

WOMEN for WOMEN

in Public Administration



Mentoring
Handbook

WOMEN FOR **WOMEN**
IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Mentoring Handbook

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Mentoring Handbook

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WHO IS THIS HANDBOOK INTENDED FOR

In 2019, the OSCE Mission to Skopje in co-operation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy initiated the mentoring program “Women for Women in Public Administration”. The goal of this program was to support the professional and personal development of women who are employed in the public sector by creating a concept of mutual support, sharing knowledge and experiences, as well as strengthening solidarity and networking among women. To that end, 20 mentoring couples were formed, consisted of mentors and mentees from different institutions in the public sector. In 2019 and 2020, the mentors and mentees participated in a series of trainings for basic and advanced mentoring skills and acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct the mentoring process.

This Handbook covers the required key techniques and tools to effectively guide the mentoring process. In addition, the Handbook is enriched with examples of good practices of the mentors who participated in the program, which significantly enriches the practical value of the Handbook.

Due to the universal nature and applicability of the developed techniques and tools, the Handbook will not only be useful for future mentors and mentees, but will also be applicable as a practical guide and a helpful reading material for any employee in the public administration, i.e., for every person who strives for continuous development both on a professional and personal level.

MENTORING AND ITS PROCESS

According to the European Mentoring and Coaching Council¹, mentoring is “a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling. The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.”

As the very definition suggests, there are as many different mentoring models and processes as there are different contexts in which mentoring takes place. In that regard, the mentoring process can vary depending on the purpose and outcomes desired, that is, the specific goal and mentoring theme, the resources (financial, human, and time), and the environmental milieu in which mentoring occurs.

Each mentoring process basically consists of three key steps:

- the first step is the introduction of the mentor and the mentee
- the second step is building a mentoring relationship and holding mentoring meetings and
- the third step is to round off the mentor/mentee relationship



Basic steps in the mentoring process

¹ <https://www.emccglobal.org/leadership-development/leadership-development-mentoring/>

STEP 1

Introduction

Once the mentoring couple is formed, i.e., once the mentor and mentee are connected according to predetermined criteria, the first mentoring meeting is being organized. This is also a formal beginning of the mentoring relationship.

The purpose of this meeting is for the mentor and the mentee to get to know each other and to start building the mentoring relationship, which should primarily be based on mutual respect and trust. It is recommended to hold the first and subsequent mentoring meetings in a quiet and peaceful location (for example, in the mentor's office), which will guarantee the privacy of the process. The mentor starts and leads the conversation. She introduces herself to the mentee taking into consideration the following:

- expertise and work experience
- the skills and knowledge that make her competent to be a mentor
- life values that motivate her
- some facts and data from her private life, which she is prepared to share with the mentee, which will add value to building a personal relationship with the mentee.

The mentee also introduces herself to the mentor, guided by the following information:

- expertise and work experience
- what encouraged her to join the program as a mentee
- life values that motivate her
- some facts and data from her private life, which she is prepared to share with the mentor, which will add value to building a personal relationship with the mentor.

During this process, both the mentor and the mentee should be self-confident and honest. However, their statements should not transform into ego-based stories and self-praise.

GOOD PRACTICE

How I prepared for the first mentoring meeting

"I would use the word CHALLENGE to name the entire mentoring process, especially the first meeting with the mentee Ramize Hasani. I was very excited about it. At the same time, I felt a little nervous about our acquaintance and the energy between us. But I had prepared introduction questions, and I knew how I wanted to start the first meeting.

In regard to the tools, although they were all very important for conducting a mentoring meeting and process, I focused on those designed to establish positive communication with the mentee. The tools helped us to lay the foundations of our further co-operation.

Through conversation with the mentee, I wanted to find out more about her. That way, we set the goal of our mentoring relationship more easily. The use of the tool for effective communication including visual and auditory communication, as well as body language, was of the utmost importance to me for establishing and maintaining communication with the mentee as well as for establishing a good mentoring relationship. That ultimately resulted in mutual TRUST."

- Ljumturie, mentor

It is recommendable as early as at the first meeting for the mentor and the mentee to start defining the goal or goals of the mentoring relationship, and if they fail to formulate them completely, they can do this at the next agreed meeting. After defining the goal they will work on, the mentor and the mentee sign a mentoring agreement, which is used as a guide for building and maintaining a mentoring relationship.

The final result of the first step of the mentoring process is a defined mentoring goal. This step can take place during one or two mentoring meetings, i.e. it can end as early as at the official beginning, namely at the first mentoring meeting or it can be completed during the next meeting.

Practical advice

It is advisable that the mentee prepares a summary of what she wants to get from the upcoming meeting 24 hours before the mentoring meeting. This helps the mentee to focus on the issues that will be discussed in the meeting, and at the same time it allows the mentor to prepare herself in advance, i.e., to think about the way she would lead the conversation and how she could help the mentee achieve the goal.

GOOD PRACTICE

How I prepared myself for the first mentoring meeting

“The first mentoring meeting was a new experience and a big challenge for me. I was excited and a little nervous. I wondered how it would progress, how it would turn out, what questions I should ask her and make sure not to forget something... Knowing that the first mentoring meeting was very important for both of us, I wanted it to be spontaneous, pleasant and in a good atmosphere. It took us more than a month to agree on the exact time of the meeting. The obligations and work duties did not allow us to do it sooner. After the gained experience from several workshops and the training in Gevgelija, we finally came to an agreement. The mutual obligations immediately determined the place for the first meeting. The dilemma was between theatre and opera. We agreed to go to the opera. After the opera, we went for a drink and the questions emerged spontaneously. Although I used to have a whole list of questions before, this time the questions came by themselves. The tools were going through my head all the time, not to miss a tool, not to change their order. However, I mostly used the active listening tool. I listened and just listened - actively, attentively, focused and very interested.

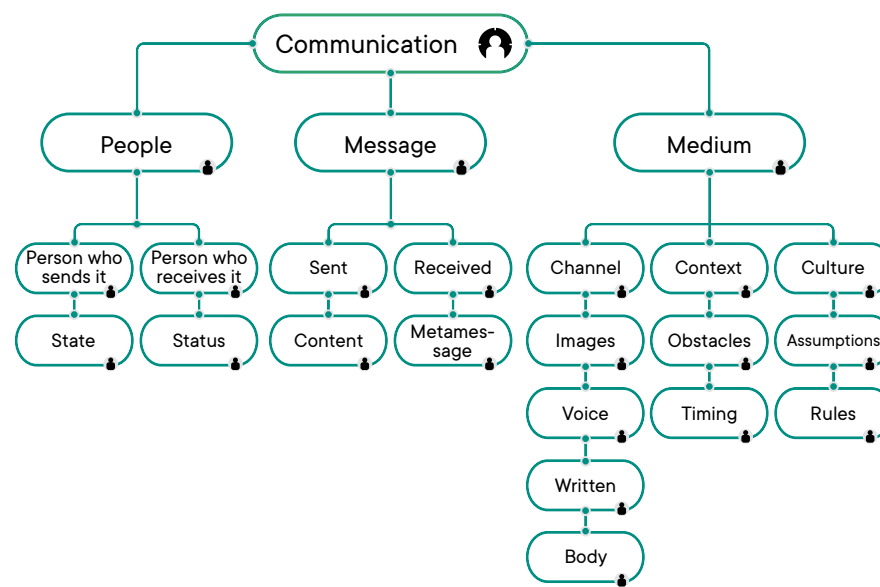
I would recommend to all future mentors to be themselves at the first meeting, to be friendly, with a big smile, a pure heart and to honestly get to know the mentee, and of course, to actively listen - the questions will come spontaneously.”

OVERVIEW OF MODELS, TECHNIQUES AND FORMS

Communication model

Communication is evaluated as a factor that has a major impact on the successfulness of the mentoring process. However, having the role of a mentor, can you be certain that you have effective communication with the mentee, that you understand well what she is telling you and that she understands correctly what you are sharing with her?

To understand the complexity of the communication process, we use the communication model of Robert Dilts. According to this model, communication consists of three elements: people who participate in the communication, message that is being shared during the communication and channels through which communication takes place.



Communication matrix

When it comes to message senders and message recipients, there is always at least one, but most frequently, there are several message senders and recipients. Each one of them is in a specific (emotional) state at the moment of communication. Thus, both the sender and the recipient can be focused, calm, nervous, irritable, sensitive, happy, euphoric, etc. At the same time, they are in a sort of a mutual status - therefore, they are subordinate, superior, on an equal level, in a kin relationship, etc.

