

e-Mentor's ToolKit

A Resource for Mentors

First Edition

Table of Contents

<i>About this Guide.....</i>	Page 3
<i>Privacy, Safety and Inappropriate Correspondence.....</i>	Page 4
<i>Mentoring—What a CanadaInfoNet Mentor Hopes to Accomplish.....</i>	Page 5
<i>Why Should I be a Mentor?.....</i>	Page 6
<i>Communication Skills for Mentoring.....</i>	Page 7
<i>Practical Mentoring Activities.....</i>	Page 9
<i>Partnership Agreements.....</i>	Page 11
<i>Customizing Your Partnership Agreements.....</i>	Page 12
<i>Sample Partnership Agreement.....</i>	Page 13
<i>Correspondence Guidelines.....</i>	Page 14
<i>Focusing your Correspondence.....</i>	Page 15
<i>Managing Constructive Feedback.....</i>	Page 16
<i>Additional Resources and Forums.....</i>	Page 17

About This Guide

The CanadaInfoNet E-Mentor Toolkit is a resource provided to help you make the most of your mentoring experience.

What is it?

It's a step-by-step guide that prepares you for your mentoring experience by identifying some key considerations to help you succeed, some practical how-to suggestions for setting up your online relationship and possible shared activities to help identify the ways in which the program can enhanced your professional abilities.

Why is a toolkit important?

Mentors and mentees who can rely on some common guidelines and principles outlined in the toolkit are better equipped to focus on the mentoring experience. Without structure, some participants might find it hard to achieve their mentoring goals. This manual is a guide only and provides suggestions that can be incorporated easily into the CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program.

How do I best use it?

The toolkit is your own document and it allows you to customize your mentoring experience.

When do I use it?

You should start reviewing your toolkit now and continue to refer to it during the program.

Privacy, Safety and Inappropriate Correspondence

CanadaInfoNet provides a forum for you to communicate with your mentee while keeping personal details such as your last name and e-mail address in confidence. It is recommended that you do not provide your mentee with this information at any time during, or after your mentoring term.

Please note that, if you participate in the CanadaInfoNet Discussion Groups, the e-mail address from which you are posting your messages will be displayed on the list. Therefore, it is recommended that, if you participate in Discussion Groups, you should use a secondary e-mail account that preserves your privacy.

Before submitting your application to become a CanadaInfoNet mentor, you were required to review the rules for mentors and mentees. If you feel, in any way, that the rules of the CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program were unclear, please contact the mentoring coordinator immediately with your questions. mentors@canadainfonet.org

Remember to preserve your privacy and protect your privacy at all times:

- ⇒ CanadaInfoNet does NOT perform reference checks on mentees. Although potential mentees are presented with a questionnaire, which is reviewed by the mentoring coordinator, there is no sure way to guarantee the credibility of the mentee's character. Therefore, as with all your communications with other people, you are advised to use reasonable caution when interacting with your mentee.
- ⇒ In addition, we recommend that you do not give out any other personal information, such as your phone number, place of business, home address, etc.
- ⇒ Furthermore, it is recommended that you do not attempt to set up meetings with your mentee for any reason.
- ⇒ If you decide to continue correspondence with your mentee beyond the CanadaInfoNet program or share personal information, or engage in face-to-face meetings, CanadaInfoNet assumes no responsibility for any consequences resulting from such contact.

Inappropriate Correspondence:

Remember, as outlined in the rules of conduct for mentors and mentees, **any comments that are hateful, racist or of a sexual nature are strictly prohibited.** Any inappropriate correspondence should be reported to the mentoring coordinator at info@canadainfonet.org. Such inappropriate comments will result in expulsion from the CanadaInfoNet program without exception.

Mentoring—What a CanadaInfoNet Mentor hopes to accomplish

The CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program is essentially about helping people to assume more responsibility for the effective management of their career and settlement into Canadian society. It is a relationship designed to build confidence and help a mentee take increasing initiative for personal development. Mentoring differs from other forms of help, such as instructing, training or tutoring. It helps both partners learn, enjoy the learning and apply the learning.

