Trinity Career Mentor Handbook

2019-2020

In support of Career Mentoring run by Trinity Development and Alumni and Trinity Careers Service

Training devised and presented by Trinity Counselling, Learning Development and Student 2 Student Services

Contents

Overview of Trinity Career Mentoring

What is mentoring?

Career mentoring is a relationship between a student or graduate ('mentee') and a more experienced graduate ('mentor'), who is there to support the mentee with developing their career. The purpose of the relationship is the passing on of knowledge, experience and offering advice. Mentors can help with preparing for the world of work, discuss career options and offer practical assistance with getting jobs and a place on a postgraduate course.

Mentoring at Trinity is facilitated by the Trinity Alumni Online Mentoring (TAOM) platform, managed by Trinity Development and Alumni, through which students and alumni can engage with each other. The Careers Service has developed the mentoring framework to help optimise relationship building between mentors and mentees in person and online. The Careers Service supports students to make the most of mentoring as part of their career development.

Trinity alumni mentors work in a wide range of sectors and locations. It is up to the mentee to select a mentor that interests them. Graduates and students of Trinity have exclusive access to Trinity Alumni Online, where mentees can connect with mentors. Mentors and mentees will build a mentoring relationship, helping mentees achieve their mentoring objectives.

Two ways to connect with Trinity students 2019-2020

Option 1 – Attend a Mentoring Launch Event for penultimate and final year students and start mentoring

Get an overview of how to make the most of mentoring at the Mentoring Briefing with Trinity Development and Alumni before each Mentoring Launch Event; understand the time commitment and what is expected of you and your mentee through the "How to" Guide for Mentors attending a Mentoring Launch Event. Mentees and mentors connect via Trinity Alumni Online.

Option 2 - Connect with all student and alumni mentees through Trinity Alumni Online and start mentoring.

Register with Trinity Alumni Online and connect with Trinity students and alumni. Respond to career related questions. If you are requested as a mentor, please respond in a timely fashion.

Mentor Guidelines and Mentor Agreement

When you engage in mentoring through Trinity Alumni Online you agree to the [Mentor Guidelines](#) and [Mentor Agreement](#).

Mentoring Certificate of Completion for Student Mentees

A certificate is available to students who complete the required documentation by 27th March 2020. Mentors need to co-sign this with their student mentee.

Mentor Guidelines

Introduction

Mentoring is an interactive learning and educational experience, provided to support students and fellow alumni with developing their career. It is a relationship between a 'mentee' and a more experienced 'mentor'. Below are guidelines to help make mentoring a success for you.

Being a mentor

Mentoring activities can range from helping a mentee to find out more about what it's like to work in a specific role or sector, reviewing a CV or LinkedIn profile, providing advice on interview strategy, or helping your mentee to practice professional communication and networking. It is a rewarding experience that generally results in personal growth for the mentor as well as the mentee. The specific shape of the relationship is up to you.

There are a couple of ways you can become a mentor: through the online platform and at in-person events. To connect with students and alumni through the online platform, please sign up at Trinity Alumni Online (the full terms and conditions for using Trinity Alumni Online are here). Once you have activated your mentoring tab, students and alumni will be able to send you a mentoring request.

We also run several **in-person mentoring events** at Trinity throughout the year. Please see the Trinity Development and Alumni website for upcoming events.

Commitment level

When volunteering as a mentor, you can choose your level of commitment which can range from answering a few questions over email through to a more ongoing mentoring relationship that may last several months. As a guideline, we would recommend that you aim for about three meetings of about an hour's duration over a six-month period in addition to replying to any e-mails/questions/concerns. You are in control of how much time you have to give to mentoring and can change your level of commitment as you see fit.

Some students will apply for a Mentoring Certificate of Completion. To receive this Certificate you will need to discuss and co-sign the Tracking My Mentoring Journey document. You will also be requested to complete mentoring feedback surveys on your experience.

Ideal number of alumni/students to mentor

You can decide how many mentees you wish to accept. If you are new to mentoring or have limits on your time, it may be appropriate to engage with just one or two mentees to begin with, monitor progress with them, and take on others as and when you feel comfortable to do so.

Ways you could help as a mentor

Your support can be valuable to students/alumni at any point in your career. For example:

- **If you only graduated a few years ago –** you can share your insight into finding a first job, applications and interviews, making the most of your time at university, and how to successfully transition into working life.
- **If you are further into your career –** you likely have a deep knowledge of the industry sector you work in, and possibly other sectors as well. You are also well-equipped to help students/alumni with longer-term career planning and goal-setting, and to help them build confidence and resilience.
- **If you are self-employed –** Trinity has many entrepreneurial students who are keen to start their own businesses. These students would greatly value your advice on the challenges and rewards of self-employment.
- **If you are a postgraduate researcher or an academic –** many students/alumni who consider academic careers can benefit from your experience of academia and of winning research positions and funding.

Responding to mentoring requests

If you have just received a mentoring request from a student/alum, these quick tips are for you.

- **Consider how you could help -** Your mentee may be able to learn a lot from you even if they are not currently interested in following your career path.
- **Tell them about yourself -** If you agree to mentor them, try to tell them a little more about yourself and your interests. This will make them more comfortable and help to get the conversation started.
- **Plan your time commitment -** Mentoring can be time-consuming; be realistic about how much time you have for the student/ alumni before accepting them.
- **Ask for more information if you need it -** If you are not sure what this student/alumni wants from you or you do not know enough about them, you can send a response to them before accepting them as a mentee.
- **Manage their expectations -** If your time is limited, tell them that – and give them a realistic idea of how quickly they will hear back from you.
- **Thank the student/alumni for their interest -** Approaching a mentor takes time and thought and can be nerve-wracking, so a kind response will be appreciated. If you decline a request there should be a good reason to do so. We encourage you to at least have an initial conversation to explore whether the relationship would be mutually beneficial.
- **Report anything you are uncomfortable with -** Please report any problems to Trinity Development and Alumni at alumni@tcd.ie. This is important, not just for your benefit, but for all other mentors the student/alumni may come into contact with.

