



# **North-West Mentor Scheme for Mental Health Service Users and Carers**

## **Mentoring Manual**

### **Part One - Pre-course materials**



Care Services Improvement Partnership **CSIP**

National Institute for  
**Mental Health in England**

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## SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

### ***Welcome to the North-West Mentor Scheme for Mental Health Service Users and Carers***

What is this Scheme for?

As a Mental Health Trust Service User or Carer, you have the opportunity to contribute to a wide range of forums, panels, committees etc. by acting in an expert advisory or representative role.

Such roles give you the chance to offer your views and those of other Service Users and Carers on matters affecting the services provided by the Trust now and in the future. They allow us to ensure that your views and needs are properly heeded and they allow you to influence how the Trust's organisations and services are designed and delivered.

You may already have considerable experience in one of these expert advisory or representative roles, you may have recently started acting in such a capacity, or you may still be considering doing so. Whichever of these is the case, this new mentoring scheme is designed to help you by complimenting the training and network groups that already exist, and helping you become more confident and effective in such a role.

Specifically this mentoring scheme is designed to:

- Develop empowered & confident service users & carers, able to contribute effectively in their advisory or representative roles
- Increase the knowledge & skills of both mentors & mentees by providing a safe and confidential arena in which to discuss and learn from their experience in these roles
- Increase the influence and impact of service users & carers on service development, redesign & organisational improvement strategies
- Develop a regional or local team of 'experts' that can be used by Trusts for local development work of this nature. Whether you are a mentor or mentee, I hope that you find the mentoring experience helpful, supportive and fulfilling.

## **What is mentoring and why is it helpful?**

Most of us, at one time or another, will have experienced the benefits of mentoring or been a mentor ourselves. Many will have done both. We may not have called it mentoring or even recognised the process, nevertheless it will, like as not, have happened to us.

Our mentor may have come in the guise of a fondly-remembered teacher, an older brother or sister, a community leader, a helpful or more experienced colleague, or just a close and trusted friend. The chances are it was not part of an organised scheme or even an intentional process. We probably just fell into it in conversation, recognising at some point that here was a person who was helping us to see through our problems, helping us to grow and develop, and feel good about ourselves.

Try to picture somebody who has played this kind of role in your life and think about what sort of things they did that were helpful to you. You might like to jot these down in the space below.

***Learning Log - What does a good mentor do?***

To get a better idea of what mentors do and why it helps, let's listen to Sami's story.

### **Sami's Story**

*I was a bit worried at first about taking Malcolm on as a mentee. When they asked me to do it I thought, "Wait a minute. He's older than me. He seems at least as knowledgeable and capable as me, even though I've been in an expert advisory role for the Trust for longer. How's he going to feel about being mentored by me?" But it's been fine – better than fine. In fact, it's been really good and I've learned a lot too. What did it involve? Well, the first thing, really, was to make sure he'd thought through the impact taking up this role might have on his life, got his head around what time commitment would be involved and how his family might be affected, what reading and preparation he'd have to do outside meetings, where he could keep important documents, agendas etc. safely, and where he could find useful help and information. He had a lot of ideas about the Trust's services, but he'd never really spent much time in formal meetings before, so, as well as sharing some of my experiences, we talked through agendas beforehand and I asked him some more detailed questions to help him plug a few gaps in his preparation and think more carefully about what he might want to say. And the nice thing was that as we had our regular monthly meetings we got to talking about ways in which the diversity of people in expert advisory or representative roles could be improved. It turns out we're both interested in that area; and we've passed on useful articles and website addresses to each other as well as conference details and stuff like that. But the most rewarding aspect of this mentoring experience – for me – has been the fact that Malcolm has made use of our regular meetings to talk through aspects of sitting on the committee that have been particularly worrying for him. It's not that I've been handing out advice all the time or anything like that; it's been more about listening, and maybe asking questions from time to time hopefully to help him clarify things for himself. And Malcolm says he's found that a real confidence-booster. And it's nice to feel you've been useful, isn't it?*

What were the things Sami was doing, as mentor? Were they similar to your own experience of helpful mentoring? Take a few minutes to jot down some of the things you noticed from this example.

***Learning Log – What does a good mentor do?***

Any of your ideas fall into these categories?

### **Developing Skills**



### **Providing ‘insider’ knowledge and guidance**



### **Networking & sharing information**



### **Being supportive & building confidence**



**Providing ‘insider’ knowledge and guidance** – This involves helping the mentee successfully adjust to the culture & conventions “...*make sure he’d thought through the impact taking up this role might have on his life, got his head around what time commitment would be involved and how his family might be affected.....*”

**Developing Skills** – This involves challenging the mentee’s thinking, ‘playing devil’s advocate’ and coaching “.....*I asked him some more detailed questions to help him plug a few gaps in his preparation and think more carefully about what he might want to say.....*”

**Networking & sharing information** – This involves facilitating access for the mentee to other people and sources of information. “...*we’ve passed on useful articles and website addresses to each other as well as conference details and stuff like that..*”

**Being supportive & building confidence** – This involves acting as a sounding board for ideas, encouraging and reinforcing “...*it’s been more about listening, and maybe asking questions from time to time hopefully to help him clarify things for himself....*”

The other thing Sami’s story makes clear is that good mentoring can be a **partnership of equals**, (“...*Wait a minute. He’s older than me. He seems at least as knowledgeable and capable as me, even though I’ve been in an expert advisory role for the Trust for longer...*”).

