Women in Biotech

Mentoring guidance

December 2023

Contents

How to be a great mentee

1. Set clear goals

Use Goal-Setting Framework below or GROW model above.

2. Be open about your needs

Give your mentor a clear view of where you need support, as well as your expectations and aspirations.

3. Prepare an agenda for meetings

Your mentor won't be able to give meaningful insight or feedback if your goals for your meetings aren't clear.

4. Own your learning journey

Set yourself tasks, listen to podcasts, take courses, etc., and if your mentor suggests resources, make sure to check them out!

5. Be available and responsive

Share your availability for catch-ups and check-ins. It's good to initiate the conversation around scheduling chats.

6. Avoid being defensive

Leave your ego at the door and recognise that your mentor's constructive feedback is ultimately for your benefit.

7. Develop trust

Don't ask for a job or other overreaching favours. Your mentor is there as a trusted advisor.

8. Learn and have fun

Don't treat the experience like a chore. This should be an engaging, enriching, and fruitful experience!

Mentor/Mentee - first meeting checklist

☐ **What do we expect to learn from each other?**

☐ **When will we check the relationship is working for both of us?**

☐ **What are the mentee's goals? What is the order of priority?**

☐ **How will we measure progress?**

☐ **Do we both agree that openness and trust are essential? What does each of us need to know?**

☐ **Will we both give honest and timely feedback?**

☐ **What is the ideal schedule for our contact and meetings? How often will we meet?**

☐ **How long shall we meet for each time?**

☐ **Will either or both of us take notes, and what can we record?**

☐ **Boundaries and confidentiality**

☐ **What is on the agenda for our next meeting?**

Goal-Setting Framework

1. Figure Out Your Goals

For about 5 minutes, do a brainstorm/ mind-dump of all short-, medium-, or long-term goals that come to your mind -anything and everything. Look through, curate, and prioritise the goals you wish to place on your formalised goal sheet.

2. Create Three Types of Goals

- **Habit-Forming Goals**

Goals that you would like to see become habitual behaviours. It takes between 21-60 days to form a habit set the goal at between 4-8 weeks

- **Reach Goals**

Goals that you have to take a few significant steps to 'reach'; can likely be achieved in between 3-12 months.

- **Stretch Goals**

Goals that are out of reach for you right now, very aspirational, and are likely 2-5 years away.

3. Create Three Phases for Each Goal

- **Phase 1: Just take a step. Make it very easy to achieve.**

Examples: Register for 2 networking events; Register a website domain; Download a meditation app; Come up with a morning routine

- **Phase 2: The meat of the goal, the main action phase**

Examples: Meet up with two executives; Build a working version of a website; Meditate for 10 minutes every day; Follow your new morning routine every weekday

- **Phase 3: Home stretch. Close the goal and unlock new potential goals.**

Examples: Send emails to get feedback from people you've met at networking events; Begin blogging on your new website; Maintain your meditation habit; Maintain your morning routine

Five mentoring session agenda templates

These 5 mentoring session agenda templates include 10 discussion questions each. Mentors and mentees can use these as a launching point to have insightful and revealing conversations that lead to growth.

The 5 agendas are on the following topics:

1. Personal development
2. Professional development
3. Collaboration and teamwork
4. Culture
5. Health and balance

Mentoring session agenda: Personal development

Use this mentoring session agenda to dig deep into the mentee's personal development: what are their goals, what's holding them back, and how can these sessions help them realize their potential?

Discussion questions

1. **What do you like to do outside of work?**

   Notes/learnings   Actions (if applicable)

2. **Do you have goals in your personal life? What are they?**

   Notes/learnings   Actions (if applicable)

3. **Do you set long-term goals and pursue them like a North Start or do you set short-term goals? Or neither?**

   Notes/learnings   Actions (if applicable)

4. **What gets in the way of your personal growth?**

   Notes/learnings   Actions (if applicable)

5. Are you surrounded by the right people that help you grow personally?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

6. Are you taking on enough challenges?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

7. What gives you peace, joy, love, and fun in your life?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

8. Where do you experience flow?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

9. Where do you want to be in the next 6-12 months?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

10. What do you want future mentoring sessions to cover?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

Mentoring session agenda: Professional development

Use this mentoring session agenda to dig deep into the mentee's professional development: what are their goals, what's holding them back, and how can these sessions help them grow?