CanadaInfoNet mentees are new Canadians and/or potential new Canadians who are professionals and trades people. In addition to mentoring, these individuals will have questions about what it's like to live and work in Canada, where the best place for them to live is, based on their, where they can find services once they arrive in Canada and much, much more.

CanadaInfoNet mentors are Canadians who are professionals and trades people who have accomplished many successes and would like to share their knowledge with others. As a mentor, you will enhance your knowledge of the process new Canadians go through in order to build their lives in Canada. You will work with your mentees to support them in their endeavors as they make their own decisions on how to settle and pursue their careers in Canada.

Mentoring is a high impact learning activity for everyone creating an opportunity to probe and practice critical success skills.

Mentoring is:

- ☺ A balanced partnership requiring equal commitment and investment from both partners.
- ☺ A career accelerator for those who have already demonstrated the ability to invest in personal career achievement.
- ☺ A helping hand extended by people in the know to people who want to be in the know.
- ☺ A welcome to Canada for newcomers and potential newcomers.
- ☺ A process that helps new Canadians and potential new Canadians learn about living and working in Canada.

Mentoring is not:

- ⊗ A one-way coaching initiative.
- ⊗ A forum for mentors to “toot their own horn.”
- ⊗ A job finding service for unemployed newcomers.
- ⊗ A process to encourage unmotivated people to take responsibility for self directed career management.
- ⊗ A process that will solve all your mentee's challenges.

Mentoring requires commitment from both partners. While it is an informal alliance, it is nevertheless, a professional undertaking. It is important to set realistic expectations at the beginning of the program in order to achieve the most benefits. No, the CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program does not guarantee that mentees will find work as a direct result of the program. **As a mentor, it is important to understand that your role is to guide your mentees, not lead them or take over for them.** Ultimately, it is up to the mentee to forge their success. As a mentor, your function is to support them in their efforts.

Why Should I be a Mentor?

Here are some assessment exercises to help you determine your personal reasons for becoming a mentor.

Individual Exercise

List some words and phrases that describe what the word "mentor" means to you?

List some of the people who have been mentors for you or for whom you have been a mentor. (Think of formal and informal mentoring.)

How could becoming a mentoring help you to accomplish your own professional goals?

Reflect on the mentoring relationships in which you have been involved. What has been satisfying for you about these relationships?

What has not been satisfying for you about these relationships? (Think about both the relationship and the outcomes.)

By considering these satisfiers and dissatisfiers, identify some expectations for your mentoring program that will contribute to making this a positive experience for you.

Did you know that the word "mentor" was actually the name of an historical person? When Ulysses went on a long voyage he left the care and education of his young son to his best friend, Mentor.

Communication Skills for Mentoring

You will employ a vast range of communication skills during your mentoring partnership. In fact, improving your business communication skills is one of the benefits of this program.

There are three fundamental skills that will contribute to the success of your partnership:

1. Questioning Skills

Questioning skills allow you to understand the goals your mentee is hoping to accomplish through the mentoring program and how you can support them. They help you to give informed responses and relevant guidance. If, at any time during your mentoring relationship you are unclear about what your mentee is expressing. Don't be afraid to ask for clarification.

Here are some important do's:

- ☺ Ask questions to gain information, **not** to impress your mentee.
- ☺ Make requests for information as specific as possible.
- ☺ Use follow-up questions to probe for more information.
- ☺ When responding to a mentee's questions, repeat their question in your own words in order to identify what it is you are responding to and to ensure that you understood what the mentee was asking.
- ☺ Convey a sense of wanting the mentee's perspective, rather than a definitive answer.
- ☺ Ask open-ended questions, rather than ones that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
- ☺ Remember to give guidance based on your experience, not advice, and do not be offended if your mentee decides that your guidance is not the right choice for them.

