

Mentoring

(Excerpt of the ECSF portfolio, mentor, & coach manual '11-'12)

1.1. Introduction

Mentoring is about learning and being open to new ideas, plans and processes. It can be considered as a developmental partnership through which one person shares knowledge, skills, information, and perspective to foster the personal and professional growth of someone else. The power of mentoring is that it creates a unique opportunity for collaboration, goal achievement, and problem solving.*

Within ECSF the type of mentoring is one where a senior professional takes a junior professional "under his/her wings" and provides guidance and counsel.

In contrast with coaching, there is no hierarchical relation between mentor and trainee. The focus is on the process of *learning in a 'safe' context* for the ECSF-trainee. The mentor supports the trainee.

The student's activities and experiences mainly in reference to competencies 6 up to 16, through the 2 case studies, will be guided and counselled by the mentor. The student's and mentor's focus is on enhancing the assessment and intervention competencies. These competencies are strengthened by the intensive weeks, the assignments and the follow up sessions. The mentor helps the trainee to enhance assessment and intervention competencies. In other words, the roles of the mentor are mainly focused on the assessment and intervention competencies.

1.2. The profile of the ECSF-mentor *

The ECSF-mentor is an SLT with significant professional experience in treating PWS and with proved evidence of continued professional development in the last 5 years. **The student will suggest during IW1 the person(s) who could take on the role of his/her mentor.** The mentor is approved by ECSF (appendix 3). It is a SLT who supports the trainee, who is well-informed about ECSF and who endorses the role of a mentor described below.

The goal of mentoring is to improve the quality of the profession by learning and getting insight in one's own behaviour and reactions in work situations by means of reflection. To learn to discover the relationship between one's behaviour and one's feelings, standards and values, to get support of one's personal functioning, increasing professional acting.

The mentor's primary role is to provide guidance and support the trainee based on his or her unique developmental needs. Throughout the learning process, the mentor will take on some or all of the following roles:

- willing to be observed and to demonstrate
- willing to observe the trainee
- offering advice and guidance
- sharing ideas and information
- answering questions
- giving instructions on the level of the ECSF-trainee

- motivating the ECFS-trainee
- prompting reflection on experiences
- giving constructive feedback
- acting as a 'sounding board' for ideas/concerns
- providing support on personal issues if appropriate
- expanding the trainee's network of contacts
- identifying resources to help the trainee enhance personal development

A few characteristics of mentors: Good listener, knowledgeable, nonjudgmental, able to give constructive feedback, honest, able to access resources, willing/able to devote time to help other develop, eager to learn, ...

1.3. Peer mentoring

Being guided by a mentor may not be applicable in case you already have experience in treating PWS attending the ECSF course and no other people with similar experience are available. If that is the case, peer mentoring is an alternative. After consultation with the ECSF-consortium, peer mentoring could substitute the role of the mentor.

Peer mentoring is a way to improve one's expertise by appealing to colleagues to discuss with you about the way you function as a professional and about concerns you have to deal with. It is about dealing, in a systematic way, with problems related to your professional action, in a small group (maximum 4 or 5). The members of the group are all SLTs. You don't expect them to give solutions to all the problems you identify in working with you clients or the client system. By asking proper questions and talking with you they stimulate your analytic and problem solving skills so you can handle problems even better.

The focus is on personal functioning and development as a fluency specialist by means of self-reflection on professional acting, on goals that underpin those actions, on causes of negative and positive perceptions and the impact in relation to your work as a fluency specialist.

1.3.1. Goals for peer mentoring

The goal of peer mentoring is:

- to improve the quality of the profession by learning and getting insight in one's own behaviour and reactions in work situations by means of reflection.
- to learn to discover the relationship between one's behaviour and one's feelings, standards and values, to get support of one's personal functioning, increasing professional acting.
- other goals are to develop affirmative and supporting relationships among each other in order to increase personal and professional growth, to increase learning skills and methods to support each other. To create a supporting framework for good mutual cooperation.

1.3.2. The peer mentoring group

An ECSF-peer mentoring group is approved by ECSF (appendix 4), composed of trainees who are already fluency clinicians. Each member 'consults' the other members of the group. The leadership changes every meeting. The group takes care of its own leadership and learns so to trust its own strength. That means that the group itself is responsible for appointments, working method and atmosphere. The structure of the meetings is stipulated by the needs of the group members. However, there is always a structure, an outline:

- formulate a problem.

- analyse the problem from different perspectives and try to find out what you learned out of it.
- search as a group for solutions and/or recommendations.

As a result of this structure, the meetings are very task-specific.

In all three of the phases the ECSF trainee who consults the others is the person who analyses his or her actions/problems with the group members. Guided and advised by the other ECSF trainees, he or she gets a better insight in the problem and how to deal with it. He / she is active in finding ones own solutions. In that sense peer mentoring is both mutual aid as well as self-help. In that sense peer mentoring is about taking responsibility and is about autonomous learning. This will all contribute to the fact that each member of the group will improve his/her skills and competencies in their own specific situations. Peer mentoring contributes to a better task implementation and to the personal development of the group members.

A clear description of the problem/situation, empathy from all members and mutual trust among each other are three conditions for successful peer mentoring

1.4. Guidelines for mentoring success*

- Be sure you are clear on such terms as how often you will communicate; whether it will be personal contact, phone, e-mail, or a combination; how quickly you will respond
- Make contact frequently, especially during the first few weeks, to build a trusting relationship
- Respect your trainee/mentor's experience and views even if you don't agree
- Follow up when you make a commitment to get information, take action, etc. Don't ever leave your mentor hanging. If you don't respond, the mentor will feel that he/she wasn't helpful. You never want to leave someone who has volunteered to help with this kind of impression
- Don't ever leave your trainee hanging. If you don't respond, the trainee will feel rejected and disappointed. You never want to leave someone who has asked for mentoring assistance feeling uncertain about the relationship
Be appreciative of whatever you get from your trainee/mentor; learn his or her strengths and seek or offer advice in these areas
- Work hard to make it a mutual relationship. This means you should always be on the lookout for information/resources that might be of interest to your trainee/mentor (e.g., articles you read or information you come across).
- Be flexible and enjoy the experience

1.5. The benefits for the ECSF-mentor*

Some important benefits for the ECSF mentor:

- satisfaction from sharing experiences with other fluency specialists
- enhancement of coaching, mentoring, leadership, and management skills
- chance to be exposed to a diversity of thought, style and personality
- a way to recruit employees for the mentor's practice, clinic or other setting
- feedback loop to ECSF-trainee and ECSF regarding curriculum needs
- a lasting career network
- an ECSF-mentor status