

## **Transcript of STAMINA mentoring Podcast - #2**

*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: Hello. I'm doctor Judie Gannon.

Rhiannon: And I'm Dr Rhiannon Washington and welcome to the Doctors of Mentoring podcast.

Judie: we thought in this second of the series of podcasts we'd talk a little bit more about different versions of mentoring, and think about what that means for how we run formal mentoring schemes.

Rhiannon: so we talked last time about the definition of mentoring. We said it was an intentional process in structured conversation, but in this podcast we're talking about different models. And I want to talk about the two main models of mentoring known as 'traditional' and 'developmental', with the traditional model of mentoring which originated in North America so sometimes called the 'North American model'. And the traditional model is very much about the more experienced mentor who advises and guides the less experienced mentee along the way. But more recently, a newer model has emerged called the developmental model of mentoring, which has apparently emerged from Europe and sometimes is referred to as the 'European model'. And that's actually more akin to coaching in many ways, so it's actually where the mentor and mentee are on a more equal footing. So whereas in traditional mentoring the mentor would be saying, 'this is what you need to do', it's much more directive in its style. the developmental mentor will recognise, I suppose, the mentee's own experience and expertise, and ability to come up with their own solutions, and then through certain

skills, such as asking powerful questions, they will get the mentee, or encourage the mentee, to come up with their own solutions, the idea being that they're more likely to actually carry those forward if it comes from them.

So if you can imagine traditional mentoring in that role, coaching on the other side, and I suppose developmental kind of sits in the middle in terms of style. Quite a good model by Cull is the push-pull model that describes this process really really well. So with the traditional, more directive, style you're pushing your mentee along, and with the developmental, non directive style, you're pulling and encouraging them. So there are different skills that you can use in those two approaches to mentoring, those two styles of mentoring. And again that feeds into why we, when we were talking about definitions last time, they can be quite difficult because you have a big sort of spectrum of different approaches.

Judie: I think it's also one of the interesting factors that, you know, sometimes when we talk to people who are mentoring in global organisations, there are national differences in how mentoring is viewed and seen in different countries. And in particular, for some companies in the States, mentoring is very much about, you know, almost a sponsorship of a mentee by a senior executive and that senior executive wants to bring on the mentee. And it's also why we see in a lot of the North American literature, this term, the mentee's the 'protégé'. Which also bestows a slightly different emphasis: the mentee is very definitely following the steps of their mentor, not necessarily being supported to carve their own way and develop as they want to develop with a mentor by their side, rather than out in front leading the way, or guiding them exactly as they see fit. So there are some interesting origins there and of course one of the things we have to think about in relation to mentoring – we talked a little bit about it last time – where a lot of mentoring has come from is this informal aspect where we'd often see an aspect of tutelage, of really being sponsored by your mentor, to be guided through your particular profession or occupation. But that was less formal and now we're in more formal structured organisations, though they might be network organisations, we probably see more opportunities for formal schemes to try and be clear about what mentoring means and what kind of support you can really expect from a mentor. And actually how to make the most of being a mentee. And what we're expecting there is that the mentoring scheme coordinator needs to do an awful lot of crafting of the expectations of mentors and mentees.

Rhiannon: yes, and I think that's where we can come unstuck. It's so interesting how it's evolved, as you said, in North America, it's a very business-focused based style. Actually research has reflected this move and this change. If we look back in the 1980's, Kathy Kram's work for example, where she actually identified that mentoring isn't necessarily just solely about career-oriented focus, but there's also psycho-social, there's that broader viewpoint. And I suppose that's where then the European model started to grow and has got greater in popularity. And, again, from the coordinator's point of view, it can be very confusing, these two very different .... Particularly as developmental mentoring is so very close in style to coaching. But if the coordinator's not sure what their mentors are doing, what sort of approaches are their mentors taking because of course different groups will expect different things I suppose.

Judie: Exactly, exactly. This is where we really come into getting you, as mentoring scheme coordinators, to have a really good think about what's the likelihood, if we kind

of think of formal mentoring as on some kind of spectrum: so we might see the kind of push at one end, the pull at the other. I mean they're not ideal types, you are going to be moving between them. But you might have a sense from who your mentees are likely to be, and who your mentors are likely to be. Where along that traditional-developmental, push-pull spectrum your mentoring dyads are likely to work. You know, are they going to be more towards the developmental because maybe your scheme is primarily with professionals who are getting ready for that next transition stage and are working with a mentor who can kind of challenge them, support them, and really think about how they can demonstrate their professional competence, expertise and experience more clearly if they have to produce a portfolio, or go through some kind of form transition. Whereas if you have a mentoring scheme with maybe some young people and being mentored by somebody who's slightly more experienced in life, there may be elements that are more slightly about pushing, yes, there's a developmental ethos at the heart of it, but there may be more aspects of thinking about role modelling in there. And also a very important aspect of building the relationship, building the rapport, understanding what makes the young person tick, what excites them, what interests them, and the genuine interest of the mentor in the mentee can go a long way to cultivating that relationship.