2. Active Listening skills

Although the CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program will be conducted on-line and it is unlikely that you will have the opportunity to meet your mentee face-to-face, you will still be employing "listening" skills. Listening refers to more than just hearing with your ears. Listening is understanding what is being communicated to you. In this program, you will be required to listen through reading. Listening skills are as important in this relationship as they are in any other, and most of us would benefit by developing active listening skills. Active listening requires you to ensure that you clearly understand the communication of your mentee. By asking open ended questions that explore your mentee's experiences, you will be better able to guide them to the right resources and experiences.

Here are some important do's:

- ☺ Clarify and confirm your understanding of what a mentee has told you.
- ☺ Ensure that your writing conveys respect for your mentee's situation.
- ☺ Pay attention to how your mentee practices active listening. Can you help them to learn some valuable lessons?
- ☺ Remember that listening is a prerequisite for learning

3. Feedback Skills

Feedback skills are particularly important for both your mentee and you. The mentee is the ideal person to give you feedback about your demonstrations of leadership and guidance through mentoring. Unlike other mentoring relationships you may have experienced previously, your mentee doesn't work with you and, therefore, is in a prime position to offer constructive observations.

Providing constructive feedback to your mentee is one of the best tools at your disposal. Feedback supports your mentee by helping them identify successful choices and challenging obstacles.

Here are some important do's:

- ☺ Remember that you are in an ideal situation to give your mentee some feedback on career, settlement and education issues in Canada and potential barriers they may encounter...use you opportunity wisely.
- ☺ Give your mentee permission to give you feedback as required.
- ☺ Talk about preferred feedback methods with your mentee.
- ☺ Give feedback on career action plans as well as on style and effectiveness.
- ☺ Enhance your opportunities for feedback by providing your mentee with examples of your own successes.
- ☺ Use feedback for some discovery about why things went well, besides the outcome.
- ☺ Keep in mind that feedback has two fundamental outcomes:
 - a. To reinforce what a mentee is already doing
 - b. To help a mentee overcome challenges

Practical Mentoring Activities

There are many ways in which you can enhance your mentee's professional development and success in Canada. Your contact need not be restricted to open-ended coaching or information sessions. It is important for a mentoring relationship to balance personal contact with practical activities.

Here are some suggestions about opportunities for enhancing mentoring effectiveness:

1. Introduce your mentee to a professional on-line newsgroup, threaded discussion or web community outside of CanadaInfoNet that you belong to. If you don't belong to one, explore some options for your self and your mentee.
2. Ask your mentee to share a career, education or settlement success or challenge with you.
3. Share a career, education or settlement success or challenge you have experienced with them.
4. Ask your mentee to send a copy of their resume so you can offer your comments and feedback.
5. Ask your mentee to send you a short update every month outlining their professional development and/or the progress of their immigration activities.
6. Take notes at a professional information presentation you attend and send them to your mentee for discussion and review in your next communication.
7. Send a copy of your resume for your mentee to review.
8. Use topical business articles or books as a platform for exchanging views.

There are many other activities that can support your professional development that will occur to you as you and your mentor develop an open and positive relationship.

Practical Mentoring Activities — A planning guide

Here are some suggestions for creating your own opportunities for mentoring activities. Consider these examples and then get creative about your own plans.

Topic	Possible activities	Potential outcomes
Books and articles on job searching in Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for recommendations • Pass on books/articles that made an impression on you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in 2-way discussion about your impressions • Challenge each others' points of view
Networking Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accompany your mentee to an online event. • Invite your mentee to an online event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze and discuss what you each hope to get from an event • Create opportunities for follow-up
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss your mentee's credentials. • Direct your mentee to credential assessment services in Canada. • Send your mentee information about the institutions you studies at in Canada. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make your mentee aware that, in Canada, they might be required to upgrade their skills. • Encourage your mentee to find out which credentials can be carried over to Canada and which need upgrading • Identify if your institution has accelerated programs for foreign trained professionals and trades people.
Sharing your information network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articles/interviews from subject matter experts • Articles/interviews about industry trends • Articles/interviews about specific job content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger scope of observations and suggestions for personal development
Managing a project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer specific examples of your work for your mentee to review • Ask your mentee for examples of their work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A channel for each of you to comment frankly on good and bad techniques
Online Job Fairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite your mentee to an online job fair where they can have online interviews and see how employers respond to their experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the experience and suggest solutions to any challenges they perceive.