Discussion questions

1. What goals do you have for your professional development?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

2. What was a professional milestone you're most proud of?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

3. Have you had any defining moments that you'd say have shaped your career path?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

4. Have you had mentors or coaches in the past support your professional growth? What impact did they have?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

5. Have you had mentors or coaches in the past support your professional growth? What impact did they have?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

6. What are your strengths in your current role? How would you like to use them in the future?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

7. What are your 1, 3, and 5 year career goals?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

8. If you could go back to being a teenager, would you pursue a different path?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

9. What skills do you want to develop throughout our mentoring sessions?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

10. What's the biggest challenge holding you back in your professional development?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

11. What does professional growth look like to you?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

Mentoring session agenda: Collaboration and teamwork

Use this mentoring session agenda to dig deep into how the mentee operates in a team setting. These questions will uncover how the mentee does their best work collaboratively.

Discussion questions

1. **In your role, do you work more independently or collaboratively within teams?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

2. **Would you rather work on a team or individually?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

3. **During team meetings, do you like to talk through your ideas as a group or formulate your thoughts before sharing?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

4. **What motivates you to collaborate with others?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

5. **Do you like to manage projects or be an individual contributor?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

6. **How do you like to communicate with team members? (e.x. Frequent 1-on-1s, asynchronously)**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

7. **What kind of team members do you work best with?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

8. **What projects energize you the most?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

9. **What do you find most difficult about working collaboratively?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

10. What do you think is more important: soft or hard skills?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

Mentoring session agenda: Company culture

Use this mentoring session agenda to dig deep into how the mentee feels and engages with their company's culture.

Discussion questions

1. **What kind of company culture would you want to work in?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

2. **How's your ideal company culture compare with your current company's?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

3. **Do you feel a sense of belonging within your company's culture? Do you think other employees feel similarly?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

4. **How are decisions made in your culture?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

5. How have you seen feedback shared and received on your team and in your culture?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

6. How does the organization view failure?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

7. How does the company celebrate success?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

8. What kinds of relationships do employees have with one another at your company?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

9. What challenges face your company's culture?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

10. What do you feel needs to change about your company?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

Mentoring session agenda: Health and balance

Use this mentoring session agenda to uncover how the mentee takes care of themselves and manages work/life integration.

Discussion questions

1. **How do you feel about your work/life balance or integration?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

2. **Does your company encourage and support work/life balance? How so?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

3. **What can your company do to give you a better work/life balance?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

4. **What times of the day do you have the most energy? The least?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

5. **What work gives you the most joy and sense of flow?**

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

6. How's your stress level lately? What causes the most stress at work?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

7. How do you diffuse the burdens of work after you leave?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

8. Have you experienced burnout? What was it like and how did you deal with it?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

9. What habits do you have to support your mental and physical health?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

10. Do you find it easy to talk about your mental or physical well-being at work?

Notes/learnings	Actions (if applicable)

The GROW Model

The GROW model of coaching has been designed by Sir John Whitmore and is central to his best-selling book 'Coaching for Performance'. This coaching model can be used to structure mentoring conversations. It is particularly useful when new to mentoring as it provides a framework within which to hold mentoring conversations that enables you and your mentee to:

- Ensure the time is being spent on mentees' goals
- That goals are explored
- Mentee's self-awareness and awareness is raised
- Solutions, actions and activities are agreed
- There is commitment from your mentee to progress their development

As with all models, when applied in practice you may find that each discreet stage tends to merge. That's fine, you just need to take a moment to check, as you go along, that you have covered each stage.

