

# HOW TO MENTOR NEW OR EXISTING VOLUNTEERS

**Mentoring involves supporting individuals to develop their skills and expertise, which in turn helps them better fulfil their role.**

Mentoring focuses on building relationships as opposed to structured training, and so is very different from coaching or managing. In mentoring, the mentee (person being mentored) decides what they most want to learn or be supported on, and the mentor (the person doing the mentoring) draws on their own experience to provide guidance in this area.

Giving a volunteer a great induction is a fantastic first step (see here for induction guidance), but providing ongoing support is also a crucial aspect of retaining volunteers and ensuring they continue to enjoy their role and find it rewarding. Mentoring is a great way of providing this support. It can give the volunteer a chance to develop new skills or to work through any issues, and more generally ensures there is a friendly face who can be relied upon to listen to and support them.

Being a mentor is also a fantastic way of developing your own communication and leadership skills. The mentoring relationship is a mutually beneficial one, and you may find that you learn as much from your mentee as they do from you.

If the word 'mentoring' feels too formal, ensuring every new volunteer has a 'buddy' is a good way of giving the same support, but in a way that feels a bit more casual.



## CONSIDER YOUR OWN SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS

It is important to know what key skills, behaviours and experience you can bring before getting started so you can provide great support to your volunteers. By understanding this, you can determine if you are the right person to mentor new volunteers or if someone else is better placed.



# TOP TIPS TO HELP YOU MENTOR NEW OR EXISTING VOLUNTEERS

There are many ways your volunteers can be supported in their role and here are some practical tips to consider when mentoring fellow volunteers:

## 1. Understand What They Want

Take the time to discuss what your mentee is looking for. This can help create a meaningful, valuable experience for your volunteers.

## 2. Build A Relationship With Your Mentee

This will help you to build trust and ensure that you provide good support. Consider an informal first meeting, ideally face-to-face, where you can get to know your mentee and understand expectations. Use this time to understand what support they may want and to help put them at ease.

## 3. Listen Carefully

It is important you listen carefully and stay focused on what is being discussed. Don't get distracted by your phone or other things - a short, but focused time with your mentee will go a long way! Consider summarising what you have heard to ensure understanding.

## 4. Offer constructive feedback

You may need to provide feedback to your mentee from time-to-time. Ensure this is always delivered positively and is constructive, based on what you have seen first-hand and ideally with examples to help understanding.

## 5. Share Your Experience When Appropriate

Sharing your knowledge and experience with your mentee is crucial to help your volunteer learn a new role. However, mentoring is not simply about telling a mentee all you know and expecting them to repeat what you did, nor is it about telling them what to do. Try to draw on your knowledge and experience only when confident it will genuinely help, and remember, it's the mentee's choice whether they use it!



**6. Be Prepared To Answer Questions**

This is a great way to help your mentee to gather key information from you. Remember, the mentoring relationship is led by them so give them the information they want to know, not just what you want them to know!

**7. Share Your Network**

Be prepared to use your own network to help your mentee with areas that you may not have experience of. This can be a brilliant way to help the volunteer become more confident and to get to know more people across the club.

**8. Learn From Others**

A great way to support your mentee is for you both to learn from others, perhaps at similar clubs or through the FAW. Consider if your mentee should 'shadow' or 'buddy-up' to another volunteer for a few weeks to help.

**9. Signpost To Training Opportunities**

Ensure your mentee is considering their development beyond the support they receive through mentoring by pointing them in the direction of training opportunities. These could be formal courses or more informal resources such as websites or YouTube videos.

**10. Consider Setting Up Regular Check Ins**

A volunteer might feel reticent to spontaneously pose what they think is a small question, so set up a regular check in so they know they will have an opportunity to get answers.



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