In terms of the message, we make a difference between a sent message and a received message. The sent message is often different from the received one, and some important aspects of the message element also include the content and the meta-message, i.e., what is not clearly or directly said by the message, and has some figurative meaning.

The process becomes more complex once the aspects of the medium through which the communication takes place are added, which include the channel, the context and the culture, which influence the communication process in different ways. Related to the channel we can make a distinction between images, voice, written communication and non-verbal (physical communication) - in order to formulate a clear message, congruence between all these channels should necessarily exist. The context in which it is communicated has also a huge impact on the communication, and the aspects that affect it are the obstacles and the timing in which it is communicated. Finally, culture and its values, rules and assumptions are additional aspects that affect communication.

Each of these aspects has an impact on the successfulness of the communication process, and as such, the mentor should take them into consideration while establishing and maintaining a communication relationship.

Characteristics of the communication wherewith we respond, rather than react

- Communication is constant

When it comes to communication, the only thing we cannot do is - not communicate. Even when we do not communicate, we say something. Silence is the message we want to send - of approval or disapproval. Also, we always respond with our body.

- The way we communicate affects the perception of the mentee and how she will accept what we communicate

According to a research conducted by Albert Mehrabian in the 1960s, only 10% of the communication takes place through words, while 30% is through the tone, pitch, volume, colour of voice and speed of our speech, and as many as 60% takes place through non-verbal channels. For the communication to be effective, there must be an order in all three channels.

- The importance of communication is in the answer we receive

Do we wonder what we want from the mentee when we communicate, what is our intention, and what kind of outcome we would like to have? The answer we get from the other side is what makes communication effective or inefficient. If we get the answer we wanted - we can say that we have succeeded.

- The one who sets the communication framework, has control over it

The framework is a paradigm that gives meaning to things. That is why it is important to determine what we focus on during the communication. We usually do this unknowingly and we do not always know the type of framework we set for communication.

- No failure, only feedback

If there is a disagreement with the mentee, we should not consider it a failure, rather only as feedback that indicates the way we should not communicate with that person.

- The person with the greatest flexibility has the greatest impact on communication

This requires flexibility for our own behaviour and perceiving how much we can and how much we know and want to see the different opportunities and choices we have. Flexibility usually requires emotion-free communication and dissociation from the person we are communicating with.

To perceive external sensations, people use one of the five basic senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. Then, they make an internal representation of external sensations or events, and this leads them to some kind of emotional state: joy, sadness, happiness, anxiety, etc. This emotional state is perceived in the way we hold the body (physiology), the way we behave and the type of words we use. The sense we use as a primary sense for perceiving the outside world, determines the way we mostly apply it while we communicate: with images, with sounds, with feelings, or with facts and evidence, which is also called a representational system.

For successful communication, both the mentor and the mentee must know the exact representational system that each one of them uses as the primary one so that they can talk to each other through the appropriate representational system.

One way to do this is with the Active Listening Tool, to hear the types of words used by the other (predicates), which indicate one of the four representational systems.

Another way is to observe the movement of the eyes. The movement of the eyes indicates a certain neurological process, i.e., the way we process information internally. Therefore, they are one of the best indicators that suggest to the representational systems.

- When the eyes go up to the left - we recall images we have seen before; we remember the past
- When the eyes go up to the right - we imagine new images
- When the eyes move sideways to the left - we recall the words we have memorized
- When the eyes go sideways to the right - we create new sounds, we think of what to say
- When the eyes go down to the left - we think and have an internal dialogue; we talk to ourselves, we question values and attitudes
- When the eyes go down to the right - we feel, we have sensations, emotions

There are certain concessions from these movements. For example, in people who write with the left hand, the movements are reversed.

In addition to listening to the speech, the mentor should also observe the non-verbal speech of the mentee, and this can be achieved through the following steps.

- Take on the role of an observer

Concentrated observation, with effort, is the basis of non-verbal communication. Being aware of the situation means engaging in conscious and deliberate behaviour that requires effort, energy, and concentration, and this can be achieved through constant exercise and practice.

- Consider the context

Is it a simple conversation, an accident, a job interview, or a mentoring session? Context significantly affects non-verbal communication.

- Learn the universal versus idiosyncratic movements of the mentee

There are universal movements which indicate certain things. For example, pursed lips always indicate that the mentee thinks that something is wrong, i.e., that she does not want to express her opinion openly. However, if your mentee scratches her head and bites her lips whenever she has to tell you about a situation, for example, with the supervisor, it indicates that she is showing nervousness in this way. Make a difference between the two.

- Learn the usual posture of the mentee

What does she look like usually, how does she sit usually, what is the position of her arms and legs, what is the position of her body and what are her usual expressions - facial expressions, whether she tilts her head, where does she put her bag? This way we can recognize which look is normal for the mentor, and when she is stressed, nervous or in a bad mood.

- Monitor behavioural changes that may indicate thoughts, emotions, interests, or an intention

Sudden changes can reveal how the mentee processes information or how she adapts to an emotional event. The body responds first.

- Find out which signals are true and which ones are false

To be able to recognize this takes time and practice, not only to observe consciously, but also to reason.

- Make sure you tell the difference between comfortable and uncomfortable situations for the mentee

That way you will know what the mentee's body is telling you. Always ask yourself whether she seems comfortable or not - you will usually know the answer to that question.

- Be subtle in your observation

Try not to stare at the mentee - observe her without her noticing that. This requires the practice of observation skills which will bring you to the point where you will be subtle.

- Rapport building

Rapport is an important communication tool, which helps to establish good communication with the mentees. It consists of two steps.

Step 1.***Monitoring the body physiology, breathing, tone and words.***

Above all, the participant in the communication follows the physiology of the interlocutor's body and pays attention to her posture - whether she is upright, hunched over, open, closed, leaning forward or backward. At the same time, she follows her gestures, i.e. minor eye and lip movements, as well as facial expression and colour. Attention is also paid to breathing, whether it is fast or slow, deep or shallow, and then to the tone, speed, tempo and volume, the pitch of the interlocutor's speech. The words used by the interlocutor are also carefully monitored.

Step 2.***Creating "a mirror image" and "matching"***

After finding all these data, the participant in the communication creates an image in the mirror or copies the interlocutor on all three levels - physiology, tonality and the type of words/predicates.

In this way, we build a communication field in which communication takes place on a more profound, unconscious level.

"In order to be successful, the mentor, in addition to knowledge, work experience and ability to transfer them to the mentee, should also know how to build and maintain a relationship with the mentee. She should know how to motivate her mentee, how to help her boost her self-confidence. The mentor achieves all of this through the essential competence, which is communication. By communicating, the mentor shares her work experience, her acquired skills, she shows interest and openly discusses the problems, difficulties and challenges that the mentee is facing."

- *Fatmire, mentor*

GOOD PRACTICE**How I conducted my first mentoring meeting**

"I was fortunate to be assigned a mentee. We held the first meeting at the joint meeting with all mentors and mentees in the hotel "Aleksandar Palace". From the very beginning we merged our energies. Gala is calm and stable, she knows exactly what she wants and what she doesn't like. I'm impulsive, but combative and I stand behind my views.

We had our first real mentoring meeting in the park on a bench near my residence. Even then, but also during the subsequent meetings we had, I did not concentrate on the tools that our trainers taught us. I have to admit that I used the tool of the five fingers the most: to listen, to be careful without giving my comments, to think of the answer and to give my opinion at the end, but at the same time to be very careful and ensure that I am not imposing my views with the opinion.

The environment itself was neutral. The park is small, but there are always people. However, all this did not bother us. The energy of unity and understanding that we felt very quickly helped us to set goals very fast. One of the goals of my mentee was to raise her self-esteem and to keep her personal life separate from work.

Now, I can conclude that my mentee has become a mature and independent person from whom I can learn a lot. I see her more fulfilled and more confident in herself. She is now able to keep her personal and professional life separate."

- *Marija, mentor*

Setting goals

In addition to starting the relationship and reaching a mentoring agreement, the essence of the first mentoring meeting is setting the goals of the mentoring relationship. There are numerous practical models, tools, and techniques for setting goals, and this Handbook describes the Goal Dart, the GROW model, and G-STAR. Each one of them can be used on its own and independently of the others, but they can also be used together by starting with the Goal Dart and then successively continuing with GROW or G-STAR.

„Goal Dart“

This technique is almost identical to the “wheel of life” technique which is an integral part of the training for mentors and mentees. If the mentee had participated in such training before, then remind her of the goal setting exercise on a personal level and tell her that by the same logic you will identify important aspects at the business level. If the mentor cannot remember the exercise or had not participated in mentee training previously, then guide her through the process, step by step, following the guidelines given below.