How can the Trinity support you?

Where career or personal development advice is sought by a student mentee outside your specialist area, you can refer back to Trinity's Careers Service, at careers@tcd.ie or go to the

online portal [MyCareer](#) so that a careers consultant can work with the student. If you are concerned about your mentee's emotional wellbeing contact the Student Counselling Service at telephone (01) 8961407 for guidance and suggestions.

Mentees who are current Trinity students can also be referred directly to the Student Counselling Service for support. If your mentee is not a current student, the service can still support you and will help you to identify an appropriate source of support for anyone of concern.

How to get started

There are a couple of ways you can become a mentor:

Sign up to Trinity's Online Mentoring Platform
To connect with students and alumni for online mentoring, please sign up to our mentoring platform at [Trinity Alumni Online](#). Please take time to complete your profile in detail as this gives you the best chance of being found by a suitable mentee. Make sure that the checklist of the mentoring 'services' you are able and willing to provide is kept up to date and the number of simultaneous mentoring relationships reflects your capacity. We want you to volunteer based on the time and energy you have available. Once you have activated your profile, students and alumni will be able to send you a mentoring request. You can easily set your preferences for the number of mentees you can accept and the types of mentoring services you can offer.

After you've connected with a mentee, you can choose how you want to connect - via email, phone, in person, etc. - as well as how often.

Attend a Mentoring Event on Campus
We run several in-person mentoring events at Trinity throughout the year. Please go to our [Mentoring page](#) for upcoming mentoring events.

How to Guide for Mentors attending a Mentoring Launch Event

What is mentoring? It is an opportunity for students to develop personally and professionally by establishing a supportive mentoring relationship with a Trinity graduate. Students benefit enormously from the exchange of ideas with graduates who can share their wealth of experience. Students take responsibility for contacting potential mentors. Once a mentor accepts a student mentee request, a mentoring relationship begins. As a guideline, aim for about three meetings of about an hour's duration over a six month period.

What types of topics interest students?

- Exploring job roles and sectors
- Deciding what to do after College
- Practicing job interviews
- Finding jobs not advertised
- CV/LinkedIn profile reviews

Who is mentoring for?

- It is for alumni mentors with professional experience interested in sharing their expertise, and
- Final year and penultimate year students of all disciplines

What is the Format of a Mentoring Launch event?
- Get ideas on making the most of mentoring at the Mentor Briefing with Trinity Development and Alumni.
- Alumni mentors are grouped by sector at the launch event to facilitate students finding you.
- It's an opportunity to network with potential mentees.
- Introduce yourself to students. Be prepared to discuss your work/career and respond to student questions.
- Zone facilitators will be on hand to help make introductions.
- Let potential mentees know that you are registered with Trinity Alumni Online and that you are willing to receive a mentoring request from them.
- Remember these events are an opportunity to speak with **many** students. The process of mentoring and in-depth conversations happens AFTER the event.
- Understand your role in supporting students to receive a Mentoring Certificate of Completion.

What Happens After a Mentoring Launch event?

- Students will be encouraged to connect with you via Trinity Alumni Online.
- Please register at: Trinity.aluminate.net and update your mentor profile.
- Respond to any mentoring requests from potential student mentees.
- Explain your availability and capacity to help.
- Once you accept a mentoring request follow up to arrange your first meeting.
- Set some SMART objectives together with your student mentee.
- The Mentor Handbook will help to manage your mentoring relationship.
- Be prepared to discuss and sign the document *Tracking My Mentoring Journey* for students who are applying for a Mentoring Certificate of Completion.

Time commitment:

- Approx. 10 hours from the launch event to April.
- Attend the Mentor Briefing with Trinity Development and Alumni prior to a Mentoring Launch event: 6-6.30pm.
- Attend the Mentoring Launch event: 6.45- 8.30pm.
- Meet Ups with Mentees: Approx. 3 meetings for approx. 1 hour over the following six months.
- Respond to a survey evaluation at the end of your mentoring relationship.

What's involved for alumni mentors:

- Willing to assist students to better equip themselves for the labour market in which they have expertise through support, assistance & guidance.
- Register with Trinity Alumni Online Mentoring and agree to Mentor Guidelines and Mentor Agreement.
- Attend the Mentoring Launch Event and meet with potential student mentees interested in your industry/field/area of expertise.
- Where advice is sought outside your area of expertise suggest that the student seeks advice from the Careers Service in the first instance.
- Provide mentoring over a specific period of time, aim for six months initially.
- Discuss and sign the document *Tracking My Mentoring Journey* for students applying for the Mentoring Certificate of Completion.
- To inform alumni@tcd.ie if there are issues connecting/communicating with mentees.

What's involved for student mentees:

- Register with Trinity Alumni Online and agree to Mentee Guidelines and Mentee Agreement.
- Contact potential mentors, to secure a mentor of choice.
- Schedule the first meeting.
- Keep meetings/ contact within parameters established by mentor.
- Be proactive, willing to meet with a mentor and prepare for meetings.

- Discuss and progress career goals and expectations.
- Complete and sign the document *Tracking My Mentoring Journey* if applying for the Mentoring Certificate of Completion.
- Inform the alumni@tcd.ie if there are any issues connecting/communicating with mentors.
- As needed, seek careers and mentoring support through MyCareer from your Careers Consultant.

Role of Trinity Development and Alumni (TDA):
- Be the point of contact for mentors at alumni@tcd.ie.
- Co-ordination of Mentoring Launch events.
- Manage Trinity Alumni Online.
- Evaluate events and mentoring relationships as they end from an alumni perspective.

Role of Careers Service:
- Be the main point of contact for student mentees through MyCareer and careers@tcd.ie
- Co-ordinate and deliver briefing sessions to mentees prior to the Mentoring Launch event.
- Evaluate events and mentoring relationships as they end from a student perspective.
- Manage the issuing of Mentoring Certificates of Completion.
- Advise on referrals which may arise for mentors who feel mentees need expertise outside of their remit.
- Create mentoring resources to support mentors and mentees.

