MENTOR PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Guidelines for Mentors and Mentees participating in the Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division Mentor Program.
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What is mentoring?

‘Mentoring is the process whereby two occupational therapists, who have been deliberately matched, have regular dialogue on a range of issues with the agreed upon goal of having the lesser experienced / skilled occupational therapist grow, develop, and address career development, where desired.’ (Mentorlink Program, OT AUSTRALIA Victoria, 1999).

What is a Mentor?

There are many different definitions and interpretations of mentor in the literature. The word ‘Mentor’ comes from ancient Greek mythology where Odysseus, King of Ithaca, asks his friend, Mentor, to act as his son’s guardian while he is away at the battle of Troy. Mentor acts as role model, teacher, adviser, friend, counsellor, guide, nurturer and protector for the son and prepares him for his leadership roles in the future.

The contemporary role of the mentor is to use the same processes as described above to assist in the growth and development of the mentee. Mentoring is not simply the teaching of specific skills, modelling of behaviour or provision of supervision and evaluation but is designed to develop the whole person through the relationship.
Christie (1999) defined a mentor as ‘a person who leads, who inspires, guides and challenges me to think, gives wise counselling, shows commitment to professional excellence and whose personality is reflected in their own professional beliefs and values.’

What is a Mentee?

The mentee is the generally the less experienced / skilled Occupational Therapist in the relationship whose development needs form the focus of the mentoring partnership. The skill level relates to the particular areas needing development and not necessarily to the overall experience of the therapist.
Benefits of Mentoring –Mentors and Mentees

Mentor
- Opportunity to share experiences, knowledge and skills with others to promote their development
- Develop new friendships/ networks with OTs working in similar clinical areas
- Keeps you up to date with new treatment trends and encourages development of new skills
- Career development
  - Learn new teaching/ counselling skills
  - Increased professional development and job satisfaction
  - Professional recognition of skills/ competencies
  - Assist in the development of the profession and it’s future leaders
- AccOT points available

Mentee
- Learn new skills and knowledge from a more experienced OT to increase competency
- Problem solving assistance for complex situations/ clients
- Develop new friendships and networks with OTs working in similar clinical areas
- Opportunity to consider use of different treatment techniques/ approaches in your OT practice
- Increased confidence as new skills develop in a supportive environment
- Career development
- Increased job satisfaction and decreased work stressors
- Increased feedback and professional development
- Access to professional development without needing to disrupt client contact or arrange travel time.
Pre Commencement Checklist – for Mentors

Prior to entering into a Mentoring Agreement it is suggested that you complete the following questions for potential mentors. The questions are for your use only to assist in determining if the Mentoring Program is for you at this stage.

What are my expectations of the program?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Why do I want to become a mentor?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Can I bring the following qualities to the Mentoring partnership?

Commitment to assisting mentee   Yes □   No □
Clinical experience and skills   Yes □   No □
Open to alternative views/ flexible   Yes □   No □
Honest and non judgemental   Yes □   No □
Strong communication skills   Yes □   No □
Maintain confidentiality   Yes □   No □
Motivated and enthusiastic   Yes □   No □
Focussed and goal directed   Yes □   No □
Problem solving skills   Yes □   No □
Nurturer and guide   Yes □   No □

If you have answered no in the above checklist you may need to consider why you want to be a mentor at this stage and if there are skills you need to further develop prior to entering into a Mentoring agreement.
Pre Commencement Checklist – for Mentees

Prior to entering into a Mentoring Agreement it is suggested that you complete the following questions for potential mentees. The questions are for your use only to assist in determining if the Mentoring Program is for you at this stage.

What are my expectations of the program?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Why do I want to become a mentee?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Can I bring the following qualities to the Mentoring partnership?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Yes □</th>
<th>No □</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to achieving goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Able to identify current needs</td>
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<td>Open to new ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Honest and non judgemental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receptive to feedback</td>
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<td>Learn from mistakes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain confidentiality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivated and enthusiastic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focussed and goal directed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Able to review own progress</td>
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</table>

If you have answered no in the above checklist you may need to consider why you want to be a mentee at this stage and if there are skills you need to further develop prior to entering into a Mentoring agreement.
Roles and Responsibilities - Mentors

Please also refer to the Mentor Program Policies and the Mentoring Agreement

• Committed to assisting mentee to assess current competencies, to establish appropriate goals and to develop new skills

• Have good competency levels in clinical skills and career development

• Acknowledge areas in which you do not have the necessary skills and refer to other resources

• Provide a broad view and be open to alternative views

• Provide honest, constructive feedback and remain non judgemental

• Display good communication skills and promote an open and honest relationship

• Maintain confidentiality

• Encourage the mentee to find their own solutions with support from mentor – avoid being prescriptive, allow mentee to problem solve

• Guide the mentee to resources, professional development activities and networks to increase their knowledge base and skill level

