Why Mentoring?

Women who have a mentor can advance more quickly, and to higher levels, than those who are not supported.[3]

Mentoring relationships can be formal or informal, and short or long term.

Formal relationships are often arranged by an organisation or workplace, have pre-articulated expectations, and often include launches, wrap-ups, and socials to normalize expectations. Formal mentorships create an environment where it is easy to get involved, but may cause concerns of time commitment and how "visible" the relationships are.
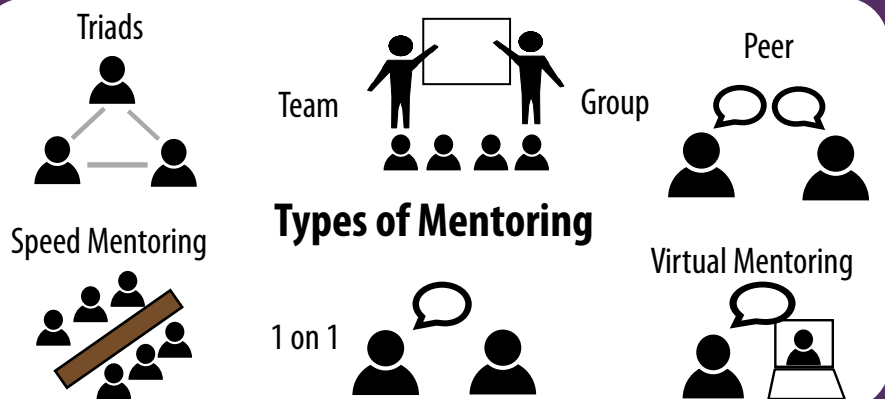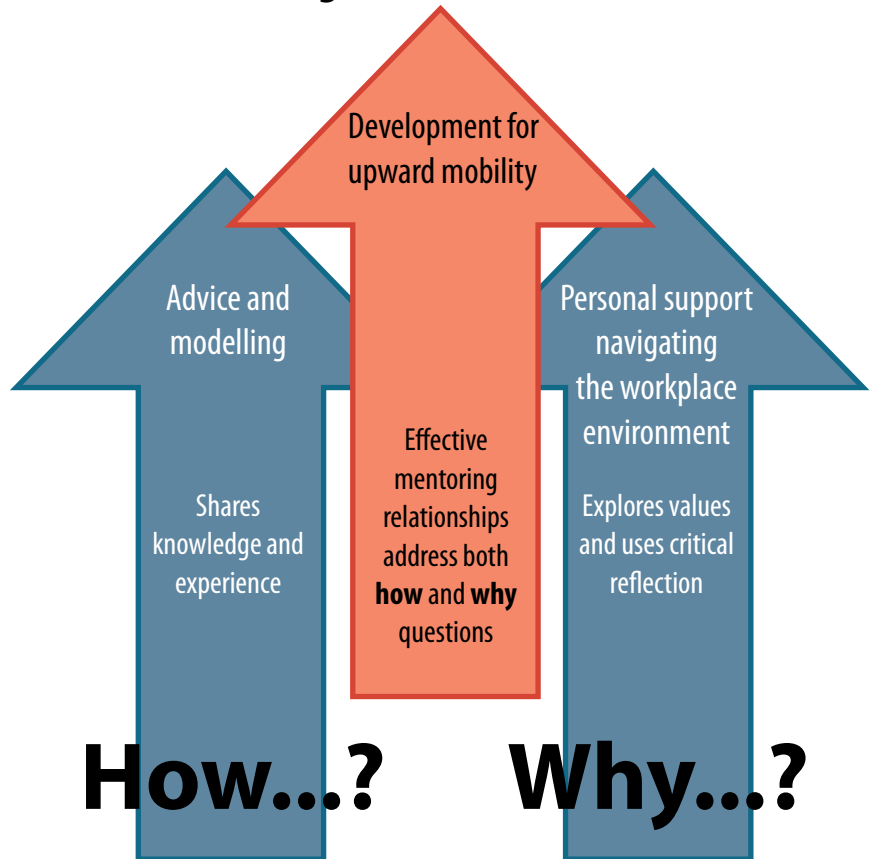
Informal mentoring is often arranged by individuals, so expectations are not always pre-determined and must be set by the mentor and mentee. They often focus on a specific need. Time commitments are more flexible, and informal mentorship is less "visible." Difficulty establishing connections can make it challenging to become involved.