Role of Schools:
- Promote the value of mentoring and attendance at events to penultimate year and final year undergraduate students.
- Encourage alumni to connect to Trinity Alumni Online.
- Facilitate at Mentoring Launch events.

Mentoring Certificate of Completion for Students

Tracking My Career Mentoring Journey 2019/2020
(between student mentee and alumni mentor)

This document sets out a framework for tracking the mentoring relationship between you and your alumni mentor with the purpose of clarifying your goals, assisting with reflection and optimising learning.
The mentoring relationship can start at any point in the academic year but should be completed by mid-March 2020. For students to be eligible to receive a Mentoring Certificate of Completion, they must complete at least three meetings with their mentor (face to face/ video) and track their progress on the form below. When completed, the mentee and mentor must sign the form and submit it to MyCareer by Friday 27th March 2020.

Mentee Name _____

Mentor Name _____

Mentoring Reflections

Clarify the goals of your mentoring relationship
Mentee: What I want to get out of mentoring is…. (Refer to Mentoring Resources for ideas)
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Mentor: What I can offer to this mentee is …(Refer to the Trinity Career Mentor Handbook for ideas)
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Our shared vision of success in this mentoring relationship is:
_____

Mentoring Arrangements
The mentee will contact the mentor at least _____ time(s) a week/ month/ semester.
Our primary means of communication will be through (circle): face-to-face / phone / email / Instant Messaging/ Trinity Alumni Online (TAO)/ Other _____
We will meet one-on-one to discuss our progress and to review our goals at least _____time(s) a week/ month/ semester
It will be the (mentee's / mentor's) responsibility to schedule these meetings. (circle)
In preparation for these meetings, the mentee will:
_____
_____

In preparation for these meetings, the mentor will:
_____
_____

Meeting Tracker

Meeting One:
Date & time: _____   Location: _____
Outcomes of/ actions from meeting: -
_____
_____
_____
_____

Meeting Two:
Date & time: _____   Location: _____
Progress since previous meeting: -
_____
_____
_____
Outcomes of/ actions from meeting: -
_____
_____
_____
_____

Meeting Three:
Date & time: _____   Location: _____
Progress since previous meeting: -
_____
_____
_____
Outcomes of/ actions from meeting: -
_____
_____
_____
_____
If additional meetings/ email exchanges/ phone calls were held please include details in an attachment with this document.

Signatures

_____   _____
Mentee Signature   Mentor Signature

_____   _____
Mentee Email Address   Mentor Email Address

_____   _____
Date   Date

Upload this completed and signed document to MyCareer by Friday 27th March 2020 to be eligible to receive a Mentoring Certificate of Completion.

Top Tips for being a great Mentor

There is no template for being a great mentor. However, you may find the advice on this page useful as you craft your own mentoring approach. *Tracking My Mentoring Journey* document can be helpful to frame your time with your student mentee. Supporting students to complete and submit this document with your co-signature by March will facilitate the student to receive a Mentoring Certificate of Completion.

- **Let the mentee take the lead –** Mentees are encouraged to take the initiative and to drive the mentoring relationship. Encourage your mentee to take initiative. Ask them what they want from mentoring and what they hope to achieve. Be a guide, not a supervisor.

- **Set objectives together -** Work together with your mentee at the beginning of your contact to define some SMART (Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic, Time-related) objectives. Encourage them to make a simple plan for working towards those objectives and review the progress they are making. Be sure to acknowledge what you have achieved together and what the next steps should be.

- **Encourage them to reflect -** Encourage your mentee to be open-minded and to reflect on their more basic preconceptions about their future: What do they really want from their career? What do they want their daily life to be like? Why do they want to take this path?

- **Be a critical friend –** Your mentee will have many questions and preconceptions about your field and they may have unrealistic expectations. Do your best to clarify, demystify and prepare your mentee for the realities of the career path they are interested in in a tactful and constructive way.

- **Encourage them to access more help -** All Trinity students have access to their careers consultant as well as supports for other issues such as finance, personal counselling and /or disabilities. Please encourage them to ask for help if they need it. The Careers Service can help connecting them with other Student Services.

How can Trinity support you?

Student mentees- Where career or personal development advice is sought by a student mentee outside your specialist area, you should refer back to the Careers Service or careers@tcd.ie or the online career portal MyCareer so that a careers consultant can work with the student. For other Trinity supports for students see Trinity Support Services.

Mentor FAQ

Who can mentor?

We would encourage all alumni to consider becoming a mentor, regardless of age or experience. Your support can be valuable to students/alumni at any point in your career.

Do I have to accept someone's mentor request? The Trinity Alumni Online platform affords the mentor the opportunity to accept or decline a mentee, dependent upon the information given by the mentee. If you decline a request there should be a good reason to do so. We encourage you to at least have an initial conversation to explore whether the relationship would be mutually beneficial.

Is it worthwhile meeting with my mentees?

Online mentoring is perfectly possible and can work very well, particularly where there are restrictions on geographical location. If there are no restrictions, then meeting your mentee(s) in person can feel more authentic since both of you are present and focused. As a guideline, aim for about three meetings of about an hour's duration over a six-month period, in addition to replying to any e-mails/questions/concerns. These meetings are necessary for students applying for the Mentoring Certificate of Completion.

Should I include an invitation to my place of work or for workplace experience?

This is entirely up to you and you can decide to offer a work experience invitation to someone whom you were initially mentoring over the phone or where you have had one or two formal meetings. There are no hard and fast rules as to how the relationship should progress. As a volunteer though, you are giving your time freely and there is no agreement to provide job opportunities, review business venture proposals or course projects, interview mentees, or recruit them for open positions at your place of employment.

How do I become a mentor?

There are a couple of ways you can become a mentor: through the online platform and at in-person events. To connect with students and alumni through the online platform, please sign up at Trinity Alumni Online (the full terms and conditions for using Trinity Alumni Online are here). Once you have activated your mentoring tab, students and alumni will be able to send you a mentoring request.

We also run several **in-person mentoring events** at Trinity throughout the year. Please see the Trinity Development and Alumni mentoring section of the website for upcoming events.

