

**CLC Mentoring Program**

A mentoring program can assist in supporting CLC staff, helping them to better manage the challenges associated with their role. By encouraging and facilitating the growth of mentoring relationships, QAILS can strengthen and grow the CLC community.

We welcome feedback on this document and in particular suggestions on how it may be improved or other ways QAILS could provide support and professional development opportunities to CLC workers.

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This document is based on the ‘CLC Mentoring Program’ scoping paper produced by the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic) Inc, which in turn referred to the following resources:

* MentorLink, Occupational Therapy Australia Mentoring Program information
* Disability Professionals Victoria Mentoring Program information and guidelines
* Leadership and Mentoring: Options for the Federation of Community Legal Centres (March 2008), Summary Report for the Federation, prepared by RMIT students in the Transforming Organisation Class, 2007

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# **What is Mentoring?**

Mentoring is a developmental partnership through which one person shares knowledge, skills, information and perspective to foster the professional growth of someone else.

## **Why does mentoring work?**

* You have someone “in your corner” who is keen to help you achieve your goals.
* Your partnership is personalised to your specific work and development needs.
* It has a direct relationship to performance for mentees and mentors.
* It has minimum disruption to your work.
* It is flexible in terms of how it is delivered, to fit in with each participant’s needs for privacy and domestic circumstances.
* It is independent of employment relationships that may discourage self-disclosure and honest feedback.

## How is Mentoring different from supervision?

The primary role of supervision is accountability and the development of specific work-based competencies. In a mentoring relationship each person is equal while supervision has an inherent power imbalance. Mentoring is a developmental relationship, expected to change over time. In a mentoring relationship, the boundaries between the personal and professional spheres are less well-defined. Mentoring creates an environment which is supportive, non-judgmental and non-competitive. It fosters trust, facilitates the sharing of information and is based on a foundation of mutual respect. The relationship promotes movement from some degree of dependence to independence and individuation.

# ****Benefits of Mentoring****

***For Mentors:***

* Opportunity to share experiences, knowledge and skills with others to promote their development
* Further develop own mentoring skills including providing feedback, communication and interpersonal skills
* Personal and professional satisfaction
* Stay in touch with emerging issues relevant to less experienced professionals
* Contribute to the development of the CLC sector and its future leaders

***For Mentees:***

* Access to a professional role model
* Gain skills and knowledge from a more experienced person
* Opportunity to consider the use of different approaches
* Problem solving assistance to handle complex issues
* Develop new networks within the CLC sector
* Increased feedback and professional development
* Greater confidence as skills develop in a supportive environment

# **CLC Mentoring Program**

The proposed CLC Mentoring Program will take the form of an informal ‘one to one’ mentoring program, involving the matching of a CLC employee to a more experienced person. The aim of this model is that of ‘coach/counsellor’ who can provide advice and direction on a variety of levels from workplace issues to career pathways, to the less experienced person.

*Mentees:* The proposed CLC Mentoring Program would initially be targeted at new or relatively new CLC Managers and Principal Solicitors.

*Mentors:* Will be open to experienced CLC managers and Principal Solicitors who feel confident and competent to nurture a mentee. External (non CLC) mentors may also be sourced by QAILS.

Those who express interest in participating in the mentoring program should complete a pre-commencement checklist for mentors (p8) or mentees (p9) then submit an Application Form (p10).

# **Program Guidelines**

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

Mentors

* Committed to assisting mentee to assess current competencies, to establish appropriate goals and to develop new skills
* Have good competency levels in leadership skills and career development
* Acknowledge areas in which you do not have the necessary skills and refer to other resources
* Provide a broad view and be open to alternative views
* Provide honest, constructive feedback and remain non judgemental
* Display good communications skills and promote an open and honest relationship
* Maintain confidentiality
* Encourage the mentee to find their own solutions with support from mentor – avoid being prescriptive, allow mentee to problem solve
* Guide the mentee to resources, professional development activities and networks to increase their knowledge base and skill level
* Motivate and nurture mentee
* Willing to commit time to mentoring partnership
* Review mentee’s progress toward achieving goals and developing skills
* Complete Mentoring agreement (p12) at commencement of partnership and forward to QAILS
* Complete 12 month evaluation of program and forward to QAILS

Mentees

* To identify current competencies, professional development needs and set appropriate goals.
* Be committed to working towards these goals and prepare for meeting with mentor
* Be honest about problem areas and request feedback and/or support
* Learn from your mistakes and be receptive to feedback
* Be motivated to follow up resources/activities/support networks to develop skills
* Maintain confidentiality
* Review with mentor your progress in achieving goals and developing skills
* Complete Mentoring agreement (p12) at commencement of partnership and forward to QAILS
* Complete 12 month evaluation of program and forward to QAILS

## Establishing the mentor relationship – for mentors and mentees

* It is the responsibility of the mentee to make contact once advised by QAILS of the proposed mentor
* Mentor and mentee need to negotiate meeting times/frequency of meetings/method of communication that is most suitable for you both.
* The Mentoring Agreement needs to be completed and returned to QAILS
* Draw up the mentee’s development plan and learning goals
* Discuss your expectations of the mentoring relationship with each other
* Consider ways to get to know your partner – send a resume/autobiography, meet face to face.
* Frequent, regular contact is recommended initially (eg 1 hour/fortnightly over the first few months). Once you get to know each other contact could be less frequent.
* The method of communication is up both partners and can include face to face meetings, telephone, teleconference/video conference/Webex/Skype, email
* It is suggested that all meetings (whether face to face or via telephone) include an agenda and are prepared for prior to the meeting
* Less formal communication can be maintained via emails/fax/voicemail messages etc
* Both partners in the relationship need to take responsibility for making it work.