Required materials: A printed circle of goals or a blank sheet of paper of A4 or A3 format

Required time: About one hour

- Give the mentee a blank sheet of paper and ask her to write a list of aspects of her professional life that are important to her and are directly related to her job.
- Then give her another sheet of paper - preferably A3 format - and tell her to draw a circle that she will divide into as many equal parts, i.e. segments as the number of aspects of professional life that she identified previously - by drawing straight lines starting from the centre of the circle to the circular as shown in Fig. 1. On the outside of the circle - above each of the segments, she should enter the previously written aspects - one aspect above each segment. Alternatively, you can give the mentee a ready-made template with a pre-drawn circle, which is divided into eight segments.
- In each of the segments under the title she should briefly describe the current situation in that field, that is, how things have been in that regard. Additionally, she should enter a grade for the situation on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 - extremely unsatisfactory, 10 - extremely satisfactory). As an alternative, instead of doing this in writing, the mentee can describe the situation aloud through a conversation you would guide.
- After describing the current situation for each of the segments, she goes one level downwards and in the smaller circle she describes the desired state, i.e., how, in ideal conditions, she would like things to be. In addition to the description, she should enter a grade for the desired state. There can be an alternative scenario for this step, following the logic of the scenario from the previous step.

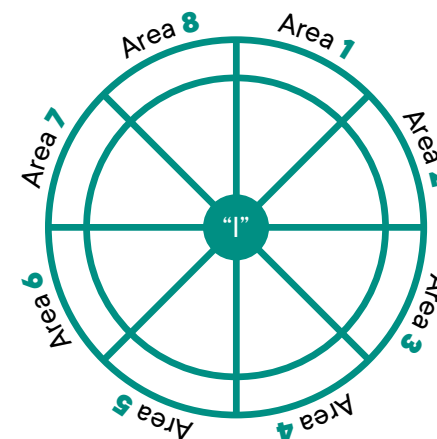


Fig. 1 – Goal Dart

- Wherever there is a difference between the current - real - and desired - ideal situation - there is a potential opportunity to set a goal. The greater the difference between the two scores, the greater the indications that the area deserves attention and is a starting point for goal setting (through the GROW model described below).
- In the middle - the innermost circle - she should write “I” - this will remind her that she is positioned at the centre of her circle of influence. She has control over her thoughts, feelings, words and actions while remaining true to her own highest values.

At the very end, make a final reflection on the overall activity. Ask the mentee how she feels about the outcome of the activity. Is she surprised? What part surprised her? What are her new realizations/findings/perceptions? What does that tell her?

Practical advice

This tool can be used at any stage of the mentoring process, during the conversation between the mentor and the mentee when a certain aspect comes to the fore in regard to which the mentee feels the need for change, i.e., improvement, when there is a need to delve even deeper into some aspect of the mentoring work or to check together the progress achieved as a result of the mentoring process. For example, during the mentoring sessions if the mentee shares with you that she feels frustrated or stressed (constantly or in certain situations), then you can ask the mentee to list eight areas/aspects of work that cause her the most stress and then rate them on a scale of 1 to 10 (the higher the stress, the higher the grade). Ask her if she is surprised of the results, how she can improve her grade (reduce it), and what she could do. In the same way you can work on any other issue including self-confidence, conflict situations, communications, lack of knowledge and skills, etc.

- *Fatmire, mentor*

The GROW model

The GROW model (G - goal; R - reality; O - options; W - willingness) is described below. It was developed by Graham Alexander, Alan Fine and Sir John Whitmore. This model can be used at any stage of the mentoring process. The purpose of the model is to help the mentee dedicate to a specific goal. Instead of imposing your idea, as a mentor, even when you are absolutely sure that you know what is best for her, you should help the mentee perceive for herself what she wants to achieve and how to achieve that.

When setting goals, you should make sure that they are in accordance with the SMART principle, i.e., the goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.

The application of the GROW model consists of the following four successive stages:

- **Stage no. 1 - Goal** What are you striving to achieve?
- **Stage no. 2 - Reality** What is the current reality, i.e., the current situation?

What is the starting point? Would it help if the goal is divided into smaller goals?

- **Stage no. 3 - Options** What are the options to achieve the goal? At this stage you can give your suggestions, but only after you give the mentee the opportunity to express her opinion.
- **Stage no. 4 - Willingness** How ready and willing are you to reach the goal?

A detailed description of each of the phases is given below.

Stage no.1: Goal

This stage is focused on setting the desired outcome of the mentoring session or the overall mentoring relationship. It can be used to formulate the overall goal and/or, through conversation, to learn and agree on the desired outcome. The goal should be:

- Positive - to progress towards something, rather than to become distant from something
- Within the control of the mentee
- Specific rather than indefinite - for example, “planning regular team meetingsevery two weeks starting in July 2022” instead of “improving team communications over the next year”.

To help the mentee set the goal, you can start the conversation with the following questions:

- What exactly do you want to achieve?
- What should it look like?
- How will you know that you have achieved the goal?
- If you had to summarize the goal in one sentence, what would you say?
- How do you benefit from it?
- Why is that important?

If, the answer that the mentee gives to the question you asked her, includes things that actually answer a question that you have not asked yet, but you planned to ask it, then skip this question. Do not try to ask all the questions in the same chronological order in which you prepared them. Instead, let the conversation, though semi-structured, have a spontaneous and natural course. If you are too rigid, the mentee may feel uncomfortable and resist having open and honest communication with you.

Stage. 2: Reality (what is happening at the moment?)

The purpose of this stage is to help you develop a clearer picture of the problem. You continue the conversation with the mentee in order to learn the different aspects of the problem. In doing so, you could ask the following questions:

- Tell me what is happening at the moment?
- What have you done about that so far?
- What prevents you from achieving/doing that?
- How much do you want that?
- What have you done so far? What worked?
- What did not work and why?

Stage no. 3: Options (what can be done?)

At this stage you help the mentee compile a list of possibilities that exist in relation to this goal. In doing so, encourage the mentee to compile the list on her own, without evaluating or judging the options. Encourage her to think of as many options as possible - at least three. To achieve this, you could ask her the following questions:

- What are the opportunities to do so?
- If we make a list, what is your first option?
- What else?
- What else could you do that you haven't tried so far?
- If you could do everything with a guarantee to succeed, what would it be?
- I know that you don't know, but if you knew, what would you do?
- Hence, we have numerous options. Let's go through each of them. How could each of these options work?

Stage. 4: Willingness or the way forward (what will actually be done?)

Of all the opportunities, i.e., possible options that will arise from the previous stage, the mentee should choose the best option and continue to work on it. For this particular reason, at this stage you discuss about the next steps that the mentee will take to achieve the goal. You do this by asking the following questions - choose the ones that mostly correspond to the course of the conversation with the mentee.

- We discussed about several options. What will you do?
- How will you do that?
- When will this happen?
- So, what exactly will you do on that date?
- What else should you do?
- What could stop you?
- What will that require?
- Who else should you involve?
- How will you get their support for that?
- When will you have that conversation?
- What will you say?
- What will you do tomorrow?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how committed are you to that? (If it is less than 10, you should continue asking the questions above.) Note: point out to the mentee that there is an option to do nothing about this and that you can return to the same questions on another occasion.

At the very end, once the mentee answered the questions regarding the four stages, ask her how she feels. Examine her level of energy, examine her self-confidence. Does she feel more energized? Has her self-confidence increased since she not only answered the questions, but also came up with possible solutions on her own. This is the purpose of the activity: to increase awareness, and thus to encourage and stimulate the mentee to take responsibility for achieving the goals. The very fact that the mentee finds the solutions on her own, leads to increased confidence in her own capacities to achieve the set goals.

Practical advice

Before using the tool with the mentee, we recommend that you use it on yourself first. Through the tool, try to define your own goals for professional development. Try to answer the questions. If you understand the questions and you find them useful to get an answer, you can use them with the mentee. However, if you encounter a question that you consider should be modified or skipped - revise or delete it accordingly. It is important to feel comfortable when asking the questions and to believe in their usefulness.

If the mentee does not have an answer to a specific question, ask her questions to encourage her to think and share. Use the open-ended questions technique and the active listening technique. However, if after several attempts to enable a continuous course of the conversation, the mentee cannot or does not want to continue, give her time to think. You can also propose to continue the conversation at the next mentoring session.