To learn more about your role as a mentor, read the Trinity Career Mentor Handbook, which includes Mentor FAQs, Guidelines and Top Tips.

What is the Mentoring Certificate of Completion?

Students who complete, sign and submit the Tracking My Mentoring Journey document to the Careers Service by a specified date in March will receive a Mentoring Certificate of Completion. As part of this process mentors need to discuss the document with their student mentee and co-sign it.

Introduction to Mentoring Up

Background

In 1980 J. Gabarro and John P. Kotter wrote an article for the *Harvard Business Review* called "Managing Your Boss,[1]" in which they identified the mutual dependencies between managers and their superiors. Among their critiques was the fact that people often assume a "passively reactive stance vis-á-vis their bosses". Rather than taking the time to understand the needs and expectations they have of their boss, and the needs and expectations their boss places on them, they assume information will come to them if they need it, and that the boss will ask if there's anything they need to tell them.

Gabarro and Kotter's simple proposal for an enhanced strategy of communication and collaboration, working in both directions, has generated an entire philosophy, and a host of accompanying text books and manuals, for "Managing Up": taking the initiative to understand your boss' context and style, where it meets and where it will conflict with your own style and how to build a relationship that will successfully navigate the risks and build on the strengths.

More recently, their approach has been adapted to look at supervision and mentoring relationships in research science[2] and other academic relationships. The resulting strategy, Mentoring-Up[3], is becoming widely adopted in higher education institutes internationally, including Stanford University, who recommended it to Trinity College Dublin. We have adapted it again to create a structure for preparing and training you as Career Mentors in a way that will help you, as well as your mentees, to get the most out of your relationships with them.

Mentoring up is a process in which the mentee continually learns about the relationship and develops skills to engage in it as the relationship evolves. Ultimately, learning the skills needed to proactively manage an evolving mentoring relationship will contribute significantly to the mentee's ability to effectively navigate and manage a career (Lee et. al. 2015)

Wherever you are in your own career trajectory, we hope that working as a Mentor will enhance your own skills in managing up, and in encouraging your team to manage you.

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[1] Gabarro, J. and Kotter, J.P. 1980. 'Managing Your Boss.' *Harvard Business Review* 58,(1), p92-100.

[2] Handelsman, J. and Handelsman, H. 2009. *Entering mentoring*. 1st ed. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

[3] Lee, S. P., McGee, R., Pfund, C. and J. Branchaw. 2015. 'Mentoring Up: Learning to Manage Your Mentoring Relationships' in Wright, G. (ed.), New York: The Graduate School Press of Syracuse University.

Framework

The Mentoring-Up strategy is divided into seven key principles:

1. **Maintaining Effective Communication** – learning and developing strategies to listen well, respond effectively and identify gaps in understanding

2. **Aligning Expectations** – understanding what the mentee expects from you, communicating what you expect from them, and identifying when this changes

3. **Assessing Understanding** – making sure that your communication styles and expectations are mutually understood and agreed

4. **Equity and Inclusion** – learning to identify, reflect on and engage with diverse perspectives. Avoiding fear of the unknown, and/or the assumption that you have to agree before you can advance

5. **Fostering Independence** – defining where a mentee needs support to build initiative and confidence, and supporting them to do this. Leading over managing.

6. **Professional Development** – enabling the mentee to identify and to achieve specific, measurable outcomes, and to reflect on the process

7. **Ethics** – maintaining clear boundaries and behaviours that ensure a safe, productive relationship between mentors and mentees. Avoid any uncomfortable situations and have clear recourse when necessary.

The next chapters will explore each of these principles in more depth, referring back to the training itself, before we finish with some more practical information.

Mentoring vs Coaching[4]

Coaching and mentoring use the same skills and approach, but coaching is short term task-based and mentoring is a longer-term relationship.

The CIPD differentiates between coaching, mentoring and counselling. It is helpful to understand these differences as, although many of the processes are similar, they are generally delivered by individuals with different qualifications and in different relationships.

Mentoring	Coaching
Ongoing relationship that can last for a long period of time	Relationship generally has a set duration
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'. Often a senior person in the organisation 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 career and personal development	Focus is generally on 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 revolves more around developing the mentee's professional career	Coaching revolves more around specific development areas/issues

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[4] Adapted from https://www.brefigroup.co.uk/coaching/coaching_and_mentoring.html

Coaching and mentoring processes

Individual and management development can take place in many forms, some delivered by managers and some by internal or external coaches, or mentors. Robert Dilts defines the different activities as follows: -

Coaching: helping another person to improve awareness, to set and achieve goals in order to improve a particular behavioural performance

Mentoring: helping to shape an individual's beliefs and values in a positive way; often a longer-term career relationship from someone who has 'done it before'

You can use the obvious sports metaphor as an example of the difference. If you are coaching a player, you're using your own strategy and experience to drive them where they need to go. You are controlling the conversation and pushing for the change, and they are listening to and being guided by you.

If you were mentoring that same player, the results would take longer to achieve. You're not telling them what to do, your showing them options and encouraging them to inform themselves and make their own decisions. You're letting them decide the strategy in a safe and supportive environment, where they can learn to see the bigger picture and gain confidence in their own judgement.

Effective Communication

Tips for Active Listening

One of the most important skills you may use as a Mentor is active listening. Listening is naturally a passive process, turning it into an active one takes a lot of effort & energy, but it's well worth it. Both your mentees and you will find the mentoring relationship a lot easier if you remember the following checklist & listen actively.

- Stop Talking
  You can't listen while you're talking

- Don't Give Up Too Soon
  Don't interrupt – give them time to say what they have to say

- Concentrate on What They Are Saying
  Focus on their words, ideas & feelings

- Look at Them
  Body Language is as important as the words they use

- Smile & Make Appropriate Noises.
  However, don't go over the top!

- Leave Your Emotions at the Door
  Any fears, problems or worries playing on your mind can interfere

- Get Rid of Distractions
  No phones, iPads, smart watches… anything that could draw your attention

- Share Responsibility for Communication
  Speaking is only half of communication – if you don't understand them, ask!

