



Social Recovery  
Reference Group  
AUSTRALIA

# Human and Social Recovery Professional Development Mentoring Program

## Mentoree Handbook

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# Contact Information

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Social Recovery Reference Group

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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 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. 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 **Mentoree Handbook** is to provide guidance in, and an understanding of, the principles behind the mentoring program and to clarify your role as the mentor.

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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.

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## 2. The responsible mentoree

The decision to be mentored can be life changing if you come into the program positively and with a preparedness to take charge of your personal and professional growth and development.

## 2.1 Manager approval

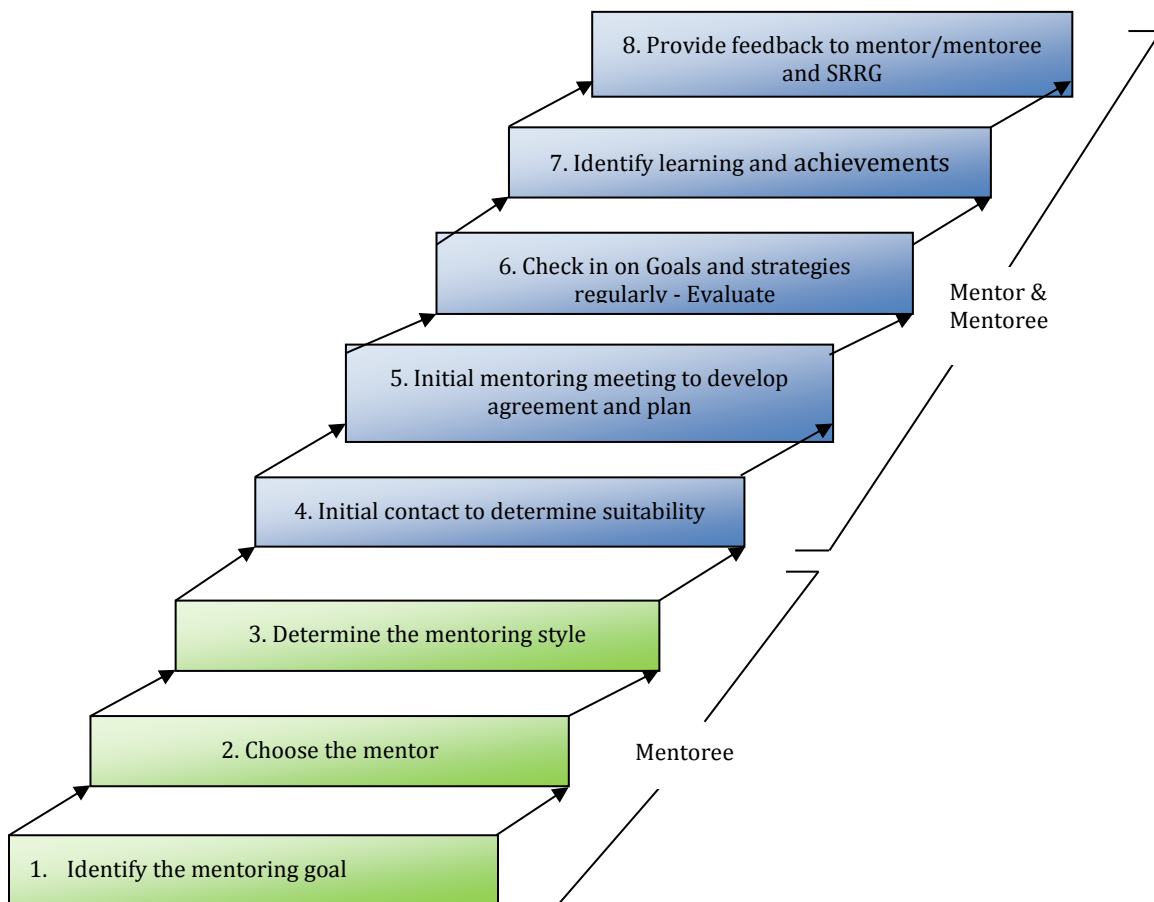
Participating in the mentoring process is a recognised development activity. It is important that you have a conversation with your manager for approval to participate in the program. The conversation should include an understanding of your goals and approach to the program.