G-STAR model

The goal setting technique can be applied not only to the first, but also to the next mentoring sessions. In addition to the abovementioned tools, you can use the G-STAR tool (G - goals; S - situation; T - thinking; A - action; R - results), especially when you need to discuss a specific question in more detail, in order to help the mentee find the answers she is looking for, quickly and easily. This tool, similar to the previous ones, consists of several sets of questions, which will help you lead the conversation with the mentee in a semi-structured way.

The first set of questions refers to the mentee's goal for a specific mentoring session. Hence, the first question you can ask her is: "What are your **goals** for today's meeting?". This question will help you find out what the mentee would like to discuss at the meeting and what outcome she expects.

Clearly point out to the mentee that there is no true or false answer. Moreover, during the conversation, give her all the time she needs to answer without being pressed for time. After asking the first question, you proceed with an even more precise question regarding the expectations of the mentee from the meeting. You ask her about the degree of control that the mentee has over the specific issue, i.e., is it something that depends on her or it is out of her control. This

set of questions is completed with a question related to the time frame, more precisely, what is the deadline when the mentee would like to achieve, or should achieve, her goal.

The next stage of the conversation continues by examining the overall **situation** that the mentee is facing in relation to the given question by discussion about her feelings, the way she describes the situation, what she knows and what she doesn't know about the current situation.

Once you and the mentee have a clear idea of the question you have been discussing, move on to the questions that lead to finding a solution to the problem. Try to find out the mentee's **opinion** about the ways in which the question can be approached, i.e., the possible problem-solving options. You can go one step further and ask her what she thinks about the way that someone else would solve the same problem - a colleague, a co-worker, a superior, etc. The last question from this phase of the conversation refers to the way the mentee would describe the success in regard to this question. In this way, the mentee is encouraged and supported to visualize success.

The rest of the conversation is focused on the things the mentee will **undertake**, the sequence of her steps and the time frame. In addition, possible barriers that may stand in her way are being examined.

The conversation ends with a discussion about the **results** that the mentee expects, how realistic and feasible they are, what will she invest in the process and the possible consequences of the failure to achieve the results.

Overall, the conversation is guided through questions that will help you find out the goals of the mentee, what is the current situation she is faced with, what she thinks about this, what she can do and what results she expects to achieve. The summary list of detailed questions is indicated below.

SWOT analysis

This technique is useful to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the mentee, as well as the opportunities and threats. It is a framework that will enable the mentee to analyse herself and help her develop a strategy wherewith she will overcome weaknesses and threats by utilizing her strengths and opportunities.

SWOT analysis (S - strengths; W - weaknesses; O - opportunities; T - threats) can be applied during any mentoring session. If you manage to set the goals that you will strive to achieve within the mentoring program in the first session, then in the second session you can set all aspects of the SWOT analysis that are related to the set goal.

Start the activity by explaining to the mentee that you will address the following four aspects: her strengths (“S”), her weaknesses (“W”), the opportunities (“O”), and the threats (“T”). Then guide her through the process by asking her the following illustrative questions that you can amend with other relevant and even more specific questions in line with the course of the conversation.

While the mentee is answering your questions, you can write down the answers in your notebook or on a large sheet of paper in front of you. If spatial conditions allow, you can stick a flipchart paper on the wall and, as the mentee answers, write down the answers on paper (you can also get a marker beforehand).

Strengths

- What are your advantages in relation to the other colleagues/associates?
- What do you do better than others? What do you do best?
- What is unique about you and makes you different from the others?
- What do others consider to be your strength?
- What are your biggest successes/work achievements?
- What are your personal values that others may not have?
- What competencies do you have (knowledge/experience/technical skills)?
- What soft skills do you have (teamwork, leadership, etc.)?
- What positive personal traits do you have (empathetic, patient, detail-oriented, etc.)?

Weaknesses

Before you start reviewing the weaknesses, make it clear to the mentee that the purpose of this section is for her to find out her weaknesses and better understand them, in order to overcome them afterwards. Because of this, the

What are the **GOALS** of the mentee?

- What are your goals for today’s meeting?
- What do you expect to be most valuable at today’s session?
- Do you have control over this issue?
- By when should you achieve this goal?

What kind of **SITUATION** is the mentee facing with?

- How do you feel about this situation?
- How would you describe the situation?
- What do you know about the current situation?
- What is it that you don’t know about the current situation?

What does the mentee intend to **UNDERTAKE**?

- What is the first thing you need to do?
- By when should you do that?
- What schedule should you follow to do things?
- Is there anything that would stop you from doing what you intend to do?

What are the **RESULTS** that the mentee expects?

- Are these results realistic?
- Have you considered other outcomes?
- What can you further invest in the process if needed?
- What are the consequences if these results are not achieved?

mentee should be as honest as possible, first of all with herself, and then with you, because with your support she can work on eliminating the weaknesses.

- What is it that you are not doing well enough? What is the reason for that?
- Do you lack technical qualifications, additional knowledge/education/experience to do the job better?
- What work duties or responsibilities do you usually avoid? What does that say about you?
- What bad work habits do you have?
- Has anyone ever complained about you at work? Which complaints or criticisms were valid?
- What could you improve about yourself?
- What would others say about the things you need to improve?

Opportunities

- What trends in the work environment are in your favour?
- Are there work duties that no one else can do except you? Something you can learn to do, and others cannot?
- What potential do you have if you improve one of your weaknesses?
- In which working group/new project could you get involved in?
- Is some vacant job position expected, that you could fill in case you further qualify?

Threats

- What barriers/difficulties do you face?
- What do others do better than you?
- Is your job description changing or are the expectations from you changing?
- Is there anything that threatens your workplace?
- Do any of your weaknesses jeopardize your performance?

Encourage the mentee to think as broadly and creatively as possible. In the end, ask her whether some of the threats can become opportunities. What threats would those be? How could this be achieved?

Considering that the SWOT analysis is an introspection exercise that helps the mentee better understand herself and prepare for further development, in order to get as much benefit of the analysis as possible, it would be good not to strictly dedicate only to the list of items within each of the four aspects, but also to go a little deeper into introspection. You can achieve this by asking the following questions:

- Where does this strength/weakness/opportunity/threat come from?
- How does this affect you?
- What will you do about it? What are the next steps?

GOOD PRACTICE

How we did it

“As early as in our first meeting, I took an open approach and was ready to hear what the mentee had to tell me. As a mentor, I started the conversation - I introduced myself, I described my life path, we talked about my profession. Then, I carefully withdrew using the tool for identification of the representational systems of the mentee, in order to think about the ways to deepen our relationship.

After my openness and transparency, the mentee shared her expectations, how she sees the mentoring relationship, whereupon we agreed that the first goal we will work on is her self-confidence, thereby building our mutual trust.

I have to say that we did not pay attention to the duration of the meeting at all, but I realized that in the process of building trust in the first meeting, the open approach we had towards each other played the biggest role.”

- Zhaklina, mentor

STEP 2

Deepening the mentoring relationship

After defining the goal, the second step of the mentoring process begins. During this step, the mentoring relationship is built and the mentor supports the mentee in achieving the goal. Mentoring practice envisages various dynamics of holding mentoring meetings and developing the mentoring relationship, depending on the duration of the mentoring program, the complexity of the set goal, as well as the circumstances and available resources for both the mentor and the mentee.

Within the mentoring program “Women for Women in Public Administration”, the recommended dynamics of holding mentoring meetings is every three to four weeks, and the recommended duration of the meetings is one hour.

Usually, mentoring meetings consist of:

- appreciation of the success that has been achieved between the two mentoring meetings
- discussion about the challenges faced by the mentee
- follow-up regarding the agreed steps from the previous meeting
- discussion on additional topics or challenges related to the goal
- agreement on the next steps

One of the goals of this step is building a mutual relationship. This is best achieved by the mentor and mentee once they:

- find common topics of interest, on a professional, personal, and educational level
- discuss their hobbies or other topics beyond professional development
- comply with the set boundaries and do not discuss about personal issues
- do not share their information with other people
- have a positive attitude

In this relationship, mentors should avoid the pitfalls of directly solving the mentee’s problem or giving an order, i.e., a guideline about the mentee’s specific manner of action. Furthermore, the mentor should avoid creating a sense of dependence and necessity of her opinion in the mentee. The mentee, on the other hand, should approach the relationship with an open and non-defensive attitude, especially in the moments when she will receive feedback from the mentor.

