

AN OVERVIEW OF MENTORING

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a voluntary professional relationship based on mutual respect and agreed expectations that is mutually valuable to all involved and includes personal and professional development, growth and support (Fawcett, 2002; Heartfield et al., 2005). Mentors act as “critical friends” in encouraging reflection to achieve success (Costa & Kallick, 1993).

What are the aims of mentoring?

Mentoring aims to provide opportunity for:

- Personal and professional growth;
- Reflection and the development of reflective practice skills;
- Support;
- Career development.

Types of mentoring

Traditional dyad model of mentoring

A more senior and experienced person acts as a mentor to a more junior mentee or protégé in enhancing mentee personal and professional growth and development.

Peer or co-mentoring

Where two peers or colleagues at similar points in their careers form a collaborative mentoring relationship to mutually foster personal and professional development.

Peer group mentoring

Where three or more peers or colleagues at similar points in their careers form a collaborative mentoring relationship. Peers actively contribute and interact as co-mentors for others within the group, learning from each other to enhance opportunities for personal and professional development for all within the group.

How does mentoring differ from supervision and coaching?

Whilst there is some overlap between mentoring and supervision, there are quite distinct differences:

Mentoring	Supervision	Coaching
Mentoring is voluntary	Supervision is often a requirement of the workplace or position	Coaching is voluntary
Mentoring has broad outcomes related to personal and professional growth, career progression and improved practice	Supervision focuses more on the oversight of professional procedures and/ or processes around providing safe, appropriate and high quality care around professional procedures and/ or processes	Outcomes related to personal and professional growth and development
Mentoring involves an equal relationship between participants	Supervision may be hierarchical	Facilitated by a coach, generally from outside the coachee's workplace
Mentoring may or may not be conducted in work time and is often conducted away from the work setting	Supervision is usually conducted within work time within the work setting but away from immediate area of practice	Mentoring may or may not be conducted in work time. Often conducted away from the work setting

References

- Fawcett, D. L. (2002). Mentoring—what it is and how to make it work. *AORN journal*, 75(5), 950-954.
- Health Workforce Australia. (2013). *National Clinical Supervision Competency Resource Validation Edition*. Health Workforce Australia.
- Heartfield, M., Gibson, T., Chesterman, C., & Tagg, L. (2005). *Hanging from a string in the wind. Development of a national framework for mentoring for nurses in general practice*.