

one ^{up} one down

Mentor Guide



FOREWORD

The purpose of this document is to act as a supporting resource for OneUpOneDown mentors throughout their role as a mentor. It is to help them understand and develop in their role, guiding them to be what we consider a great mentor.

We'd like to acknowledge you, the mentor. Thank you for giving your time and energy to help another individual grow. The guidance you provide, decisions you help make and the care you maintain towards your mentee throughout your three-month mentorship period has the potential to be life-changing.

By Natalie & Dzhuliana, OneUpOneDown

Follow us [f](#) [@](#) [in](#) [t](#)

THE ROLE OF A MENTOR

“To empower a mentee through a process of generating new experiences and action.”

Mentorship is a relationship designed to build a mentee’s confidence and support them to make decisions while taking control of their learning and development.

Mentoring differs from training, teaching and coaching. We believe a mentor doesn’t need to be an expert in their field or qualified to teach in a specific knowledge domain. They do however, need to be able to listen and ask insightful questions that challenge a mentee to identify the course of action they need to take in regards to their development. It’s then a mentor’s role to support the mentee to take these respective actions.

More than this, as a mentor, your role is not to solve a mentees problems by giving them the answers, it’s to be a helping hand and someone who provides support where you have strengths and a mentee has weaknesses.

How a mentor supports a mentee is based on the needs of the mentee and it is likely that mentor-mentee sessions will require some of the following:

- **Asking questions** to help develop an understanding of the mentee’s situation or problem.
- **Active listening** to be able to connect with the mentee and share your most relevant experience and knowledge.
- **Sharing experiences, stories and insights** to offer differing perspectives, and help the mentee learn from your successes and mistakes.
- **Providing support and encouragement** to help the mentee feel more confident in their actions.
- **Sharing resources** to support a mentee’s continued learning outside of your mentoring sessions.
- **Offering connections** to networks where suitable.

MENTORING GUIDELINES

We understand there isn't always one framework that suits everyone, so we like to let each mentor-mentee relationship find what works best for them. However, we have learnt what has been most effective for past matches and put together the following mentoring guidelines you might like to use:

Meeting frequency - We suggest that you meet with your mentee for a minimum of 4x1 hour meetings throughout the 3 month period, twice in the first month and once each month following. Many of our successful matches have found meeting every fortnight works well too, in order to continue to hold them accountable and keep up momentum.

Location - Many of our mentees are based overseas, or in varying cities, therefore, we recommend running your mentoring sessions online, using Skype or Zoom. Video calling is encouraged over phone calls as it gives you the opportunity to put a face to a name and read the other person's body language. Alternatively, if you are matched with a mentor and/or mentee in the same city as you, you may like to connect in person for a couple of your sessions or find a balance between this and video calling.



MENTORING EXPECTATIONS

We aim to provide you with the best possible mentor-mentee match, mentorship support and overall experience. To assist us in doing so, we have the following expectations for you in your role as a mentor:

Communicate with us. If you find your mentee has dropped off, is missing meetings or is not as engaged as you were hoping for, we expect that you let us know. We can't do anything to rectify the situation if we are unaware it exists! Alternatively, if you have general questions or would like to know how to better support a mentee, be sure to reach out.

Show up. Mentoring can often be de-prioritised when other things pop up or life happens. However, you might be surprised how valuable a mentoring session is even if you are busy and have other priorities. Please respect the time and commitment that has gone into the relationship and make it a priority during the matching duration.

Keep up the momentum. It's easy to kick off a mentoring relationship with a lot of momentum then let it drop over time and become disengaged. We expect you as a mentor to do your best to stay engaged, honor your commitment and continually contribute to the relationship. We do also understand that life happens and you may have to pull out of a mentoring relationship temporarily, this is absolutely fine. Just please let us know!

Our tip: schedule your next meeting immediately after the previous one. This will keep yourself and your mentee accountable, and support you in not missing call times and/or creating time in your calendar. If you like to prepare for your sessions, be sure to book extra time in your calendar. This applies for the following tip also!