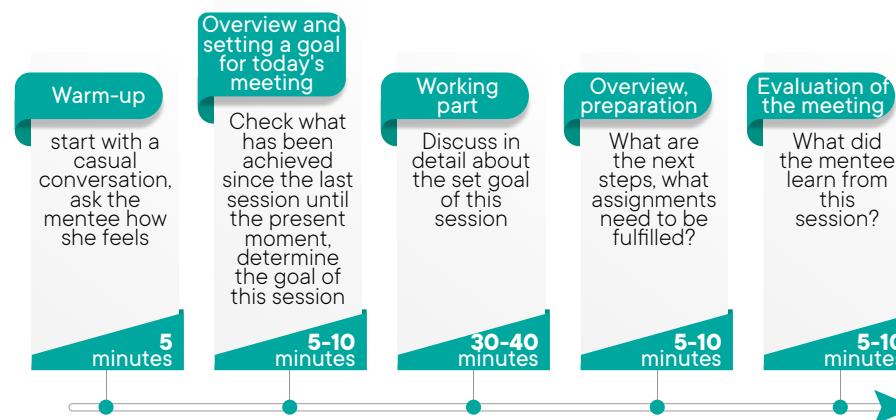
The result of the second step of the mentoring process should be a gradual progress towards achieving the set goal. Depending on the complexity of the set goal, this step, within the mentoring program “Women for Women in Public Administration”, can take two to four months.

“The mentoring relationship should be based on trust, confidentiality, mutual respect and sensibility.

The mentor should allow the mentee to foster a bond between them and encourage her to take greater responsibility for her own thinking and development. There should be no compulsion or an agenda that the mentor imposed as the ultimate goal.

The mentor should help the mentee to identify goals and challenges and set priorities for relevant personal growth.”

- Viktorija, mentor



Structure of a mentoring session, taken from Women’s Empowering Principles, Mentoring in Workplace

OVERVIEW OF MODELS, TECHNIQUES AND FORMS

“EFFECT” model of relation-building

According to Amy Iversen, relationship-building consists of the following six components:

- Empathy - to understand the other’s perspective, to be able to put ourselves in the other person’s shoes
- Focus - to be able to listen, to concentrate on the other person
- Flexibility - to be open to the other’s ideas, even when they are different from our ideas
- Empowerment - the session should help to gain ownership and control over the goals
- Congruence - Do the mentor and the mentee work in the same direction? Can they see the mutual perspectives? Can the mentor accept the mentee’s goals even when they are different from hers?
- Trust - Can the mentee trust the mentor? Does the mentor have confidence in the mentee? Can the mentee tell the mentor what she has planned to achieve?

Active listening

Listening is an integral part of communication. Therefore, for a successful mentoring relationship, it is exceptionally important for the mentors to be able to actively listen so that they can “truly” listen to the mentees. Unlike passive listening, which does not require special effort, active listening is a focused process that, in order to be implemented successfully, requires exercise. Active listening implies a skill that can be acquired and developed through practice. Active listening means listening with all the senses. In active listening we concentrate on what we are being told, as opposed to passive listening to the “message” of the speaker. In mentoring relationships, during mentoring sessions, active listening means that the mentor observes both the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of the mentee, in order to understand what

the mentee is experiencing during the session. At the same time, the mentor should show effective non-verbal behaviour towards the mentee during the communication.

Listening continuum

The essence of active listening is a clear and decisive intention that needs to be set when communicating with other people. According to Stephen Covey, most people do not listen with the intention of understanding, but with the intention of answering. Most people strive to be understood and to convey their point. In doing so, they either completely ignore the person who speaks or they pretend to listen, selectively listening only to certain parts of the conversation, or focusing only on the words, and omitting their meaning. What they listen, they filter through the filter of their own life experience, i.e., as Covey says, their own frame of reference, comparing what they listen with “their own autobiography.”

In “*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*”, one of the habits that Covey indicates is the habit “seek first to understand, then to be understood.” It is useful for mentors to apply this principle, in order to be able to influence on the mentees, to challenge their way of thinking and support their development, mentors primarily need to be able to understand mentees.

According to Covey, there is a **listening continuum**, which consists of 5 levels of listening. At levels 1 through 4 we listen through our own perspectives. At these levels, our understanding of others is limited or non-existent. The following is a brief description of the way of listening in each of these levels..

Level 1 – ignoring – while the other person is talking to you, you are not paying any attention to him/her.

Level 2 – pretending – you leave an impression that you are listening to the person who speaks. You may hear some of the things, but you are not fully present. You make movements wherewith you want to leave an impression that you are listening, you are nodding, saying “aha”, “yes-yes”, but in fact you are not interested. To really listen to the person - you need to devote both time and attention.

Level 3 – selective listening – you only pay attention to certain parts of what is being said/spoken and you easily go back to pretending to be listening (level

2), interrupting the speaker or showing impatience for the speaker to get to the key point. You will recognize this level if you have a tendency to complete the sentences of the person speaking.

Level 4 – attentive listening – you dedicate time and pay attention and this is good, but not enough to achieve real understanding. This level is one step prior to the highest level of listening and all we have to do is put ourselves in the shoes of the person speaking. At level 4 – attentive/careful listening, we tend to:

- **Evaluate** – to judge based on our values, priorities and needs
- **Advise** – give recommendations based on our views
- **Examine** – seek information that we think is important
- **Interpret** – what is happening the way we see it

What we should strive for is the **5th level**, that is, the level of **empathic listening**. At levels 1-4 we are stuck in our own frame of reference, while at the level of empathic listening we enter the frame of the speaker. Real communication takes place at this level.

In “*The 7 Habits of Effective People*”, Covey points out that most of our efforts to develop communication skills involve reading, writing, and speaking. However, very little effort is put into developing our ability to truly hear the other person’s perspective.

Listening continuum	
5. Empathic listening	Within the frame of reference of the other person
4. Attentive listening	Within our own frame of reference
3. Selective listening	
2. Pretending that we listen	
1. Ignoring	

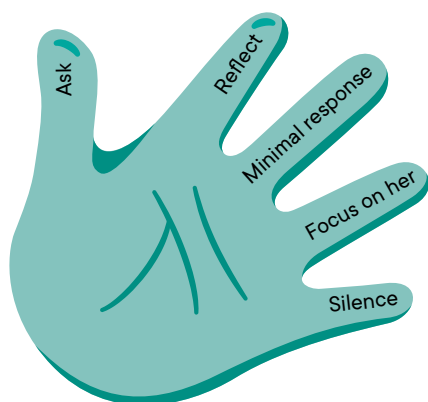
The “SOLER” approach

Gerard Egan (The Skilled Helper) is the author of the so-called “SOLER” approach (S: Sit Squarely; O: Open position; L: Lean; E: Eye contact; R: Relax) as part of the non-verbal listening process used in communication. The following is a brief description of each of the components of this approach tailored to meet the needs and nature of the communication process between the mentor and the mentee.

- **Sit upright in front of the mentee**. Preferably, the position of your body in relation to the mentee should be as the hands of the clock showing 5 o’clock - in order to avoid the possibility of “staring”. Sitting upright says, “*I’m here with you, I’m here for you.*”
- **Have an open attitude** – open body posture. Thereby, do not cross your arms or legs as such a body posture may seem defensive and may be a sign of less involvement and accessibility for the mentee. On the other hand, an open attitude indicates your openness to the mentee and what she is saying.
- **Slightly lean towards the mentee** – that way you send a message to the mentee “*I am with you, I am interested in you and what you are saying*”. On the other hand, if you lean back - you will send the opposite message. However, make sure that the forward tilt is mild and moderate because if you tilt too much, it can upset her and it may be interpreted as having some expectation from her.
- **Maintain eye contact** and try not to “stare” at the mentor. That way you send her a message again saying “*I’m interested, I’m with you*”. Do not forget to take your eyes off the mentee from time to time so as not to stare at her. Keep track of the length of time you are looking away as this may indicate a level of comfort.
- **Relax**. This should help the mentee to relax as well. Be relaxed and be natural. By doing so, you are letting the mentee know that you feel comfortable, and at the same time you help the mentee feel comfortable too.

“A model that would come in handy”

The author of the active listening model called “Handy Model” is Anne Rolf. Below are the instructions given by Ann Rolf to apply the model. Draw a contour of your hand. Mark each finger as indicated in the picture. This will come in handy as a reminder of the five techniques for better listening.



