MENTOR TRAINING

Effective mentoring programs conduct some degree of training or onboarding to fill in skill gaps and set expectations. Best practice when it comes to this includes:

1 Build or refine training for participants based on critical skills needed to succeed

This stage is another opportunity to set expectations and provide remedial support before one-on-one mentoring begins. There is a broad consensus in the literature that some form of training is a key factor in effective mentoring programs, especially for volunteer mentors.[36]
Research suggests that without training, mentors have a tendency to move on to the actual interactive stages with mentees before fully understanding the potential approaches that may be useful and common problems that may arise.[37] There are three main benefits to training:

- Clarifies understanding about the goals of mentoring by highlighting the main roles of the mentor versus the mentee, e.g. who drives the conversation, pre-meeting asks.

- Helps mentors to approach the relationship with a structure applicable to various mentee needs. The public is not explicitly trained on mentoring techniques such as active listening, mindfulness and the ability to give positive as well as constructive feedback.[38] Training exposes the mentor to strategies to recognize and address problems.[39]

- Gives specific contextual or cultural knowledge for the mentoring relationship. Entering the mentoring relationship with this knowledge can be crucial for building trust.[40]

2 Explore offering initial and ongoing support

Training does not need to be limited to the onboarding period. Mowgli Mentoring, for example, offers support that extends into the program. They begin their program with a one-and-a-half-day workshop for mentors, followed by a year of ongoing capacity building.[41] Several remote mentoring approaches offer open office hours and technical support on an ongoing basis.

[36] O'Connor and Laidlaw, 2006; Ehrich et al., 2004; Douglas, 1997; Lall, 2020; YBI, 2018, [37] Alred, 1998; St-Jean et. al., 2016, [38] O'Connor and Laidlaw, 2006; Ehrich et al., 2004; Douglas, 1997, [39] Benson et al., 2002, [40] Salas, 2020, [41] Bury, 2020