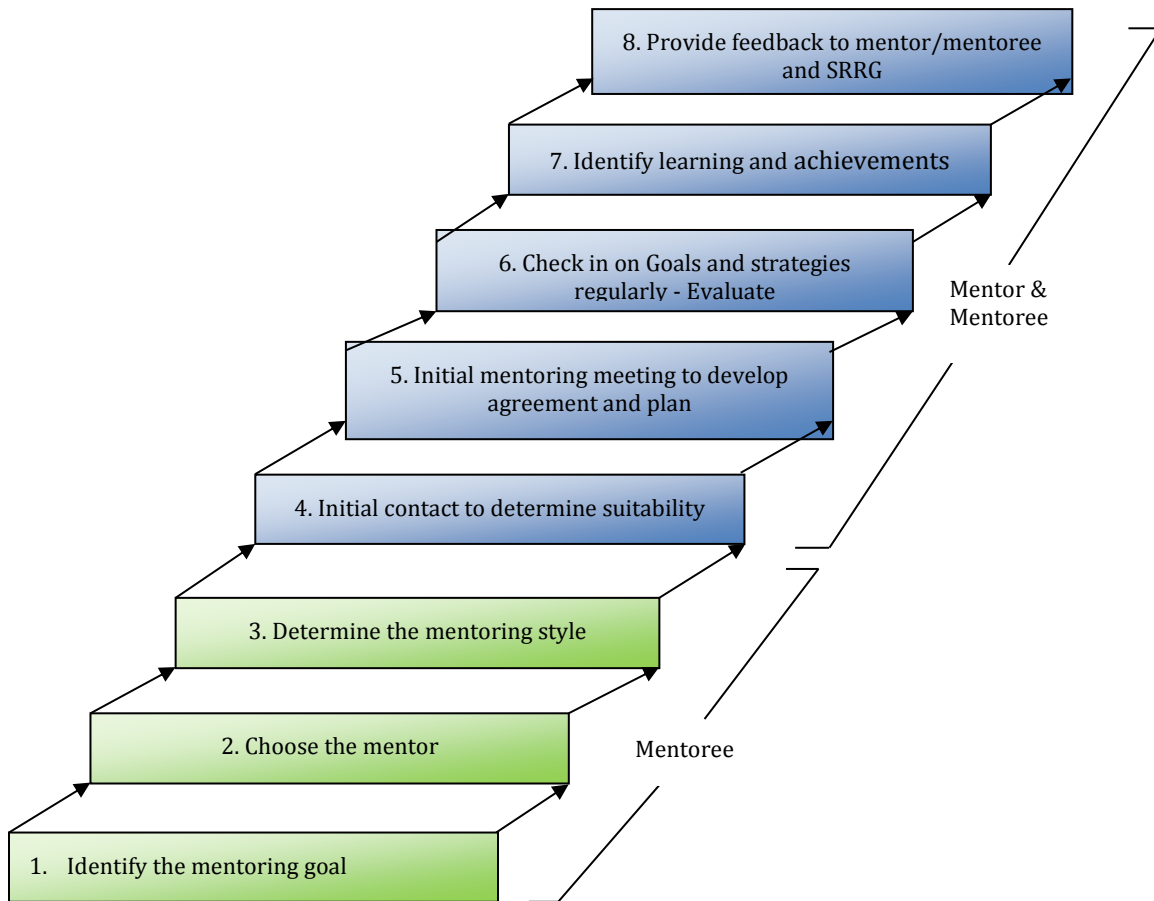
Success in the program will directly relate to the **mentoree** meeting their responsibilities to you as the mentor and to themselves. They must:

- demonstrate to you they have their manager's and National Consultant, Disaster Recovery's approval to participate in the program
- have clarity about their goals before starting the program
- take charge of their learning and progress and share information, ideas and solutions
- make the commitment and time to contact and meet with you
- negotiate an action plan at the initial mentoring meeting and set the agenda for all future sessions.

It will also be dependent on you, the **mentor**, having the capacity to:

- give constructive feedback, constructively challenge the mentoree, share expertise and provide guidance
- be positive, ethical, maintain confidentiality and uphold professional and personal conduct.

A successful mentoring program will follow these steps:



Note: The mentoree works through steps 1 to 3 prior to the initial mentor-mentoree session where their goal and preferred mentoring style will be discussed. You, the mentor, will be involved from step 4 onwards.

5. Identifying the mentoring goal

It is essential the mentoree is clear about the reason for embarking on the Program. Mentoring is an effective strategy that can contribute significantly to the career development of a mentoree. Mentoring also provides the same opportunity for professional growth to the mentor.

Possibilities include:

- Identify specific learning opportunities, development needs, a suitable course or being an observer in another jurisdiction
- Broadening networks
- Developing leadership skills
- Gaining knowledge and experience of recovery at a national level
- Experiencing recovery operations and planning
- Understanding governance structures in other jurisdictions
- Gaining knowledge and experience of community recovery

“Mentoring is an effective strategy that can contribute significantly to the career development of a mentoree”.

