

This document's intention is to highlight the nuances of reverse mentoring and not as a replacement for training and preparation. Updated 2020.

Preparing for Reverse Mentoring

Suggestions for the mentor

1. Remember your mentee has committed to the initiative and wants to engage in a learning alliance.
2. Setting out your contract/ground rules together with your mentee is very important. Be clear from the start on what you would both like to benefit from in your sessions, how comfortable you both are to being open and honest. Revisit this regularly.
3. Reiterate that sessions are **100%** confidential. All topics remain completely in the session.
4. Should a reschedule happen for whatever reason do not take it personally. If it happens repeatedly consult HR or your program manager.
5. Reflection sessions will be offered to you and the process of it is explained in training.

Suggestions for the mentee

Session frequency is recommended at no less than monthly for six months and the duration can be 40 minutes to approximately an hour.

1. Consider the possible overwhelm your more junior mentor may be experiencing when embarking on this relationship. This aspect is covered in their training however being mindful will help put your mentor at ease and ensure a relaxed flow of conversation is established sooner.
2. Focus on a maximum of three key areas into which you would like to gain insight and share these with your mentor in your first session. This does not mean to say you should ringfence topics to these, tangents are welcome in all mentoring relationships.
3. It is the mentee responsibility to follow up sessions with some brief notes. This should be respected on a reverse mentoring scheme to show the mentor time is being valued as well as setting the scene for the next session, as in traditional mentoring methods. Follow ups can be in the format of the briefest of points, are best mentoring practice and encourage reflection on the sessions.

Common derailments

Transference and counter transference – the mimicking of previous relationships. Parent/child or sibling is common in reverse mentoring. This topic is covered in training.

Expectations – managing mentees expectations on being mentored by a junior employee. Mentees should be prepared that this is a learning alliance and not a tick box exercise.

Overwhelm – on the mentor prevents free flowing conversations and curious questioning.

Time – mentees often reschedule and reduce session time. If this happens frequently it undervalues the initiative and is poor for mentor morale.

Resources:

Professor David Clutterbuck
Jack Welch on Utube

<https://davidclutterbuckpartnership.com/making-reverse-mentoring-work/54-seconds>