- React to the Ideas Put Forward, Not the Individual
  Even if you don't like the person, their ideas may be good, and vice versa

- Listen to How They Say Things
  Attitudes & reactions are as important as what is said

- Listen for Their Personality
  How & what they say can give you an insight into what makes them tick

- Allow Space & Time for Thinking
  Silence is Golden. Also, if you have a time limit, make that clear in the beginning.

- Avoid Jumping to Conclusions and Making Assumptions.
  They may not mean the same thing you would when they say a particular word or phrase.

- Don't Make Hasty Judgements.
  Wait until you know all the facts before making any decisions.

- Resist the Feeling That You Must Solve the Problem.
  You're there to listen. If you focus on finding answers, you're not listening properly.

- Reflect, Paraphrase, Summarize.
  This will ensure you don't miss anything that the mentee is saying, and give them the chance to correct how you interpret them.

Aligning Expectations

Aligning expectations is all about avoiding assumptions. By clarifying what is said, and what is meant by it, and by allowing time for exploration in a conversation, you can make sure that you have a much fuller understanding of what someone is trying to explain.

Quite often, our jobs involve assimilating information and acting quickly on it, but allowing a little time and space for conversation can really broaden and shape our responses to be more effective.

Reflecting, Paraphrasing, and Summarising

Reflecting, paraphrasing and summarising skills are not just applicable to mentoring; you are probably using most of them already without even realising it. Mastering these skills will be useful in a variety of settings (workplace, personal relationships, politics, etc.) and probably throughout your lifetime.

REFLECTING

Reflecting is a very important tool used to mirror the meaning and feelings of what someone has said. Usually it just involves repeating the last few words of what was heard. This communicates that you have heard and are absorbing what is being said.

Example

A mentee is very anxious about doing an oral presentation in front of their interview panel. They say to you, *"I won't be able to do it. I'll just get up there and freeze!"*

Possible reflection

"You'll freeze?"

PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing is the skill of restating what someone else has just said. The listener repeats the message in their own words, perhaps using a concrete illustration, example or metaphor to convey more vividly what they understand has been said.

Paraphrasing combines thoughts, feelings, and/or actions to provide a clearer picture for both people involved in a conversation. Paraphrasing also allows a speaker to re-hear a statement and thus verify that the listener did, in fact, listen to them. These comments therefore provide ongoing feedback during a conversation, a constant re-tuning of the communication channel.

Finally, paraphrasing does more than simply mirror back what another person has said – it invites the person to explore further or to understand better whatever is being discussed.

Example

A mentee describes a heated argument with their line manager during their summer internship. As they talk of their anger, their eyes fill with tears.

Possible paraphrase

"Am I right in thinking that you are cross with your manager, and at the same time you are feeling upset?"

This paraphrase takes into account the content (dispute with line manager), the verbalised feelings (anger), and the nonverbal behaviour (tears).

In order for paraphrasing to be most effective, it must be accurate. Nevertheless, you should attempt to paraphrase what another person is saying; even if you are not sure you are right. It is important to invite the other person to confirm or reject a paraphrase, as it will give you the opportunity to correct any errors of perception on your part.

Some possible introductory phrases for paraphrasing:

• I hear you saying that…

• If I understand correctly, you…

• It sounds like you…

NOT:

• You're not making yourself clear.

• You haven't expressed that very well.

<u>Examples of paraphrasing</u>

"I really can't apply for that placement. It's not that I cannot do it, I just can't stand the thought of the interview."

Paraphrasing response: *"You feel that you are capable of doing the placement, but don't want to apply because you're daunted by the interview?"*

"I'm so confused. I just don't know whether to transfer to that other course or carry on as I am."

Paraphrasing response: *"So you're saying that you're unsure if you want to change course?"*

<u>Guidelines</u>

- Be tentative and offer your impression of what someone else has said.
- Avoid telling, informing or defining the other person.
- Be respectful: don't judge, dismiss or use sarcasm.
- Use your own words. Repeating verbatim (parroting) is not paraphrasing.
- Try to tune into the other person's language. It is better to use exact words when characterising an event or situation, e.g. "unsure" not "indecisive."
- Listen to the depth of feeling expressed in the person's voice and reflect accordingly in your response.
- Do not add to what the person has said, and avoid interpretations and evaluations.
- Be genuine and don't pretend you understand if you do not.
- Be brief and direct.

SUMMARISING

Summarising pulls together the main points of a discussion and organises them so that they can be reviewed, confirmed or corrected.

Summaries can serve a variety of purposes, including to:

- Prioritise and focus scattered thoughts and feelings.
- Close the discussion of a particular theme.
- Begin a further discussion.
- Check understanding of the progress of the conversation.
- Prompt exploration of an idea more completely.
- Focus a conversation that seems to be going nowhere.
- Begin to consider ways forward.

Guidelines

- Put together the key ideas and feelings into broad statements of the student's basic meanings.
- Attend to the student's various themes and emotional overtones.
- Be brief and direct.
- Do not add to what the person has said, and avoid interpretations and evaluations.

Example

In the following response, the listener summarises what a mentee has said and adds a question to help that person move forward.

"Can I just check that I'm getting this right? You've told me of a few choices open to you. You could try to deal with procrastination yourself, make an appointment to meet with your tutor or enrol in a study skills group. None of the options feel like a perfect solution for you. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of each of these possibilities?"

Assessing Understanding

Below is a useful template for checking that the mentee and the mentor have aligned their expectations.[5] It can be readily converted into a contract if you want a formal agreement, or followed more informally, but you should never skip a question. If you think an area of this template might be inapplicable, agree this with your mentee as well.

The mentee's major goals are:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

Our shared vision of success in this mentoring relationship is:

_____

We agree to work together on for _____ (period of time).

The mentee will contact the mentor at least _____ time(s) a week / month / semester.