Then do the following:

1. Fist your hand and keep your thumb straight - as for the “like” sign. Touch your chin with your thumb. When you do, say “silence.” Do this three times - touch your chin with your thumb and say “*silence*”. This will be a reminder that the first step to truly understanding what the mentee is telling you is to be quiet and listen. While your thumb is on your chin, quite easily and comfortably raise your index finger and place it on your lips, as a further reminder to yourself that you need to “*hush*”.
2. The next thing you need to do is point with your outstretched index finger towards the imagined mentee and say “*focus on her*”. Put your hand back in the “*hush*” position and then again point it back and forth three more times, repeating “*focus on her*”.
3. Lower your index finger and now apply gentle pressure with your middle finger on the fleshy part of your palm under your thumb. What is the touch surface of the middle finger? Repeat this three times with light pressure on the surface below the middle finger. Minimal response, minimal response.
4. Now try to straighten your ring finger - quite a bit. Imagine that you have a diamond ring on your finger and that it reminds you that you need to “*reflect*”. Repeat in yourself “*reflect*”, “*reflect*”, “*reflect*”.
5. In the very end, lift your little finger. So far you have listened well and in order to go deeper, you need to ask. Remember, the questions should be open-ended, with expressed curiosity. Straighten your little finger and repeat “*ask, ask, ask*”.

This way you will always have at hand the 5 techniques for better listening.

According to Anne Rolf, if you want to become a better “listener”, you need to acquire the following habits:

- **Silence:** Do not interrupt, do not come up with your own story, opinion or advice. Let the mentee speak.
- **Focus on her** – pay attention to what the mentee is saying or not saying. You want to understand what she thinks and that cannot always be achieved through the first words she says. Observe her non-verbal communication. Forget about your judgment and just listen to her point of view. Try to “catch” her values and priorities, needs and desires.
- **Minimal response** – you need to show her that you are fully present and listening without interrupting her. Therefore, give her positive nonverbal cues of listening. Keep verbal responses short (“*hmm*”, “*aha*”, “*I see*”, “*tell me more*”) to encourage her to say more.
- **Reflect** – when it is your turn to speak, do not succumb to the temptation to give advice! Instead, repeat what the mentee said, emphasizing her feelings. Do not literally repeat her words, instead, paraphrase, summarize or retell using some of her words.
- **Ask good questions** – when you reflect, the mentee will confirm or clarify her thoughts. In some cases, that’s all it takes. People often just want to release their energy or express themselves. They do not seek advice. Even when they need an answer, the opportunity to think out loud and to be listened is quite enough for them to come to their own solution. If you need to continue the conversation, do so with open-ended questions that you will ask with an appropriate level of curiosity based on your respect for the mentee. And ... keep listening.

GOOD PRACTICE

Application of useful approaches and tools

"Mentoring as a process is a huge responsibility. Being more experienced, the mentor is the one who conveys knowledge to the mentee who wants to acquire new knowledge and experiences. Knowing that my advice or course of action would make a difference in the mentee's life (with a strong desire for positive changes), I used the most effective tool in the mentoring process itself: active listening.

In the process of our training as mentors, Vesna and Valbona presented or introduced us to many tools, or reminded us of many tools, the application of which provides positive and fast results. After each training, I applied the conveyed knowledge in everyday life and so I understood which of the tools I can implement best, and give positive results, in accordance with our expectations, which is crucial.

I use active listening every day. When I really listen actively, I always get results. Through active listening, the interlocutor, who is the mentee in this case, comes to the solutions on her own, we have a "win-win" situation, both the mentor and the mentee are successful, the mentee is more self-confident and determined for changes because they have been initiated by her.

Another tool that I use and that makes my daily life much easier is the time management tool, i.e., making a list of assignments before I go to sleep. I write them down and while I sleep, half of the assignments are completed by themselves and checked as finished.

This entire process has shown that people do not actually listen to each other, because if they really do, issues would be much easier to resolve. The trainings in which we participated as mentors abounded in methods, tools, researches, examples and stories. All we have to do is apply them."

- Bisera, mentor

Asking questions

It is very important to enter the mentoring relationship with an open mind and focus on the big picture in relation to the situation or topic you are discussing with the mentor.

The best way to do this is by asking questions. The skill of asking questions as a mentor helps you in the following:

- Avoiding early and wrong conclusions
- Avoiding personal interpretation of things
- Avoiding the trap of giving advice and ready-made mentoring solutions
- Maintaining communication at the level of structure - we can more easily understand the views of the mentee - what are her beliefs, fears, values, understandings, and thus get to know her better

There are two types of questions: closed, the answer of which is always yes/no and open, which begin with "what, how, when, in what way".

During the mentoring sessions, you need to ask as many open-ended questions as possible.

What should you pay attention to when asking questions to the mentee?

- You need to ask yourself: "What do I achieve with this question? Am I satisfying my curiosity or will the mentee really benefit from answering this question?"
- Make sure you ask questions that will benefit the mentee: as you actively listen to her, ask yourself what would be helpful for her and come up with a question that will lead the mentee to the required answer.
- Ask one question at a time, which should always be simple.

Below are some examples of open-ended questions for different purposes, which you can use during the mentoring sessions.

In terms of **problem-solving and goal-setting questions**, you can go back to the detailed instructions for the goal-setting tools, the Grow and G-STAR models, where you will find questions that have already been formulated for this purpose. The goal is to get a positive statement from the mentee wherewith the goal will be defined.

Use	Questions	Goal
Questions for getting additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me something more about that situation? What exactly does this mean? • Why is this a problem for you? • Describe in detail how you feel/how you felt at that moment? • When did you feel that way before? • When did you succeed in something before? How did you do that? Who helped you? • What made you do that? • How do you know that...? • What is stopping you from...? • What do you think makes the superior act that way? What else could be the reason? • Why is it important for you to ...? • What if ... (it does not happen, it does not change, you do not learn it ...)? 	To obtain as much information as possible from the mentee about the problem/issue without jumping to conclusions
Questions to encourage the mentee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could you do to ... And what else ... And what more? (enriching the options) Which of these options do you prefer? • Who else can help you achieve your goal? How? • What will you do today, in a week, in a month? • How could you act differently? • What steps could you take? • What do you lack to achieve the goal? • What should you learn, feel, see in order to believe that ...? • How could you...? • If you could do it perfectly, what would it look like if all the conditions were met? • What could be your next step? 	Encourage the mentee to reach internal and specific resources/ways to achieve the goal
Questions to round off the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything left that we have not considered? • How do you feel now? • Let's arrange the next meeting ... • What will you do from today until the next meeting? 	Round off the meeting, receiving feedback from the mentee that she knows what to commit to

What competencies are key to successfully lead the mentoring process?

“In order to be able to successfully lead the mentoring process, I primarily think that the mentor should **have experience** (not only professional, but also some life experience), but more importantly **to have the ability to convey the experience to the mentee**.

Specifically, I would say that the 16 years of professional experience that I have, was a ‘trump card’ for me, during this process. If I did not have this experience, I think I would not have been able to successfully play my role of mentor. Considering that part of the work duties in my workplace include giving directions (guidelines), sharing knowledge and skills to younger and less experienced colleagues, including new employees, over the years I have conveyed all of this, and I still convey it, selflessly and unreservedly, which results/resulted in their motivation, achieving good results in their work, as well as their personal development, which I myself have observed and noticed. All this was an encouragement and a solid basis for me personally, that I can contribute to this project, and that we can fulfil the set and agreed goals with the mentee.

The possession of **personal qualities**: honesty, openness, communication, dedication, patience, discretion, to inspire, to be a person of trust, to listen, as well as to know what is relevant about the mentee, I also think **is especially important for the mentor to be able to lead the mentoring process successfully**.

In this regard, I would say that I, as an honest, communicative and open person, very easily and quickly established a friendly relationship with the mentee, I was very accessible for her, and this deepened our relationship. My natural introduction at the first meeting (without taking a superior position), the retention and maintenance of such a relationship throughout the mentoring process, contributed to relaxed meetings and friendly, but also very pleasant conversations. I think my dedication was recognized by the mentee, who “reciprocated” with her active and dedicated participation in the process. Since I am a communicative person, it was not at all difficult for the mentee to be open to me. Moreover, the fact that I actively and empathically listened to her, I observed and asked questions, helped me recognize what the mentee wants to achieve, but also enabled me to learn a lot from her. Hence, I think that if I did not possess these qualities as

a person, not only would I not be able to successfully lead the mentoring process, but also the output, i.e., the final result would not have been the same.”

- Ivona, mentor

Giving and receiving feedback

Feedback is an information you receive in response to your actions (what you have done) or your behaviour towards the others.

In an organizational context, feedback is an information that is sent to a person or a group of employees about their previous behaviour, so that the person/group can adjust their current or future behaviour to achieve the desired result. In a mentoring context, feedback is a type of communication between the mentor and the mentee about the impact of the mentee’s behaviour or performance.