## 2.2 Making your program successful

Your success in the program will directly relate to the commitment you have made to your mentor and yourself to:

- be clear about your goals before embarking on the program
- take charge of your learning and be connected in sharing information, ideas and solutions
- be respectful and make the commitment and time to contact and meet with your mentor. Negotiate an action plan at the initial meeting and set the agenda for all mentoring meetings
- receive and respond to feedback constructively, being brave in tackling tough issues and having the courage to share your views and try new ways of working
- be ethical in your attitudes and actions, maintaining confidentiality and upholding professional and personal conduct.

A successful mentoring program will follow these steps:



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

## 3. Identify your mentoring goal

It is important to be clear about the reason for embarking on the mentoring 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

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

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## 4. Choose your mentor

Mentors have volunteered to offer their time to share their knowledge and skills. The profile of each mentor will be held on SRRG files by the National Consultant Disaster Recovery. Each Mentor will list in their profile their specific areas of expertise, experience or knowledge they can impart within the broad categories listed on the application form. The following needs to be considered in the choice of mentor:

### 4.1 Mentor capabilities

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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 of the mentor.

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.

The role of the mentor 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.

## 4.2 Understand YOUR role

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The role of the mentoree is to:

1. Actively drive the Mentoring Agreement and Action Plan (See Program Overview) agreed with the mentor, through commitment to the agreement and plan, all meetings and setting the agenda for all mentoring sessions
2. Be clear about the goal and objectives
3. Engage willingly with the mentor to seek out new knowledge, skills and experiences, remaining open to alternative solutions to issues
4. Participate with the approval and support agreed by their home organization and undertake to share and implement any new learning for their home organisation
5. Embrace opportunities to undertake new experiences
6. Behave in a manner consistent with their home organisation's Code of Conduct

## 4.3 How will you choose?

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Select an available mentor with the skills, knowledge and expertise that can support you in the achievement of your mentoring goal.

Often people are hesitant to ask high performing people to be mentors because they are concerned the relationship will not be reciprocal or think the person is too busy. Be mindful the benefits of mentoring, when done well, are shared; mentors have volunteered their services for personal growth and to make a positive contribution to the sector. A suggested approach could be:

*Dear (mentor's name)*

*My name is (your name). I have been working at (organisation) for (how long) as (your role) in the (division or unit). As part of my personal and professional development I have identified the value in participating in the Recovery Professional Development Program. Based on my mentoring goal to (brief goal) I feel you have the relevant skills and experience to mentor me in this area.*

*Please reply via email if you are available and interested in mentoring me and I will arrange a time for us to meet.*

*Regards  
(your name)*

## 4.4 Get the most out of your mentor

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**The success of a mentoring partnership is greatly increased when the following elements exist:**

- Mentorees are committed to meeting regularly and take the initiative to arrange meetings with their mentor
- Mentorees establish and encourage open and authentic two-way communication
- Mentorees respond to constructive feedback and advice and follow up on agreed tasks
- Mentorees understand and abide by confidentiality within the partnership



Detailed tips are provided in Form 5: A guide for making the partnership work in the Program Overview.

## 5. Determine your 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. exploring models for Personal Hardship and Distress payment systems, case management, exploring relief and recovery centre management experience. 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.

### 5.1 Short or long-term mentoring

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#### 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 between Australia and New Zealand.

### 5.2 Consider your style and timeframe

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Consider the mentoring style and timeframe in which your mentoring goals could be achieved to discuss with your mentor at the initial session.

## 6. Develop an action plan and mentoring agreement

### 6.1 The Action Plan

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An action plan will be essential to the success of the mentoring relationship. A Mentoree Action Plan template is available from the Program overview document. This has been created as a guide for you to develop your plan and consolidate the mentoring agreement with your mentor.