Our primary means of communication will be through (circle):

face-to-face / phone / email / IM/ _____

We will meet one-on-one to discuss our progress and to reaffirm or revise our goals at least _____ time(s) a week / month / semester

It will be the (mentee's / mentor's) responsibility to schedule these meetings. (circle)

In preparation for these meetings, the mentee will:

In preparation for these meetings, the mentor will:

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[5] Adapted from Branchaw, J. L., Pfund, C., and Rediske, R. (2010), *Entering Research: A Facilitator's Manual: Workshops for Students Beginning Research in Science*, W.H. Freeman & Company.

Equality and Inclusion

Becoming aware of our own thoughts and feelings is the first step in the process of becoming an effective mentor and manager. If we are aware of our own personal beliefs and feelings, we are better able to ensure that we do not impose them on others. Think about yourself in a reflective manner. Ask yourself: What would prevent you from remaining impartial while supporting a mentee or staff member? How are your personal values, beliefs and attitudes implicated?

It is necessary to understand the differences between values, beliefs and attitudes versus prejudices. It is also necessary to tease out what prejudices exist in our society, community, and ourselves. Unfortunately, personal prejudices can and do colour our individual ways of being. Much of the time we are unaware of the ways in which we might influence a relationship, situation, or event by our own bias. Often we are not even conscious of holding a particular view, but can you honestly say you are impartial about everything? Do you ever get annoyed by someone on a TV or radio show debate? Did you have a strong opinion about any referendum or political issue recently?

In becoming more aware of your personal values, beliefs and attitudes, you will be able to see the importance of considering issues and situations from another's point of view. We all have our own unique combination of values, beliefs and attitudes which influence how we see and make sense of our experience and situations. As a mentor, it is important to suspend our own world view as we try to be objective and non-judgemental and so gain some understanding of the other's position.

Valuing diversity

Maintain an awareness of the nature and existence of personal, institutional and societal prejudice.

It is important to remember that many, if not, all people have prejudices and biases. However, we are all more informed when we are <u>aware</u>. Have a think about the changing composition of Irish society. Think of the attributes/factors for which people are commonly discriminated against. These may include: nationality, skin colour, religion, accent, economic status, sexuality, gender identity, disability, age, etc. What additional hurdles might someone who identifies under one of these categories come across? Do any of these labels trigger your own bias or prejudices, positive and negative?

Fostering Independence

We're going to move back to active listening skills in this chapter, as a critical facet of active listening is the ability to be non-directive, which means not giving advice.

When a mentee is comfortable looking at options and speaking their own mind, it's fairly easy to avoid being directive. But what about when someone is particularly lost and confused?
When they're looking to you for guidance, and you know exactly what you would do if it were you?
Or when they explicitly say "I really want your advice".

As well as avoiding any blame if advice is take up wrong or goes badly, the importance of being non-directive lies in the fact that **it is much more empowering to help someone to reach a decision for themselves.** Even if it takes longer. Even if you disagree with their decision.

Questions

Sometimes, the best way to avoid proposing a solution is to ask more questions, until you find the right one to trigger that person's own sense of what they want or are looking for. It deflects the request for an answer back to them, and helps you to explore the issue in a way that takes you back out of the hot seat.

Questions are an important part of a helping conversation. However, they need to be used appropriately to benefit a discussion.

General guidelines for questions

- Ask questions that serve a purpose.
- Ask questions that have substance to them - to help the person get somewhere, to gather information that is useful for the person, to challenge the person to think about something.
- Take questioning very slowly. Many people need to develop trust with a person in order to feel comfortable with revealing personal information.
- Do not ask too many questions, so that a person feels "grilled".

Some pitfalls of questioning

Leading questions

This type of question assumes that the questioner knows the answer, and puts it in the other person's mouth.

e.g. "That's hard for you, isn't it?" "When will you tell your parents?"

Why questions

'Why' questions can put people on the defensive as they can imply that the person should know the answers. Such questions can sound critical, as though you are questioning their judgement.

e.g. "Why don't you tell your parents?" "Why do you not understand this?"

Intimate questions

Some questions are not appropriate to ask because they may not be relevant or may be too personal. This can be a very fine line, but you should try to ask questions that are valuable for progressing a specific conversation. Always be respectful and treat other people as you would want to be treated. Avoid being voyeuristic by not asking inappropriate questions. Helping someone does not involve getting "juicy details".

e.g. "Are you gay?" "What did spending the night together involve?"

Poorly timed questions

Such questions interrupt the flow of a person relating their story. In addition to being inconsiderate, these questions can abruptly end a conversation.

e.g. "How long has this been going on for?" (Asked in the midst of someone divulging an affair with a colleague)

"Well, what will you do?" (Asked while someone is still relating the details of their personal crisis)

All questions are either closed or open questions:

Closed questions

Closed questions often begin with verbs like do, did, does, can, will, etc. and can be answered with a 'yes' or 'no' response. If a specific piece of information is needed, then a closed question may be used. Closed questions are also helpful to check facts and to ask for clarification.
However, closed questions lead to very little discussion as they elicit a one-word response. An example is: "Do you like your course in Trinity?" They often elicit a one-word answer, only get short answers and pin people down. If used appropriately, closed questions can be useful for:

Clarifying

Do you want to work in finance?

Checking information

It seems to me that … is this right?

Establishing facts

Do you want to do a Masters first? Do you have funding?

Getting someone to focus on a particular issue

You mentioned alcohol; is that a particular problem for you?

Open questions

To get fuller, more meaningful responses questions need to be asked that are not dead-ends. Open questions encourage people to explore their story. The goal is to gain more detail and understanding so that the problem becomes clearer.

Suggestions for forming open questions:

To begin discussion

Use "What" and "How":

e.g. "How can I help you?" "What is on your mind?"

To request description

"Tell me about…" "Explain to me…" "In what way does…?"

To give a person an opportunity to expand on what is being said "When you say he upsets you, what exactly does he say/do?" "Could you say some more about that?"

To focus on feelings

"Could you describe your feelings?" "How do you feel about that?"

To focus on plans

"What will you do…?" "How will you make it happen?" "How will that help you to…?" "What are your choices?" "What could you do that might change things?"