FIRST MENTORING SESSION

The purpose of your first mentoring session is to establish your mentor-mentee relationship with regards to direction and any expectations either you or your mentee have for the 3 month period. Part of having a great experience as a mentor and feeling as though you have successfully supported your mentee where they needed help, is getting clear on what needs to be achieved from the beginning.

Your first session is the time to get to know each other, work out the areas where you add the most value to your mentee, and agree how you'd like the relationship and future sessions to run. We recommend using this session to agree on the frequency of meetings, best communication method and/or platform, agreed topics of discussion and the scope of the relationship.

Here are a few questions you can ask your mentee to understand how to help them best:

1. Tell me about yourself, what is your story?
2. What made you decide to sign up through OneUpOneDown to receive a mentor?
3. Is there any particular outcome you'd like from our mentor-mentee relationship?
4. Have you had a mentor before? What worked well, what didn't work so well?
5. We've matched these tags, can you please tell me why you want to work in these areas?
6. Are these areas (the tags) still primary priority for you? If not, what is the specific area you would like to focus on for the next 3 months?
7. Are there any other challenges that you're facing that I might be able to support you with, both personally and professionally?
8. Are you comfortable discussing anything and everything (both personal and professional) or would you rather keep discussion to a particular area of expertise?

At this point (or any other point that seems suitable) you might like to share more about yourself and your own experience. This will build trust and show authenticity which often go hand in hand. Here are a few examples statements that you might like to try using:

- I have experience in [insert areas], through my work/personal experience [insert relevant experience]. I believe I can help you by..... does this sound good?
- Is there anything else that you think I can help you with?
- Do you prefer structure or spontaneity with your mentoring sessions?
- Would you like to come to each session with anything in particular - resources, relatable stories etc? Or are you happy to go with the flow as the sessions continue?
- Is there anything else you can share that will help me to be an effective mentor for you?

ON-GOING SESSIONS

No two mentoring sessions will be the same, and again, it's up to you to find a structure that works best for you and your mentee. If you're able to achieve the following outcomes from your sessions, you've done an awesome job:

Create a space for your mentee to show up and share honestly!

A great mentor can create a space for their mentee to feel comfortable to share their honest thoughts, opinions and concerns in order to become more aware of the areas they need support in. By helping a mentee become more aware of this, you can support them in identifying how they might develop in these areas.

How you can do this: actively listen to build trust, ask open-minded questions to fully understand a mentee's situation and try to meet them where they are on their journey. Offer advice or guidance once you have done these things.

Uncover opportunities to help your mentee. We don't know what we don't know! And we never will unless we continue to expand our thinking, seek new knowledge and/ or have someone else point out areas we need to develop or opportunities waiting for us to take. This also applies to possible solutions and can be applied to mentor- mentee relationships.

If you're able to call a mentee's blind spot or identify areas where they may need to improve on, your mentee will be better off. Same goes with solutions, if you've tried the solution they are proposing and have proven it to be ineffective, it's your job to work with them to find ways to improve on the idea or identify new opportunities alongside them.

How you can do this: we're starting to sound like a bit of a broken record here, but questions, questions, questions! Focus your questions on the 'why' because your mentees answers in order to better understand the logic behind their answers, and how you might be able to use this to work with them to find new opportunities or feedback areas they need to work on.

Help your mentee gain clarity and direction around the action(s) she can take. Once you've set up your sessions, asked lots of questions to understand your mentees situation and explored possible opportunities and the thinking behind them, the next step is to agree on what your mentee's actions need to make progress. We recommend encouraging the mentee to consider what the actionable steps might be for the discussion before jumping in to offer suggestions, as they might find they have the answers already.

Locking in actionable steps will help transition realisations and learnings into tangible outcomes for your mentee, which can be incredibly satisfying when they start to see the progress they're making from completing these.

