Learning Guide

Peer mentoring

28991 Provide peer mentoring in a health or wellbeing setting

Name:

Workplace:

Issue 1.0
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Introduction

In this learning guide you will learn about peer mentoring in a health and wellbeing setting – what it is, how it works and the benefits of this process.

How to use your learning guide

This guide supports your learning and prepares you for the unit standard assessment. The activities and scenarios should be used as a general guide for learning.

This guide relates to the following unit standard:

- 28991 Provide peer mentoring in a health or wellbeing setting (level 4, 6 credits).

This guide is yours to keep. Make it your own by writing notes that help you remember things, or where you need to find more information.

Follow the tips in the notes column.

You may use highlight pens to mark important information and ideas, and think about how this information applies to your work.

You might find it helpful to talk to colleagues or your supervisor.

Finish this learning guide before you start on the assessment.

What you will learn

This topic will help you to:

- understand what peer mentoring is.
- understand the role of a peer mentor and the different ways in which peer mentoring can take place.
- understand how the peer mentoring process works.
- learn what qualities make a good peer mentor.
- learn what makes a good peer mentee.
- see peer mentoring as an ongoing process.
What is peer mentoring?

Peer mentoring is the opportunity to gain insight or expand your knowledge and experiences through mentorship. Mentorship is a professional development relationship in which a person with more experience in a particular area (the peer mentor) provides information, support and encouragement to assist a less experienced person (the peer mentee). The purpose is to acknowledge the peer mentee’s potential and develop or improve their skillset within a shared area of interest. Mentoring can be formal or informal.

The mentor and mentee relationship

Peer mentoring is not simply a case of the peer mentor telling the peer mentee what to do. Rather, peer mentoring is an ongoing, reciprocal relationship in which both people in the partnership have an opportunity for professional growth and development.

Mentoring examples

Mentoring goes all the way back to Greek mythology. The word ‘mentor’ comes from a character in Homer’s Odyssey, written in the 8th century BC. Mentors appear throughout history and legend – Alexander the Great had Aristotle and King Arthur had Merlin. Mentoring was widely practised in medieval monasteries and was the basis of the apprentice system in pre-industrial England.

The basic principle has always remained the same: a more experienced person guiding and assisting a less experienced person.

If you reflect on your own life, perhaps your experiences at school and work, you may remember times when you have been mentored or have acted as a mentor.

Write

Can you think of someone you consider to be a mentor in your workplace? What did they do to make you think about them that way?

Do it

Reflect on your own past mentoring experiences, either as a mentor or mentee.

Have there been times when you have supported other people to learn? Write these down and explain how they are examples of mentoring.
Benefits of peer mentoring

The benefits of peer mentoring are twofold as it can be a reciprocal way of learning and growing for both participants. It gives both the mentor and the mentee the opportunity to develop transferable skills.

Advantages for the peer mentee

Through the mentoring process the peer mentee will:

• gain practical advice, encouragement and support.
• learn from the experiences of others.
• gain in confidence.
• become more empowered to make decisions.
• strengthen their communication, study and personal skills.
• develop strategies for dealing with both personal and work issues.
• identify goals and establish a sense of direction.

Advantages for the peer mentor

The mentoring process will help the peer mentor to:

• improve their communication and personal skills.
• develop leadership and management qualities.
• reinforce their study skills and knowledge.
• increase in confidence and motivation.
• enhance their curriculum vitae (CV).
• gain recognition for their skills and experience.
• benefit from a sense of fulfilment and personal growth.