SMART:

"How does this fit in with your key strategy?" "How will you measure your success?"

"What might prevent you from achieving this?" "What resources will you need?"

"What's your timeframe for this?"

Professional Development

As part of the recent Trinity Education Project, the university has defined a series of attributes that are important to a student's personal and professional development, and indicative of what they can expect from Trinity in terms of its academic and extra-curricular offerings.

Trinity Graduate Attributes

To Act Responsibly

A Trinity Graduate
- Acts on the basis of knowledge and understanding
- Is self-motivated and able to take responsibility
- Knows how to deal with ambiguity
- Is an effective participant in teams
- Has a global perspective
- Is ethically aware

To Think Independently

A Trinity Graduate
- Has a deep knowledge of an academic discipline
- Can do independent research
- Thinks creatively
- Thinks critically
- Appreciates knowledge beyond their chosen field
- Analyses and synthesises evidence

To Develop Continuously

A Trinity Graduate
- Has a passion to continue learning
- Builds and maintains career readiness
- Commits to personal development through reflection
- Has the confidence to take measured risks
- Is capable of adapting to change

To Communicate Effectively

A Trinity Graduate
- Can present work through all media
- Is expert in the communication tools of a discipline
- Connects with people
- Listens, persuades and collaborates
- Has digital skills
- Has language skills

If you are discussing personal or professional development with a mentee, or helping them to prepare for a job application, or for interview, these are really useful starting points.

Often, a student or recent graduate can identify that they have a skill when asked, but finds it harder to reflect on how they have gained or developed a skill, and how their experience to date, especially when it doesn't seem immediately relevant, could be used to their success in the application process.

For example, a Business student may also have volunteered as a Mentor for incoming first years whilst in university, and taken on the role of Treasurer in a student society. When asked about leadership, they might talk about a group project they did for an Economics module, but neglect to mention the fact that they were responsible for inducting and supporting 25 junior students. When asked about finances, they might refer to their academic knowledge, but fail to mention their hands on experience in their society role.

Ethics

By its nature, a mentoring relationship will generate a sense of trust, respect and understanding between two people. This can lead to open discussion about issues neither the mentor nor the mentee expected to address. Everyday life is alarmingly short of safe, non-judgemental spaces for us to air our feelings and feel heard and understood, so when we find them we're not always able to prevent ourselves from using them to their fullest.

These situations are another example of why active listening is so important. If we are able to hear, respond and refer, without the pressure to react or resolve what we're being told, we can maintain a safe and respectful space for ourselves as well as our mentees.

Empathy

Empathy isn't about sympathy or feeling sorry for the person, or getting emotionally involved or making assumptions. It is about seeing things from another's point of view, trying hard to interpret the other person's meaning and to see the world as they see it.

Being truly empathetic requires a great deal of skill and experience; however, we can all strive to be empathetic in our relationships with others".

Communicate that you are trying to understand a person's unique situation by:

• Caring to understand what is really "going on" for a person

• Asking relevant questions about a person's circumstances

• Thinking, acting and feeling in the person's interest

• Refraining from making assumptions or judgements.

While a sympathetic response is to identify how we would feel if we were in someone else's situation, an empathic response involves understanding how they are different from us, and what it is like for them to experience it their way, with their background, history and personality.

While an in depth understanding means tapping into our own experience of the feelings they describe, it also means checking if our experience tallies with theirs, and if/where it differs. This helps us to maintain a healthier distance from the issues in hand, whilst still offering support.

Boundaries

While a mentoring relationship involves mutual respect, trust and communication the power differentials between a mentor and mentee are always present, and easy to overlook or misinterpret.

To be an effective and reliable mentor for your mentees means protecting yourself from burn out, maintaining professionalism in all circumstances and treating each mentee the same way you would any other mentee, without bias or prejudice.

These boundaries have been put in place to help ensure that you maintain positive, healthy relationships with your mentees in a way that won't have a negative impact on your personal life:

- Ensure you are **clear about when you are available** to your mentees, and don't be overly generous with your time. If you wouldn't take a 1am phone call every morning, don't take one at all.

- Be mindful of **appropriate venues** for one-to-ones – if you can't meet on campus or in a workplace canteen/common room, keep it to public places suitable to the conversation. Don't use venues where alcohol is served – this will exclude some mentees and sends entirely the wrong message about the type of relationship you are forming.

- While friendships and relationships may develop between you and your mentees, remember there is a slight power differential between you and your mentees – ensure that this is not misused **in any way**. It's an absolute rule that **mentors cannot enter into romantic and/or physical relationships with their mentees**. This protects you from any accusations of abuse of power, protects them from any situation where they feel unable to express a lack of consent, and gives you a very gentle way of deflecting any mentee who does develop feelings for you.

- **Support, don't solve** – there's a huge difference between helping a mentee develop a CV/portfolio, for example, compared to giving them a job. Remember that, however wonderful direct intervention/problem solving might be in the short term, in the long term it's disempowering.

- **Respect your mentees' right to privacy** – don't discuss anything they tell you with people who it doesn't concern.

- **If you're concerned about a mentee for any reason, refer them** to a source of support, and get support for yourself. If you find things that they have said to you are going round in your head and causing distraction, it's time to debrief with someone (see Referrals).

- **Don't take on too much or go out of your depth** – refer if you think it's necessary for you as well/instead of them!

Referrals

You may occasionally come across situations when it is inappropriate for you to get involved, when the problem is too close to your own experience, when you feel out of their depth, or when the issues require professional involvement and support. Often the best support a non- professional person can provide is genuine concern, a listening ear and a referral to specialist help.

Having the knowledge and skill to make a referral is a great asset. You may feel that you have failed in your helping role, but this is not the case at all! It is crucial to understand that part of being an effective supporter is the ability to identify a problem and find the appropriate support. It is always better to refer, than to take on problems or issues that are 'over your head'. **The key message is if in doubt, refer.**

An integral part of training in referral skills requires a discussion about dealing with extreme situations. Although mentoring is not intended to manage or detect distressed and/or suicidal people, you may come across someone that causes you concern. Respond in a calm and sensitive manner, but don't try to tackle the issue yourself. Refer them on as soon as it is appropriate to do so.

