

A guide on Mentoring and Counselling

In most cases the role of counselors and mentors merged at certain points. Some of the attributes are shared by both mentors and counselors. However, mentoring stresses both the professional and personal development of the individual while counseling seeks to explore the underlying dynamics of individuals and their relationships in a much deeper approach depending on the requirement. Counselors must have a very important role where psychological i.e. illnesses or societal disturbances i.e. Family issues, ragging etc are affecting a student's life or career process beyond his control. The service of a professional counselor will be required based on the intensity of the issue. See the “**Student Counselor's Guide: University of Ruhuna**” for further information (<https://paravi.ruh.ac.lk/stuaffair/download.php>).

Mentoring

Effective leaders are mentors who recognize potential in less experienced individuals and aid them in the development of their skills and talents.

Mentoring has several benefits

Students are not developing as they had hoped. A mentor can be influential in helping such students in their careers and convincing them to stay in the course and to meet their objectives.

- a. Mentoring reduces drop outs
- b. Mentoring cultivates talent
- c. Mentoring develop leaders

Good mentors exhibit the following attributes

- a. **Accessibility:** Mentors make themselves available, taking the time to spend with someone make observations, listen carefully and offer guidance.
- b. **Patience:** Students learn at varying speeds and some need more guidance than others. It's important to be willing to provide whatever it takes to help
- c. **Sensitivity:** Tact and diplomacy are vital. A mentor's role is to motivate and encourage.
- d. **Respectfulness and respect:** Everyone is different. Mentors respect these differences. In turn mentors are recognized and admired by peers, superiors and even by outsiders.
- e. **Flexibility:** Mentors need to adapt to various situations and be willing to try a new approach if one mentoring method fails to achieve the desired results.
- f. **Knowledge:** Before they can help someone else mentors have acquired experience and knowledge which lend credibility to the guidance they give.
- g. **Confidence:** Mentors are self-assured and friendly.
- h. **Attentiveness:** Mentors care about other people and truly want to help. It is of great help because it enables the other person to articulate the problem and sort things out.

How to mentor

- a. Mentors provide positive, nurturing environments that benefit the people they mentor. To create a positive nurturing environment to do the following.
- b. Offer opportunities for skill development Provide special projects and assignments that build new skills. Refer people to books or articles about that skill
- c. Point out areas needing improvement. Often a gap exists between a person's existing skills needed to complete a project or to advance in a career. Draw attention to that gap: then guide students to discover what they can do to close it
- d. Provide helpful advice Offer ideas or information based on your superior experience in the subject matter at hand.
- e. Be a role model: We all listen to people we respect and admire. Be aware that people watch you to see how you handle difficult or challenging situations
- f. Encourage students to think for themselves. Don't simply solve the problems. Instead encourage students to find solutions for themselves

The Counseling Process

Counseling, as a process, has been defined variously by authors.

No single definition has stood so far, most contain some reference to difference in role of the student who is to be assisted or helped and the counselor who is more experienced. There are two important characteristics of counselling process.

First, it is assumed that the student is willing to participate in the process. He/She may have a concern about the world around him/her, or curiosity about what he/she is experiencing. While the process may be unfamiliar to him/her and he/she may display resistance at moments, counseling will not be successful unless he/she participates fully.

Second, the counselor must possess appropriate training, experience, and personal attitudes to function effectively.

Principles of Counseling

1. Counseling is a process. It is necessary for the counselor to understand that counseling is a slow process. Failure to understand this will result in disappointment.
2. Counseling is for all. Counseling is meant for all the students and not only for those who are facing problems or other exceptional students. Counseling is more developmental and preventive than remedial in nature.
3. Counselor does not deprive the right of self-choice but simply facilitates choice. The counselor should give due respect to the individual and accept him/her as he/she is.
4. Counseling is not advice giving
5. Counseling is for enabling the student to do sensible thinking.
6. Counseling is not problem solving. The counselor simply assists the person to find solution on his/her own.
7. Counseling is not interviewing but conversing with the client in order to help him/her develop self-understanding.
8. The counselor should determine individual differences and provide for them.
9. The counselor has to prepare the client to open to criticism including self-criticism.
10. The counselor acts as a facilitator or catalyst only.

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