

ONR
Reverse Mentoring – Participant Guidance

What is Reverse mentoring

Reverse mentoring takes the format of traditional mentoring relationship and “reverses” the roles, so that the senior leader is mentored by a junior colleague. It is also called “upward mentoring”. Reverse mentoring relationships place the more senior person as the primary learner and provides an opportunity to hear and learn from the experience of the junior colleague.

Whereas traditional mentoring is centred on the development of junior mentees, in reverse mentoring both the mentor and mentee are provided with an opportunity to learn from each other. The senior leader (mentee) is able to gain a better understanding and appreciation of other perspectives, leading to valuing people for their unique abilities and taking an active role in promoting practices that support diversity and inclusion. The more junior colleague (mentor) is at the same time provided with the opportunity to learn from their mentee’s experience, knowledge, perspective and skills so it can be considered as a beneficial career development opportunity for all involved.

This approach enables leaders and senior managers to stay in touch with their organisations and colleagues; and truly understand and recognise the structural and cultural barriers that affect certain employees within the organisation when they don’t normally have direct exposure to their experiences.

Benefits of Reverse Mentoring

It provides opportunities for individuals from under-represented groups (such as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), LGBT+, Disability) to work as equal ‘partners’ with senior leaders in a relationship where knowledge and understanding of both sides of lived experiences creates awareness, insights and action that directly contributes towards the creation of a more equitable and inclusive organisation; where the factors that generate inequity are positively and proactively addressed.

It is a powerful way to build human connections and community and can build a learning culture, encouraging growth, change and action in an organisation. This is particularly the case at present where remote working can in many ways reduce the opportunities for organic networking and interaction beyond immediate team or peers. Reverse mentoring can bring benefits in the following ways:

To ONR

- Supports the ONR Strategy and creating a culture of inclusion and excellence
- Reaffirms ONR values and the aims of the People Strategy
- Contributes to leadership development and diversity
- Supports inclusivity

- Transfers knowledge and skills between experienced leaders and emerging leaders
- Helps attract, retain, and develop talent
- Shapes the future leadership pool

- **To Mentors**
 - Improved self confidence
 - Provides direct contact with leadership within ONR
 - Expands understanding and improves working relationships
 - Enables greater control and ownership of development
 - Provides career development opportunities

- **To Mentees**
 - Improved self-awareness through reflective learning
 - Fosters a trusting relationship that serves as a platform to share knowledge and lived experience

 - Promotes the acquisition of knowledge, skills, style and insights
 - Reinforces leadership development as a continuous, evolving process

 - Develops new ways of working and thinking

 - Enhances coaching and listening skills

 - Creates an optimal environment for continuously improving attitudes, behaviours and practices to foster inclusivity and a wider cultural perspective

Relationship Guidelines

Both Mentor and Mentee must be willing to:

- Be Open Minded and Supportive
- Committed to the relationship and building trust
- Share skills, talents, and experiences
- Devote the necessary time and energy to make the partnership a priority
- Respect the confidentiality of the partnership
 - Nothing should be shared outside the relationship unless mutually agreed upon
- Listen
- Seek and solicit open and candid feedback
- Include informal, unscheduled communications between meetings
- Talk to HR to resolve any concerns about the partnership, such as:
 - Ability to effectively mentor someone with whom there is no day-to-day exposure
 - Incompatibility
 - Inability to sustain commitment and time to the partnership

Other Considerations:

- The foundation of mentoring is trust and confidentiality
- The relationships should be Mentor-driven
- These are guidelines and not rules so be creative in this relationship

Reverse Mentoring Roles Expectations

The Mentee's Role

- Role model inclusive leadership behaviours
- Support your mentor in taking primary responsibility for initiating and managing the mentoring relationship
- Provide feedback to and seek feedback from your Mentor
- Provide a sounding board for your Mentor
- Coach on how to succeed in their profession/specialism and (wider nuclear industry)
- Provide advice on career opportunities and development
- Share organisational perspective, business information and experiences both good and bad
- Always consider your Mentor's goals for the mentoring relationship

The Mentor's Role

- The Mentor should define their development goals and objectives, and work with their Mentee to create a plan for the mentoring relationship
- Mentors are responsible for managing the mentoring relationship, working with the Mentees to schedule mentoring meetings and develop agendas in advance of meetings
- Make the most of opportunities to meet
- Mentors should assume their Mentee is eager to meet and talk with them
- The Mentor should monitor their progress on their development plan and notify the Mentee of any changes
- Be clear about what they want from their Mentee

Confidentiality Guidelines

Confidentiality is the foundation of reverse mentoring relationships. No information should be shared outside the partnership unless agreed to by both the Mentor and Mentee, unless any identified threat or harm or risk to any persons or third party. Use the following guidelines to maintain trust and confidentiality in the mentoring partnership:

	MUST	MUST NOT
Mentee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage open dialogue, help the Mentor feel comfortable • Be open to Mentor's feedback and opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the Mentor's issues, concerns & comments with peers/colleagues • Attempt to resolve the Mentor's problems or unduly influence the outcome of Mentor's plans.
Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask probing questions • Be honest and open in discussions with the Mentee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with others the comments, opinions, insights of your Mentee • Compromise the credibility or reputation of your Mentee • Share information you get from attending meetings at the request of your Mentee

Feedback

In effective reverse mentoring partnerships, Mentors and Mentees freely give one another feedback. However, it is this aspect of the process that can often be the most uncomfortable for both parties. Keep in mind that significant personal and professional growth is not possible without some discomfort. When feedback is respectful and clear, it helps both partners see the other person's perspective and can become an invaluable development tool.

- As a Mentee, you might give feedback regarding:
 - Your Mentor's behaviours, attitudes and style
 - Observations about your Mentor's stated goals and/or progress toward them
 - Positive comments you have heard about your Mentor from others.
 - Non-traditional learning and feedback on some of the social networking opportunities in virtual communities.

As a Mentor, you might give feedback regarding:

- The helpfulness of your Mentee's advice, suggestions or strategies
- Comments on the Mentee's behaviors that make the Reverse Mentoring relationship productive for you
- Comments on the Mentee's behaviors that make the Reverse Mentoring relationship difficult for you

To help become more effective at both giving and receiving feedback, use the following tips:

- Wait until feedback is requested or ask if it is desired
- Listen
- Don't be too quick to offer advice
- Give feedback about **behaviour** not **personal traits**
- Offer honest feedback in a manner that maintains self-esteem

The First Mentoring Meeting

The First Mentoring Meeting

- Get acquainted:
 - Establish how you will work together
 - How often will you meet, commit to a minimum number of meetings
 - How should you stay in touch between meetings?
 - Confidentiality
- Discuss the Mentor's development goals, career objectives and goals for the mentoring partnership
 - Why are these goals important?
 - What led the Mentor to want to develop these goals?
- Mentees: Share your personal motivation for participating as a Mentee and what you hope to gain from the experience.

Follow-Up Mentoring Meeting

- Discuss the Mentor's goals and objectives and be prepared to refine as needed.
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