

# Definition of Mentoring

Mentoring is most often defined as a professional relationship based on mutual trust in which an experienced, respected and enthusiastic person (the mentor), shares his/her knowledge and experience with a less experienced colleague (the mentee) in developing his/her knowledge, learning, work-based skills, well-being, personal and professional development.

Mentoring is valuable during the time of:

- development
- transition
- change
- difficulties (e.g. communication, relationship problems and stress)

The table below summarises what is Mentoring and what is not.

Mentoring IS	Mentoring IS NOT
Supporting others to problem solve	Imposing your ideas and values
Confidential	Getting a new best friend
Using knowledge and experience	Counselling, buddying, coaching
Reflective	A quick fix solution
Building confidence	Teaching
Being honest	Giving all the answers
Motivating the mentee	Having power over someone
Encouraging independence	Judging

Mentoring is also not to be confused with Coaching, Counselling, Buddying, etc. Although there are many similarities, mentoring enables the mentee to follow in the path of an older and wiser colleague - "who has been there, done that" - and who can pass on knowledge, experience and open doors to otherwise out-of-reach opportunities.

The table below summarises the main differences between Mentoring and Coaching.

Mentoring	Coaching
Longer term, on-going relationship	Relationship generally has a set duration and addresses a short-term need
Emphasises feedback and reflection by the mentee	Emphasises feedback to the mentee
Focuses on capability and potential	Focuses on skills and performance
Concerned with implications beyond the task	Task focused
Can be more informal and meetings can take place as and when the mentee needs some advice, guidance or support	Generally more structured in nature and meetings are scheduled on a regular basis
More long-term and takes a broader view of the person	Short-term (sometimes time-bounded) and focused on specific development areas/issues
Mentor is usually more experienced and qualified than the 'mentee', who can pass on knowledge, experience and open doors to otherwise out-of-reach opportunities	Coaching is generally not performed on the basis that the coach needs to have direct experience of their client's formal occupational role, unless the coaching is specific and skills-focused.
Focus is on professional and personal development	Focus is generally on career development/issues at work
Agenda is set by the mentee, with the mentor providing support and guidance to prepare them for future roles	The agenda is focused on achieving specific, immediate goals
Mentoring resolves more around developing the mentee professionally	Coaching revolves more around specific development areas/issues
Feedback and discussion primarily about implicit, intuitive issues and behaviours	Feedback and discussion primarily explicit
Outside line management relationship	Primarily a line manager role

## Summary of Different Development Processes and Their Differences

Individual and management development can take place in many forms, some delivered by managers and some by internal or external coaches, or mentors. A short description of the different activities are: -

Process Name	Process Description
<b>Mentoring</b>	Helping to shape an individual's beliefs and values in a positive way. Often this is a longer term professional relationship from someone who has 'done it before'.
<b>Coaching</b>	Helping another person to improve awareness, to set and achieve goals in order to improve a particular behavioural performance.
<b>Counselling</b>	Helping an individual to improve performance by resolving situations from the past. Explore personal issues and problems through discussion in order to increase understanding to develop greater self-awareness. The aim of counselling is to lead the client toward self-directed actions to achieve their goals.
<b>Buddying</b>	Helping new employees adjust to jobs during their first few months of employment. Buddies are most often peers in the same department, who assist new employees for short periods of time and require no specialised training - unlike mentoring - as a buddy.
<b>Guiding</b>	This is the process of directing an individual or a group along the path leading from present state to a desired state.
<b>Teaching</b>	Helping an individual or group develop cognitive skills and capabilities.