



Remote Mentoring Program

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We're all too familiar with remote working and its challenges. We've all read the headlines and articles revealing that:



Many people love a remote-first workplace.



Others ache to get back to the office, and much more.

For some, this whole workplace transition has been disruptive. For others, it's been liberating. One thing's certain: the way we manage and, in this context, the way we develop a mentoring relationship needs specific tools and best practices to make it work in a remote-first workforce.



Benefits and Drawbacks to Mentoring while Remote-first

There are pros and cons to starting a mentoring relationship remotely. Let's define some of each:

Pros to Mentoring Remotely

Many of the benefits to starting a mentoring relationship remotely are related to time and location constraints being removed.

- ✓ More flexibility with time because you don't have to travel to meet one another.
- ✓ It can feel more comfortable talking about personal matters without the fear of someone overhearing.
- ✓ More variety in who your mentor can be across departments and locations.

Cons to Remote Mentoring

The drawback to remote mentoring is that it can seem like virtual meetings don't measure up to in person.

- ✗ It can seem harder to have casual conversations (although by no means impossible).
- ✗ Technical difficulties can be infuriating (having the right mentoring tools and strong wifi is crucial).
- ✗ Much of our communication is non-verbal. Video conferencing can make it harder to pick up on those cues.

How to be a Good Mentor or Mentee While Remote

Remote and in-person mentorship have a lot in common. However, the main difference is how both of you overcome the constraints that video meetings impose. Most companies are fully remote and run mentorship programs to stay connected and strengthen their cultures. So you're not alone in this adjustment.

Here are the best practices for mentoring in a remote workplace:

- 1 | Frequent Check-Ins
- 2 | Share Resources With One Another
- 3 | Talk About Things Outside of Work
- 4 | Learn How to Have Effective Conversations
- 5 | Be Empathetic to Each Other's Situations
- 6 | If Comfortable, Go on Camera



Frequent Check-Ins

Send them regular messages to check in with your mentee or share valuable information to accompany your meetings. This will help build a relationship beyond the time you spend together during your sessions. Likewise, mentees should share updates with their mentors. For example, the mentee could share how they incorporated their mentor's feedback.



Share Resources With One Another

Similar to checking in with one another, you should also share things like articles or other resources that you've found that are relevant to your discussions.



Talk About Things Outside of Work

Especially in a remote setting, it can feel like your conversations have to get straight to the agenda. But there's no reason the light, casual conversations can't take place. It can be tiring if every conversation gets serious immediately, and we all need time to ease into more personal topics that require more thought. Consider this your permission to have casual or seemingly irrelevant conversations. They will be the buffer that helps both of you move the conversation into more meaningful places where growth and learning happen.



Learn How to Have Effective Conversations

We all know how to talk to one another. don't we? We can always get better at spotting the opportunities where our mentor or mentee begins to open up but may need a little more encouragement. Having interpersonal skills and actively working on them is essential for both mentors and mentees. It may be the difference between a successful mentoring relationship and a poor match.



Be Empathetic to Each Other's Situations

Everyone has different feelings about working remotely. It's important to recognise that virtual mentoring may be normal for some but an adjustment for others. Acknowledging that will help build a stronger relationship.



If Comfortable, Go on Camera

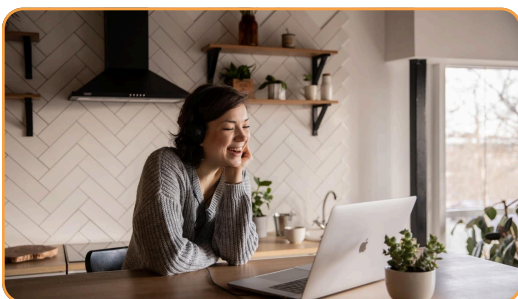
Similar to being empathetic, understanding people's comfort level around using their camera during calls is important. However, using your camera makes it much easier to build a long lasting connection that leads to growth for both parties. Therefore, we'd encourage you to find a space you'd be most comfortable turning your camera on in.

Further reading



If you want to go deeper on the topics discussed above, we have resources on our website that unpack them further.

They include:



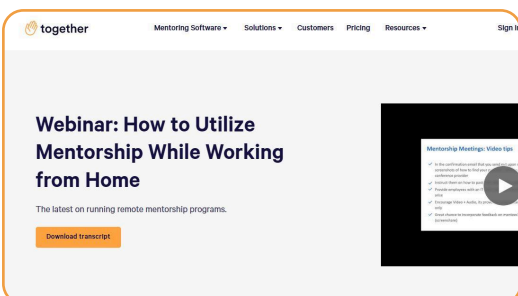
[10 Virtual Team Building Activities for Your Remote](#)



[Managing and measuring productivity in remote workplaces](#)



[Tips For Remote Mentoring Programs](#)



[Webinar: How to Utilize Mentorship While Working from Home](#)



[Best Ways to Onboard Remote Employees](#)

Sources

- How to have more meaningful conversations | **Lucy Foulkes**
- Interpersonal Skills | **Skill You Need Blog**



Conclusion

There's no reason remote mentoring shouldn't be just as effective and beneficial as mentoring in person. There are, in fact, many benefits to remote mentoring. It's more convenient, and there's more flexibility in who you can mentor or receive mentorship from. The key takeaways to be aware of when engaging with remote mentorship are:

- Check in with each other frequently, beyond just your sessions. And talk about more than just work.
- Share resources you come across that you find interesting with one another. Then, you can discuss them at your next meeting.
- Practice interpersonal skills. It can be a little more challenging to pick up on social cues through a camera. However, by developing your skills in interpersonal communication, both of you will get more proficient at communicating and understanding one another.