Part 1 requires your personal goals and commitment to the process to be identified prior to the initial mentor-mentoree meeting. The remaining sections are to be completed with your mentor. This forms your relationship agreement.

## 6.2 Prior to the initial meeting

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You, as the mentoree, are responsible for driving the mentoring relationship. In preparation for the initial meeting:

- outline your goals and forward them to your mentor for consideration prior to the meeting
- think about the mentoring style that will best suit your situation. And be ready to discuss this with your mentor. Be flexible as your mentor's situation requires consideration
- develop 3 – 5 possible strategies for achieving your goals
- confirm the first meeting date, time and venue with your chosen mentor
- be prepared to develop the agreement at the first meeting
- list questions you would like to ask your mentor to get to know them.

## 6.3 The initial meeting

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The purpose of the initial meeting is to get to know your mentor and to discuss and agree to the mentoring commitment.

Take the opportunity to get to know your mentor; ask questions and share information. Share your hopes, fears, ideas, achievements and goals openly. Your mentor will be able to get some insights into your perspective. Establishing rapport with your mentor is essential to the ongoing relationship.

## 6.4 Complete the Action Plan

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Work with your mentor to complete parts 2, 3 and 4 of the action plan. This will formally establish your **mentoring agreement** which should include:

1. how you came to identify mentoring as your professional development strategy; confirmation of your manager's approval to undertake mentoring. Your manager must sign part 1 of your action plan.
2. your goals and initial strategies
3. details of the mentoring style you both feel would best suit the situation
4. a timeframe for the mentoring relationship. This will depend on your goal and may change over time. Ideally the relationship should not exceed a 12 month period.
5. 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.
6. how to best communicate, i.e. email, telephone, face-to-face
7. roles and responsibilities, i.e. how you will work together including spoken commitment to confidentiality, agreement to two-way communication and feedback
8. how you will monitor the relationship, e.g. timeframe, task completion, reviewing goals
9. how progress will be measured, i.e. how will you know the goal has been achieved?

10. an 'out' clause. When commencing a mentoring relationship it is important to discuss and agree on when and how to end the mentoring relationship. It should be agreed that the relationship will 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.

## 6.5 Changing your goals or strategies

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

# 7. Making the partnership work: Your learning journey

The following tips will provide a guide for conducting meetings and ensuring your learning goal is met. Refresh on these tips prior to and after each meeting:

## 7.1 Be prepared for each session

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Model professionalism at your mentoring meetings by being prompt, well prepared and maintain professional courtesy and respect.

Preparation means coming to the conversation with a good idea of what you would like to focus on during the time together.

Be punctual and ready to give a brief update on recent progress and developments, review the goals and propose an agenda for the meeting; emailing topics to the mentor ahead of time can be valuable!

A mentoring learning journal specifically for this program is a good tool to capture your learning journey.

## 7.2 Stick to the plan

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Schedule your mentoring sessions immediately and build in enough time around the sessions to prepare. Your mentor is a volunteer whose extra time is scarce. By establishing a time commitment and ensuring conversations start and end on time, you will demonstrate respect and responsibility to your mentor and a commitment to your mentoring program.

Review your goals at the beginning of each meeting.

## 7.3 Ask direct questions

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Be clear about what you most want to know. Since the mentoree is the one who establishes the agenda for the conversation, you are in a position to set this up in a way that provides the most relevance and value for you.

Let your mentor know what is foremost on your mind and what would be helpful to talk about. If the conversation strays, just prompt the mentor to return to the original topic. You are responsible for ensuring that the conversation meets your needs.

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## 7.4 Listen with an open mind

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Challenge yourself to find the connection from the advice or perspective you are hearing. Aim to learn something new as a result of each meeting.

## 7.5 Focus on the relationship

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Your mentor's role is not to get another job for you or to solve possible issues in your workplace. Be realistic in your expectations and focus on building a relationship that enables the challenge for growth and development.