If you become distressed and uncomfortable with other people's problems, it is essential that you seek immediate support for yourself. Never go it alone.

What, When and Where to Refer

Making a referral is helping an individual access other sources of support

WHEN

- The problem requires specialist help (see below)
- You are unable to be genuine, honest and impartial
- You are worried that the person might come to harm or get into deeper problems
- You are concerned about your own circumstances (e.g. you have high stress at work, your own personal issues to contend with, etc.)

IF IN DOUBT, YOU SHOULD REFER

Problems that always call for specialist help

- Depression and/or suicidal thoughts
- Extreme stress, anxiety or panic
- Unresolved grief
- Alcoholism/drug abuse
- Serious medical problems

WHERE

Places to refer a TCD student (will depend on the problem) Student Counselling Service 01 896 1407

College Tutor (contact details will be on their my.tcd.ie portal) Students' Union 01 646 8431

Senior Tutor's Office 01 896 2551

College Health Service 01 896 1556/1591

College Chaplains 01 896 1260/1901 International Office international@tcd.ie Disability Office

disab@tcd.ie

Equality Office equality@tcd.ie

Niteline (9.00pm—2.30am every night in term) 1800 793793

Instant messaging service also available at: http://www.niteline.ie/onlinelistening.php

Places to Get Help for former students and/or after hours

DUBDOC (weekdays 6—10pm, weekends/bank holidays 10am—6pm) 454 5604 Samaritans (24 hours) 1850 609090

AWARE's Depression Line (10am—10pm) 676 6166 Emergency services (fire brigade, Gardaí, ambulance) - 999

As a volunteer representing TCD you are welcome to contact the Student Counselling Service directly on 01 896 1407 to discuss your concerns about any student, or former student of the university. Counselling staff will be happy to advise you on actions to take and services that may be appropriate to the situation.

How to refer

Bear in mind that referrals need to be handled sensitively. If someone has shared their worries with you, it means that they trust you and are hoping that you can help and support them. Try to consider a poor referral scenario: a mentee confides in a mentor who insensitively and abruptly suggests that they seek help elsewhere. How might the mentee feel?

Possible reactions:
- Abandoned
- Rejected
- They aren't able to help
- I'm a hopeless case
- My problems aren't serious enough
- They're too busy to help me
- They aren't interested in helping
- I'm a burden to them

By acknowledging that these are possible misunderstandings that can occur when making a referral, it should help you think about what you need to do to make a referral as sensitively as possible.

You need to know what the problem is before you can refer.

Choose your words carefully. Use phrases like:
- You might find it helpful to…
- You might like to talk with…
- Would you consider talking with…
- I think it might be useful for you to…
- How would you feel about talking to…
- What do you think might happen if you spoke to…

Do not say:

You need to see… or You must talk…

☆ Be honest. Tell the person why you are not the best person or why someone else might be better help at that moment.

☆ You can continue to be supportive by keeping in touch and asking how things are going.

☆ Know your limitations and do not get out of your depth.

☆ Remember, ultimately, it is another person's problem - not yours. Do not feel overwhelmed or guilty if you cannot help.

Tips for referring reluctant people

When you believe that a mentee might benefit from professional help, it is best to be honest about your reasons and express your concern about their well-being. Sometimes people may be reluctant or shy in accepting a referral, so here are some suggestions.

No analysis couch involved!

Dispel myths that surround seeking help. Explain that seeing a counsellor does not mean that they are crazy or that they will spend years on an analysis couch. Encourage them to schedule 'just one' appointment with a professional, and often one appointment is all that is needed.
Suggest that to get help is a positive sign of personal strength.

Suggest all options

Some people may not feel comfortable about seeing a counsellor, but will agree to visit a G.P. Others may choose to talk with a chaplain or contact a local support group. Therefore, it is very helpful and often enlightening to present all of the person's options when discussing support services.

Explore the person's reluctance

If someone is reluctant to seek help, ask why they are not keen on seeing a professional. Possibly it relates to a previous negative experience. Or maybe there is a misconception that, if they sees a psychiatrist or counsellor, the information will be passed on to lecturers, colleagues and/or family. If you explore the reluctance, you may be able to resolve the concerns.

Second opinion needed

Present the referral as a help to you, because you are unsure of how to provide help. Explain that the problem is outside of your area of expertise.

Get out the telephone book

If they are unsure about seeking help, it may be useful to provide the person with names and contact numbers that can be used at a later date.

Help them to make an appointment

Ask the person if they would like you to arrange an appointment with a professional. This is especially helpful if they are depressed and lack the energy to negotiate details. If you arrange the appointment, inform the professional of your specific concerns regarding the person.

Honesty about involving others

If you feel the situation is an emergency (you believe there is the possibility of harm to the person or others) and the person will not see a professional, you may need to speak to someone on their behalf. If possible, before doing so, gently explain that you will need to speak with a professional. Sometimes it can be useful to give the person the choice about who you will contact.

What is a CRISIS & what do you do?

A crisis is when you are concerned about a person's immediate well-being. In a crisis, you should seek urgent professional attention from any of the sources listed on page 24. If appropriate, you may want to accompany the person to a professional. A crisis is not when a person cries or if they are suffering from an ongoing problem (unless it has become an immediate crisis and his or her well-being is endangered). However, they may still benefit from seeking help from a professional.

What if the person refuses?

Unless it is an emergency situation (potential harm to self or others), everyone has the right to refuse support. Or they may just need time to think about a referral. Offer an open invitation to the person to come back to you. When you see the person again, ask how they are and reiterate that support is available if they want it. However, refusal to seek professional help does not mean that you must provide help that is outside your area of expertise.

What if YOU need support?

If you have any concerns about what is best to do, please consult with TCD's student counselling service. They will support you and help you to clarify the best course of action. Please remember that if you have serious anxieties about anyone, it is important that you yourself have adequate support. You need to feel confident that you have done all that you can do to make sure that the distressed person is safe.