



# **MENTORING SESSION AGENDAS**

For Mentees

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# SESSION 1

## Get to know each other

Your first session - whether it's for networking or mentoring - is important and you should prepare well. To ensure a great first impression and avoid possible pitfalls, review the respective checklists below.



### Mentoring

#### Before the Session

- Review your mentor's profile on Together
- Review your mentor's LinkedIn profile, if available
- Make sure you've scheduled a meeting and that the time works for both of you
- Prepare by reading through the Mentee Handbook and watching these two videos: [understanding what you want out of a mentoring relationship](#) and [establishing your mentoring relationship](#)
- Also check out the other videos and articles in the resources area of the platform



#### During the Session

The conversation topics below can help you to learn about each other. As a general rule, you should listen as much as you talk. Aim to be a present and attentive listener.

##### 1. Quick Career History

Exchanging your career histories helps you understand each other's backgrounds, find common ground and build mutual respect.

- What are you most proud of in your career?
- Did you think this is where you would be at this point in your life?
- What's unique about your career approach?
- What used to be a weakness of yours that you have worked on?

##### 2. Mentoring Profile Overview

Discuss things about your mentor's profile that were important or interesting to you.

- What is your motivation for signing up for the mentoring programme?
- What would you like to improve on next?
- What is your next big challenge?
- What do you hope to accomplish in 6 months, 1 year, 3 years, 5 years, and 10 years?
- Ask about personal interests that intrigued you.

### 3. Time Commitment & Scheduling

Discuss and agree on meeting frequency and logistics.

- How often would you like to meet? We recommend that pairs meet twice monthly but it is up to you and your mentor to decide what works best.
- What times are you generally available to meet? And for how long?
- How will you communicate? Will you meet in person? Virtually? Between meetings, will you keep in touch by email, MS Teams or a different channel?



### After the Session

- Fill out a 1-minute feedback form about the session
- Schedule your next session (aim to do it within two weeks to help establish the relationship and your goals)



## Networking Before the Session

- Identify a topic and concrete questions that you want to ask. Some suggestions include:
  - What is your role in the XYZ project?
  - What do you enjoy about leading your team right now?
  - What is challenging about life in your duty station?
- Review your mentor's profile on Together
- Review your mentor's LinkedIn profile, if available
- Make sure you've scheduled a meeting and that the time works for both of you
- Read the [Networking Overview](#) and listen to this [LinkedIn Course](#)



### During the Session

Networking meetings tend to be brief and focused. It's important to maximize your time and get feedback on the questions that matter most to you. Here is a suggested format:

- Briefly introduce yourself in 3 minutes or less
- Share why you wanted to meet in 2 minutes or less. What stood out about that person's profile?
- Use the remainder of the session to ask 3 detailed questions prepared in advance
- Thank the person for their time and arrange a second meeting if both parties agree.



### After the Session

- Fill out a 1-minute feedback form about the session
- Schedule a next session if you agreed on this with your colleague/mentor

# SESSION 2

For mentoring, the topic is Setting Goals. See below.

For networking, refer to the session one guidance above. Use your second session to ask questions that you didn't get a chance to cover in your first.

## Setting Goals

**Objectives:** Discussing goal setting, building trust, establishing confidentiality

It's time for your second session – a good time to discuss goals that you'd like to achieve through the mentoring programme.

### On trust and confidentiality

Trust is something that grows over time and is often earned through action. You may feel hesitant, therefore, to disclose some information to your mentor about a challenge or problem you have. That is perfectly fine; each person should take their time in assessing how much they want to share with their mentor and when. This comfort level will also depend on a mentee's personality and cultural background, among other factors.

In this context, it is important for mentees and mentors to discuss confidentiality parameters. In principle, most or all of the content of your sessions should stay between you and your mentor. Ask your mentor about what they are open to discussing and how. For example, it's good practice to not mention colleagues' names when you are presenting a given problem or challenge that you need help with. Also think about and discuss what information, if any, you agree can be shared outside the mentoring sessions.



### Before the Session

- Make sure you've filled out the feedback form for session 1
- Watch this video on [building trust with your mentor](#)
- [Explore this LinkedIn Learning course on Successful Goal Setting](#)



### During the Session

- Discuss your goals and how you might achieve them
- Discuss an Action Plan and initial first steps.



### After the Session

- Fill out a 1-minute feedback form about the session
- Schedule your next session

# SESSION 3

## Solve a particular problem

**Objectives: Find a new way to look at a past or current problem**

By session 3 you may have goals in place for your mentoring relationship. Writing down your goals can give you structure and help you stay accountable. If you have your goals in place, session three can be a good time to discuss a specific problem with your mentor. It could be a challenge in your daily work or a larger issue about your career journey. Here are some sample ideas below.