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.

## 7.6 Ask questions

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The most enjoyable mentoring sessions flow with a natural back-and-forth dialogue. Relax and enjoy getting to know one another. Don't be shy about asking questions, curiosity is a good trait. Simple questions can give you good information: "what was that like for you?" or "how did you feel at the time?" Ask a question at the start of each session to get to know your mentor's experiences, such as, "how has your career path evolved?" or "in hindsight, is there anything you would have done differently?"

## 7.7 Take notes

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It is difficult to remember key points and commitments after a meeting. Keep a notebook and jot down ideas and insights during sessions and in between sessions to discuss at the next one. Capture the commitments you and your mentor make to each other so you are able to follow up appropriately. Set aside 15 minutes post meeting to reflect on what you learned and what actions you might take to follow up.

## 7.8 Provide context and brief updates to help your mentor to understand you

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At the beginning of each session, provide a brief update on progress since the last conversation. This may require 10 minutes to reflect on the notes from the previous meeting and your progress to date.

## 7.9 Respect your mentor's boundaries

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The mentor's role is to support your development through regular conversation. Outside of the session, most mentors have limited time to engage with mentorees. Communicate respectfully with the mentor, and be careful not to inundate them with emails or phone calls outside of the session. Respect the time boundaries of the session and do all you can to end at the agreed time.

## 7.10 Follow up on agreements

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If you have made a commitment to take a step as a result of the mentoring session, make sure you do so. It is discouraging for the mentor if you have made commitments you then fail to act on.

You can also help the mentor to keep their commitment by sending a brief thank you note after a session that also lists any agreed actions.

## 7.11 Be prepared to learn from a range of people

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In the past, people believed that a strong personal connection was essential to a mentoring relationship. However, mentoring serves many purposes and does not necessarily require a deep

personal connection. Mentoring may be short-term, specific to a situation, focused on a particular area of development, or may even turn out to be a life-long conversation! By recognising you can benefit from a variety of perspectives and styles – even those quite different from your own – you will open yourself up to new ideas, valuable information, and a wide range of perspectives. You and your mentor don't have to have everything in common to have a productive exchange.

### 7.12 Acknowledgement

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After each session, express appreciation by identifying specific insights or examples you feel helped you. This information will let your mentor know more about what you value and guide them in future sessions to ensure they make a difference.

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

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## 8. Evaluate regularly

### 8.1 Evaluate the mentoring relationship

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It is important to review your relationship at the end of every mentoring meeting. The success of the relationship often hinges on the ability to give and receive feedback.

### 8.2 Review your mentoring goals

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It is also important to regularly review your goal. Spend time discussing and measuring your goal and achievements. It may be your initial goals and strategies 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 your relationship agreement to make the adjustments.

### 8.3 Achieving the goal

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

## 9. Identify learning and achievements

When you start to display autonomy and independence and feel confident in achieving your goals, you will rely less on the mentoring relationship. You will either be near the end date of the relationship agreement or you may wish to bring the end date forward and think about ending the relationship.

All mentoring relationships need to come to an end at some point and usually within 12 months. 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, regardless of its success or not (see part 4 of the action plan), you should set up a meeting specifically for this purpose and discuss the following:

What did you, as the mentoree, 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)?	
Are there other mentoring goals you have identified through this involvement?	
What do you see as your next stages of learning and development?	

It is important to celebrate what you achieved together and thank the mentor for their time and insight.

## 10. Provide feedback

Feedback is a valuable mechanism for individuals and organisations.

### To your mentor

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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, at the end of your mentoring relationship, with a letter or email to your mentor, highlighting the contribution they made to your development and what you particularly valued.

### To the Social Recovery Reference Group

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Feedback also provides the SRRG with critical information for modifying or enhancing the Program. To assist us in continuously improving the mentoring program please complete the Mentoree Feedback Survey.