The literature related to feedback abounds in techniques that make feedback a positive experience for both the person who gives it and the person who receives it. However, even if they are trained to use those techniques, many people still approach to feedback with resistance and anxiety – to both giving and receiving. As a result, often such situations are either avoided or people do not deal with them effectively.

When feedback is approached as a process of sharing information – each of the involved parties plays two roles: each has information to give and information to receive. They are equal partners - with valid information arising from their share in the situation and from the way they understand relevant facts and events.

Both parties enter the conversation with shared goals:

- To learn about their mutual views of the situation
- To reconsider their own starting points based on what they learn from each other
- To explore options for similar circumstances in the future

What is generally known about feedback is that:

- It is difficult to give feedback
- Giving feedback requires skills that must be developed
- Feedback is an essential and powerful developmental tool

The EARN model

The EARN model (E: Event; A: Action; R: Results; N: Next Steps) of giving feedback is a tool for communicating motivational and developmental feedback in positive and negative situations, in order to achieve maximum clarity and effect. This model consists of the following four components:

- **Event:** What was the situation like?
- **Action:** What was the observed behaviour?
- **Result:** What was the impact or the consequence?
- **Next steps:** What behaviour should continue/change?

1. Event	2. Action	3. Result	4. Next steps
What was the situation? When did it happen? Where did it happen?	What was the observed behaviour? What specifically was said or done? Focus on the behaviour, not the personality Use a non-judgmental tone Describe without judging	What has changed? What was the impact or the consequences? Who was affected? Provide clarity, confirm that the mentee understands the importance/ consequences of the behaviour or procedure	What behaviour should continue or change? Look for specific change and/or ideas Agree on the next steps
Motivational feedback: Information given to the mentee about her performance with a view to maintain the behaviour that is appropriate and/or effective			
Developmental feedback: Information given to the mentee about her performance with a view to change the behaviour that is inappropriate and/or ineffective			

The provision of feedback by using this model is implemented through the following steps:

1. First you identify the event - where and when the behaviour/action happened. For example, “during the last mentoring meeting” is one of the ways you can describe the event. You need to make sure that the mentee knows what you are talking about before proceeding with the conversation.
2. Then, you describe the specific action or behaviour for which you are giving feedback. *What was the observed behaviour? What did the mentee specifically do or say?* In this part it is important to keep the focus on the

behaviour, not the person. Keep the tone of your voice without condemnation and describe the action or behaviour without judging. For example, “while I was talking, you were looking at your phone.”

3. The next thing you do is explain to the mentee the result of her behaviour. “When holding mentoring meetings, it is important that we are both fully focused. When you are looking at your mobile phone, I’m not sure if you’re following me.” In other words, you explain to her the impact or consequence of her action or behaviour. What has changed (for better or for worse)? What was the consequence? What was the impact? Be very clear about what you are giving feedback for. It is very important for the mentee to understand in detail the importance or consequence of her action or behaviour.
4. Finally, ask the mentee about the next steps. That way she continues the conversation and becomes part of the solution. Ask for her ideas, her suggestions. For example, “What if we turn off our phones during mentoring sessions or respond only in emergencies?” The mentee will not always be willing or able to suggest the next steps, but it is important to let her know that you see her as part of the solution.

The application of this model provides you with a structured way of giving motivational and developmental feedback.

Feedback loop

The feedback loop consists of the following five steps:

1. Asking for feedback - make it a habit of asking for feedback. Remember to ask clear, concise questions, because scanty and general questions will result in scanty and general answers.
2. Getting feedback - this can be a challenge for many people. Remember that this is not a personal attack, rather an observation of your behaviour and the consequences of the impact.
3. Accepting feedback - learn from the feedback - use it to improve your behaviour and broaden your way of thinking.
4. Feedback-based action - take the information and act accordingly. Set goals and share the progress.
5. Giving feedback - this should be perceived as an act of care. Pay attention to your comments. They should be well framed, concise, relevant and practical.

What competencies are key to successfully lead the mentoring process?

“I believe that the combination of multiple competencies is important for the successful conduct of the process, i.e., the competencies of building trust, active listening, inspiring action, giving corrective feedback, ability to jointly overcome risks, etc., are inseparable. However, I would single out the competence of encouragement as an important element, which is certainly not enough on its own, however, when combined with all other competencies and simultaneously with any other competence, it provides a successful mentoring process which is beneficial to both parties and the institutions. After we built trust, we learned about the character of the other, but also about our own character (thanks to the training), we defined the goals through which we will help each other for personal and professional development, but also for the gender policies in the parent institutions. Considering that I had more experience on this issue, and my parent institution at the time, the Assembly, is more gender sensitive in relation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I shared my entire experience, as well as all the risks that had to be overcome in order to contribute to a more gender sensitive Assembly. In this way I stimulated and encouraged the other mentor Viktorija to ignore the fear of risks and the fear of failure, and instead to focus on the benefits of achieving the goal. Simultaneously, we encouraged each other to pursue the goals for personal and professional advancement. From this perspective now, I can conclude that the incentive was very effective, i.e., it gave both of us the courage to take successful steps for career advancement. At the same time, despite changing my work environment and institution, I remained committed to improving the Assembly’s gender sensitivity. Hence, I would encourage the continuation of the mentoring program and the inclusion of the mentor-to-mentor relationship, in addition to the mentor-mentee relationship, because the result that two women with similar experience and level can achieve as a team and in solidarity, is a huge benefit for them and for other women in their surroundings. Specifically, based on my experience, I believe that stimulation, i.e., encouragement and empowerment can contribute to improving solidarity among women, as well as to the realization that women can and should help each other and that they are not rivals, but rather a team in the implementation of all life goals.”

- Eva, mentor

Decision-making technique

The decision-making technique² called “*six thinking hats*” is based on the premise that the human brain thinks in a number of different ways that can be intentionally challenged, hence their use can be planned in a structured way that allows them to develop thinking tactics for specific issues. The technique can be used for individual thinking and group discussions on various issues of common interest. It can also be used to evaluate the results of thinking and to decide what to do next. As such, the technique can be used at any stage of the mentoring process, especially when it is necessary to consider a particular issue from several different perspectives, i.e., when an alternative way of looking at a particular issue or problem that the mentor has detected is needed. Thereby, depending on the context, you may decide to apply only one, a few or all of the hats in the chronological order listed below.

Step 1:

If the mentee is not familiar with this tool, describe its purpose and constituent elements at the very beginning of the session, so that the mentee can understand the meaning of each of the colours, i.e., to understand the function of each of the hats.

Required materials: Six hats in different colours: blue, red, white, yellow, green and black; the hats can be made of fabric or paper. Alternatively, you can make/supply one hat with a neutral colour and six post-it notes in different colours and stick them on the hat depending on the hat you are wearing. Feel free to be creative in choosing the material wherewith you will symbolize the colour.

Required time: About one hour

The blue hat governs thinking. This is a **control** hat. It organizes thinking, sets focus and agenda, summarizes things, draws conclusions and enables adherence to rules. The order is always such that it starts and ends with the blue

² The author of the technique is Edward de Bono

hat. The person with the blue hat is the conductor of the process, ensuring that everyone wears the appropriate hat at a given time to maintain parallel thinking.

The white hat is the hat of **information**. It identifies the information we have, the ones we need and the ones we lack. It wonders what questions we need to ask to get the information we need and how to get the information. It points out that facts and figures cannot be treated objectively when offered as part of an argument. It reminds us of the difference between a proven fact and an unverified fact (belief). It requires that we take up the position of a computer. This hat is called a “**neutral**” hat because it operates with facts and data.

The red hat deals with emotions and intuition, which are key components of the decision-making process. The red hat allows us to express our feelings without the need to explain them. It represents the present feelings at the moment and helps to gain insight into “the position that people represent” in a way that is not subject to punishment. It opens the door to extracting the inner knowledge (that we are not even aware we have) - views that arise from life experience including bias, heuristic and pattern recognition. The red hat is recommended to be used within a very short period of time - about 20 seconds - and it is a wonderful way to start the process - when we put all the cards on the table.

The black hat is a hat of warning, caution and survival. It helps to identify risks, difficulties and problems. The black hat represents the sceptical view. It points to potential problems and thinking that do not match the facts, experience, rules, strategy or values. Why will something fail? Why this may not be the right thing to do? It is the hat that allows us to deconstruct the thinking process regarding a given topic. It is contrary to the optimism of the yellow hat and can refute the arguments of the yellow hat. However, in any case, the reasons are indicated. Logic must prevail over the answers of the black hat; if it is based on feelings - then it is thinking of the red cap. As a general rule, we are all natural “black hats”. People who excessively use the black hat tend to spend a lot of their energy on finding flaws in things.