Partnership Agreements

It is advisable to set out, at the beginning of the relationship, some mutual expectations. This not only allows you and your partner to establish a business-like framework, it invites some good discussion about partners' hopes and concerns.

Elements of a Partnership Agreement

The agreement should contain certain elements that will provide parameters for the mentoring relationship that are beneficial to both partners and are achievable.

Why – the benefits of the mentoring relationship

Discuss how an effective plan for the mentoring program will benefit the mentor and the mentee.

What – the expected Outcomes of the mentoring relationship

Discuss the concrete outcomes both the mentee and the mentor want to achieve through the mentoring relationship.

How – the personal boundaries of the relationship

Agree on how both the mentor and the mentee will work together to make this relationship a successful one. Some examples of discussion points are:

- ☺ When are the best times to exchange correspondence?
- ☺ How are we going to develop a professional relationship that will allow us to share with each other honestly and objectively?
- ☺ How will we deal with disagreement or what we perceive to be resistance?
- ☺ What mutual fears do we have about the relationship?
- ☺ What is it about me (the mentor), my way of viewing the world or my reactions that might block our relationship?
- ☺ What is it about me (the mentee), my way of viewing the world or my reactions that might block our relationship?

Customizing Your Partnership Agreement

There are two kinds of conditions that should be addressed in a mentoring agreement:

Professional norms

Personal behavior

Professional norms may include

- ☺ Time commitments
- ☺ Frequency of meetings
- ☺ Punctuality
- ☺ Completing assignments or research

Personal behavior may include:

- ☺ Appropriate interpersonal behaviors
- ☺ Confidentiality
- ☺ Permission to give and receive feedback
- ☺ Defining areas that are not appropriate for discussion or disclosure.

Refer to the partnership agreement on the next page to help you and your mentee prepare a simple, yet useful agreement.

Sample Partnership Agreement

Here is an example of a simple partnership agreement

CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program Partnership Agreement	
<i>To be completed by Mentee:</i>	
My primary expectations for my mentor are:	
<i>To be completed by Mentor:</i>	
My primary expectations for my mentee are:	
<i>Correspondence</i>	
Frequency of correspondence:	(Number of times per week)
Timeframe for responses:	(When mentor will respond to mentee)
Mentoring will start on:	(date)
Mentoring will end on:	(date)
I agree to conduct any research or follow-up as requested through our formal correspondence	
	(Mentor's acknowledgement)
	(Mentee's acknowledgment)
The initial correspondence will take place on:	(date)

Correspondence Guidelines

Following a set format that includes some, or all, of the following enhances mentoring correspondence:

- ☺ Updates on action items
- ☺ Debriefing on problematic assignments since last correspondence
- ☺ Feedback by mentor on his/her observations of the mentee's progress
- ☺ Mentors suggestion for development initiatives including reading and relevant forums
- ☺ Opportunity for the mentee to share success stories
- ☺ Mutually agreed homework assignments which cover both research and action items.

Regular correspondence between the mentor and mentee will be enhance if:

- ☺ There is a focus on one area of development
- ☺ The meeting ends with homework assignments
- ☺ Both sides practice active listening

Here is a sample of the structure you could use for your correspondence preparation

Meeting Planner
Mentee: Correspondence Date: Respond by Date:
Mentoring Topics:
Relevant information/resources/materials that would benefit the mentee:

Focusing Your Correspondence

Mentoring correspondence is your opportunity to share your experiences with someone who has similar experiences and interests. The focus of the correspondence is for the two of you to decide.