6. Choosing a mentor

6.1 Mentor capabilities

Mentorees will select their mentor based on the information provided by the National Consultant, Disaster Recovery and through Mentor Profiles, which outline their specific areas of expertise, experience or knowledge.

Ideally a mentoree should choose a mentor from outside their organisational reporting structure, in order to provide a broader scope of knowledge and deflect work specific tasks.

6.2 A difficult stage of the process

For a mentoree, selecting a mentor with the skills, knowledge and expertise that can support them in the achievement of their goal could be difficult.

Mentorees may be hesitant to ask experienced people to be mentors. They may think the relationship will not be reciprocal; or the possible mentor is too busy. Please be mindful of this if contacted by a mentoree and encourage their initiative. The benefits of mentoring, when done well are shared. Mentors often volunteer their services for personal growth and to make a positive contribution to their home organisation or the broader recovery sector.

The mentor's role is not to provide solutions. It is to challenge, ask reflective questions and encourage the mentoree to seek solutions.

7. Determining the mentoring style

There are several mentoring styles a mentoree could consider using in a short or long-term capacity. Short-term mentoring should generally last no more than three months. This can help where a particular area for development has been identified. Or where a specific skill development or sharing of targeted knowledge would be of benefit or where a person requires support with a short-term task, i.e. developing a resume. They can meet an immediate need in terms of: a boost to enthusiasm, ideas for further development or consolidating direction.

One-on-one formal mentoring, peer mentoring and online mentoring can be short or long-term and would depend entirely on the mentoree's goals and needs.

7.1 Short or long-term mentoring

One-on-one formal mentoring

This style of mentoring is aimed at transferring knowledge, empowering the mentoree and has a strong focus on formal planning and action. This is most likely suited to a person seeking higher level knowledge, skills and experience.

Peer Mentoring

This is where colleagues mentor one another with an emphasis on mutual support, cooperation in researching areas of common interest, setting goals and understanding timelines. This is mostly likely suited to senior managers and executives exploring what occur in other jurisdictions.

Online Mentoring

Online mentoring is most likely to succeed where the mentor and mentoree know each other, or who have had one intensive face-to-face meeting, and could consider conducting their mentoring relationship at a distance. This may suit many mentorees and, without detracting from face to face visits to observe, learn and interact, may be commonly used to conduct a mentoring or peer support partnership across Australia and New Zealand.

7.2 Determine the mentoring style and timeframe

The mentoree must consider the mentoring style and the timeframe most useful in achieving their goal. They must discuss this with you at the initial session. They will be mindful their preferred style may not fit with your commitments and flexibility is paramount.

8. Your mentoring agreement

8.1 The initial session

The purpose of the initial session is to get to know your mentoree, and to discuss and agree to the mentoring commitment.

8.2 Build rapport

It is essential rapport is established in the mentoring relationship. The mentoree will have allowed time at the beginning of the initial meeting for you to get to know each other. List some questions you would like to ask of your mentoree to get to know them, such as:

- their job and what it involves
- current interests
- career or professional aspirations

8.3 Be clear about what you can offer

Prior to the initial meeting the mentoree will have forwarded their goals and possible strategies to you for consideration. Be prepared to help them clarify their thinking and what support you can provide in the mentoring relationship.

8.4 Develop an agreement

The mentoree will have completed Part 1 of their Mentoree Action Plan prior to the initial meeting. Discuss this with the mentoree to understand their commitment to the program. Work with the mentoree to complete parts 2, 3 and 4 of the action plan to negotiate your mentoring relationship. This plan confirms your mentoring agreement and, in this discussion you should take the time to consider the following points:

1. establish the mentoree has their manager's approval to participate in the program
2. help to clarify the mentoree's goal
3. confirm strategies to achieve their goal

4. be clear about what you can offer
5. agree to the timeframe the mentoring relationship will need
6. identify the mentoring style you both feel would best suit
7. clarify how progress will be measured.

Part 5 of the action plan should be used if the goal or strategies change at any stage in the mentoring process.

8.5 Set ground rules

Completing the action plan will consolidate the mentoring agreement and confirm:

- a timeframe for the mentoring relationship; which will depend on the mentoree's goal but should not exceed a 12 month period
- the frequency, structure and length of meetings. Establish a mutually agreed schedule for mentoring sessions, including how much notice each of you need if a session needs to be postponed.
- how to best communicate, i.e. email, telephone, face-to-face
- roles and responsibilities, i.e. how you will work together including spoken commitment to confidentiality, agreement to two-way communication and feedback
- how you will monitor the relationship, i.e. timeframe, task completion, reviewing goals
- an 'out' clause. When commencing a mentoring relationship it is important to discuss and agree on when and how to end the mentoring relationship. The relationship should end on good terms whether it is a planned or unplanned ending. If the mentoring relationship is not effective or there is no change in circumstances, then it is appropriate for the mentoree or mentor to end the mentoring relationship amicably.

Regularly review the agreement throughout the relationship.

