



MENTORING GUIDE

— for Parents Selfhelp Groups —





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1 Introduction to Mentoring Concepts

The purpose of this guide is to shepherd leaders of a Parent Self-Help Group (PSHG) in a community or District Council to support their counterparts in another PSHG or District Council through transfer of knowledge and skills. It will guide both mentors (more experienced leaders) and mentees (less experienced leaders) to enter into formal mentoring relationship that will be of mutual benefit to them as well as the organization.

Mentoring aims at enabling the mentee to develop his/her own skills, strategies or capacity so that he/she can undertake certain tasks more effectively with or without the mentor's presence.

1.1 What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is a process in which an experienced individual (mentor) helps another person (mentee) develops his/her skills through a series of time-limited, confidential, one-on-one conversations and other learning activities.

A **mentor** is someone willing to make his/her time and expertise available to guide a less experienced person to develop his personal or professional skills. A **mentee** is someone who wants to learn from an experienced person, and so seeks his/her valuable guide to enable him/her grow personally and/or professionally.

1.1.1 Mentoring Relationship

Mentoring relationship exist between a mentor and mentee. The relationship may be informal or formal. An informal mentoring relationship usually occurs spontaneously as a more experienced person gives help to a less experienced one without the later explicitly asking to be mentored. Informal mentoring may occur within the context of a supervisory or peer relationship. For instance, the chairperson of IG district/PSHG, as part of his/her supervisory role, may assist his/her Secretary to improve on how s/he does his/her work.

In a formal mentoring relationship, usually the less experienced person explicitly asks to be mentored or the more experienced person explicitly offers to mentor the less experienced person. Whatever is the case, formal mentoring relationship requires the setting of goals/outcomes and agreements.

1.2 Benefits of Mentoring

Mentoring is beneficial to individuals involved in the relationship as well as the organization that institutionalizes the mentoring programme.

1.2.1 To Mentors & Mentees

As a result of being mentors, they will:

- renew their enthusiasm for the role of experts (more experienced persons)
- enhance their skills in coaching, listening, and modeling other persons
- demonstrate their expertise in sharing knowledge/skills

As a result of having mentors, the mentees will:

- make smoother transition into their new or less familiar roles;
- further their personal development;
- have their planned capacity building or training activities complemented by mentors;
- get assistance with ideas they conceive or issues their encounter in their leadership roles;

1.2.2 To Organization

Implementing a mentoring program comes with overall benefits to an organization. These include the following:

1. **Skills Enhancement** – mentoring enables experienced or competent individuals to pass their expertise on to others who need to enhance their skills.
2. **Leadership and Management Development** – mentoring encourages the development of leadership competencies, which are often more easily gained through practical, guided experiences than through capacity building or training workshop.

3. **Onboarding Process** – mentoring helps new leaders to settle smoothly into their new roles
4. **Knowledge Exchange** – mentoring provides for the exchange of knowledge between members of different organizations or groups.
5. **Project Sustainability** – One of the benefits of mentoring is to enhance sustainability of the intervention. Leaders at the community level and / or in project districts who have received capacity building in various areas will transfer their knowledge or skills to leaders outside the project districts through mentoring relationships. This will support attempts by organizations to replicate interventions in other districts in Ghana.

1.3 Key Mentoring Skills

It is important that any person aspiring to be a mentor should have or develop the following essential skills. These skills are needed to ensure the success of mentoring relationship.

- **Active listening** – Listening actively establishes rapport and creates a positive, accepting environment that permits open communication. By listening actively, you will ascertain your mentee's interests and needs. Examples of active listening include the following:
 - Show interest in what the mentee is saying, and reflect back important aspects of what was said to show that you've understood.
 - Use body language (such as making eye contact) that shows you are paying attention to what is being said.
 - Reduce background noise and limit interruptions when talking to mentee on phone. Respond to emails within 24 hours if possible, and be sure your message is responsive to the original message.
 - Reserve discussing your own experiences or giving advice until after your mentee has had a chance to thoroughly explain his or her issue, question or concern.

- **Building Trust** – Trust is built over time. As a mentor, you will increase mentee’s trust in you by:
 - keeping your conversations and other communications with him/her confidential
 - honoring your scheduled meetings and calls
 - consistently showing interest and support
 - being honest with your mentee
- **Determining Organizational and Personal Goals** – As a role model, you should be fully aware and identify with the organizational goals and also have your personal goals. Similarly, you should be able to help your mentee identify with the organizational goals and set his/her personal goals.
- **Capacity building** – The mentor should have proficiency in areas that the mentee requires capacity building. Capacity building can be achieved through the following:
 - Imparting knowledge and skills by explaining, giving useful examples, demonstrating processes, and asking thought-provoking questions
 - Helping the mentee gain broader perspectives of his/her responsibilities as well as the organization
 - Discussing some actions you’ve taken in your roles and explaining your rationale
- **Encouraging and Inspiring** – Research suggests that giving encouragement is the mentoring skill most valued by mentees.

Mentee can be **encouraged** in many ways such as:

- commenting favourably on his or her accomplishments
- communicating your belief in his/her capacity to grow personally and reach his/her goals
- Respond to his/her frustrations and challenges with words of support, understanding and assurance. Just knowing that someone else has been there can be tremendously helpful to the mentee.

