

## **Transcript of STAMINA mentoring Podcast - #1**

*In this series of podcasts we will be exploring the contemporary nature of formal mentoring schemes and the role of mentoring scheme coordinators, managers and other stakeholders. We will be discussing a range of topics related to mentoring - if you have a topic you would like us to focus on or would like to participate in the series please get in touch [mentoringnetwork1@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:mentoringnetwork1@brookes.ac.uk)*

### **Audio source:**

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/units/obbs/centres/iccams/networking-and-collaboration>

Judie: So welcome to the doctors of mentoring. I'm Dr Judie Gannon from the International Centre for Coaching & Mentoring Studies at Oxford Brookes University and with me is ...

Rhiannon: Dr Rhiannon Washington. Hello.

Judie: Hello. Well the idea behind this podcast is to talk about supporting and developing formal mentoring practice and really giving some attention to the mentoring scheme coordinators who run all the formal mentoring schemes that we see everywhere these days.

Rhiannon: Absolutely. And these podcasts are for anybody who's interested in mentoring of course – hopefully I'll have some information that's going to appeal to all but we're particularly concerned with scheme coordinators because it can sometimes be quite an isolated role and we want to support and help you as much as we possibly can.

Judie: Yes. Rhiannon and I have quite extensive experience of running schemes, researching round schemes, and supporting different mentoring scheme coordinators, and this is why we really wanted to offer something that's really focused, not just on the mentor, not just on the mentee, but really on the scheme coordinator. So it's a balance there. We're all part of the STAMINA mentoring network. And STAMINA stands for Sustainable Mentoring and this is really what we're focused on: how can we get you

thinking about how is your formal mentoring scheme going to become sustainable?  
what can you do as mentoring scheme coordinators to make sure that your scheme will last, that your stakeholders, your mentors, your mentees and everybody involved will really benefit over the long term and your scheme will keep going

Rhiannon: That can be a real issue can't it, you know you might be lucky enough to get some investment to start off, very often though it's sort of in addition to your existing role isn't it: just starts up a mentoring scheme. And it all starts off very well but sometimes withers on the vine doesn't it [yeah] for all sorts of reasons and that's I think that's a problem that lot of coordinators face, a lot of organisations face, so if we can help address that, help you to think about that, that'll be a good thing,

Judie: OK, so what's the podcast going to be about? Well we actually have a series of podcasts sketched out from our experience that there's a few things that we think will be really critical in terms of supporting coordinators. So we're going to talk about the purpose behind your mentoring scheme, how you actually recruit and select mentors and mentees ...

Rhiannon: Yeah, so how you select them, how you bring them, are you going to offer training, what information are you going to offer them, what can you provide, what sort of resources are you dealing with, the interesting question of how you match your mentor and mentee, and also how do you tackle problems and how do you deal with those? Particularly as your role as a coordinator, what's your input there?

Judie: Yeah. We often know that mentoring scheme coordinators have to run events that bring mentors and mentee's together and other stakeholders so we'll talk a little bit about how you manage and organise those events. And we'll also be interviewing some key people in the mentoring world, whether that's scheme coordinators from different sectors, but also some of those who are providing services and support, maybe doing a bit research in mentoring and also offering software systems in mentoring. Just to really give you that sense of who can you draw on, what are the insights that are all related to formal mentoring schemes.

Rhiannon: Absolutely and what resources are out there for you. So we've got a number of podcasts planned and we're going to be exploring all these topics and hopefully get some feedback from you as to other topics that we could cover, or questions you might have as well.

Judie: So one of the things you might want to do [Judie falters over her words for a moment] is have a look a look at our website STAMINA mentoring network ...

Rhiannon: yeah, if you Google that that should be the top of the page for you.

Judie: Exactly. And you can find out there what we're up to, the case studies that we've covered before, a few people who are involved in the network, but also you can get hold of us by our e-mail address, by our Twitter handle, and we've also got a Facebook page as well. So there's lots of ways that you can feed into these podcasts and kind of add to the community and develop things along with us.

Rhiannon: And we would love to hear from you as well.

Judie: Exactly, exactly. So moving along then I think it would be useful Rhiannon to kind of think about how do we define mentoring?

