



Koordinationsstelle für Geschlechterstudien,  
Frauenforschung und Frauenförderung

## Do I want to be a Mentor?

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A Short Introduction to (CAKE and PIE) Mentoring

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<https://koordination-gender.uni-graz.at/de/gleichstellung/mentoring/ihre-fragen-unsere-antworten/>

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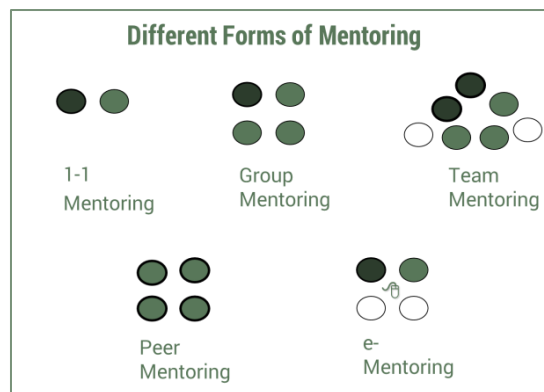
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# 1 Who is a Mentor?

A mentor is a person who supports the development of one mentee or a group of them.

A mentee seeks advice through the mentoring relationship, regardless of the age or position of the mentor(s). This means that mentoring can take place in different forms, as visualized below. Both, mentees and mentors, can benefit from reflecting and learning during a mentoring process. Peer mentoring is a special case – being at the same career/hierarchy level, all persons involved are mentors and mentees at the same time (depicted by the bold lines below).



Source: *convelop*

A mentor may provide advice for a mentee, e.g. on how one might gain more information or support. However, direct advice and guidance should be limited for the benefit of good listening, observing and effective questioning.

Hence a mentor needs good communication skills in order to support the reflection and learning process. He or she is also ready to provide feedback and to share observations. Good communication is empathic, demonstrating that the mentor understands the situation, the challenges and needs of the mentee.

Communication skills like active listening, effective questioning and feedback can be trained and further developed. They are not only important for mentoring, but are essential leadership skills.

**In an organizational context**, the support for mentees is intended to focus on professional performance and career development. Within an organization, formal mentoring settings prevail. The mentor is supposed to be more experienced than the mentee and to offer guidance without being directly connected by professional relationships (e.g. as supervisor, team member etc.). When a mentor clearly has a senior position, mentees are often called “protégés” in order to emphasize this hierarchical relationship. At the University of Graz, there should ideally be two career steps between a mentor and a mentee in formal mentoring relationships, following the quality guidelines of the „Forum Mentoring e.V.“.

To support career development, mentors need institutional expertise and experience in order to ask good questions and provide guidance for the mentees on how to plan and foster their personal career path.

#### A Career in Science Needs more than Scientific Excellence

Scientific Excellence		
Education, Lecturing Presentation Skills	Research Management Team Leadership	Organisational Management Organisational Leadership

Source: *convelop*

Mentoring offers a safe place to reflect sensitive career issues. However, a mentor does not take decisions for a mentee or offer solutions (e.g. on whether to prolong an academic career or not). A mentor rather supports the decision finding process.

When a mentor is fully convinced of the mentee's future potential, she or he might turn into a sponsor by advocating for the mentee within the institution, offering access to networks and/or information on career opportunities (see below).

#### Mentoring vs. Sponsorship



##### Mentoring, Coaching

- feedback, reflection, motivation, coaching
- career goals, determining strengths
- understand informal rules and career requirements (at the university)



##### Sponsorship

- active support for a person you truly believe in
- recommend the person
- invite him/her to participate in networks, to become member of a board, ...

S. A. Hewlett (2013): Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor: The New Way to Fast-Track Your Career

Source: *convelop*

**Within the frame of the MentoringPLUS Programm**, mentees ask a potential mentor if he or she is interested. After a first meeting, both decide freely if they match and want to establish a mentoring partnership. Guidelines to set the goals for the mentoring process and protocol templates for the mentees are available.

The mentors are supported by a regular mentoring jour fixe which takes place twice per semester. If any questions arise they are highly welcome to call or email Ilse Wieser and/or Karin Grasenick (see above).