Next we will look a little more closely at the role of a peer mentor in a health or wellbeing setting and the different ways in which peer mentoring can take place.
## Myths about mentoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Fact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring is one-way</td>
<td>No. Both people can learn from each other’s strengths and experiences. A good mentoring partnership is always a two-way relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring only happens face-to-face</td>
<td>No. While face-to-face mentoring might be the preferred way, there are always other ways to engage in mentoring such as email, phone or video link.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring is time consuming</td>
<td>No. The way the relationship works is up to the participants. It doesn’t have to be time consuming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors are older</td>
<td>No. It is not the age of the mentor that matters, but their skills, knowledge and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring relationships are complicated</td>
<td>No, not if they are done right! That’s what this learning guide is all about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You only need one mentor</td>
<td>No. Because different mentors bring different knowledge to the mentee; having more than one mentor can increase learning experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring doesn’t really achieve anything useful</td>
<td>No, absolutely not! The success of mentoring has been proved time and time again over hundreds of years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Types of mentoring

Peer mentoring in the workplace can be:

• formal or informal.
• direct or indirect.
• in individual or group settings.
• short term or long term.
• provided by a team leader or a coach.
• any relationship that meets the needs of the people involved.

There are several different ways in which peer mentoring can take place. Each serves a different purpose in the relationship between peer mentor and peer mentee.

Example:

A short-term, formal peer mentoring relationship can be effective for meeting a specific objective that won’t take a long time to achieve – for example, to learn how to use a particular software application.

A long-term, formal peer mentoring relationship might be more suitable for preparing someone to take over another person’s role.

What approach your organisation takes to peer mentoring and how it contributes to the ability of your workplace to deliver services should be defined in its policies and procedures. We recommend that you check these out as you need to be familiar with this information if you are likely to become a peer mentor.

Do it

What do your workplace policies and procedures say about mentoring? If you are a peer mentor or looking to become one, you need to be familiar with this information.
Informal and formal mentoring

Informal peer mentoring happens naturally in many workplaces. Formal peer mentoring programmes are usually developed by the organisation and typically have very structured guidelines.

Informal mentoring

Either the mentor or the mentee can initiate informal peer mentoring. This type of mentoring may last a long time and may involve an emotional connection rather than being strictly business related.

Usually, informal peer mentoring relationships begin when two people discover that they have shared interests. In a workplace situation the mentoring relationship may start simply by one person asking questions of another who has been with the organisation for a long time. A relationship may develop in which one person (the peer mentor) listens to and advises the other (the peer mentee). An informal peer mentor can be almost anyone and does not necessarily have to be a work colleague.

These informal relationships can last a lifetime. However, the success of the relationship can be limited by the emotional involvement between mentor and mentee, which can lead to unrealistic expectations or a tendency for the mentor to direct rather than guide the mentee. Whether or not this happens depends very much on how the relationship between the two individuals is structured and managed over time.

Formal

Formal peer mentoring is set up by an organisation and is bound by a specific structure and guidelines not found in informal peer mentoring. The focus of the peer mentoring programme is usually based on a specific organisational objective – for example, the need to upskill staff or transfer technical knowledge. The relationship usually has a time limit and meetings are planned rather than spontaneous.

The organisation usually selects the peer mentor on the basis of the mentor’s and mentee’s fit and suitability for the specific objective, rather than on their shared interests. For this reason, formal peer mentoring relationships may lack the ‘spark’ or ‘chemistry’ of an informal relationship. However, formal peer mentoring programmes are more focused and task-specific than informal peer mentoring, and are designed to benefit the organisation as much as the individual.
**Question**

What are the major differences between formal and informal peer mentoring?

Draw lines to match each description of informal peer mentoring (left column) below with the best description of how formal peer mentoring differs (right column). The first one is done for you as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal peer mentoring</th>
<th>Formal peer mentoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can be initiated without organisational support</td>
<td>Relationship often has a high organisational visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually established by similar viewpoints and attraction</td>
<td>Peer mentor and peer mentee are usually selected by someone else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer mentor and peer mentee select each other</td>
<td>Established by the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial contact is positive</td>
<td>Always initiated by the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship often has a low organisational visibility</td>
<td>There are specific goals and outcomes set by the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings are unstructured and take place when needed</td>
<td>Usually short term with a predetermined endpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There may be no specific goals or outcomes</td>
<td>Meetings are structured and timetabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can last a long time</td>
<td>Initial contact can be apprehensive and awkward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you look through these differences, you might come to the correct conclusion that the best peer mentoring option is often one that combines both the formal and informal approaches.
Direct and indirect mentoring

Direct (face-to-face)

Direct mentoring is the traditional way for peer mentoring to take place in both formal and informal contexts. In an informal situation, the strength of the relationship and shared interests mean that mentoring is most likely to be direct.