How you can do this: wrap up each mentoring session with asking your mentee what they think the resulting actionable steps could be. Document the agreed tasks and follow up the session with a written reminder of them. This helps create accountability and can be a great starting point for future sessions.



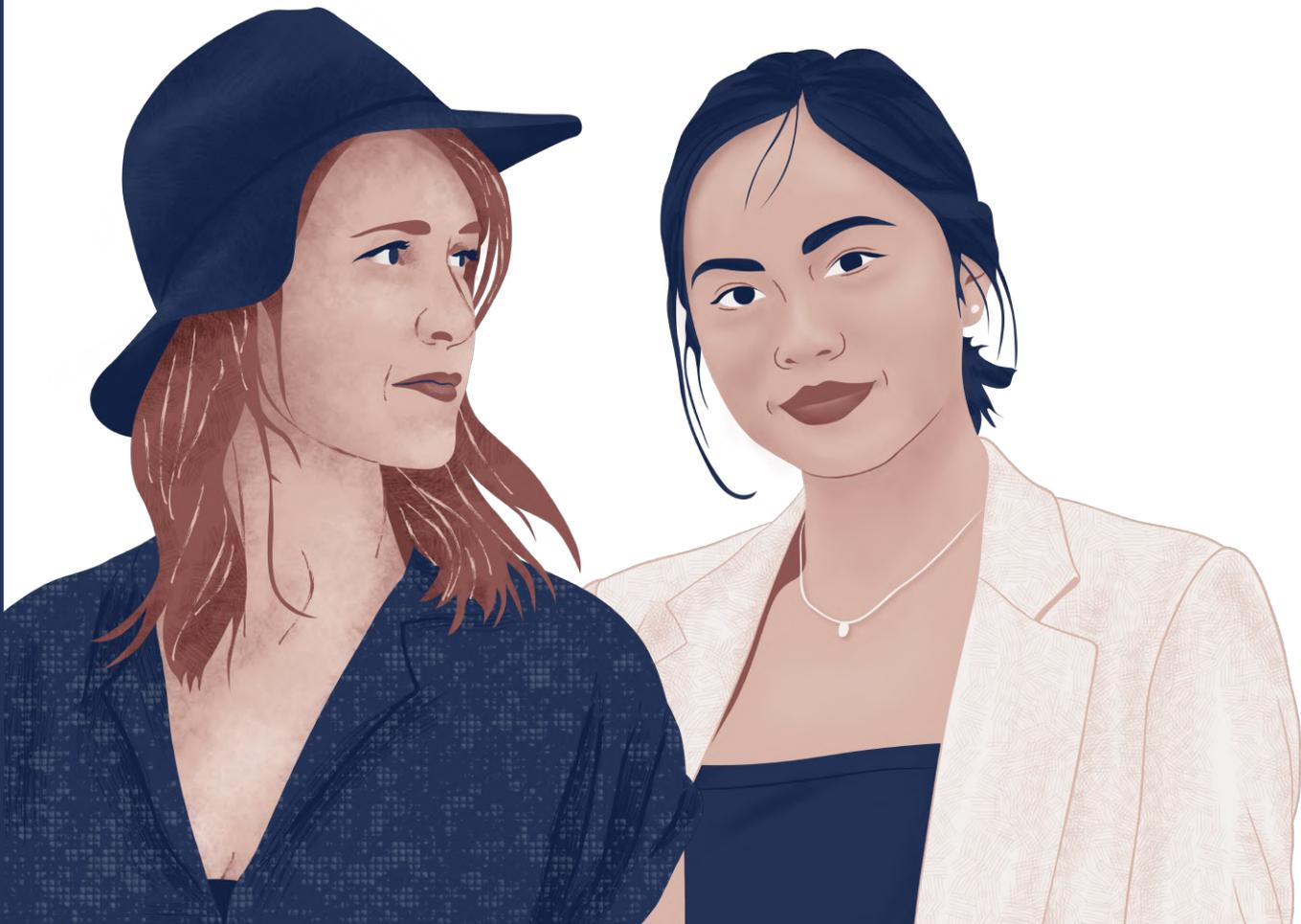
Feedback. Often it's hard to know how you're going as a mentor and whether your mentee is getting any value out of your sessions. There is one simple solution to this – ask for feedback! It can be a great way to finish and/or start on-going mentoring sessions because it allows you to reflect on how the session has gone in the moment and what progress your mentee has made since.