Here are some suggestions for focusing your discussion:

- ☺ Offering your perspective on business and organizational trends in Canada.
- ☺ Developing a personal learning plan
- ☺ Directing your mentee to helpful services, government resources and organizations that specialize in helping newcomers settle in Canada.
- ☺ Offering your mentee assistance in preparing resumes, getting ready for interviews and networking.
- ☺ Sharing specialized reading materials and online resources.
- ☺ Giving constructive feedback on your mentee's resume.
- ☺ Preparing for the adjustments of coming to Canada.

The advantages of having a focus for your correspondence is:

- ☺ The mentee can research specialized information in advance, if appropriate.
- ☺ Your meeting will be directly related to the needs and interests of your mentee.
- ☺ You'll both be practicing the skills of developing an agenda and presenting information.

Managing Constructive Feedback

Feedback is fundamental in order for your mentee to be able to assess the success of the mentoring relationship. A mentoring program is a unique opportunity to give some feedback to your mentee, which they can use to take control of their future in Canada by understanding the differences between pursuing their career in their country of origin and Canada.

Be specific when giving feedback without sounding unsupportive, destructive, negative or imposing. It is important to remember that, ultimately, it is the mentee who is responsible for his/her own successes. It is also important to remember that it is not likely that your mentee will make all the same career choices as you would. The CanadaInfoNet.org Online Mentoring Program is not about creating another you, or finding someone to follow in your footsteps.

Never tell your mentee that their choices are wrong. Instead, if you believe your mentee's decisions and efforts are in opposition of how you would proceed, consider the following possibilities:

- ☺ Make suggestions of other alternatives and share your knowledge of these options. Help them make an informed decision.
- ☺ Ask your mentee open-ended questions about why they are considering this approach. It might be that the reason their approach is different from yours is because their goals are also different.
- ☺ Consider your mentee's approach. What are the possible outcomes? Is it possible that their approach, although different from your own, could yield success?
- ☺ Even if you are absolutely sure that their approach is faulty, discuss the subject objectively and with caution. Express your reasons for believing the approach is faulty, BUT leave the final decision up to them. Remember, if you convince them to follow your "advice" against their own judgment and they fail, they will most likely hold you responsible.

Feedback should focus on actions and interests, not on your attitude. Your mentee probably respects your opinion and is grateful for your assistance. Any forceful or destructive criticism could discourage your mentee and result in a breakdown of trust in the relationship. Consider all your correspondence carefully and remember that your goal is to help them succeed. Remember, the more often you provide feedback, the better you become at it which prepares you for full and frank discussions with your professional peers and networks.

Additional Resources and Forums

During your mentoring program, you should also encourage your mentee to take advantage of the numerous resources and forums provided by CanadaInfoNet.org. You could even participate in other CanadaInfoNet forums with your mentee:

1. CanadaInfoNet Resources:

The resource section of our site is an excellent place for both you and your mentee to find links to government websites, sites with services for newcomers, labour market information, job boards, education credential assessment centres cultural resources for newcomers and much, much more.

2. CanadaInfoNet Success Stories:

Here's an opportunity for you and your mentee to share your stories of success with our community of online readers. Success stories are a collection of inspiring true accounts of Canadian immigrants who have achieved success in the areas of employment, education and/or settlement.

3. CanadaInfoNet Ask an Expert:

Ask an Expert is an extensive database of questions commonly asked by newcomers and potential newcomers. Mentees and mentors can send their questions, via our online form, to be answered by our panel of experts.

4. CanadaInfoNet Discussions:

We also have interactive threaded discussion groups that allow our community of mentees and mentors to share ideas with each other via a public forum.

5. CanadaInfonet Video:

We utilize Streaming Video functionality in order to present information and training workshops to our online community.