G - **Goal setting for the session as well as for the short and long term**

R – **Reality-checking to explore the current situation**

O - **Options and alternative strategies, or course of actions**

W - **What is to be done, when and by whom and the will to do it**

Goal Setting

The first stage is to agree and understand the goal that the mentee wants to cover in the session. This is important! Some questions to help with this are:

What would you like to get out of this session?
We have half an hour for. Where would you like to have got to by then?
What would be the most useful/helpful thing for you to take away from this session/time?

A goal should be:

SMART, PURE and CLEAR

Specific, **M**easurable, **A**greed, **R**ealistic and **T**ime phased
Positively stated, **U**nderstood, **R**elevant and **E**thical
Challenging, **L**egal, **E**nvironmentally sound, **A**ppropriate and **R**ecorded

Agreeing mentoring goals:

An eight-step approach based on Well Formed Outcomes:

Adapted from Mentoring – A Henley Review of Best Practice by Jane Cranwell-Ward, Patricia Bossons and Sue Gover

1. State what you want in the positive. *What do you want?*

2. Find out what evidence they need to demonstrate success. *How will you know when you have what you want? How will you look, sound and feel? What will be the same – different?* This is a must for recognising success

3. Can you start and maintain the process to get what you want? *What stops you from having it right now? What do you need? What is your first step?*

4. You presently do things which work, so what part of your present behaviour can you use to get what you want?

5. In what context do you want this? *Everywhere or somewhere specific? When do you want it – all of the time? When, where and with whom do you not want it?*

6. What are the costs of what you want? *Is it worth the cost to you? What will you gain? What will you lose?*

7. Is it worth the time it is going to take?

8. Is it what you want in keeping with your own purpose, your sense of self and identity?

Reality Checking

Once the goal is set you will need to explore the facts and feelings around the issue/problem/topic. This exploration is to raise the awareness and self-awareness of the individual. Awareness is defined as perceiving things as they really are and self-awareness is recognising those internal factors that distort one's own perception of reality.

To do this we often we need to tap into the emotions:

- *How did you/do you feel about….?*

- *What is the predominant feeling when….?*

- *What do you think you are afraid of?*

- *Can you give me a rating on a scale of 1 – 10 for your level of confidence in your ability to do….?*

One reality question that nearly always contributes value is:

'What action have you taken on this so far? Followed by

'What were the effects of that action?' or, if the answer is nothing! *'What are the factors that prevented you from taking action?'*

Options

Once your mentee is aware of the reality around the situation they need to think about actions, solutions and ideas that will help resolve or move the situation forward. Having options is important as choice enables us to feel in control and empowered. It is even more powerful if those choices are our own and the choice we make is also our own.

When asked to think about options for taking an issue forward we can be faced with negativity. This negativity comes from our own limiting beliefs. As a mentor we need to get people to see beyond these beliefs.

Some very common negative responses are:

- *I don't know*

- *It can't be done*

- *It can't be done like that*

- *They would never agree to that*

- *It's bound to cost too much/take too much time*

To unlock negativity the following *'what if…'* questions may work

- *What if you knew the answer? What would it be?*

- *What if the obstacle didn't exist? What would you do then?*

- *What if you did have enough money/time?*

The key is to identify the limiting belief; the solutions and choices are then much easier to find.

What is to be done?

Once the choices for moving forward have been agreed, it is important that the mentee has fully bought into the action if they are to feel confident in completing it. This stage needs to cover the what, when, who (support/involved) and the will to do it. If this is not explored you may think your mentee has left the session with agreed actions and be surprised to find that when you next meet that nothing has happened!

Some questions that may help are:

- *What are you going to do?*

- *When are you going to do it?*

- *Will this action meet your goal?*

- *What obstacles might you meet along the way?*

- *Who needs to know?*

- *What support do you need?*

- *How and when are you going to get that support?*
- *What other considerations do you have?*
- *On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you that will carry out the actions agreed?*
- *What prevents it from being a 10?*
- *What would make it a 10 for you?*