Direct peer mentoring involves one-on-one communication between the mentor and the mentee, allowing them to form a stronger bond because of the personal nature of the meeting. It also means that they can use non-verbal communication and gain immediate responses to questions, rather than waiting for an email or memo. It is much easier to establish a two-way learning process when people meet face to face.

However, meetings can be difficult to organise if schedules clash or the participants are bound by their locations. For example, the ideal peer mentor might work in a different city or even a different country. Situations like this may also restrict the mentee to only one mentor, which may limit the success of the process.

Face-to-face, informal peer mentoring meetings may be far easier to organise, as the people involved may already know and feel comfortable with one another, whereas the relationship of formal face-to-face peer mentoring may need to be worked on to be successful.

Indirect mentoring

Indirect peer mentoring relies on technology, whether it is a phone call, email, text, video link or skype call. The indirect approach might not suit everyone, but it does have some advantages in that it can reach people who might be in a different location. It can also avoid the difficulties of arranging meeting times, and more information can often be shared in this way than in a face-to-face meeting.

However, there are some significant disadvantages. Electronic communications generally lack the cues associated with face-to-face communication, such as facial expressions, posture and other non-verbal forms of communication. This takes away the immediacy of the face-to-face meeting and may negatively impact on both communication and learning.
Group settings

Some peer mentoring occurs in groups, with one or more mentors present. This approach is mostly found in formal peer mentoring, although it can happen informally, too – for example, in a team meeting. One benefit of group mentoring is the opportunity for a mentor to transfer a large amount of knowledge to several mentees at once by means of a group discussion. However, this assumes that all the mentees have similar needs.

Some mentees might be comfortable with this approach, particularly as it allows the sharing of multiple viewpoints. It also caters for mentees who might be uncomfortable with a one-on-one relationship. However, the closeness of the one-to-one relationship and the bonds that are formed through the personal approach are lost in a group setting. Confidentiality is also lost and, of course, some people do not enjoy group learning and sharing.
Short-term and long-term peer mentoring

Short-term mentoring
Short-term peer mentoring is an effective approach when there is a need to meet a particular objective that won’t take a long time to achieve.

Some examples include learning:
- how to use a particular system or software application.
- how things work in the organisation during job induction.
- practical tasks, such as how to shower a person correctly.

Long-term mentoring
A longer-term peer mentoring relationship is required in situations where the objective will take longer to achieve, as in succession planning for a future role, where it may take many months or even years for the mentee to acquire all the skills required. Another example is when the mentee is undertaking long-term formal study, such as a degree or diploma.

Peer mentoring by team leader or coach

Team leader
A person’s mentor will often be the team leader of the mentee’s workplace team. If you refer back to the definition of ‘peer’ at the beginning of this learning guide, it makes sense that a person’s team leader, who has a similar role but more skills, knowledge and experience, might also be an ideal person to act as peer mentor.

Coach
Sometimes the peer mentor will not be part of the mentee’s work team but rather have an external coaching role. This approach may be used in situations where the mentee is required to learn a whole new set of skills that no one in their work team has yet acquired or when the team leader is not free to take on a mentoring role.
Example in your workplace

Now let’s put what you have learned so far into the context of your own workplace. Think about the following questions.

Question

How would you explain peer mentoring in your workplace?