The yellow hat refers to benefits and feasibility, not fantasies. That is the optimistic view. In fact, optimism is the prerequisite for using this hat. It helps to find benefits and values and takes into account short-term and long-term perspectives. The reasons must be indicated. However, if you have only speculations - then express them within this hat. Use the yellow hat to refute and oppose the black hat. The yellow hat needs more effort, because it leads to optimism and is usually the easiest role for the representatives of a project.

While the black hat refers to risks, the yellow hat refers to opportunities. In fact, any opportunity identified by the yellow hat can be given to the green hat in order to consider the ways that opportunity can be used.

The green hat refers to ideas and opportunities. It is a hat of creative thinking, it is related to energy. The yellow hat identifies opportunities, however it is not responsible for explaining how those opportunities would be realized: the green hat assumes that responsibility. The green hat seeks alternatives and possibilities, it eliminates shortcomings and creates new concepts. It does not have to be logical. It encourages risk-taking. It demands new approaches and replaces reasoning with movement.



Step 2:

Once the mentee becomes familiar with the technique or is reminded of it, guide her through the process of putting on each of the “hats”.

Start with the “blue hat” and ask the mentee the following two questions subsequently:

- What is the problem?
- What decision do you want to make?

After answering the questions wearing the “blue hat”, tell her that you are switching to the “white hat”. Ask her the following questions:

- What is your goal?
- What is the context (who, what, when, where, why, how, how much)?

- What are your beliefs and opinions regarding this problem/issue?
- What facts do you know?
- What information do you need?
- Where can you get the information you need?
- What questions should you ask?

After asking the questions indicated above, you move on to the “red hat” questions:

- What feelings does this problem arouse in you?
- What is your premonition?
- How could your feelings change over time?

Once the mentee answers the questions, move on to the “yellow hat” questions:

- What will make our proposed measures successful?
- What are the benefits?
- How will this improve things?
- How do you know that this will be useful?
- Why do you think that this will be successful?

After the optimistic approach, you continue with the sceptical approach wearing the “black hat”. Thereby, you can ask some of the following questions:

- What are the risks?
- What are the failure scenarios?
- What are the potential side effects/unpredicted consequences?
- Why this would not work?
- What are the weaknesses?
- What is it that you forget and could seriously harm you?
- How do you know that this will not work?
- What makes this harder than you might assume?
- What are the real threats?
- Why you should not continue?

You complete the cycle of questions by wearing a “green hat”:

- Can you do this differently from what you have done so far?
- What are the new ideas?
- What opportunities are there?
- What are the immediate steps for this to succeed?
- What risks should you accept? (based on what will be said about the risks while wearing the “black hat”)

In the very end, ask the mentee about her final conclusion and what she will do.

GOOD PRACTICE

How I was preparing for the mentoring meetings

"After the first meeting with my mentee, after the first introduction, I met a well-built young person, who knew exactly what kind of career development she wants. The energy and desire to work were great, and there was no lack of self-confidence. It was only necessary to channel that energy, so that it would not be wasted unnecessarily.

Each of our subsequent meetings was a challenge for me. I wanted to learn with her as well, to get to know her work and although the nature of our work was different, the principles and the way of behaviour did not differ much.

We set some goals, we defined the details, so that we change some of them over time. I tried to emphasize the role of the analysis, the preparation at the beginning of each work, the determination of the time frame for achieving a certain goal, the role of external influences and how it turned out to be inconvenient for the training period. I also emphasized the importance of flexibility, humanity, but also the ability to recognize the moment when a stronger position should be taken. We understood each other very well, even just a short conversation bore fruit. I think that we established lively and wavery atmosphere where the wave was slowly but surely moving towards the mainland.

Often, as I prepared for each of our meetings, I felt that I was doing everything instinctively, that I did not remember the tools and mechanisms we had learned in trainings. And in fact, I did not remember their names. However, that is why I was reviewing, I was looking through the training material and I would think - Hey, look, I used this ... or ... Did I listen to her actively enough? ... or ... Hey, let me see where my mentee and I will be in these squares ... or ... Did we set goals well ... or ...

And I came to the conclusion that the training material really helps, it guides the direction that each mentor should follow during the mentoring process. Especially when it is accompanied by practical examples and according to the principle of play. And always, for each of our meetings, I 'snuggled' in the material from the previous trainings and, of course, I enjoyed that process."

- Biljana, mentor

Step 3

Achieving the goal and rounding off the mentoring relationship

The third step of the mentoring program starts at the moment when the mentee confirms that she achieved the defined goal. This rounds off the official mentoring relationship.

It is recommendable to hold a separate mentoring meeting for this purpose, at which the mentor and the mentee will esteem the contribution they both made during the mentoring process and will evaluate:

- the extent to which the goal has been achieved
- the way the mentor supported the mentee in achieving the goal
- the benefits to the mentor of this relationship
- the benefits to the mentee of this relationship
- what could have been done differently if the mentoring relationship starts all over again.

The final result of the third step is meeting the goal and completing the mentoring relationship. This step, in fact, represents the last mentoring meeting.

After the mentoring relationship is completed, the mentor and the mentee can agree to continue their relationship in an informal and unstructured way, with a dynamic that suits them both.

GOOD PRACTICE

How I prepared for the final mentoring meeting

"Elena achieved the assigned goal. Formally, I had to prepare for our final meeting, and it happened to be in pandemic conditions with online communication. An experience which was based on a pleasant association, open communication and a lively relation of transfer of knowledge and experience, throughout the whole process, now had to end differently.

While preparing for the final meeting, I was thinking about the satisfaction I felt for the excellent job and the satisfaction that my professional experience had benefited someone.

I had only one question in mind that I wanted to ask Elena: Did we achieve the goal and manage to organize the work at a higher level?

We made the evaluation slightly different from the proposed evaluation template. As a hybrid model. I combined the questionnaire with the tool wherewith we set the goal. I decided to go back to the beginning of the process, using the way we set the goal. I used the same tool to evaluate the completed task altogether with the achieved results and the challenges we faced.

At the final meeting, it was more important for me to share my feedback on what the development of the mentee meant during the time we spent together, the satisfaction I had at the joint meetings and my hopes for her according to her qualities.

Mentoring is a reversible process, every mentor is a mentee, and every mentee is a mentor. Growth is mutual. It is indeed a woman for a woman. "The public sector is just the channel through which we connected."

- Neda, mentor

Overview of models, techniques and forms

Mentoring process evaluation form

Evaluation by the mentee

Name and surname: _____

Evaluation of the mentoring relationship

1. What were the greatest achievements?
2. How effectively were the mentoring goals achieved? What goals were not achieved and why? What goals were overcome and how? Was there a difference between the initially defined goal and the goal you achieved in the end?
3. Describe the most important topics you discussed. Why were these topics so important to you? What has changed as a result of the discussions?
4. What aspect of the mentoring relationship made you most satisfied?
5. What was most useful to you?
6. Which stories, anecdotes or examples left the biggest impression on you as the best moments of the communication between you? Why were they particularly important?
7. What could you have done differently?
8. What would have been different (for you, the mentor, for both of you) if the mentoring had not happened?
9. What kind of contact will you have with the mentor in the future?

10. Would you be interested in participating in a similar mentoring program in the future?

If the answer is YES, please describe the role you would like to have. If the answer is NO, explain the reason why.

11. Would you recommend the “Women for Women” program to other public administration employees? Explain the reason for YES or NO answer.

Evaluation by the mentor

Name and surname: _____

Evaluation of the mentoring relationship

1. What were the greatest achievements?

2. How effectively were the mentoring goals achieved? What goals were not achieved and why? What goals were overcome and how? Was there a difference between the initially defined goal and the goal you achieved in the end?

3. Describe the most important topics you discussed. Why and how were these specific topics selected? What has changed as a result of the discussions?

4. What aspect of the mentoring relationship made you most satisfied?

5. What was most useful to you?

6. What was the most important learning experience for you personally?

7. What would have been different (for you, the mentee, for both of you) if the mentoring had not happened?

8. What could you have done differently?

9. What kind of contact will you have with the mentee in the future?

10. Would you be interested in participating in a similar mentoring program in the future?

If the answer is YES, please describe the role you would like to have. If the answer is NO, explain the reason why.

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