



Mentor Program Playbook

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating in our mentor program. L&D Cares' purpose is to provide coaching, mentoring, and resources to help talent development professionals thrive and flourish in their career. This playbook provides general guidance and tools for our mentees, mentors, and our mentoring programs to help:

- Mentees determine their readiness, match to a mentor, and maximize their mentoring experience as a member of L&D Cares
- Mentors determine their readiness and maximize their potential as a mentor for L&D Cares and our members
- L&D Cares Directors establish and manage our mentoring program



What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a voluntary professional development approach that can contribute to career growth and satisfaction for mentees and mentors. Mentoring occurs when a more experienced professional (mentor) guides a less experienced professional (mentee) to:

- Thrive and flourish in their career
- Grow professionally
- Enhance success in their current role
- Address challenging situations
- Effectively navigate their company or industry

Mentoring can be a one-time conversation, a short-term series of conversations, or a multi-year relationship. **L&D Cares is dedicated to allowing the mentor and mentee to establish the type of mentoring relationship that best suits the needs of the mentee.**

Types of Mentoring Supported by L&D Cares

We believe the cornerstone of effective mentoring is the one-on-one conversation between the mentor and mentee. L&D Cares does not support establishing mentoring circles because we believe the primary goal of mentoring is to focus on the specific, individual needs of the mentee. We believe the mentor can help the mentee in a number of ways, including:

- Guiding (especially in challenging situations)
- Asking open ended questions to get to the root of the mentee's purpose and needs
- Problem solving
- Offering suggestions and feedback
- Providing information
- Sharing resources
- Skill-building
- Reflecting on what they observe

Although our mentoring programs will have no direct oversight by the L&D Cares Board of Directors, we have established this playbook to provide guidance for both the mentor and mentee to assist them in establishing their own expectations and agreements. We do not support our approved mentors with a budget. We do not supply our mentors with a formal curriculum, but we do assist both our mentors and mentees in matching/pairing and in tracking sessions and progress. We do support our mentors and mentees with a formal matching process to assist in selecting and/or pairing mentees and mentors.



Responsibilities for Mentors and Mentees

It's important to note that **participation in an L&D Cares mentoring relationship is voluntary**. Participation requires time, effort, and attention from both the mentor and mentee.

Responsibilities for both L&D Cares mentees and mentors include:

L&D Cares Mentees	L&D Cares Mentors
<p><i>Demonstrate Openness and Willingness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Let your guard down and take risks ● Listen and ask questions ● Explore your own insights and views ● Ask for help ● Challenge your assumptions 	<p><i>Demonstrate Care</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Show curiosity ● Listen deeply ● Follow through on commitments ● Maintain confidentiality ● Focus on creating a positive mentee experience
<p><i>Take Responsibility for the Experience</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drive the relationship ● Participate actively and fully ● Determine the focus/agenda for meetings ● Initiate the conversations ● Follow through on commitments 	<p><i>Expand Mentee's Awareness</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask open-ended questions ● Explore the mentee's strengths and values ● Explore mentee's obstacles ● Reframe difficult situations ● Tailor feedback and resources
<p><i>Take Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish your desired outcomes and goals ● Prepare and implement action plans ● Reflect on your progress and results 	<p><i>Inspire Mentee to Take Action</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage clear and compelling goals ● Encourage focused action toward those goals ● Gain commitment to action
<p><i>Additional Notes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be respectful of your mentor's time because mentoring is voluntary. 	<p><i>Mentors Do Not</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supervise or manage the mentee ● Intervene in mentee's workplace or performance issues ● Actively seek new jobs for the mentee ● Sponsor the mentee for a promotion or advancement



Mentee Readiness

Any member who wants guidance or support related to career advancement or skill development can request to be matched with an L&D Cares mentor. Mentees should meet the following minimum criteria before seeking out a mentor:

1. Have a clear and compelling opportunity to address
2. Have the capacity to commit time and attention over multiple conversations
3. Be highly motivated to receive support and take action

Potential mentees should assess their readiness to be matched with a mentor by checking each of the statements below that are correct for them:

- I have a clear and compelling interest in advancing my career or developing my skills.
- I will be open, transparent, and vulnerable when working with a mentor.
- I am open to receiving direct feedback, guidance, and suggestions from a mentor.
- I will take risks that challenge my comfort zone.
- I will commit to multiple mentoring conversations (as agreed upon with my mentor).
- I will follow through on exercises and action plans that help me address my needs.
- I will leverage the mentoring experience to the fullest extent possible.

If the potential mentee responds with all statements checked, they are ready for a mentor. If they did not, they may not be ready for mentoring at this time.

