

GETTING STARTED

Strangers don't form partnerships; it is important that there be a bond between Coach and Mentee and that both partners develop an understanding of what the team's goals and objectives are.

THE FIRST MEETING

One way to prepare for your first meeting as a mentoring team is for the Coach and the Mentee to fill out a "Who Am I?" worksheet that can be shared before the meeting, i.e., via fax or email.

What happens at the team's first meeting will be influenced by the personalities of the partners, the goals and objectives of the mentee and the experience levels of both team members. Discussion could include:

- Does either partner need to define learning styles?
- Are there any ground rules that need to be discussed, i.e., commitment, confidentiality, freedom of choice, etc.?
- What will be the frequency and/or length of meetings? How much face-to-face time can both partners invest? What are the best alternatives when face-to-face is not possible?
- Do both partners understand the ASW Mentoring Program requirements and timelines?

Mentoring is not something you "do" to another person, it is a definable process of mutual discovery where both parties are engaged, receive values and achieve goals.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

A Mentoring Team should develop an action plan for how they are going to proceed throughout the next 6 month period. The Coach should facilitate this discussion and move it toward definable actions chosen by the Mentee – it must be the Mentee's actions and commitments.

It may take several meetings, phone calls, and/or emails before a final plan of action is developed and agreed upon. This strategic planning should culminate in an Individual Development Plan for the Mentee. Timelines and due dates should be set and followed up on.

The team must be committed to ongoing communication and interaction. Ensuring that both parties' supervisors are on board with the mentoring activities will help with this commitment.

Make sure that you include progress evaluation into your meetings to ensure that planned activities are still viable and valuable. Some mentoring teams continue their partnership after the current year's mentoring program is closed.