9. Making partnership work: the effective mentor

9.1 Have the desire to help and be available

Be willing to spend time contributing to the relationship, considering options and direction for the mentoree, and being objective throughout the program.

9.2 Be prepared for each session

Model professionalism in meetings by being prompt, prepared and maintaining a positive focus. Come to the conversation with questions and ideas in relation to the agenda for each meeting.

9.3 Stick to the plan

To keep the mentoring relationship on track, ensure regular meetings are set as part of the mentoring agreement, be honest and open, and avoid quick fixes. Cooperate in scheduling sessions immediately and build in enough time around them to prepare.

Actively review the mentoree's goal and progress at the beginning of each meeting.

9.4 Be motivated to continue developing and growing

Your own development never stops. To help others develop, you must value your own growth too. Many mentors say mentoring helps them with their own personal development and skills.

9.5 Have confidence and an assured manner

This does not mean overconfidence! Have the ability to critique and challenge mentorees in a way that's non-threatening and helps them to look at a situation from a new perspective. Treat the mentoring relationship with the respect it deserves. Focus on the mentoree's goals and use the powerful skills of smart questioning, active listening and value-added feedback to achieve the best outcomes.

9.6 Ask the right questions

The best mentors ask questions that make the mentoree do the thinking. However, this is not as easy as it sounds. A simple guide is to think of what you want to tell the mentoree and find a question that will help the mentoree come to the same conclusion. To do this, try asking open questions that cannot be answered with just yes or no, or ask more direct questions that offer several answer options. You can then ask the mentoree why they chose that particular answer.

9.7 Listen actively

Be careful to process everything the mentoree is saying. Watch body language, maintain eye contact and understand which topics are difficult for the mentoree to discuss. Showing someone that you are listening is a valuable leadership trait. It shows that you value what the person is saying and that you will not interrupt them. This requires patience and a willingness to delay judgment. Recognise the challenge of demonstrating your active listening when using telecommunications for meetings.

9.8 Provide feedback

Do this in a way that accurately and objectively summarises what you've heard, and also interprets discussion in a way that adds value for the mentoree. Use feedback to show you understand what the mentoree has been communicating and offer suggestions to assist. This is the key to helping the mentoree see a situation from another perspective.

9.9 Get the most out of the relationship

When the mentoring relationship formalises and begins to take on importance for both individuals, relationship norms will develop. Both parties will learn how to communicate effectively.

From the mentor's perspective, the success of a mentoring relationship is increased when the following elements exist:

- The mentor is committed to meeting regularly and supports the mentoree to build and maintain the mentoring agreement and relationship
- The mentor actively listens and ensures there is open and authentic two-way communication
- The mentor challenges mentorees, providing constructive feedback and advice, and co-designing tasks and progress monitoring

- The mentor understands, commits to and abides by confidentiality in regard to the mentoring agreement and mentoring discussions.

10. Evaluate regularly

10.1 Evaluate the mentoring relationship

The success of the relationship often hinges on the ability to give and receive feedback. It is important to briefly review or check in on the mentoring relationship at the end of each mentoring meeting. *How are we both experiencing this in relation to our hopes and expectations?*

10.2 Review mentoring goals

Regularly review mentoring goals. Spend time discussing goals and measuring achievements. It may be the strategies or goal initially identified will need to be modified or the timeframe reassessed. There is value in recognising the need for adjustments to the plan and being prepared to make them. Use part 5 of the Mentoring Agreement to record the adjustments.

10.3 Achieving the goal

Once the mentoring goal has been met then it is time to end the mentoring agreement and relationship.

11. Identify learning and achievements

All mentoring relationships end. This final phase of the mentoring relationship offers an opportunity for personal growth and reflection regardless of whether the relationship has been effective or not. To end the relationship (see Part 4 of the Mentoring Agreement and Action Plan in the Program Overview) the mentoree should set up a meeting specifically to discuss their learning and achievements.

It would also be useful to reflect on and discuss (as appropriate) the questions in the table below. These do not have to be shared beyond the mentor and mentoree and it's critical to discuss if you will share this information with your managers, or with the SRRG mentoring program coordinator.

What did you, as the mentor, learn and achieve?	
What did you achieve together?	
What you would do differently next time?	
What did you value in this mentoring relationship?	
What was the reason for ending the relationship (if ending early)?	

Given what you've learnt about the mentoree's hopes and aspirations, what might you suggest to the mentoree as next stages of learning and development?	
Thoughts on future steps for you...	

It is also important to celebrate what you achieved together and thank the mentoree for the opportunity to be involved in their development.

12. Provide feedback

Feedback is a valuable mechanism for individuals and organisations.

12.1 To your mentoree

A successful mentoring relationship will have enabled the exchange of formal and informal feedback between the mentor and mentoree throughout the relationship. You may wish to formalise this with a letter or email to your mentoree, highlighting their achievements and contribution to your development at the end of the relationship.

12.2 To the Social Recovery Reference Group

Feedback also provides the SRRG with critical information for modifying or enhancing the Program. To assist in continuous improvement of the mentoring program please complete the Mentor Feedback Survey.