Rhiannon: Yeah absolutely I mean mentoring, if we think about, it's something we all do naturally, isn't it? Help somebody, support them, guide them, and what's really a definition of mentoring is that it's an intentional act, so rather than a natural, you know we naturally do it, it's actually an intentional process where the mentor tries to support and help the mentee within a structured conversation. So it's to really help them to achieve what they what they're looking to achieve. So mentoring very often is looking at the long term, perhaps where their career's going, but it can also encompass a wide range of activities, but we're looking for a definition, I would say it's an intentional process or there are intentional, structured, interactions between the mentor and the mentee with the purpose of helping the mentee develop in their their professional life.

Judie: Yeah, yeah. And there's some really interesting research out there about the value of this intentional developmental relationship really supporting people. What we often see is that there's a great heritage on informal mentoring, so this is seen as kind of the naturalistic version, where we might meet somebody through our everyday lives - whether that's you know at school gates, whether at a social event, whether it's in the work setting - and we find that, you know, they have some experience that we feel we would value in helping us progress in life. Equally we might need somebody and they might have a conversation with us and say, I think I'd really like to work with you, to know a little bit more about what I should be doing next, in terms of thinking about my career or particular life stages. So informal mentoring is a very natural aspect of this intentional relationship that supports the mentee's development. Formal mentoring has kind of emerged probably more in the last kind of 30 or 40 years, it is really where we're trying to recreate the informal mentoring relationship in particular settings and there are a wide variety of those settings. For example, we can see formal mentoring in aspects of supporting young people through key transitions, in professional areas, in the workplace.

Rhiannon: There is a wide range, and I suppose formal mentoring came about because it was recognised the value of informal mentoring was recognised how it can make such a huge difference to the way some people might see themselves in their career, helping them to plan out where they're going, how they're going to get there, the difference they can make, and as you say, I mean the difference perhaps if you see youth mentoring for example or mentoring in addiction situations, the actual value is incredible and I suppose formal mentoring then really emerged from that, so that we

could understand how it is done and then apply in an organisational situation, for example, to make the most of it. And, as you said Judie, there's loads of emerging research all the time on the benefits of it, because it's not that easy to define, because mentoring often supports a wide range of different supports as well and that's why definitions can be a little bit confusing today.

Judie: Definitely. It's one of the interesting aspects where we look at lots of professions or occupations have mentoring as well, so you know from apprenticeship schemes which will usually have an aspect of mentoring in them, right through to aspects of the legal, teaching, medical professions where mentoring is seen as something that's part and parcel of your development, and some of it might be informal but now we see a lot more organisations really understanding the value of ensuring that a formal provision of mentoring is there. And that provision does two things: it not only helps the mentee develop within that profession, through key stages often, but it also really reinforces the expertise and the development that mentors have gone through and it can be incredibly rewarding for mentors to understand, in a little bit more detail, how far they've come in their professions and that aspect of how they can support the generations who are actually joining in the areas that they're so passionate about.

Rhiannon: I think that's one of the big surprises for any mentor, is how much actually they get out of it, not just the altruistic aspect but also how much they learn [yeah] from the process and from their mentees. And that's why it is hard not to get a bit carried away when you're talking about mentoring, there are so many positives, if it's done right. And I suppose that's what we're here to help you do, is to make sure that your scheme ... that you get the most out of your scheme. Or if you're not a coordinator, if you're just interested in mentoring, then hopefully get out as much as you can from the process.

Judie: OK, so that's the end of our very first podcast. It's really a taster for what we want to be providing over the coming months and it links into the research that we're currently doing. In the next podcast we'll be thinking about the perfect model. But one of the things we want to do ...

Rhiannon: ... yes, we thought we'd have a segment in each of our podcasts where we offer a sort of take home tip that you will hopefully remember based on the podcast and what we've been talking about today. We're calling that, "the doctors top mentoring tip". This particular tip for this first podcast is called, "you are not alone" and you're not. We're a resource for you. As I said, we're here for everybody, anybody who's interested in mentoring, but if you are a coordinator we really are particularly here for you, you're not on your own, you're not isolated. Sometimes it can feel that way. These podcasts are to help you deliver your scheme, and you'll get more out of them if you engage with us and tell us what your challenges are, ask questions, we're here to help you and we'd absolutely love to do that. And as Judie said, Google STAMINA mentoring, all our details are there and please do get in touch.

Judie: And we're looking forward to hearing from you all and thanks for listening to this first podcast, and we look forward to meeting you again on the second podcast: 'The Perfect Model'.

Rhiannon/Judie: Goodbye.