Mentees can be **inspired** by:

- sharing your personal vision or those of other leaders
- describing experiences, mistakes, and successes you/others have encountered on the road to achieving your/their goals
- talking with the mentee about people and events that have inspired and motivated you
- introducing him/her to your colleagues who can be additional useful contacts or inspiring models



2 Description of PSHG/District Mentoring Programme

2.1 Organizational Strategy

Inclusion Ghana (IG) District branches or Parent Self-Help Groups (PSHGs) are broadly categorized into showcase and adjoining districts/groups. Showcase districts/groups have generally experienced leadership in key area such as records keeping, advocacy, fundraising and micro-project activity planning or management. Adjoining districts/groups have generally low leadership capacity in one or more of key areas mentioned above.

The mentorship programme involves a showcase district/PSHG supporting one or more adjoining districts/PSHGs to enable them develop their capacity in identified areas. Depending on the skills needs assessment, one leader from a showcase district/PSHG will mentor the entire leadership of an adjoining district/PSHG. On the other hand, the mentorship can also be a one-one relationship between the leaders of both districts/PSHGs. For instance, a one-one mentoring relationship will mean the Secretary in a showcase district/PSHG will mentor the Secretary in adjoining district/PSHG to develop his/her skills as Secretary.

2.2 Expected Outcomes

The following are the expected outcomes of a mentorship programme.

1. Increase the overall performance of mentored districts/PSHGs
2. Enhance the skills (personal growth) of executives of mentored districts/PSHGs
3. Build a more cohesive IG branches through networking at executive level

2.2.1 Success Indicators

The success of the mentoring programme will be judged by the level of achievement of the expected outcomes through appropriate results indicators. These indicators should be collectively selected by stakeholders involved in the mentoring relationship, including staff of IG Secretariat or a member organization, mentors and mentees. Possible results indicators for the expected outcomes stated above should be as follows:

▶ **Outcome 1**

- a) Number of mentored districts/PSHGs keeping key records (Personal details of members, dues payments, filing of external correspondences, etc).
- b) Number of advocacy activities carried out by mentored districts/PSHGs in a year.
- c) Number of mentored districts/PSHGs that have undertaken any fundraising activities within a year of the mentoring programme.

▶ **Outcome 2**

- a) Number of mentored district/PSHG executives who indicate improvement on how they carry out their roles following their participation in the mentoring programme.
- b) Number of mentored district/PSHG executives who report learning new skill (doing something they could not before) through their participation in the mentoring programme.
- c) Number of mentored executives who indicate they have clear goals for their district/PSHG compared to the period before the mentoring programme.

▶ **Outcome 3**

- a) Number of mentee executives who regularly (at least once in a quarter) communicate with executives in their mentor districts/PSHGs
- b) Number of mentor executives that have shared any new knowledge with their mentee executives
- c) Number of joint activities between the mentor and mentee districts/PSHGs

2.3 Program Duration

The anticipated length of time for implementing the mentoring programme could be **between 6-12 months**, depending on the volume of support needed by mentee in his/her areas of shortfall in skills or knowledge to undertake assigned roles. However, the optimum duration should be agreed between the mentor and mentee.

2.4 Selection of Mentors

IG Secretariat or a corresponding Member Organization (MO) of IG should do performance assessment of executives of mentor district/PSHG to identify and select those who have the requisite skills to support executives of a mentee district/PSHG.

2.4.1 Characteristics of Mentors

Good mentors do not take their responsibility as a mentor lightly. They feel investing into the success of the mentee. Good mentors demonstrate more of the following qualities.

- a) Committed to the mentee's personal growth and professional development through guidance, feedback, and occasionally, an insistence on a particular level of performance or appropriate direction
- b) Have the role content or knowledge necessary to effectively teach a mentee significant knowledge or skills
- c) They demonstrate honesty, integrity, and both respect for and responsibility for stewardship
- d) They demonstrate effective communication skills both verbally and nonverbally
- e) They have enough emotional intelligence to be aware of their personal emotions and sensitive to the emotions and feelings of their mentees
- f) They are individuals who would be rated as highly successful in both their roles and in promoting the vision and mission of their organizations or groups
- g) They are willing to communicate failures as well as successes to their mentees
- h) They can say when the relationship is not working and back away appropriately without regard to ego issues or the need to assign blame or gossip about the situation

2.4.2 Roles of Mentors and Mentees

Partners involved in mentorship should be clear about their roles and responsibilities to making mentoring relationships work out successfully.