## What happens in a mentoring “meeting”?

A typical mentoring “meeting” will involve the mentor and mentee:

* Discussing what has happened since the last mentoring meeting.
* Reviewing the previous meeting commitments to take actions.
* Confirming the relevance of the current meeting’s agenda.
* Discussing any recent incidents and more effective approaches to handling similar situations in the future.
* Practising and refining more effective approaches.
* Instruction and practice in agreed topics e.g. trying a different approach, reading an article
* Discussing current work projects and people.
* Exchanging feedback on actions taken.
* Agreeing Action Commitments and Discussion Topics for the next meeting.
* Scheduling the next mentoring “meeting”.

## Recruitment and matching

QAILS will determine a rationale for selection and matching of participants. Compatibility between mentor and mentee will take into account interests/hobbies, career history, age and gender preferences, etc.

The mentor and mentee are not to be working within the same CLC.

*Mentor/Mentee support and monitoring*

QAILS will communicate regularly with mentors and mentees via phone/email.

## The importance of trust and confidence

Trust is critical in a healthy mentoring relationship, so matters discussed between a mentor and a mentee must remain confidential. It is in this ‘safe’ environment that a mentee can openly share mistakes or any lack of self-confidence. It also allows the junior mentoring partner to take risks without fearing negative consequences. Given that, the mentor should not share the mentee's mistakes and setbacks with others. Of course, maintaining confidences goes both ways. This trusting environment allows the senior mentoring partner to share lessons learned from personal mistakes and failures without the fear of these ‘blunders’ becoming common knowledge.

Always remember, trust takes a long time to become fully established, yet it can be destroyed in a matter of moments.

## Problem solving

* The expectation of both the mentor and mentee needs to be established at the beginning of the partnership to prevent any misunderstandings and future conflict.
* Be realistic and honest about the time you have available
* Deal with any problems promptly and honestly
* Listen and act on feedback from each other
* Try to work toward a “no blame” solution

If the conflict cannot be resolved within the partnership then either participant can contact QAILS for support and advice. If unresolvable the mentoring partnership may need to end at this stage and either participant can reapply for a new mentor/mentee.

## Ending the partnership

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

Both participants will need to provide written advice to QAILS that the partnership has ended. An evaluation form will be sent on receipt of this advice for you to complete and return to QAILS.

# Forms and Resources

## Pre commencement checklist – for Mentors

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

***What are my expectations of the program?***

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***Why do I want to become a mentor?***

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***Can I bring the following qualities to the Mentoring Partnership?***

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

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

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## Pre commencement checklist – for Mentees

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

***What are my expectations of the program?***

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***Why do I want to become a mentee?***

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***Can I bring the following qualities to the Mentoring Partnership?***

* Commitment to achieving goals Yes No
* Ability to identify current needs Yes No
* Open to new ideas Yes No
* Honest and non judgemental Yes No
* Receptive to feedback Yes No
* Learn from mistakes Yes No
* Flexible Yes No
* Maintain confidentiality Yes No
* Motivated and enthusiastic Yes No
* Focussed and goal directed Yes No
* Able to review own progress Yes No

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

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## APPLICATION FORM

**MENTOR** **MENTEE**

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| First Name |  | Last Name |  |
| Gender |  |  |  |
| Telephone [business] |  | Mobile |  |
| e-mail |  |  |  |

**EMPLOYMENT**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Position Title |  |
| Time in current position |  |
| Organisation name |  |

***My attributes and interests are……***

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***I would describe myself as a person who…..***

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***I would prefer to mentor / be mentored by a:***

**male** **female** **I have no preference**

***I like to be matched with a person who…..***

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***At the completion of the program I want to have achieved……***

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**APPLICANT**

I understand the basic principles of the mentoring program as a developmental opportunity.

I understand that QAILS will take all reasonable action to match me to a suitable mentor/mentee.

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| Signed |  | Date |

## Mentoring Agreement

This agreement is not a legal contract but is aimed at establishing agreed roles and responsibilities in the mentoring partnership and we have discussed the basic principles underlying our mentoring relationship as a developmental opportunity.

We are voluntarily entering into a mutually beneficial relationship. It is intended this relationship will be a rewarding experience and that our time together will be spent in personal and professional development activities.

We have read the roles and responsibilities of the mentor and mentee in the program guidelines and undertake to meet those roles in this partnership.

We agree to:

* Maintain confidentiality re our mentoring agreement and meeting discussions unless otherwise agreed
* Maintain a mentoring record (p13)
* Develop a Mentee’s Development Plan (p14)
* Contact QAILS if support is required for problem solving/conflict resolution
* A no-fault conclusion of this relationship if necessary.

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| Mentoring Relationship commencement date: |  |
| Estimated duration of the mentoring program: |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mentee Name** [print] |  |  | **Mentor Name** [print] |  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | signed |  |  | signed |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | date |  |  | date |

**To be completed together, signed and returned to QAILS**

## Mentoring Record

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

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| **DATE** | **AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT** | **CONTACT METHOD** | **ACTIVITY/TOPIC** | **OUTCOME/ACTION** |
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## Mentee’s Development Plan

For period from / / to / /

**Consider the areas you would like to develop**

**Current skill level:**

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**Desired skill level:**

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**Mentoring Action Plan**

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| **GOAL** | **PLAN** |
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**Review Date: / /**

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| **Mentee Name** [print] |  |  | **Mentor Name** [print] |  |
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|  | signed |  |  | signed |
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|  | date |  |  | date |

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