How does peer mentoring contribute to the organisation’s ability to deliver services?

You may find it useful to refer to your organisation’s policies and procedures to help you answer this question, as every workplace can differ.

Remember that the peer mentor role may include the following types of peer mentoring:

- formal and informal peer mentoring.
- direct and indirect peer mentoring.
- individual and group peer mentoring.
- short- and long-term peer mentoring.
- team leader and coach peer mentoring.

You may wish to talk about these in your explanation:
What makes a good peer mentor?

“A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you.”

Bob Proctor, coach, mentor and author

A good peer mentor is someone who is first and foremost a good role model. If they do not set a good example, then the peer mentoring process is probably doomed to failure.

However, being a good role model is only part of what makes a good peer mentor – they need a range of skills and knowledge to make the mentoring process a success.

Skills and knowledge

What skills and knowledge does an effective peer mentor need?

Here are some ideas about what makes a peer mentor effective. However, the exact qualities required will depend on what the peer mentee is trying achieve.

Peer mentoring skills and knowledge may include:

- good communication skills and the ability to be supportive, empathetic and respectful.
- the ability to resolve conflict.
- the ability to facilitate groups and meetings.
- leadership and teamwork.
- problem-solving skills.
- time management skills.
- the ability to question and challenge.
- the willingness to share skills, knowledge and expertise.
- a positive attitude, enthusiasm and confidence.
- knowledge of the mentee’s role and the specific task for which mentoring is needed.
- technical skills specific to the required role and tasks.
- the ability to give guidance, insight, advice and constructive feedback.
- respecting confidentiality.
- an understanding of their role and it boundaries
- knowledge of the organisation’s policies and procedures.
- familiarity with health and wellbeing environments.

Think about

Can you think of any other skills and knowledge that make a good peer mentor?

Are these things you do now with others – or maybe you aspire to these?
Strategies

An effective peer mentor is able to use their skills and knowledge to create a personalised mentoring strategy – a plan of how they are going to structure and run the process based on the needs and abilities of the mentee. Overall the mentor needs to support the mentee to:

- achieve the goals they have identified.
- take responsibility for achieving their goals.
- develop and use communication skills that assist them in achieving their goals.

Below are some examples of different peer mentoring strategies used to achieve these outcomes. We will look at the peer mentoring process itself later in this learning guide.

**Strategy: Achieving identified goals**

A useful strategy for helping the peer mentee to grow and achieve their goals is for the mentor to balance support with question and challenge. Of course, if the mentor only challenged and never offered support, this could have a negative effect on the mentee’s progress towards the desired outcomes. However, an effective mentor will balance the two, by providing opportunities for growth and setting positive expectations.

**Strategy: Taking responsibility for achieving goals**

An effective strategy for the mentor is to encourage the mentee to take ownership of the mentoring process. The mentor empowers the mentee to lead their mentoring meetings as much as possible. While there may be an agreed format for these meetings, the mentee is the one that should be doing most of the talking.

**Strategy: Using communication skills that help achieve goals**

The mentor should be able to model and demonstrate effective communication skills. The peer mentor should have the ability to teach as well possess the ability to:

- listen supportively.
- question and challenge limitations.
- provide guidance, insight, advice and constructive feedback.
- adjust their communication to different personalities.
- show respect and genuine interest.
- develop and maintain trust and rapport.
- maintain professional boundaries through both verbal and non-verbal communication techniques.

Think about Can you see how a peer mentor’s skills and knowledge link to effective strategies?
Evaluation, self-reflection and review

A good peer mentor takes the time and has the ability to carefully evaluate, reflect on and review the strategies they used as well as their own role and performance in the mentoring process.

