



MENTORCONNECT

Building Trust - Mentee Resource

BUILD TRUST WITH YOUR MENTOR



ABOUT MENTORCONNECT

[The MentorConnect program](#) brings together skilled immigrants and established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships. Skilled immigrants entering the program have the education, experience, and language skills to succeed in the Canadian labour market. However, they may not understand the Canadian context of their profession, workplace culture, or know how to translate their skill sets. Often what they need are the local insights and access to professional networks that a one-on-one connection with a local mentor can offer.

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BUILDING TRUST

BUILD TRUST WITH YOUR MENTOR

Building trust with your mentor is crucial for a successful mentorship. Trust fosters open communication, mutual respect, and a supportive environment for growth. This resource will guide you through practical steps to establish and strengthen trust with your mentor.



Tips on How to Build a Trustful Mentorship

Be proactive:

- Take the initiative to schedule meetings with your mentor and come prepared with questions and topics you want to discuss. This will help you get the most out of your mentorship experience.
- Use the advice and feedback you receive from your mentor to act towards achieving your goals.

Example

Jane regularly schedules her monthly meetings with her mentor, Mark, two weeks in advance. She sends an agenda beforehand with questions about her career path and current projects to ensure they make the most of their time together. After receiving feedback on her presentation skills, Jane practiced regularly and implemented Mark's tips in her next meeting. Her improved confidence and clarity impressed her team, demonstrating her proactive approach.

Be adaptable:

- Be open to new ideas and ways of doing things. Your mentor may have different perspectives and approaches from yours, but you can always learn something from your mentor.

Example

Tom was used to managing projects in a traditional way but was open to his mentor's suggestion to try agile methodologies. This adaptability led to increased efficiency and team satisfaction.

Have an eager mindset for feedback:

- Be open to feedback and suggestions from your mentor, even if it's not always comfortable to hear. Your mentor can offer valuable insights.

Example

Sarah asked her mentor, Lisa, for feedback on her performance review. Although some points were challenging to hear, Sarah took them seriously, leading to significant improvements in her team leadership skills. She kept a journal of feedback received and her subsequent actions, which helped her track progress and see the positive changes over time.

Set goals:

- Work with your mentor to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, emotion, and re-evaluate (SMARTER) goals for your mentorship experience (See *Goal Setting* resource). This will help you stay focused and motivated.

Example

John and his mentor, Emma, collaborated to set SMARTER goals for his professional development. They outlined clear, achievable steps to enhance his project management skills, which kept John motivated and focused. He regularly reviewed these goals with Emma, adjusting as needed, which ensured his growth remained aligned with his career aspirations.

Be accountable:

- Take responsibility for your own learning and growth. Set goals for yourself and work with your mentor to achieve them.

Example

Alex set personal development goals and shared them with his mentor, Paul. By taking ownership of his learning, Alex demonstrated commitment and reliability. He regularly updated Paul on his progress, seeking guidance, when necessary, which showed accountability and dedication to growth.

Be appreciative:

- Remember to thank your mentor for their time and support. A simple thank-you note or email can go a long way in showing your appreciation.

Example

After each meeting, Emma sends a thank-you email to her mentor, highlighting specific advice that was particularly helpful. This simple gesture reinforces her appreciation and the value she places on their relationship.

Communicate effectively:

- The five Cs of communication (see *What are the Five Cs of Communication?* below) –Clear, Concise, Correct, Complete, and Courteous—serve as a comprehensive guide to enhance your interactions. Additionally, attempt to listen actively (see *How Do I Actively Listen?* below), ask questions, and provide feedback when necessary.

Example

Laura ensured her emails to her mentor were Clear, Concise, Correct, Complete, and Courteous. This professional communication style built respect and clarity in their interactions. During meetings, Laura practiced active listening by summarizing her mentor's points and asking follow-up questions. This practice deepened their conversations and built mutual understanding.

WHAT ARE THE FIVE CS OF COMMUNICATION? ¹

For better communication with your mentor, try to be:

Clear: What is the purpose of the communication?

- Keep a positive tone.
- Make the communication easy to understand.
- Limit jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations.

Concise: How to use simple language?

- Use active language versus passive language.
- Know the audience.
- Practice what to say.

Correct: How to communicate without error?

- Make sure my communication is accurate.
- Ensure my grammar, spellcheck, and autocorrect has been reviewed.
- Make sure my claims are true and factual.

Complete: Does the message contain all the relevant information?

- Ensure all key details are included.
- Answer all questions that may be asked.
- Provide any other supporting information that may be helpful.

Courteous: Is the communication in a polite, friendly, professional, and open way?

- Look at communication from the recipient's perspective.
- Deliver communication with assertiveness, which is a balance of courage and compassion.