This example is NOT about an older, wiser person teaching a novice how to do things. Rather, it is about two people with DIFFERENT experience coming together for mutual learning and development. The mentee benefits, sure, but the mentor can learn a lot from the process too. Here are a few thoughts about how both people can benefit from a successful mentoring relationship:

## MENTEES GET.....

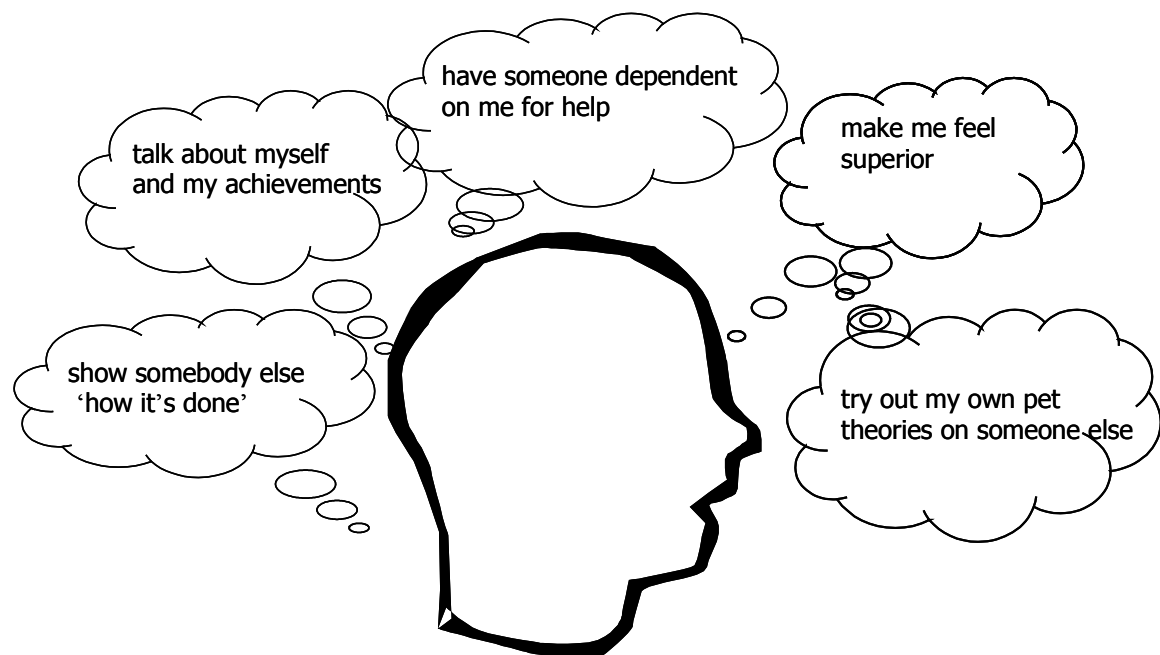
- Insight and guidance from someone who 'knows the ropes'
- A different perspective on issues
- A safe space to try out ideas
- Help with solving problems
- Someone to stretch and challenge them
- Improved skills and increased self-confidence
- Access to information and networks

## MENTORS GET....

- The opportunity to learn by hearing another perspective
- The opportunity to learn by reflecting on their own experiences
- Satisfaction from helping someone else's development
- Renewed confidence in their own knowledge and abilities
- Better understanding of different people's needs

## WHY BE A MENTOR IN THE FIRST PLACE?

What is it that makes people interested in being a mentor? Well, first of all, here are some of the **wrong** reasons:



Hopefully, none of these reasons will apply to you or your mentor. So what do you think would be the most important attributes of an **effective** mentor?

***Learning Log***

List the first three or four qualities that come to mind, identifying if you wish the one you consider the most important of all. Then compare what you have written with our list below.

- **A real desire to help others develop their potential** – Sounds soft maybe, but mentoring may prove too challenging a calling if the mentor ignores its prime purpose
- **A real desire to learn and grow continuously yourself** – People who feel they know it all, or know as much as they really want to, do not generally make good mentors.
- **An open mind which can suspend judgement of others** – Mentoring works best if you can accept your mentee as worthy and capable even if their words or actions might make you think otherwise. This is what Carl Rogers called “unconditional positive regard”, and it is not always easy to do.
- **A wish to give something back** - to use your accumulated experience and, dare we say it, wisdom, to help the next generation succeed. Research has identified this concept as a common motivator for mentors.
- **Experience of being mentored yourself**, and perhaps a continuing inclination to seek this sort of help – Most mentors enter into the role

because they have personally experienced its effectiveness. But, more importantly, a key indication of one's desire to continuously learn and grow is to seek such help yourself. After all, no-one trusts a chef who does not eat in her own restaurant.