• Motivate and nurture mentee

• Willing to commit time to mentoring partnership

• Review mentee’s progress toward achieving goals and developing skills

• Complete Mentoring Agreement at commencement of partnership and forward to Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division

• Complete 6 and 12 month evaluation of program and forward to Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division.
Role and Responsibilities - Mentees

Please also refer to the Mentor Program Policies and the Mentoring Agreement

- To identify current competencies, professional development needs and set appropriate goals
- Be committed to working towards these goals and prepare for meetings with mentor
- Be honest about problem areas and request feedback and/ or support
- Learn from your mistakes and be receptive to feedback
- Be motivated to follow up resources/ activities/ support networks to develop skills
- Maintain confidentiality
- Review with mentor your progress in achieving goals and developing skills
- Complete Mentoring Agreement at commencement of partnership and forward to Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division
- Complete 6 and 12 month evaluation of program and forward to Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division.
Establishing the Mentoring Relationship – for Mentors and Mentees

- It is the responsibility of the mentee to make contact once advised by Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division of the potential link.

- Mentor and mentee need to negotiate meeting times/frequency of meetings/method of communication that is most suitable for you both. The Mentoring Agreement needs to be completed and returned to Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division.

- Draw up the mentee’s development plan and learning goals.

- Discuss your expectations of the mentoring relationship and of each other.

- Consider ways to get to know your partner—send a resume/autobiography, meet face to face, arrange peer shadowing.

- Frequent, regular contact is recommended initially (e.g., 1 hour/fortnight over the first few months). Once you get to know each other contact could be less frequent.

- The method of communication is up to both partners and can include face to face meetings, telephone, teleconference/videoconference, videotape or audiotape, photographs, email.

- It is suggested that all meetings (whether face to face or via telephone) include an agenda and are prepared for prior to the meeting.

- Less formal communication can be maintained via emails/fax/voicemail messages etc.

- Both partners in the relationship need to take responsibility for making it work.
Problem Solving

- The expectation of both the mentor and mentee needs to be established at the beginning of the partnership to prevent any misunderstandings and future conflict.

- Be realistic and honest about the time you have available

- Deal with any problems promptly and honestly

- Listen and act on feedback from each other

- Try to work toward a ‘no blame’ solution

If the conflict cannot be resolved within the partnership then either participant can contact Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division for support and advice.

If unresolvable the mentoring partnership may need to end at this stage and either participant can reapply for a new mentor/mentee (at no additional charge).

Ending the Partnership

The mentoring partnership may be ended for various reasons and both participants agree to a ‘no faults’ conclusion at the commencement of the relationship. The partnership can end after the completion of the timeframe for the mentoring agreement or if requested by either participant.

Both participants will need to provide written advice to Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division that the partnership has ended. An evaluation form will be sent on receipt of this advice for you to complete and return to Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division.
Registration

The Occupational Therapy Board requires Occupational Therapists to have maintained the currency of their knowledge and skills through participating in continuing professional development activities.

The Occupational Therapy Board has recognised the important role of mentoring in professional development and has allowed for time involved to be included no matter what side of the mentoring process you are on. Appropriate records need to be kept to claim time (refer to the Occupational Therapy Board website for more details and CPD area allocation).

Acknowledgements

Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division would like to acknowledge the valuable support of Victorian and Queensland Divisions in allowing access to their Mentor Program policies and guidelines.
Mentoring Agreement

This document is not a legal contract but is aimed at establishing agreed roles and plans in the mentoring relationship.

**Mentoring roles**
- we have read the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee in the program guidelines and undertake to meet those roles in this partnership.

**We both agree to**
- Maintain confidentiality re our mentoring agreement and meeting discussions unless otherwise agreed
- Contact Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division if support is required for problem solving / conflict resolution
- Having a no-fault conclusion to our relationship at any time either of us may want to end the mentoring partnership

**Mentoring plan**

<table>
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<th>Meeting Times:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency of Contact:</td>
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<td>Method of contact:</td>
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<td>Duration of Agreement:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amount of notice required if changes to meeting times:</td>
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Mentee Name_____________________________  Signature________________________________ Date_______________

Mentor Name_____________________________  Signature________________________________ Date_______________

Please complete form and return to:
Occupational Therapy Australia South Australian Division
U2/156 Fullarton Road
Rose Park SA 5067
Mentoring Record

It is recommended that both mentor and mentee keep a record of the mentoring activities to ensure time is spent effectively working toward the established goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time Spent</th>
<th>Contact Method</th>
<th>Activity/ Topic</th>
<th>Outcome/ Action</th>
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## Mentee’s Development Plan

For period from __/__/__ to __/__/__

### Consider the areas you would like to develop –

<table>
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<th>Current Skill level:</th>
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<th>Desired Skill level</th>
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### Mentoring Action Plan

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Plan</th>
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### Review Date: __/__/__

Mentee Name________________________________  Date_______________

Signature_________________________________  Date_______________

Mentor Name________________________________

Signature_________________________________  Date_______________

________________________________________

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References