Short term mentoring formats include speed mentoring, project-specific mentors, shadowing, or transition mentors.

Long term mentoring may include regular or ad-hoc meetings, peer mentors, and most mentoring programs.

Online mentoring may use either format.

What is Mentoring?[9,10]

Development for upward mobility

Advice and modelling

Shares knowledge and experience

Effective mentoring relationships address both **how** and **why** questions

Personal support navigating the workplace environment

Explores values and uses critical reflection

How...? Why...?

Types of Mentoring

Triads

Team

Group

Peer

Speed Mentoring

1 on 1

Virtual Mentoring

WWEST — Westcoast Women in Engineering, Science & Technology

Ranked Facilitative Responses[2]

Reflecting & Understanding Feelings
Conveys you have heard and understood their emotional experience

Clarifying & Summarizing
Focuses the discussion; indicates accurate hearing & understanding
Indicates a desire to be accurate in communication

Questioning
Seeks information & furthers discussion

Reassuring & Supporting
May dismiss the person's feelings (negative)
Indicates a belief in their ability to solve the problem

Analyzing & Interpreting
Trying to explain behaviours or feelings
Responses may imply what they should think or do

Advising
What you should do or feel

Evaluating
Judges what you do or feel

In a mentoring relationship, **how you respond** affects how the other person responds. Choosing a response is context and relationship dependent.
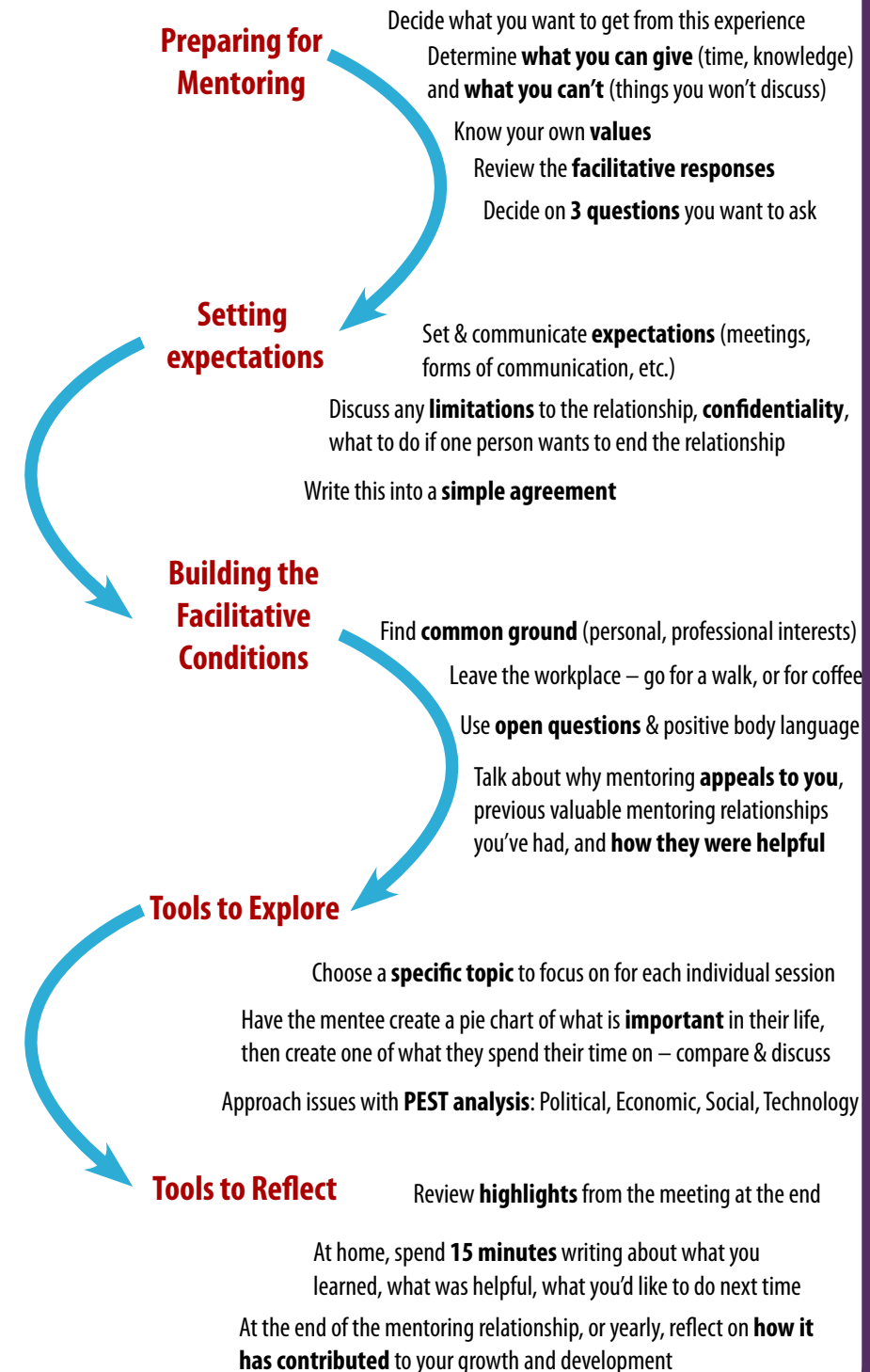
Facilitative Conditions[1]

