

Mentors

Tips for a Successful Mentoring Relationship

We ask that mentors commit to 1 hour per month to meet with their mentees (either face to face or otherwise) If you have any issues with this please communicate this to your mentee.

In advance of your first meeting:

- Crossing Thresholds participants will approach their chosen mentor via the mentor pool. Once a request has been sent, mentors have 10 days to respond, either accepting or declining the request
- We suggest that mentees send mentors their action plans, regardless of the stage that it is at. You may also want to share with each other your CV or other information about yourself.

At the first meeting:

- Take the time to get to know each other – the more open you are, the easier it will be for your mentee to do the same, and for trust to develop.
- It is useful to agree mutual expectations at the outset and have these as a written record of your commitment to the partnership.
- Explore your mentee's career goal, current situation and milestones together. Help your mentee evaluate her milestones and look at some actions to take in the coming year. It's likely you will need to spend at least one full session clarifying this.

Things that work well:

- Agree at the outset your goals for the mentor partnership, and the frequency, length, structure and logistics for the sessions (we recommend one hour monthly but 30 minutes once a fortnight or 90 minutes every 6 weeks might work better for some).
- It is down to the mentee to drive the mentoring relationship, including suggesting dates and making sure these get in both your diaries. Block-booking a number of sessions or setting up a recurring Outlook event can work well. Decide between you what you will do if a session gets cancelled.
- We advise mentees to prepare in advance for each session and send a reminder/agenda/update to you a couple of days beforehand. Decide how you will evaluate the relationship along the way.
- Build in time for giving and receiving feedback at the end of each session, so you know that the sessions are serving their purpose or what else you need to do.



- Encourage your mentee to write up the plans you agree, with action points highlighted, and send them to you as a record of your mutual commitment.
- Use your mentee's career action plan as a focus of your work together. You could also agree a list of relevant topics to look at, for example as your mentee works through the Crossing Thresholds modules, make them the themes the topic of your discussions. This approach will help to keep your sessions both fresh and inspiring as well as help your mentee get the best from the programme by preparing for and evaluating the modules with you.
- Be prepared to give specific help if appropriate, e.g. looking over an application form.
- Be willing to challenge myths, assumptions and negative expectation where appropriate.
- Try to avoid overly focusing on what has worked for you in the past. Your mentee has unique aspirations, skills and experience and the context is constantly shifting, therefore it is vital to keep an open mind about what will work and continue to review this along the way.

Some typical pitfalls:

- Doing the majority of the talking, rather than the mentee. Practise active listening and ask plenty of questions rather than try to come up with solutions
- Trying to discourage your mentee from pursuing her aspirations in order to avoid disappointment
- Overly focussing on apparent problems, constraints and obstacles rather than how to be as effective and strategic as possible
- Trying to provide the 'right' answers or strategy
- Neither party taking notes – resulting in forgetting what has been discussed/agreed
- Sessions that lack structure
- Not being challenging enough
- Repeatedly cancelling or postponing sessions. Better to unpair and encourage your mentee to find another mentor.

Any questions please do get in touch crossingthresholds@thresholds.co.uk

We expect this to be a richly rewarding experience for both parties and hope you enjoy it!



Thresholds helping you take the next steps in your career