- “I tried to delegate a task last week and it did not go well. Can you help me think through what to do differently next time?”
- “I have two very different career path options. It would be good to get your feedback about how to choose one.”
- “I have a performance review coming up with my manager . Could you help me prepare?” (Consider using role - play to help you plan difficult conversations)
- “I have been facing some difficulties in my new role as project manager. How about I describe the situation and then you could give me some feedback?”



### Before the Session

- Make sure you’ve filled out the feedback form for session 2.
- Reflect on past or current situations to address during the session.



### During the Session

- Discuss a specific problem.



### After the Session

- Fill out a 1-minute feedback form about the session.
- Find a date that works for both of you for session 4.

# SESSION 4

## Leadership in any role

**Objective: Develop ideas on how to show leadership regardless of your level or role**

Senior leaders are vital for articulating vision, driving progress toward common goals, delegating responsibilities, distributing resources and motivating teams. But managers and individual contributors of all levels can show leadership in their everyday roles and functions.

Some ways to do this are listed below. Use a session to discuss if and how you are practicing these behaviors in your current job. Which ones would be challenging for you? Seek feedback from your mentor on how you can exhibit them more often or in different ways. Ask whether she/he has other ideas on how you can show leadership.

### **1. Give recognition to others**

Acknowledging the good work of others helps increase team spirit and a positive work culture. When you praise a colleague, you are also demonstrating confidence and showing that you care about the work of the team and how people feel.

### **2. Seek feedback from managers and other colleagues**

Understanding how others perceive us is key to learning and growth. In individual meetings with your manager and in team meetings with peers, ask for positive and constructive feedback.

### **3. Increase your self-awareness**

Make time to reflect on what you want in your career and how you're going to achieve it. Your participation in this mentoring programme is one way to do this! The more time you spend on identifying your strengths and gaps, the more ready you will be to make good career choices and advance in an organization.

### **4. Demonstrate excellence**

No matter your level or title, it's important to be present and proficient in your functions and to have a mission that drives you. Consider developing a personal mission statement that keeps you focused. What do you want to achieve in the next few months? What impact do you want to have on your team, the organization or the world, through your work?

### **5. Be solution-centric**

Voicing problems is an important step toward driving change, but a leader will focus on possible solutions. A solution-centric leader envisions solutions, articulates them and engages others to help achieve them. Communicating with a positive tone is a key skill in this regard.

### **6. Share your views**

This one can be especially difficult for more junior individual contributors. Sometimes it can seem as if more senior colleagues are not interested in all views. But often it is simply a matter of finding the right way to say things – and then everyone in a room will listen. Leading with a positive statement and framing your perspective as an option or opportunity is a great way to present your view.



## Before the Session

- Read the article **“How to be a Leader and at any Level”** by Hilary Jane Grosskopf.
- Consider which of the above leadership behaviors you’d like to discuss.
- Reflect on the ways in which you’ve demonstrated these behaviours and include detailed examples.
- Prepare questions about how your mentor has demonstrated leadership in various roles.



## During the Session

- Take notes and ask questions



## After the Session

- Fill out a one-minute feedback form about the session.
- Schedule your next session.

# SESSION 5

## Networking

**Objectives: Involve more colleagues in your progress through networking**

Networking - meeting and getting to know colleagues that you can learn from or simply enjoy talking to is an important professional development activity. A strong network of contacts across departments and duty stations can help you accomplish your daily work in many ways. Knowing a colleague in communications may be helpful when your team needs to suddenly create a new website. A contact in information technology might have the info you need.

A strong network can also help you explore career options. Many people like to talk about their jobs and career journeys; all you need to do is ask questions in order to learn. In this fifth session, you could talk to your mentor about how they have benefited from a network of contacts. How did they meet people? What worked and what did not? Depending on one's personality, networking can come easy or be challenging; you could discuss this topic too.

You could also ask if they know colleagues that you might enjoy talking to or learning from. In this regard, give your mentor some direction so they can more easily think of contacts. For example, is there a duty station you would like to learn more about? Are you interested in work-life at Unicef or UNDP? Or would you like to meet people who have met some of your career goals?



### Before the Session

- Make sure you've filled out the feedback forms for session 4
- Think about networking and which types of colleagues you'd like to meet.



### During the Session

- Take notes and ask questions, if appropriate.



### After the Session

- Fill out a 1-minute feedback form about the session.
- Schedule your next session.



# SESSION 6

## Reflect and decide on next steps

**Objectives:** Review your progress and discuss whether you will have more meetings (both parties have to agree)

Here are some suggested topics:

### Reflect

- Which were the most useful conversations or exercises? What were the biggest takeaways?
- What logistics worked best for meeting?
- Thank your mentor for their time and input.