The **mentor's role and responsibilities** include the following:

- a) Clarify expectations and boundaries of the mentor-mentee relationship
- b) Identify the mentee's goals
- c) Support the needs and aspirations of the mentee
- d) Commit to spending time with the mentee to develop the relationship
- e) Encourage the mentee through constructive feedback
- f) Create an environment that allows the mentee to ask questions without being intimidated
- g) Offer advice by sharing life experiences
- h) Be prompt for meetings and/or scheduled calls and use the time efficiently
- i) Encourage and promote leadership development
- j) Provide practical solutions for problems

The **mentee's roles and responsibilities** in the relationship include the following:

- a) Actively participate in the mentor-mentee relationship by identifying wants and needs from the partnership
- b) Be prepared for a meeting by having specific topics to discuss to ensure time spent is productive for both parties
- c) Share strengths and weaknesses and identify the areas in which assistance is needed
- d) Communicate effectively, openly and honestly
- e) Be open and willing to accept constructive feedback
- f) Understand the limitations of the partnership and take ownership of the outcome
- g) Assess and evaluate the partnership to ensure it meets the objectives
- h) Be prompt for meetings and/or scheduled calls
- i) Listen to advice and utilize the information to make informed decisions

2.5 Identifying Areas for Mentoring

Specifically, mentors and mentees will discuss and agree on areas where support is needed. In general, however, IG mentoring programme directs support in the following key areas for districts/ PSHGs development.

- ▶ **Records Keeping** – District/PSHG executives require sufficient skills in keeping various records for their groups. Key **administrative records** must include personal details of PSHG members (parents/caregivers and their children/wards with ID), dues payments, minutes of meetings, project documents. Main **financial records** should include income statement (funds received & expenses made), bank deposit/withdrawal slips, and annual bank statement. Records keeping should also include proper filing of external correspondences to/from the district/group.
- ▶ **Stakeholder Engagement and Advocacy** – Executives must develop the confidence to engage important stakeholders at community and district levels. They also require good advocacy skills to be in a better position to talk about the rights of PWIDs and their parents/caregivers when they engage stakeholders. Community level stakeholders will include traditional leaders, religious groups/leaders, Assemblymen and opinion leaders. At the district level, key stakeholders include district assembly and other gov't agencies such as DSW, GES, GHS and other civil society organizations.
- ▶ **Fundraising** – Raising funds to support groups activities are very essential and so district/PSHG executives should develop essential fundraising competence to support groups fundraising initiatives. Basic skills should include awareness of community based organizations income spectrum and ability to fundraise along the income spectrum.
- ▶ **Sustainability of Groups** – Besides financial sustainability, the level of competence of districts/ PSHGs leaders in other key group sustainability areas is important to ensure continuation of activeness of groups as well as their relevance. These sustainability areas include group identity & ownership, establishment of partnerships, leadership & conflict management.
- ▶ **Others** – Beyond areas listed above, groups involved in the mentoring programme may identify key skills areas that are very relevant in context of PSHGs, for which support may be needed by the mentee.

3 Implementation of Mentoring Programme

The following guidelines should be followed to ensure proper implementation of a district/PSHG executive mentoring programme.

3.1 Orientation for Mentors & Mentees

Once mentors have been selected, they should be matched with mentees. An orientation session must be held to formally introduce both mentors and mentees to the proposed mentoring programme. The orientation should bring matched pairs together to enable them get familiar with each other and set the tone for mentoring relationships. It should also highlight key issues such as mentoring agreement, mentoring plan and techniques that should be considered for the success of mentoring relationships.

3.2 Building the Mentoring Relationship

The following sections give guidance on undertaking successful mentorship initiative.

3.2.1 Develop Mentorship Agreement

Being a formal mentoring relationship, IG Secretariat or the responsible MO should facilitate the development and signing of mentoring agreement to guard the relationship.

The agreement may include:

- ▶ Roles, responsibilities and expectations during the programme duration for both partners,
- ▶ The number of times the mentor and mentee will meet,
- ▶ A confidentiality clause,
- ▶ Termination of agreement, and
- ▶ Signatures of both partners

A sample mentoring agreement is annexed to this guide.

3.2.2 The First Meeting

During the first meeting (ideally face-to-face), mentor and mentee should discuss their backgrounds, experiences, interests and expectations. After reflecting on earlier information provided by mentee, the mentor may ask further questions, if necessary, such as:

- ▶ Tell me a little more about your skills, some key challenges you are facing, etc
- ▶ How have you benefited from other mentoring relationships, if any?
- ▶ What are some of your preliminary goals for our mentoring relationship?

Also, it is important to establish a schedule for communicating regularly – whether in-person, by phone, or e-mail.

3.2.3 Prepare Mentees' Action Plan

The MO or mentor should support mentee to develop his/her mentoring action plan. This action plan should include:

- ▶ Individual goals and objectives
- ▶ Learning activities (topics for discussion) to accomplish set goals or objectives

A sample monitoring action plan template is annexed to this guide.

3.2.4 Implement Mentee's Action Plan

This is the main component of the mentoring relationship. The mentor will help mentee work towards achieving his/her goals or objectives specified in the mentee's action plan through:

- ▶ Conversations
- ▶ Sharing written materials
- ▶ Trying various learning and development activities
- ▶ And introducing him or her to other colleagues

This stage of mentoring relationship should be marked by openness and trust, meaningful discussion, and application of new insights and approaches. The mentee needs ongoing encouragement from the mentor, who should also feel comfortable enough to challenge the mentee to think in new ways or approach problems differently.

As both partners work towards achieving goals or objectives, there should be periodic reflection on progress made, so asking such questions as listed below may be very helpful.