By way of example, let's now hear Malcolm's side of the story (remember him?) regarding his experience of his mentor, Sami:

### **Malcolm's Story**

*I'm lucky because Sami has been a really good mentor to me. She's never pulled rank or made me feel self-conscious about the difference in our ages and experience. She was completely open about her own strengths and weaknesses. She'd say stuff like, "I find some of this stuff really difficult still, so if you can think of better ways of approaching it I'd love to hear them". So I was much more at ease, realising that even she wasn't absolutely perfect. Anyway, this is how we did it; this is how the mentoring went. We sat down right at the beginning and agreed stuff about confidentiality and what we would and wouldn't include in our discussions and when we'd meet and that sort of thing. She was always there. She never cancelled on me, not once. Every month or so, we'd have a meeting for anything up to a couple of hours sometimes. First of all we'd talk about what I'd been doing since we last met, and any difficulties I'd been having. Sometimes she'd suggest things that it would be useful for us to talk about as well – things she'd picked up on from her own expert advisory role. It was really useful talking things over with her. It helped me build my confidence up because it made me realise that I can actually talk a lot of sense if I put my mind to it! I learned a lot from that – partly from things Sami said, but also from things I came up with myself. She helped me see things about myself – strengths mainly, but also things I needed to develop – that I just hadn't been aware of before. And she never hurried me over things.*

*She'd let me drone on sometimes when I was trying to work things out, just letting me think out loud, really. And somehow she managed never to look bored or impatient. And never made me feel I was being stupid or wasting her time. She made me feel she was really, genuinely interested in how I was doing. So they felt really useful, those meetings. I always came away feeling I'd gained something, that I understood stuff better. And I never came away without some points for my action plan. And that was how it went. It worked great for me. I was really lucky.*

## SECTION TWO – GETTING INVOLVED

Whether you think you'd like to find yourself a mentor, or be a mentor yourself, the one-and-a-half day introductory training we will be holding in each of five regions across the North-West should help you to decide.

The outline content of this introductory training is as follows:

- Context of the Mentoring Scheme
- Self-awareness – Why is it important, and how can we use it?
- Helping relationships – where does mentoring fit in?
- Skills, qualities and motives of a good mentor
- Four-stage model of mentoring
- Communications skills & helpful techniques at each stage
- How mentoring relationships end – moving on
- What can you do to help your mentor
- Your role, rights & responsibilities as mentee
- Getting the most from your mentoring
- Concerns & fears
- Preparing for your first meeting

These one-and-a-half-day sessions will run from 9.45 am until 1.30 pm on day one and 10.00 am until 4.00 pm on day two. Lunch and refreshments will be provided on both days and attendees will be able to claim back their travel expenses, if they complete the form provided and hand it in to one of the Bluesci staff.

The sessions are designed to be fun and interactive, and give people the chance to experience the process from both the mentor and mentee perspective. There will be lots of opportunity to practice skills, and to reflect on lessons learned. The materials included in this pack will help prospective mentors and mentees prepare for day two of the training, as well as providing lots of useful reference material to help you make the most of your mentoring relationship.

### APPLYING TO BE A MENTOR OR A MENTEE

Once you have decided that you would like to get involved in the scheme, either as a mentor or as a mentee (and you are welcome to apply to be both), then you should complete the appropriate application form at the back of this pack and hand it in at the end of the introductory training.

## MATCHING MENTORS AND MENTEES

In order to help us match mentors and mentees appropriately according to their needs, we will talk to you about what you are specifically looking for in your mentor/mentee. This may include preferences around gender, ethnicity, etc. We then follow a robust process to match you with someone suitable, taking into account geographical constraints. However, be assured that whether you are a mentor or a mentee, you will always have the final say in whether to accept this matching or not.

## CONTINUING SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT FOR MENTORS

The package of support does not end with the introductory training. Once you are established in a mentoring relationship, we will provide supervision support via telephone and email, as well as a series of additional half-day workshops, delivered regionally, which will allow mentors to share experiences and support each other, as well as develop additional skills.

### SECTION THREE – GETTING READY FOR TRAINING

Hopefully, you now know a little bit more about what mentoring is, and the ways in which it can be helpful, as well as some background to the service users and carers mentoring scheme. Here are some questions for you to think about and answer for yourself, in preparation for the second day of your introductory training.

#### ***Learning Log***

Why do you want to be a mentor/mentee?

What are you hoping to get out of it? (You may wish to refer back to the lists of benefits mentioned earlier)

Where do you think it might take you?

PREPARATION WORK: PLEASE COMPLETE BEFORE ATTENDING DAY TWO OF THE INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP

Try to think of areas of your life that may prove especially challenging over the next year or two. These could be associated with the expert advisory or representative role you hold or aspire to. On the other hand, they may be to do with a difficult decision, an area of personal development (e.g. learning to dance or speak another language), or a significant lifestyle change (e.g. giving up smoking, or taking more exercise). Try to answer the following questions as honestly as you can.

***Learning Log***

What are these challenges?

What are the competencies/skills/behaviours you will need more of or less of in order to meet these challenges?

Is there anything you are really avoiding?

From the answers to these questions, try to identify the 2 or 3 most significant changes you need to make over the next year or two