Rhiannon: Absolutely, that's a really important skill and we will later on have a podcast looking at the different skills in more detail. If you think about that spectrum – all the different skills – so, you know, it could be that your mentor is literally sponsoring a mentee and making those introductions, and being that directive person, it could be that your mentor is actually not saying an awful lot and acting more like a sounding board which is a hugely powerful skill. And it's really, from the coordinator's point of view, their challenge is to work out, as you said Judie, generally speaking, where does my scheme sit, bearing in mind that even within a session the mentor could be moving from one skill to another, or from one end of the spectrum to the other. Thinking about where the scheme sits and how do I actually prepare my mentors to deal with that, and indeed my mentees to receive that kind of support.

Judie: So that's an important point – this aspect of preparation, this aspect of managing expectations and picking up on this idea of really communicating clearly to the stakeholders involved in your mentoring scheme. So that might be the sponsors of the scheme, it might be the funders of the scheme. The scheme will have clear priorities in terms of supporting the relationship. But also then, how you recruit and how you brief your mentors and your mentees, very clearly saying to them what their expectations are likely to be in terms of this developmental maybe more than a traditional view of the mentee needs bringing on by the mentor and will be guided to do whatever the

mentor says. So, have a really good think about these things and discuss them with the key stakeholders in your mentoring scheme.

Rhiannon: yeah because they're going to have their own expectations. And if you've got a mentee who wants some clear guidance and they're getting a very non-directive approach from their mentor, it could be very frustrating for both parties and could potentially lead to problems as well.

Judie: So that aspect I think is really important. It brings us round to something we'll focus more on in later podcasts, but this idea of briefing and training your mentors and mentees, so they can recognise what kind of conversations are happening. So not just the content, but actually what is going on in this conversation: am I being challenged so it's about encouraging me to think in new ways and identify what I'm actually capable of, my real skill set, where I have achieved before? Or is it more about somebodies trying to help me understand how they have learnt to develop their career and I can pick up on ideas about this might be relevant to me or this might not be relevant to me. So it's those kinds of things that we can really help mentors and mentees get to grips with when we brief them, when we first talk to them about what our schemes are about, what type of conversations are they going to have, and how to make the most of those conversations as they work together.

Rhiannon: It's a delicate balance, picking a moment, understanding, and we're back to rapport again. So we're back to that key skill, we're back to it's not just what your mentee says, it's what they don't say, it's the body language, it's the whole package. So those are all really really important skills and it will help them to make the right choice in terms of the support that the mentor gives.

Judie: very true. So some of the research we've recently been doing has focused on what's the rationale, the real purpose behind different mentoring schemes. And it was really interesting to get those results back and identify that, yes, development is at the heart of a lot of mentoring that's going on in formal mentoring schemes across the UK. But there are also some other really interesting purposes for which mentoring is being used. So, we've had some great data come back from those who are using mentoring to support those who are homeless, veterans facing adversity after leaving the forces, adoptive parents who are being mentored by other adoptive parents, several schemes that kind of link into supporting those who are dealing with drug and offending rehabilitation. So we're seeing mentoring, yes, being used to support development, through careers, through key life transitions, but we're also very clearly seeing mentoring being used to support quite challenging circumstances that people are facing.

Rhiannon: We were saying, weren't we, that it's almost like an evolution going on here, so it's not just about that development it's actually looking at how mentoring can support a variety of social issues. It's very very interesting what the research is telling us.

Judie: So one of the key things we always like to do when we're talking about the 'Doctors of Mentoring' podcast is we like to talk about this aspect of, not only how you set up the scheme, how you manage your scheme, but also how you evaluate your scheme. And when we're thinking about the kind of model, or approach that you might

be adopting, then it's very important to think about not only how you design the scheme and whether it's more developmental or deficit- tradition oriented, but also about how you manage it. So that might be for some developmental schemes, you might be more hands-off as a mentoring scheme coordinator. Whereas for the more traditional oriented mentoring schemes you might as a mentoring scheme coordinator need to be nurturing these mentoring relationships and giving a bit more guidance about how the mentee and mentor might work together. And helping them structure their sessions. So it very much depends on your type of scheme. And obviously this also affects how you evaluate your scheme: what can you realistically expect as the outcomes? And are you clearly evaluating against what you initially hoped for at the very beginning of the initiation of your scheme? So these are things to take through the whole mentoring scheme lifecycle.

Rhiannon: OK. Excitingly enough I think we've arrived at the 'Doctors of Mentoring' top mentoring tip.

Judie: Fantastic.

Rhiannon: I know, I can't believe it. And this podcast's top tip is called, 'the wisdom of flexibility' considering what we've been talking about today. When you think about your models or your approaches, and we talked about the traditional and the developmental - and of course you could have your own hybrid of those, with bits and pick and choose and why not - really you need to be guided by your mentees' needs and making sure your mentor has the appropriate tools to really meet those needs. So from the coordinator's point of view, you want to make sure, as you said earlier Judie, the stakeholders, the scheme, what's it all about, what are you trying to do and where you are on our spectrum. But also does the mentee understand that, does the mentor understand that and does the mentor have access to the appropriate tools to be able to pull them out and use them for the mentee at the appropriate time. So that's the top mentoring tip this time.

Judie: Fantastic. Well, we're at the end of our second podcast. Thanks very much for listening. Remember to have a look at the STAMINA mentoring network. And to send us your thoughts and your comments and anything you'd like us to consider on the podcast. You can do that via the website, because you've got opportunities there to email us, to link into our Facebook group, and also comment on Twitter as well.