- ▶ What are the benefits of the relationship up to this point? How am I (mentor) helping you (mentee) achieve your objectives?
- ▶ What changes do you (mentee) see in yourself and in the way you approach your work as a result of the mentoring relationship?
- ▶ What kinds of adjustments or changes, if any, are needed in your goals or in our relationship?

Best Practice Solutions

Working towards the achievement of goals and objectives is the relatively longest phase in the mentoring relationship and **it is subject to challenges that require conscious efforts to overcome.**

For instance:

- ▶ Energy in the relationship may decrease especially when progress is judged to be very slow,
- ▶ The mentee may feel s/he is burdening the mentor
- ▶ Other responsibilities may compete with each partner's commitment to the mentoring relationship

When such challenges arise, the mentor needs to take stock of his/her commitment to the relationship and consciously reach out to the mentee to ensure the challenges are dealt with for the success of the mentoring relationship.

Mentors may want to consider some best practice solutions to such challenges as listed below.

1. **Time and energy:** Think small rather than large, especially in the beginning. Avoid promising more time than you can deliver. Check with your mentee to be certain you are both comfortable with the time you are spending and with the learning that is occurring.
2. **Building trust quickly:** Other mentors have successfully used strategies such as listening very carefully to mentee and remembering things said by the mentee in the past. Demonstrate your credibility. Keep your promises and commitments (if any need to be changed, let mentee know immediately and reschedule or renegotiate them). Admit some errors made and lessons learned. Avoid talking negatively about others. Above all, keep the confidences mentee shares with you.
3. **Not being the “expert” on all your mentee’s needs:** Explain your role as “learning facilitator” early in your relationship. Tell your mentee that you will not have all the answers, and you are looking forward to learning together as well as seeking help from others who are more expert on different topics.
4. **Being sensitive to differences:** In addition to discovering all your similarities, work carefully to identify the differences between you and your mentee. For example:
 - ▶ How do the specifics of his/her position differ from the role(s) you’ve played?
 - ▶ What is occurring to him/her now that you did not face?
 - ▶ If you are of different generation/age, gender, race, cultural group, or professional background, what different experiences have you both had?

Assume a learning mode and invite discussion about all of these topics to enable you understand any differences and well to deal with it.

3.3 Ending the Mentoring Relationship

In the process of bringing the mentoring relationship to an end, the mentor must work with the mentee to define the types of support s/he may need in the future. As a mentor, you may want to connect your mentee to additional colleagues who can provide benefits other than those provided by you.

The final discussion should be directed at the following:

- ▶ Reflecting on accomplishments, challenges, and progress towards goals;
 - What will your mentee remember most about the relationship?
 - What challenges lie ahead for him or her?
- ▶ Exploring other types of support he or she may still need;
- ▶ Discussing whether the relationship will continue informally and how you will implement that; and
- ▶ Expressing thanks and best wishes!

3.4 Mentoring Programme Evaluation

Evaluation of the mentoring programme should be conducted for both mentors and mentees as a critical step in ensuring future success of the mentoring programme, by capturing relevant information such as interaction, activity and satisfaction level. Inclusion Ghana or a member organization should also evaluate the mentoring programme from its perspective to provide feedback on ways the programme has improved the mentee's performance and contributed to expected outcomes.



- Evaluation process should occur at least once, at the end of programme. Evaluation questions may include the following:
 1. Were the goals/objectives met?
 2. How many times did the mentor/mentee pair meet?
 3. What were some obstacles that prevented you from accomplishing the goals?
 4. How suitable was your mentor/mentee match?
 5. How supportive has the OPWD been during the mentoring program?
 6. What have you learned so far from the mentoring program?
 7. Is there any part of the mentoring program you would like to see improved (Yes/No)? If yes, what part?

Besides evaluation, mentors can provide written reports to their mentees or IG/member organizations on their thoughts of the relationship, accomplishments as a pair and recommendations for future interaction. Mentee could also provide a similar report to their mentors or IG.

Annex-1: Sample Mentoring Action Plan

Mentee: Yaw Sarpong	District/PSHG: Kroye Group, Abease	Position: Secretary
Mentor: Adams Kojo	Nyame Bekyere Group, Yeji	Secretary
Date Created: 4 th April 2018		

Skills/Knowledge Area for Development:	Objectives:		
Examples: 1. Advocacy 2. Record Keeping 3. etc	1.1 Understand causes of ID 1.2 Explain the needs of persons with ID 2.1 Design template to capture personal details 2.2 etc		
Actions	Resources and Needed Support	Timeline	Criteria for Success
Objective 1.1 - Read through IG presentation on ID - Discuss ID issues you find difficult to understand with mentor - etc	- Handout of presentation; need a teacher for 2hrs a meeting, twice a week to interpret presentation - Meet with mentor every Saturday evening at 4pm - etc	- 9 th to 20 th April, 2018 - 16 th to 28 th April, 2018	Ability to clearly explain at least 4 causes of ID
Objective 1.2			
Objective 2.1			

Annex-2: Sample Mentoring Relationship Agreement

Mentoring Agreement			
Mentor		District/PSHG	
Mentee		District/PSHG	

Objectives:

Activities to be carried out:

Communication Methods & Frequency:

Duration of Relationship:

Actions to take if problems arise:

Confidentiality:

We agree to enter this mentoring relationship as defined above and will maintain confidentiality.