Friendliness	Sharing mutual interests	Genuine warmth	Genuine sense of comfort and support
Understanding	Empathy		Perceive and acknowledge their experiences
Caring	Value them as a person	Personal commitment to the process	Personally care about their well-being
Respect	Right to express their own ideas and feelings		Right to shape their own lives
Trustworthiness	Confidentiality and security in relationship		Honesty
Acceptance	Accept who they are		Respect the personal worth and dignity of a person

6 conditions must be met to create a relationship in which a person feels **comfortable to self-disclose**.[1]
In a mentorship, this relationship is **reciprocal**.

Types of Questions

Effective:
- Are person-centred
- Are **open**
- Ask "**why**" (without being intimidating)

Ineffective:
- Completely change the focus
- Are binding
- Solicit agreement
- Force choices
- Have "no good answer"
- Are yes/no

Tools for Mentoring[4,5]

Preparing for Mentoring
Decide what you want to get from this experience
Determine **what you can give** (time, knowledge) and **what you can't** (things you won't discuss)
Know your own **values**
Review the **facilitative responses**
Decide on **3 questions** you want to ask

Setting expectations
Set & communicate **expectations** (meetings, forms of communication, etc.)
Discuss any **limitations** to the relationship, **confidentiality**, what to do if one person wants to end the relationship
Write this into a **simple agreement**

Building the Facilitative Conditions
Find **common ground** (personal, professional interests)
Leave the workplace – go for a walk, or for coffee
Use **open questions** & positive body language
Talk about why mentoring **appeals to you**, previous valuable mentoring relationships you've had, and **how they were helpful**

Tools to Explore
Choose a **specific topic** to focus on for each individual session
Have the mentee create a pie chart of what is **important** in their life, then create one of what they spend their time on – compare & discuss
Approach issues with **PEST analysis**: Political, Economic, Social, Technology

Tools to Reflect
Review **highlights** from the meeting at the end
At home, spend **15 minutes** writing about what you learned, what was helpful, what you'd like to do next time
At the end of the mentoring relationship, or yearly, reflect on **how it has contributed** to your growth and development

Mentoring at Work

Increasing workplace diversity, especially at the mid- and upper levels, can be supported through diversity mentoring programs.[8] Organisations should also consider how to promote and support a variety of forms of mentoring, and reduce barriers to employees' participation.

Often, individuals who need mentoring the most are unable to find mentors because they are afraid to ask, or are searching for the "perfect fit" mentor.[7] Informal mentoring can help resolve this. Peer mentoring is also beneficial; individuals with similar levels of experience act as both mentees and mentors to each other,[7] offering advice and support in navigating the workplace and decision-making.[6] There is value for employees at all levels, including executives.[5]

Finding mentors outside of the workplace can address individuals' life satisfaction levels, and provide outsider perspectives on work-related issues.[5] Participating in multiple types of mentorship (peer, seniority-based, non-work, etc.) provides more opportunities for an individual's holistic personal development.[5]

Facilitative responses should be used as tools for strengthening relationships, and ensuring individuals feel comfortable self-disclosing. Setting expectations is key in ensuring a successful mentoring relationship.

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Recommended Readings

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About ONWiE

The Ontario Network of Women in Engineering (ONWiE) was formed in 2005 between all the schools and faculties of engineering across Ontario. The objective of this network is to work collaboratively to support current female engineers, students, and encourage the next generation of women to pursue careers in engineering.

Find out more at: http://www.onwie.ca/