## 2 What Makes a Mentoring Partnership Successful?

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Successful mentoring relationships are built on clear expectations about goals and the mentoring process. Especially the number of meetings and the responsibilities of mentees as well as mentors should be clarified.

Both mentor and mentee benefit from the relationship. The mentee should plan the mentoring process, actively remind the mentor and take responsibility for the next steps. He or she might also give the mentor feedback – based on mutual respect for effort and experiences. Respect is based on a personal connection that can be created if the persons involved demonstrate that they pay attention by mutual listening and reflecting (see above). Shared values and similar work style preferences might also help to build a common basis.

## 3 What Main Topics Should Mentoring Focus on?

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A mentoring process where ‘junior professionals’ are guided and supported in their career development by more senior professionals is meant to contribute to:

- A deeper understanding of the ‘business of the business’
- Awareness about leadership requirements at different levels
- Knowledge about how to contribute to business at higher levels
- The formation of relationships
- Leveraging one’s strengths in service of organizational goals

Susan Colantuono talks about two approaches to mentoring: One that focuses on enabling, confidence and encouragement (CAKE). This is more commonly provided to women, but neglects some fundamental issues regarding essential business, financial and strategic skills to achieve and sustain outcomes. Colantuono calls that ‘The Missing 33%’, as it is the basic third part of leadership success, besides the use of great personal attributes and strengths and the ability to engage greatness in others. To learn about the fundamentals of performance, image and exposure, PIE-Mentoring (which is more commonly provided to men) is required to a greater extent, especially for women. Mentors should much more focus on their mentees’ career growth and their preparation to contribute at higher business levels. This includes self-reflection on leadership qualities, but also the notion of not necessarily striving for perfection, but for good enough performance. For instance, when it comes to job requirements, women typically think they have to meet all of the requirements, whereas men who are shaped by PIE-mentoring might think that 60% are enough and would apply for the job anyway.

In other words, Susan Colantuono argues that mentors should provide their female mentees more generously with PIE than with CAKE. The table below gives a more detailed overview on the essential elements of both types of mentoring.



CAKE	
C	<b>Confidence:</b> Developing confidence and courage to do something that the mentee had not thought about at all or did not think she could do.
	Ask yourself: How is confidence developed in your mentoring relationships (being a mentor or mentee)?
A	<b>Aptitude &amp; Attitude:</b> Aptitude is about highlighting a mentee's skills or pointing out her areas for development. A mentor often has a broader perspective and sees latent talent or skills – sharing these with the mentees helps to further refine their career path. Attitude refers to the discussion of and complaint about work-related challenges, which should be kept to a minimum.
	Ask yourself: How much time do you spend on aptitude & attitude discussions? Could that time be reduced and used for other purposes?
K	<b>Konnection (sic!) to resources:</b> Putting the mentees in touch with the 'right' people, 'right' professional development opportunities, 'right' internal resources for success. This includes recommendations on courses; helping to attain important credentials, degrees or qualifications; support to attend or speak at conferences; advice on networking; tips on job openings; referring the mentee to others; etc.
	Ask yourself: What role does resource connection play in your mentoring relationships and field of activity?
E	<b>Encouragement:</b> Give backing to mentees, based on truly recognizing their value and qualities.
	Ask yourself: To what extent is encouragement given or needed?
PIE	
P	<b>Performance:</b> Performance is about achieving outcomes. A job must not be done perfectly, but should simply be done good enough to get the required results.
	Ask yourself: Who has enabled you to know what it means to achieve outcomes and which outcomes are most important?
I	<b>Image:</b> Image is about cultivating a 'leaderly presence' and exhibiting one's leadership qualities. There are different ways to do so, and they are not necessarily linked to clothing (e.g., Steve Jobs was dressed very casually but acted like a leader).
	Ask yourself: What types of image advice have you received or given?
E	<b>Exposure:</b> This involves getting the right job assignments to move up, to see and learn how work is done at higher levels (e.g., finding out who makes strategic decisions, what rationales guide decision making, how decisions affect the company/organisation)
	Ask yourself: What kind of job assignments have you received/given? How did that provide insights into higher level thinking and decision making?



## 4 References

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