### Going forward

- If you would like to continue meeting with your mentor, let them know. Give them a chance to reflect on this and get back to you at a later time. You can easily schedule more meetings through the platform.
- Share your success: when you have good news about your job, let your mentor know. It could be a simple email and your mentor might really appreciate it.
- Pay it forward: consider becoming a mentor in a future programme.



### Before the Session

- Reflect on past sessions and decide on what you'd like to highlight as especially useful
- Decide if you'd like to ask if your mentor can meet again in the future (on a regular or ad-hoc basis).



### During the Session

- Discuss the overall experience and share specific feedback too.



### After the Session

- Fill out a 1-minute feedback form about the session.

# SESSION 7

## Peer feedback

**Objectives: Involve more colleagues in your progress through feedback**

One of the best ways to grow is to get feedback from others. You could use a mentoring session to share with your mentor feedback you have received. You could start small and ask one or two teammates. You could schedule individual meetings with them or send them questions by email and ask for written feedback. Keep in mind that some people may find it difficult to be candid and honest with this exercise. Think about which colleagues might be more open and receptive to it.

Some sample questions:

- What is one thing you've noticed me doing well? Can you give me a specific example?
- How can I challenge myself to develop that skill further?
- What is one thing you think I can improve on? Can you give me a specific example? Do you have a suggestion for me to try?

In the mentoring session you could share the feedback and how you felt about it. You could also ask your mentor for feedback. What have they noticed about your communication skills, for example, in your sessions so far? Think about what else you'd like to know.



### Before the Session

- Make sure you've filled out the feedback form for session 6.
- Decide who you're going to ask for peer feedback.
- Prepare for asking for and receiving feedback by [watching this 4-minute video](#).
- Review the feedback and take notes to later discuss with your mentor.
- Read some of the articles in the resources area of the platform on receiving feedback.



### During the Session

- Talk through the peer feedback you received.



### After the Session

- Fill out a 1-minute feedback form about the session.
- Schedule your next session.

# SESSION 8

## Reverse it

Reversing roles in a mentoring relationship can be fulfilling and fun. You may have skills that your mentor would like to attain or you might be working on a project that they find particularly interesting. Ask your mentor ahead of time about these ideas. Then, if there is sufficient interest, during this session you could take on the mentoring role.

Some ideas include:

- Discuss one of your projects or events that is of interest to your mentor.
- Discuss a technical skill you have:
  - Software/apps that aid in remote working
  - Software/apps used for communications (short video production, social media tips, etc.)
  - Knowledge management software used by your team
- Experience at another duty station – have you worked somewhere that your mentor might consider in the future?
- Languages – maybe you speak a language that your mentor has studied. Why don't you use the lesson to refresh their memory?



### Before the Session

- Make sure you've filled out the feedback form for session 7.
- Watch [this short video on why reciprocity improves mentor mentee relationships](#).
- Help your mentor decide which topic they'd like to discuss.
- Prepare any arrangements needed to showcase software or documents.



### During the Session

- Guide your mentor, ask questions and provide feedback.



### After the Session

- Fill out a 1-minute feedback form about the session.
- Schedule your next session.

# SESSION 9

## Shadowing

**Objectives:** Learn about an aspect of your mentor's work through job-shadowing

Consider a job shadowing exercise for this session (or use the session to discuss a future job shadowing exercise). In job shadowing you aim to learn about a particular aspect of your mentor's work through observation. It is particularly helpful for learning about a more senior person's context, workflows and challenges.

Some sample questions:

- Joining an in-person or virtual meeting with your mentor . Consider the various types you might join:
  - Weekly team meetings
  - Meetings that your mentor attends with peers or more senior colleagues
  - Meetings with working groups on special topics
- Reviewing documents or project plans that your mentor is working on and discussing them afterwards.
- If appropriate, complete a short task or assignment that you mentor could use help with.

Coordinating a job shadowing exercise takes can take some preparation time. As a mentee, aim to be clear on what type of meeting or project you'd like to observe and ask y our mentor for feedback. Some mentors may be open to this type of exercise while others may not be comfortable with it.



### Before the Session

- Make sure you've filled out the feedback form for session 8
- If you've set up a shadowing exercise for session 9, remember to:
  - Discuss with your mentor ahead of time whether you will interact with their colleagues in a meeting and how
  - Prepare questions ahead of time
  - Take notes
  - Dress to fit the day/meeting



### During the Session

- Take notes and ask questions, if appropriate



### After the Session

- Fill out a 1-minute feedback form about the session.
- Schedule your next session