WHAT IS ACTIVE LISTENING?²

Active listening for mentees involves being fully present and engaged when interacting with their mentors. This requires the mentee to focus on what the mentor is saying without interrupting, while also showing attentiveness through body language and verbal acknowledgments like "I see" or "That makes sense." Mentees should also reflect on the mentor's advice by asking clarifying questions and summarizing key points to ensure understanding. By practicing active listening, mentees demonstrate respect for their mentor's expertise and time, fostering a more productive and enriching mentoring relationship. This approach not only enhances learning and development but also strengthens the mutual trust and respect essential for effective mentorship.

¹ Adapted from Forbes.com

² Adapted from Chronus.com



How Do I Actively Listen?

- **Repeat or paraphrase what you just heard.** Periodically check in with your mentor to make sure you understand.
- **Be prepared.** Re-read the meeting agenda beforehand and make sure you are prepared.
- **Declutter your space and screens.** This helps you focus on the conversation and avoid distractions.
- **Focus your attention to your mentor.** This may include eye contact or other indications to show you are engaged in the conversation.
- **Do a posture check.** Sit up straight and limit posturing that can signal defensiveness or disinterest (i.e., crossing my arms).
- **Take a minute to be mindful.** Take a deep breath and focus on the present moment before starting a conversation.

Be respectful:

- Respect your mentor's time and expertise by being punctual, prepared, and professional during meetings.
- Be respectful of any differences if your mentor comes from a different cultural background than you. Ask questions if you are unsure about something, and you will avoid making assumptions.

Be patient:

- Remember that building a relationship with your mentor takes time. Be patient and trust the process.

Be curious:

Demonstrate you are prepared and have clear ideas of questions you want to ask my mentor.

- Ask your mentor questions about their experiences and how they overcame challenges. This will help you learn from their experiences and apply those lessons to your own life.

WHAT CAN I ASK MY MENTOR?

- **Ask clear, specific questions.** Your mentor cannot answer questions that are too broad or too vague. You can strive for open and engaging dialogue.
- **Ask questions about key areas of growth.** You can ask your mentor about their experiences, successes, and failures, and the lessons they learned along their journey.
- **Be prepared.** You can be prepared with a list of questions to ask, plans of action to talk about, and a notepad and pen.

Examples:

- What are some challenges you faced in your position?
- What skills have been most beneficial for you?
- How do you achieve work/life balance?
- Are there any networking groups you think I should join?
- How did you get over feeling like you are not as good as you thought?

- What skills would be beneficial for me to work on?
- What could I have done differently in this specific situation that may have improved the outcome?
- Do you feel you belong to X organization? Why or why not?
- Do you feel comfortable being yourself at work?
- To what extent do you feel that you can disclose your whole identity to your colleagues?
- Are there aspects of your identity that you feel you need to keep separate from the workplace?
- Do you downplay any aspect of your physical, cultural, spiritual, or emotional self at work?
- Do you ever feel left out at work-either when engaging in work activities or socially?
- Do you feel emotionally and socially supported at work?

DOS AND DON'TS WHEN BUILDING TRUST

| What a Mentee DOES | What a Mentee DOES NOT DO |
|---|--|
| Take initiative and be accountable for own career. | Avoid difficulties; don't expect mentor to solve all problems. |
| Avoid perfectionism; understand that mistakes are part of the learning process. | Sidestep work; don't rely on mentor to do their work. |
| Work hard and support other mentees. | Stay in your comfort zone; instead embrace new learning experiences. |
| Be enthusiastic about pursuing a wide range of professional experiences. | Exploit friendship; don't use the mentor relationship to avoid work or responsibilities. |

| What a Mentor DOES | What a Mentor DOES NOT DO |
|---|--|
| Listen, allowing mentees to discuss and explore issues and ideas. | Take over tasks that the mentee should be handling themselves. |
| Help deepen understanding of the industry and shape career aspirations. | Impose opinions or force the mentee into any direction; decisions lie in the mentee's hands. |
| Offer valuable feedback and facilitate open communication. | Use undue influence or manipulate the mentee by exploiting a sense of obligation. |
| Provide insights into workplace norms and expectations. | Show favoritism; maintain a balanced perspective. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Support networking opportunities and leverage their experience. | Expect mentees to perform activities outside of the MentorConnect program's roles and responsibilities. |
| Serve as an example and motivate mentees to embrace new challenges. | Act as a therapist. |
| Encourage autonomy through hands-on experiences and independent decision-making | Force the mentee to share information that is not relevant to the mentorship. |

Where these helpful? Do you have any further suggestions or ideas to share?



Contact Us

For further information contact us at:

Email: mentorconnect@iecbc.ca

Website: <https://iecbc.ca/our-work/programs/mentorconnect/>



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