No-fault Termination: We are committed to open and honest communication in our relationship. We will discuss and attempt to resolve any conflicts as they arise. If, however, one of us needs to terminate the relationship for any reason, we agree to abide by one another's decision.

Sign:

Date:

Mentee

Sign:

Date:

Mentor

Annex-3: Skills Needs Assessment Tools

Leadership Skills Assessment¹

Instructions – For each statement, click the button in the column that best describes you. Please answer questions as you actually are (rather than how you think you should be), and don't worry if some questions seem to score "in the wrong direction".

#	Statement	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Choice
1	When assigning tasks, I consider people's skills and interests	1	2	3	4	5	
2	I doubt myself and my ability to succeed	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I expect nothing less than top-notch results from people	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I expect my people to work harder than I do	1	2	3	4	5	
5	When someone is upset, I try to understand how he or she is feeling	1	2	3	4	5	
6	When circumstances change, I can struggle to know what to do	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I think that personal feelings shouldn't be allowed to get in the way of performance and productivity	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I am highly motivated because I know I have what it takes to be successful	1	2	3	4	5	
9	Time spent worrying about team morale is time that's wasted	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I get upset and worried quite often in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5	
11	My actions show people what I want from them	1	2	3	4	5	
12	When working with a team, I encourage everyone to work toward the same overall objectives	1	2	3	4	5	
13	I make exceptions to my rules and expectations. It's easier than being the enforcer all the time!	1	2	3	4	5	
14	I enjoy planning for the future	1	2	3	4	5	
15	I feel threatened when someone criticizes me	1	2	3	4	5	
16	I make time to learn what people need from me, so that they can be successful	1	2	3	4	5	
17	I'm optimistic about life, and I can see beyond temporary setbacks and problems	1	2	3	4	5	
18	I think that teams perform best when individuals keep doing the same tasks and perfecting them, instead of learning new skills and challenging themselves	1	2	3	4	5	

¹ Source: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_50.htm

Interpretation of Scores

Score	Interpretation
18-34	You need to work hard on your leadership skills. The good news is that if you use more of these skills at work, at home, and in the community, you'll be a real asset to the people around you. You can do it – and now is a great time to start!
35-52	You're doing OK as a leader, but you have the potential to do much better. While you've built the foundation of effective leadership, this is your opportunity to improve your skills, and become the best you can be. Examine the areas where you lost points, and determine what you can do to develop skills in these areas.
53-90	Excellent! You're well on your way to becoming a good leader. However, you can never be too good at leadership or too experienced – so look at the areas where you didn't score maximum points, and figure out what you can do to improve your performance.

Self-Confidence

(Questions 2, 8)

Self-confidence is built by mastering significant skills and situations, and by knowing that you can add real value by the work you do. One of the best ways to improve your confidence is to become aware of all of the things you've already achieved.

Positive Attitude and Outlook

(Questions 10, 17)

A positive mindset is also associated with strong leadership. However, being positive is much more than presenting a happy face to the world: you need to develop a strong sense of balance, and recognize that setbacks and problems happen - it's how you deal with those problems that makes the difference.

Positive people approach situations realistically, prepared to make the changes necessary to overcome a problem. Negative people, on the other hand, often give in to the stress and pressure of the situation. This can lead to fear, worry, distress, anger and failure.

Emotional Intelligence

(Questions 5, 15)

The concept of emotional intelligence used to be referred to as “soft skills,” “character,” or even “communication skills.” The more recent idea of **Emotional Intelligence** (EQ) offers a more precise understanding of a specific kind of human talent. EQ is the ability to recognize feelings - your own and those of others - and manage those emotions to create strong relationships.

Providing a Compelling Vision of the Future

(Questions 6, 14)

This is your ability to create a robust and compelling **vision of the future** , and to present this vision in a way that inspires the people you lead.

The first part of being able to do this is to have a thorough knowledge of the area you’re operating in. From there, good use of strategic analysis techniques can help you gain the key insights you need into the environment you’re operating in, and into the needs of your clients.

Motivating People to Deliver the Vision

(Questions 9, 12)

This is closely related to creating and selling a vision. You must be able to convince others to accept the objectives you’ve set. Emphasize teamwork, and recognize that when people work together, they can achieve great things.

Being a Good Role Model

(Questions 4, 11)

Good leaders **lead by example** . They do what they say, and say what they do. These types of leaders are trustworthy, and show integrity. They get involved in daily work where needed, and they stay in touch with what’s happening throughout the organization. Great leaders don’t just sit in their offices and give orders - they demonstrate the actions and values that they expect from the team.

Managing Performance Effectively

(Questions 3, 13)

Effective leaders manage performance by setting their expectations clearly and concisely. When everyone knows what's expected, it's much easier to get high performance. There's little uncertainty, therefore you can deal with performance issues quickly. Involve them in the rule-making process, and make sure that your expectations align with the resources and support available. Apply rules fairly and consistently.

Providing Support and Stimulation

(Questions 1, 7, 16, 18)

To be highly motivated at work, people need more than a list of tasks to be completed each day. They need challenges and interesting work. They need to develop their skills, and to feel supported in their efforts to do a good job.