Evaluating and reviewing peer mentoring strategies

As a peer mentor, evaluating the strategies you have used is about looking at how effective the strategy was. Were you able to achieve your desired outcomes? Think about the following questions:

- What were the objectives of the peer mentoring process?
- How can I tell if these objectives were achieved?
- How can I measure the results of the process?
- What aspects did the mentee find the hardest?
- What helped the mentee the most?
- When in the process did the mentee experience the biggest shifts in their skills, understanding, confidence and ability?
- Who can I talk to for feedback on the end result?

Based on what you found out during your evaluation, the review phase focuses on how you will do things in the future.

- What strategies work well and not so well?
- Do different strategies work better in different situations?
- How can I improve the strategies I use?

Reflecting on and reviewing own role and practice

It is important to reflect on your own role and performance in the peer mentoring process. Here are some ideas to get you thinking about how you might do this. You might also be able to think of others.

- How do I feel about my role and practice in the process?
- Am I happy with the outcome?
- What were my strengths and weaknesses?

The next step after self-reflection is to review how you will do things in the future.

- What might I do differently next time?
- What areas do I need to work on, and how?
What makes a good peer mentee?

“You become what you think about.”

Earl Nightingale, speaker and writer on motivation and personal development

A peer mentoring relationship is two-way. The mentee is not a passive participant; they are not there simply to be ‘filled with knowledge’ by the mentor. The mentee is a collaborator who actively engages in the peer mentoring process to learn and reflect on their experience.

A mentee goes into the peer mentoring relationship with the understanding that their life and work skills can be enhanced through the experience, and that the process offers some positive, measurable benefits. The mentee knows best what skills and competencies they want to gain; it is up to them to make these clear at the outset. The mentee has goals they want to achieve and the mentor is there to help the mentee achieve them. It is important to remember that peer mentoring is all about learning, not looking good in front of the mentor.

What makes a person a good mentee?

For peer mentoring to be successful, the mentee needs to:

- have a clear goal for the relationship.
- be open and willing to accept help.
- communicate.
- be open and honest with the mentor.
- be prepared to ask for help.
- be respectful of the relationship.
- not make the mentor do all the work.

A clear goal

The mentee should know what they want to achieve and be specific about it – that is, they must avoid vague questions such as ‘How can I do better in my job?’ The mentee’s expectations of the relationship should be well thought out, realistic and achievable. Ideally, they will identify any problems that might get in the way of reaching their objectives.

Willingness to accept help

The mentee needs to take note of the mentor’s advice and suggestions. The mentor is there to help the mentee – that’s the whole point!
This does not mean just taking advice and feedback, but acting on it. If there is a problem, the mentee needs to talk about it. By being honest and open in communicating the mentee shows that they are actively involved in the relationship and are thinking about what the mentor says.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key words</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>collaborator</td>
<td>works well with and actively cooperates with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive</td>
<td>not actively participating or involving themselves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Communicate**

The peer mentee needs to be prepared to listen, but they must also understand that they need to contribute if progress is to be made. They should ask a lot of questions; the more they ask, the more clarity they will gain, and the better their decisions will be.

**Being open and honest**

The mentee should share with the mentor anything that is bothering them. This will help them to connect with the mentor at not only a professional level, but a personal level as well. The mentor may have gone through similar experiences and be willing to share their perspective.

**Willingness to ask for help**

The mentor has willingly entered into the relationship and is there to help the mentee, but will not know how they can help unless the mentee asks.

**Respecting the relationship**

The mentee should stick to what they and the mentor have agreed, turn up for scheduled meetings, and deliver on any promises that they make.

**Not making the mentor do all the work**

It’s not up to the mentor to work out how to guide the mentee; it’s up to the mentee to work out how they need help.
The peer mentoring process

This section looks mainly at the formal peer mentoring process, as the informal process is less structured and more fluid in how it operates. However, some of the points here are applicable to both situations – for example, the need to build rapport and reach mutually agreed objectives are both part of the peer mentoring strategy. The peer mentoring process is basically the plan that is developed by the mentor, and discussed and agreed by the mentor and mentee at the beginning of the relationship.