Mentor Readiness

If you are passionate about helping others advance their career, knowledge, or skills, you might make an excellent mentor. Generally, the most effective mentors have ALL of the following characteristics:

1. Sufficient experience or competency related to the mentee's area(s) of need.
2. Capacity to commit time and attention over multiple conversations.
3. Highly motivated to help another professional with career advancement or development.
4. Ability to maintain confidentiality.
5. Be a member of L&D Cares in good standing.

Before agreeing to be a mentor, make sure you are a good fit based on the mentee's needs and your abilities and availability.

Matching Mentees and Mentors

L&D Cares will help match mentees with mentors. Mentees and Mentors must be members of L&D Cares. We will use the following process to make the best match possible. We strongly encourage the mentee and the mentor to assess the applicability of the match, as we do not guarantee a good fit. We will work with mentees to:



1. Determine their area of focus and desired outcome.
 - a. What area do you want to focus on? What, specifically, is your desired outcome?
 - Career advancement
 - Professional growth (e.g., develop new skills)
 - Enhance success in current role
 - Effectively navigate their company or the industry
 - Address challenging situations (e.g., difficult work relationship, work-life balance)
 - Other
2. Determine the members' readiness for mentoring using the above Mentee Readiness checklist.
3. Identify potential mentors. We will use these questions to guide the selection:
 - a. Who do you admire, trust, and respect?
 - b. Who has the experience, knowledge, or skills related to your area of focus and desired outcome?
 - c. Does your mentor need to be in your area of professional focus?

Maximizing the Mentoring Process

Mentoring requires time, effort, and attention. Maximizing your experience – either as a mentor or mentee – should be a priority to ensure you are investing your time wisely and benefiting appropriately. The best mentoring relationships have these key features:

- **Honesty** – the mentee and mentor should be willing to be authentic, articulate a difficult truth, share a challenging insight, transparently share something personal that may generate a feeling of vulnerability. Honesty – with a mix of vulnerability and courage – are at the center of the most powerful mentoring relationships.
- **Commitment** – the mentor and mentee should both fully commit to the process and the relationship, and to ensuring that they each get the most out of the experience.
- **Mutual Learning** – mentees and mentors are both in positions to learn from each other and from the experience. When opportunities arise, the mentee and mentor are encouraged to share with each other what they have learned. This type of mutual learning promotes vulnerability and relatability.
- **Agreements** – the mentee and mentor should make up-front agreements and be willing to modify them, as needed.
- **Action** – mentoring conversations can be powerful catalysts for mentees to grow and learn, but what the mentee does in between each mentoring conversation can be the difference between a so-so experience and a transformative one.
- **Structure** – mentoring experiences do not need to be rigidly structured, but they should follow the general structure we describe on the following pages: foundation, mentoring, and wrap up.



L&D Cares Mentoring Framework

The mentor and mentee establish their own cadence for their meetings and both determine if the meeting is a one-time mentoring session or will contain multiple sessions. To ensure the mentoring experience is positive for our mentees and mentors, we adhere to three phases of mentoring as outlined below.

1. Establish a Foundation for Mentoring
2. Conduct Mentoring
3. Wrap Up

Multiple Mentoring Sessions

If it's decided that multiple sessions are needed, leverage the framework in the following manner:

Establish a Foundation for Mentoring

The first 1-2 meetings establish the foundation for mentoring. The mentee and mentor:

- Get to know each other
- Establish the mentee's needs, focus, and goals
- Establish agreements
- Begin building trust

Conduct Mentoring

If it's decided to have ongoing meetings, the mentee and mentor:

- Help mentee meet needs, address challenges, achieve goals, build skills, and/or advance career
- Mentee completes exercises, activities, and assignments in between conversations
- Provide feedback, information, insights, and resources
- Continue building trust

Wrap-Up

The mentoring wrap up includes a final meeting:

- Recap and celebrate mentee's progress and results
- Share mutual learning
- Decide on post-mentoring relationship

One-Time Mentoring Session

If it's decided between the mentee and mentor that a one-time conversation is preferable leverage the framework in this manner:



Establish a Foundation for Mentoring

Spend a few minutes establishing the mentee's need, focus, or goal. Make agreements for the rest of the conversation, as needed.

Conduct Mentoring

Spend most of the conversation helping the mentee meet his/her established need. You can do this in many ways including:

- Sharing information, feedback, or resources
- Demonstrating a skill
- Making an introduction to someone else
- Coaching the mentee to self-discover a solution

Wrap Up

Spend the final few moments sharing any mutual learning that took place. Decide if there are any next steps for either of you.