Think about your approach to **Task Allocation** , and look for opportunities to match people with jobs and responsibilities that will help them to grow and develop.

Communication Skills Assessment²

Instructions – For each statement, tick the cell in the column that best describes you. Please answer questions as you actually are (rather than how you think you should be), and don't worry if some questions seem to score "in the wrong direction".

#	Statement	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Choice
1	I try to anticipate and predict possible causes of confusion, and I deal with them up front	1	2	3	4	5	
2	When I write a memo, email, or other document, I give all of the background information and detail I can to make sure that my message is understood	1	2	3	4	5	
3	If I don't understand something, I tend to keep this to myself and figure it out later	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I'm surprised to find that people haven't understood what I've said	1	2	3	4	5	
5	I can tend to say what I think, without worrying about how the other person perceives it. I assume that we'll be able to work it out later	1	2	3	4	5	
6	When people talk to me, I try to see their perspectives	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I use email to communicate complex issues with people. It's quick and efficient	1	2	3	4	5	
8	When I finish writing a report, memo, or email, I scan it quickly for typos and so forth, and then send it off right away	1	2	3	4	5	
9	When talking to people, I pay attention to their body language	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I use diagrams and charts to help express my ideas	1	2	3	4	5	
11	Before I communicate, I think about what the person needs to know, and how best to convey it	1	2	3	4	5	
12	When someone's talking to me, I think about what I'm going to say next to make sure I get my point across correctly	1	2	3	4	5	
13	Before I send a message, I think about the best way to communicate it (in person, over the phone, in a newsletter, via memo, and so on)	1	2	3	4	5	
14	I try to help people understand the underlying concepts behind the point I am discussing. This reduces misconceptions and increases understanding	1	2	3	4	5	
15	I consider cultural barriers when planning my communications	1	2	3	4	5	

² Source: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCS_99.htm

Interpretation of Scores

Score	Interpretation
15-35	You need to keep working on your communication skills. You are not expressing yourself clearly, and you may not be receiving messages correctly either. The good news is that, by paying attention to communication, you can be much more effective at work, and enjoy much better working relationships! The rest of this article will direct you to some great tools for improving your communication skills.
36-55	You're a capable communicator, but you sometimes experience communication problems. Take the time to think about your approach to communication, and focus on receiving messages effectively, as much as sending them. This will help you improve.
56-75	Excellent! You understand your role as a communicator, both when you send messages, and when you receive them. You anticipate problems, and you choose the right ways of communicating. People respect you for your ability to communicate clearly, and they appreciate your listening skills.

The Source - Planning Your Message

(Questions 2, 11)

Before you start communicating, take a moment to figure out what you want to say, and why. Don't waste your time conveying information that isn't necessary – and don't waste the listener or reader's time either. Too often, people just keep talking or keep writing – because they think that by saying more, they'll surely cover all the points. Often, however, all they do is confuse the people they're talking to.

Encoding – Creating a Clear, Well-Crafted Message

(Questions 1, 5, 8, 10, 15)

When you know what you want to say, decide exactly how you'll say it. You're responsible for sending a message that's clear and concise. To achieve this, you need to consider not only what you'll say, but also how you think the recipient will perceive it.

We often focus on the message that we want to send, and the way in which we'll send it. But if our message is delivered without considering the other person's perspective, it's likely that part of that message will be lost. To communicate more effectively:

- Understand what you truly need and want to say.
- Anticipate the other person's reaction to your message.
- Choose words and body language that allow the other person to really hear what you're saying.

Choosing the Right Channel

(Questions 7, 11, 13)

Along with encoding the message, you need to choose the best communication channel to use to send it. You want to be efficient, and yet make the most of your communication opportunity. Using email to send simple directions is practical. However, if you want to delegate a complex task, an email will probably just lead to more questions, so it may be best to arrange a time to speak in person. And if your communication has any negative emotional content, make sure that you communicate face to face or by phone, so that you can judge the impact of your words and adjust these appropriately.

Decoding – Receiving and Interpreting a Message

(Questions 3, 6, 12, 14)

It can be easy to focus on speaking; we want to get our points out there, because we usually have lots to say. However, to be a great communicator, you also need to step back, let the other person talk, and just listen.

This doesn't mean that you should be passive. Listening is hard work, which is why effective listening is called **active listening**. To listen actively, give your undivided attention to the speaker.

Feedback

(Questions 4, 9)

You need feedback, because without it, you can't be sure that people have understood your message. Sometimes feedback is verbal, and sometimes it's not. Feedback through **body language** is perhaps the most important source of clues to the effectiveness of your communication. By watching the facial expressions, gestures, and posture of the person.

Team Management Skills³ Assessment

Instructions – For each statement, tick the cell in the column that best describes you. Please answer questions as you actually are (rather than how you think you should be) and don't worry if some questions seem to score "in the wrong direction".