Remember that the organisation you work for may have some specific guidelines, policies or procedures on how the peer mentoring process should be set up and run. You need to check what these are before starting any kind of mentoring arrangement.

Below is one example of a peer mentoring strategy that could be used to establish and run a peer mentoring programme. While much of it would apply to any mentoring relationship, the details will depend on the people involved, the organisation they work for, and the type of work they do. This process will guide you to:

- build rapport and trust.
- communicate effectively.
- manage the scope and boundaries of the relationship.
- create realistic timelines for success.
- create a schedule for appropriate meeting times.
- create and comply with terms of confidentiality.
- generate an outline of the knowledge and material that will be covered.

The first meeting – establishing a relationship

The first meeting is critical to the success of the whole peer mentoring process. It is important that the mentor and mentee get to know each other, begin to build up rapport, and establish the overall objectives and expected outcomes they hope to achieve. This first meeting should be designed to include formalities such as confidentiality and the creation of schedules and timelines.

If the mentoring is part of an organisational programme, there may be requirements for documenting the meeting and creating a partnership agreement (essentially a record of the objectives, outcomes and roles of the partners). You need to check your organisation’s policies and procedures to see what is required.

Do it

What do your workplace policies and procedures say about mentoring? If you are a peer mentor or looking to become one, you need to be familiar with this information.
The first meeting should follow the following steps.

**Step 1: Get acquainted**

Start with things that you may have in common. As well as those related to work these could include families, hobbies, interests and personal histories. Consider these questions:

- What do you have in common in your work roles?
- What do you have in common outside of work?
- Do you know the same people? At work? Outside work?
- What unique qualities do you each have?
- What outside interests do you both have?

**Step 2: Establish the scope of the mentoring relationship**

At this stage, both the mentor and mentee need to be clear about what the mentee hopes to achieve through the mentoring process. The goals, objectives and expected outcomes from the mentoring relationship need to be determined and recorded.

At the beginning the peer mentor will need to take the lead by asking some appropriate questions, such as:

- Where are you now? Where do you want to be in the future?
- What are your visions and aspirations?
- What do you think are your strengths and weaknesses right now?
- How do you think the mentoring process can help you? Perhaps to:
  - gain new technical skills.
  - develop communication, study and personal skills.
  - learn strategies to deal with both personal and work issues.
  - learn how to make better decisions.
  - create a sense of direction.
  - build confidence.
- What are your top three goals?
- What do you want to get out of this process?
Step 3: Establish boundaries and ground rules

This is a crucial part of the meeting, where you agree important details about confidentiality and the boundaries of the mentoring relationship and the process, such as:

- What are each person’s roles and responsibilities?
- The meeting schedules:
  - How often will you meet?
  - When and where will you meet?
  - How long will you meet for?
- What will happen in the meetings?
- Are there are any organisational requirements to be fulfilled?
- Is the information shared during the meetings to be kept confidential or may it be shared more widely?

**Question**

What is the process in your workplace for establishing the scope and boundaries of a peer mentoring relationship?

Check your organisation’s policies and procedures to help you answer this question, as every workplace can differ. You also need to think about this in relation to what your own role and responsibilities are.
The second meeting – achieving the goals and objectives

Now that the basics have been established, the second meeting moves on to setting out how the goals and objectives are to be achieved. This meeting is for creating a plan of action.

Begin by reviewing the top three goals identified in the first meeting. From these, establish:

- a list of mentoring or learning goals, in order of priority.
- the objectives that describe how to achieve these goals.

Given that the peer mentoring process is to enable the peer mentee to learn, consider what is required to be successful. For example:

- Should the peer mentee learn by doing (a specific task or project), by observing (following others in their activities) or in some other way?
- Are there any special requirements or resources needed?
- Can the process be broken into identifiable steps?
- What is the timeline and how can progress be monitored?