Here are a few questions to ask when seeking feedback:

1. How are you feeling after our session today?
2. Was our session today helpful?
3. Is there anything we didn't cover that you would like to focus on for next time?
4. How did you get on following our last conversation?
5. Are there any ways I can better support you during this session?
6. Have you had any interesting observations or realisations since?
7. Is there something in particular that you'd like to talk about today?

“A mentor empowers a person to see a possible future, and believe it can be obtained”

– Shawn Hitchcock



COMMUNICATION

A person's ability to communicate and the way in which they do so can impact a mentor-mentee relationship. We've found that some mentors whose mentees have different communication styles to them find it hard to form and maintain a connection. They can be left feeling as though they've been ineffective as a mentor.

We are here to remind you that this is not the case! If you find it difficult to communicate with your mentee or it takes you a little longer to connect with them, it does not mean you're not a great mentor. Sometimes mentors and mentees just don't gel, or the differing communication styles may come as a surprise and require a little bit of getting used to.

In our initial survey, we ask both mentors and mentees to select one or multiple communication styles they feel suits them best, so we can factor this in when finding a suitable match. It's important to recognise that while we try our best to make great matches, they may not always align and that could be the reason a mentorship doesn't work, not because you have been ineffective as a mentor.

How to manage differing communication styles.

If you're finding that you aren't able to connect with your mentee immediately, or recognise that your mentee has a different way of communicating than you, you might like to try:

1. Asking your mentee how they would like you to communicate with them.
2. Understanding which communication style and/or personality type your mentee is, so you can better understand their thought patterns and/or how they like to give and receive information.
For example, if your mentee is direct with their communication, it is likely they are outcome focussed and like to understand the purpose of a given topic rather than the small details associated with it.
3. Observing your mentees body language. Do they get uncomfortable or look disengaged when you communicate in various ways? Or do they get animated and excited when you communicate a certain way? This should help you understand which style and/or method of communication they prefer.

FAQS

How much time should I give to my mentee?

As a general guideline, your minimum time commitment as a mentor is 4x1 hour sessions throughout the 3 month period. Twice in the first month and once per month following this. Many of our successful matches have found meeting fortnightly to support continued momentum and creates a higher level of accountability.

However, we understand that one framework doesn't suit everyone, so we like to let each mentor-mentee relationship find what works best for them. We also understand that we're busy women and fitting in a mentoring session every fortnight may not be realistic or suitable for our mentors. It's best to decide with your mentee what is suitable for your relationship based on the amount of time you have to give. We do recommend that this is a conversation that you, as the mentor, initiates as often mentees are conscious of your time and will not want to ask for more frequent meetings.

What if I don't hear from my mentee after our session?

If you don't hear from your mentee after a session, please don't assume that it's because they didn't get value. The lack of communication may be because your mentee is conscious of your time and doesn't want to feel like they are bugging you for the next session.

A mentor-mentee relationship needs to be driven by both mentors and mentees, so we recommend you follow up with your mentee to check in and arrange a time for the next session, if you didn't do so at the end of your previous session. If after this, you still haven't heard from your mentee, please let us know. We'll get in touch with them then find an appropriate solution.

What if my mentee stops responding to my communication?

If you've been in communication with your mentee and they have stopped responding, please let us know so we can help to manage the situation. We want to ensure mentees are respecting and valuing your time and can only take action if we are informed of the situation.

For more questions, please visit our [FAQs page](#).

If you are a "mentor & mentee" you might be interested in our [Mentee Guide](#).