#	Statement	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Choice
1	When I have a problem, I try to solve it myself before asking my boss what to do	1	2	3	4	5	
2	When I delegate work, I give it to whoever has the most time available	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I follow up with team members whenever I see that their behavior has a negative impact on customer service	1	2	3	4	5	
4	I make decisions following careful analysis, rather than relying on gut instinct	1	2	3	4	5	
5	I let my team members figure out for themselves how best to work together – teams are a work in progress!	1	2	3	4	5	
6	I wait before disciplining a team member, so that people have a chance to correct their behaviors for themselves	1	2	3	4	5	
7	Technical skills are the most important skills that I need to be an effective manager	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I spend time talking with my team about what's going well and what needs improving	1	2	3	4	5	
9	In meetings, I take on the role of moderator/facilitator when necessary, and I help my team reach a better understanding of the issue or reach consensus	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I fully understand how the business processes in my department operate, and I'm working to eliminate bottlenecks	1	2	3	4	5	

³ Source: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_28.htm

11	When putting together a team, I consider the skills I need – and then I seek people who best fit my criteria	1	2	3	4	5	
12	I do all that I can to avoid conflict in my team	1	2	3	4	5	
13	I try to motivate people within my team by tailoring my approach to motivation to match each individual’s needs	1	2	3	4	5	
14	When my team makes a significant mistake, I update my boss on what has happened, and then I think of it as an important lesson learned	1	2	3	4	5	
15	When conflict occurs within a new team, I accept it as an inevitable stage in the team development process	1	2	3	4	5	
16	I talk to team members about their individual goals, and I link these to the goals of the entire organization	1	2	3	4	5	
17	If I’m putting a team together, I select people with similar personalities, ages, time with the company, and other characteristics	1	2	3	4	5	
18	I think that the statement “If you want a job done well, do it yourself” is true	1	2	3	4	5	
19	I talk with team members as individuals to ensure that they’re happy and productive	1	2	3	4	5	
20	I brief my team members so that they know what’s going on around them in the organization	1	2	3	4	5	

Interpretation of Scores

Score	Interpretation
20-46	You need to improve your management skills urgently. If you want to be effective in a leadership role, you must learn how to organize and monitor your team’s work. Now is the time to start developing these skills to increase your team’s success! <i>(Read below to start.)</i>
47-73	You’re on your way to becoming a good manager. You’re doing some things really well, and these are likely the things you feel comfortable with. Now it’s time to work on the skills that you’ve been avoiding. Focus on the areas where your score is low, and figure out what you can do to make the improvements you need. <i>(Read below to start.)</i>
74-100	You’re doing a great job managing your team. Now you should concentrate on improving your skills even further. In what areas did you score a bit low? That’s where you can develop improvement goals. Also, think about how you can take advantage of these skills to reach your career goals. <i>(Read below to start.)</i>

Understanding Team Dynamics and Encouraging Good Relationships

(Questions 5, 15, 17)

Good management means understanding how teams operate. It's worth remembering that teams usually follow a certain pattern of development: forming, norming, storming, and performing. It's important to encourage and support people through this process, so that you can help your team become fully effective as quickly as possible.

Selecting and Developing the Right People

(Questions 11, 17)

Finding great new team members and developing the skills needed for your team's success is another important part of team formation.

Delegating Effectively

(Questions 2, 18)

Having the right people with the right skills isn't sufficient for a team's success. Leaders must also know how to get the job done efficiently. **Delegation** is the key to this.

Motivating People

(Questions 13, 19)

Another necessary management skill is motivating others. It's one thing to motivate yourself, but it's quite another to motivate someone else. The key thing to remember is that motivation is personal. We're all motivated by different things, and we all have different levels of personal motivation. So, getting to know your team members on a personal level allows you to motivate your people better.

Managing Discipline and Dealing with Conflict

(Questions 3, 6, 12)

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, there are problems with individual performance. As a manager, you have to deal with these promptly. If you don't discipline, you risk negative impacts on the rest of the team.

Communicating

(Questions 8, 9, 16, 20)

An element that's common to all of these management skills is effective communication. This is critical to any position you hold, but as a manager, it's especially important. You need to let your team know what's happening and keep them informed as much as possible.

Planning, Problem Solving and Decision-Making

(Questions 4, 10)

Many managers are very comfortable with planning, problem solving and decision making, given that they're often skilled specialists who've been promoted because of their knowledge and analytical abilities.

Avoiding Common Managerial Mistakes

(Questions 1, 7, 14)

Good communication helps you develop facilitation skills, and it also helps you avoid some of the most common problems for managers. Some of these common mistakes are thinking that you can rely on your technical skills alone, asking your boss to solve your problems, putting your boss in the awkward position of having to defend you, and not keeping your boss informed.

Project Management Skills Assessment⁴

Instructions – For each statement, tick the cell in the column that best describes you. Please answer questions as you actually are (rather than how you think you should be) and don't worry if some questions seem to score "in the wrong direction".