As allowed by confidentiality and any organisational reporting requirements, it is best to record this plan of action. In this way, both mentor and mentee know what is expected of them. Recording the meeting also sets an agenda that can be followed in later meetings.

One essential ongoing activity for following meetings is to regularly review progress and, if necessary, refine the process (whether it is meeting frequency, specific objectives, expectations or resolving disagreements). Peer mentoring is a dynamic process and you need to be prepared to change or modify it as you go.
Subsequent meetings – maintaining momentum

After the second meeting, both participants should have a clear idea of the process they are following. It is important to keep the momentum going in the subsequent meetings.

An essential part of each meeting should be a regular review of how the process is working. The mentor as well as the mentee should talk about their understanding of how the process is progressing and how they are performing in their role. If there are problems, these should be discussed and resolved before continuing.

If progress is not being made, the mentor and mentee need to establish the reasons for this and take appropriate action. Actions could include a review of the timing or style of the meetings, a revision of the goals and expectations or even a decision to stop the mentoring relationship altogether. The peer mentoring process is a dynamic one, and the way it operates is bound to need changes and fine-tuning as it matures.

Some questions that could be asked as part of a review process include:

- How is the peer mentoring partnership working?
- What is working well?
- What, if anything, is not working as well as you had hoped?
- What are you both gaining from your experience of the process?
- What does the mentee appreciate about the support the mentor is providing?
- What additional support might the peer mentee welcome?
- Are there any external constraints or difficulties affecting the partnership? How could these be resolved?

Key words

| subsequent | occurring or coming later or after |
When changes occur in the process

Changes can sometimes occur in the peer mentoring process that can affect the outcome. Here are some examples of changes that may affect the mentor–mentee relationship.

**Example: Lack of time**

After committing to the mentoring relationship, the mentee or the mentor may find that they don’t have time to attend mentoring sessions.

One solution in this situation is to change the frequency or time of these sessions. However, if a solution cannot be found that suits both parties, the mentoring relationship may have to end. The mentee would then need to find another peer mentor.

**Example: Peer mentor’s promotion**

The mentor could be promoted to the role of the mentee’s supervisor or team leader.

If this happens, the mentee may feel that the process is more a hierarchical one than a true peer mentoring process. This can affect the openness of communication during mentoring sessions and have a negative impact on the outcomes. If this happens, the peer mentoring programme for the mentee may need to be renegotiated.

**Example: Peer mentee’s work role changes**

The peer mentee may change their work role.

This may result in a review of the desired peer mentoring outcomes to ensure that they are still relevant to the mentee. The goals and objectives may need to be changed. The mentee may also need a different mentor if the current mentor does not have enough knowledge of the new role.
Ending the mentoring relationship

All relationships evolve and change, and the time will come when the mentor and mentee both believe that they have accomplished what they set out to achieve. The final meeting should be an opportunity to review the process. Questions to consider include:

- Were the goals and objectives met?
- Has the mentee learned what they set out to learn?
- Has the mentor also learned something new?
- Has it been a positive experience for the mentee? For the mentor?
- Where to now? Is there a next step?

A continuing process

Is that the end of the process?

The simple answer is ‘No’. Mentoring in some form or another is always a part of someone’s life. Change is a constant in our world, and to be successful we need to adapt to change or get left behind. Even if you believe that the peer mentoring programme you completed was successful, there will always be other things you want to learn. You may not have the desire for or be required to acquire new learning right away, but it could happen at any time and in different areas of your life.

If you have been a peer mentee, why not consider peer mentoring someone in the future, using the positives and negatives of your experience to support another person to become more confident and proficient.

If you were a peer mentor, you could expand your skills and support another person to achieve their goals. As you will have noted, providing support to a mentee can increase the knowledge, skills and experience of the mentor; it’s not only the mentees who gain from the process.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to be a peer-mentor or peer-mentee, this is a great time to consider mentoring as a chance to impart valuable knowledge and learn and grow in your work environment.