#	Statement	Not at All	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Choice
1	I communicate what needs to be done by what deadline, and expect the people to whom I assign the work to be responsible for breaking down the work packages into smaller and more manageable pieces	1	2	3	4	5	
2	When I choose suppliers, I base my decision on their ability to deliver on time as well as on price	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I prepare a specific timeline and sequence of activities, and I use this schedule to manage the overall project to ensure its timely completion.	1	2	3	4	5	
4	When a project begins, I work with its sponsor to negotiate and agree specific deliverables	1	2	3	4	5	
5	Project teams are only temporary, so I don't worry too much about personalities. I select team members based on the technical skills I need	1	2	3	4	5	
6	At the start of a project, I formally outline what, why, who, how, and when with a Project Initiation Document – so everyone can understand how the elements of the project fit together	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I consider a variety of cost alternatives when developing my original project budget plan	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I outline clear expectations for the project team, and I manage their individual and collective performance as part of the overall project evaluation process	1	2	3	4	5	
9	When a project gets behind schedule, I work with my team to find a solution rather than assign blame	1	2	3	4	5	
10	I identify as many potential project risks as I can, and I develop a plan to manage or minimize each one of them, large or small	1	2	3	4	5	
11	Because projects involve so many variables that change so often, I let the plan develop on its own, as time passes, for maximum flexibility	1	2	3	4	5	
12	I use customer/stakeholder requirements as the main measure of quality for the projects I manage	1	2	3	4	5	

⁴ Source: https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newPPM_60.htm

13	I routinely monitor and reevaluate significant risks as the project continues	1	2	3	4	5	
14	I give people a deadline to complete their project work, and then I expect them to coordinate with others if and when they need to	1	2	3	4	5	
15	I keep all project stakeholders informed and up-to-date with regular meetings and distribution of all performance reports, status changes, and other project documents	1	2	3	4	5	
16	I define specifically what the stakeholders need and expect from the project, and I use these expectations to define and manage the project's scope	1	2	3	4	5	
17	Forecasting costs is more art than science, so I include extra funds in the budget and hope that I'm under cost at the end	1	2	3	4	5	
18	I present project status information in an easy-to-use and easy-to-access format to meet stakeholders' information needs.	1	2	3	4	5	
19	Delivering on time and on budget are the most important things for me	1	2	3	4	5	
20	When I contract for goods or services, I often choose suppliers based on familiarity and the past relationship with my organization	1	2	3	4	5	

Interpretation of Scores

Score	Interpretation
20-46	Oh dear. Right now, you may be focusing mostly on day-to-day activities rather than the bigger picture. If you spend more time on planning and preparation, you'll see a big improvement in your project outcomes. And you'll have more time to spend on productive work rather than dealing with last-minute surprises. As part of planning more for your projects, take time to create a development plan for the specific skills on which you scored lowest. <i>(Read below to start.)</i>
47-74	Your project management skills are OK, and when projects are relatively simple, your outcomes are often good. However, the more complex the projects you manage, the less control you will have and the more likely you are to deliver below expectations. Take time to improve your planning skills and prepare for the unexpected. The more time you spend on your up-front planning, the better your project outcomes will be. <i>(Read below to start.)</i>
75-100	You are an accomplished project manager. Few things that happen will upset you, or hurt your confidence in your ability to lead the project to a successful end. Use your mastery to help others on your team develop their project management skills. Lead by example, and provide opportunities for other team members to manage parts of the project. Also, be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses. Just as you review a project at its completion, make sure that you review your own performance, and identify what you can do better next time. <i>(Read below to start.)</i>

Project Integration

(Questions 6, 11)

At the beginning of a project, it's important to develop a solid understanding of the project's goals, and how the various elements will fit together for a successful outcome.

Scope Management

(Questions 4, 16)

Projects have a nasty habit of expanding as they go along, making it impossible to hit deadlines. To control this "scope creep," it's essential to define the scope at the very start of your project based on the problem analysis

Schedule Management

(Questions 1, 3, 9, 14)

A project's scope can easily grow, and so can the time needed to complete it. For a project to be completed successfully, despite all of the unknowns, it's important to clearly define the sequence of activities, estimate the time needed for each one, and build in sufficient contingency time to allow for the unexpected.

Cost Management

(Questions 7, 17)

To determine what a project will cost, you must be systematic with your estimating, budgeting, and controlling.

Also, be aware that many project decisions will have an impact on cost. Therefore, it's important to understand what's driving your costs and to develop a system for monitoring the project's financial performance.

Quality Management

(Questions 4, 12, 19)

Projects must be delivered not only on time and on budget, but also to specification (this is what “quality” means in project management). As part of this, ensure that you actively manage **project benefits** . By continuously referring to the benefits that the project will provide, you keep client quality at the forefront – and you won’t waste precious time and resources trying to achieve an inappropriate level of quality.

People Management

(Questions 5, 8)

The people on your project team can make or break the final outcome. Here, getting the right mix of interpersonal and political skills is just as important as the right technical skills.

Communication

(Questions 15, 18)

As with most situations, effective project communication means communicating with the right people at the right time and in the right way. To do this, **Stakeholder Management** is essential. When you **analyze your stakeholders** , you identify who must be kept informed in full, and who needs less intensive communication.

Risk Management

(Questions 10, 13)

Project managers must understand which of the risks to their plans are significant, develop a plan for monitoring and controlling the major risks involved in your project.

Project Procurement

(Questions 2, 20)

Unless your project is in-house, external suppliers will generally have a large impact on your costs. Suppliers will also affect whether the project delivers on time and to specification.

General Project Management Skills

(Questions 4, 9)

This quiz also highlights some general skills that you should be aware of while developing your project management.



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