Curtin University

EMPOWER Project

EMPOWER
— PEER MENTORING —

Peer Mentoring Manual

Make tomorrow better.

THE GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

healthway

Contents

Contact Details

Curtin University Project Lead:	**Professor Jaya Dantas** E: jaya.dantas@curtin.edu.au T: 08 9266 4151
Curtin University Research Officers:	**Shelley Gower** E: shelley.gower@curtin.edu.au T: 08 9266 2362
	Dr David Forbes E: david.forbes@curtin.edu.au
	Zakia Jeemi E: zakia.jeemi@curtin.edu.au
Project website:	http://empower-project.com.au

Resources

You will be provided with a set of resources to help you with various topics. Resources will be available on the website in the **Mentor Resources** tab. You may also like to visit:

Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre
        9345 5755
        9/24 Chesterfield Rd, Mirrabooka, 6061

Mercy Care Mirrabooka
        6298 9888
        4 Brewer Place, Mirrabooka

Introduction

Migrant women in Australia face unique struggles in seeking employment as they may encounter language barriers, social isolation, and an absence of social and community networks. In addition, they may have family commitments and limited education.

Curtin University in collaboration with Ishar Women's Multicultural Health Centre have developed a peer mentoring project for women with a migrant background. Peer mentors who are themselves women who have migrated or resettled in Australia, will use their life experiences and training to assist other migrant women move towards their employment and/or education goals.

The peer mentoring program aims to build:
> ➢ Empowerment
> ➢ Resilience, confidence and self-esteem
> ➢ Job-seeking and entrepreneurial skills
> ➢ Knowledge of the types of jobs available, work rights and occupational health and safety
> ➢ Health and well-being

Women from migrant backgrounds are often employed in low-paid precarious jobs such as aged care, cleaning, in housekeeping departments in hotels and childcare where exploitative practices and Occupational Health and Safety issues may be evident. Interventions that increase knowledge about employment law, workplace rights and employer obligations will help women to navigate these conditions and seek more secure and fulfilling employment. Interventions need to focus on women's capacity to build new skills as well as expand on traditional skills and existing strengths.

This manual has been developed by Curtin University and Ishar based on an extensive community consultation with women and stakeholders to give mentors the information they need to assist others to achieve their employment goals.

What is Peer Mentoring?

The Power of Partnerships

Although we live in a society that promotes independence and individuality, it is the connections between us that make us strong. By sharing our skills and experiences with others, and learning from others, we are able to do more, and enjoy more. Being involved with other people brings value to our lives.

Mentoring recognises that we have the ability to build the capacity of others. It helps us contribute to our own lives and to the lives of others.

Definition of Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is a process through which a more experienced individual encourages and assists a less experienced individual develop their potential within a shared area of interest.

The relationship is reciprocal – both individuals have the opportunity for growth and development.

Peers are individuals who share some common characteristics, attributes or circumstances. These may relate to age, ability, life experience or interests etc.

Peer mentors are individuals who have more experience within that common area along with additional training or experience in how to assist another in acquiring skills, knowledge and attitudes to be more successful.

Gillman, D. (2006) *The Power of Peer Mentoring*, Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin Madison. Retrieved from https://www2.waisman.wisc.edu/cedd//pdfs/products/family/PPM.pdf

Women from CALD migrant backgrounds benefit from learning from those who have come before them. This can help them identify their goals and work towards achieving them. They may be able to avoid some of the difficulties.

By hearing about your experiences and journeys, including where it has been difficult, the women will gain confidence.

The mentoring relationship is empowering for both the women and the mentor. There will be contributions from both sides, and both sides will benefit. Mentoring enhances inclusion and self-

determination.

Mentoring has a proven track record of success, for all ages and circumstances (Gillman, 2006). Mentoring has helped improve outcomes related to:

➢ Job skills

➢ Motivation and self-esteem

➢ Friendship

➢ Communication and assertiveness skills

➢ Problem solving and decision making

➢ Conflict resolution

➢ Resiliency

The purpose of this booklet is help mentors recognise their own strengths and experiences, and provide guidance on how they can use these to mentor others.

What Makes a Good Peer Mentor?

> ### What Peer Mentors do…
>
> Make the women feel at home – be welcoming
>
> Listen and respond – knowing when to maintain confidentiality
>
> Share experiences and insights regarding employment
>
> Provide advice using their own experience – But know when a problem needs to be shared with a staff member
>
> Be enthusiastic
>
> Be reliable
>
> Point peer mentees in the 'right direction' if needed

This project evolved with the belief that women who have migrated to Australia who are working and/or actively involved in their communities can act as excellent role models for women with similar backgrounds who seek support, practical advice, and/or assistance with problem solving in seeking employment or education.

Peer Mentors will serve as a guide, a role model, a motivator and be a good listener.

They will understand the frustrations related to settlement and offer emotional support during the adjustment to a work environment. Peer mentors will have had life experiences that will be relevant and valuable to refugee women. An effective mentor will be an individual who, by virtue of her own life experiences, has skills, and knowledge to share with other refugee women.

The peer mentors will have a number of skills, they will be **empathetic** – they will have communication skills that show caring and understanding, recognise participant feelings and create the basis for trust and caring. The mentors will also be **responsive** and show the participants that they understand how they feel, and have the capacity to **listen**.

A Peer Mentor is **discouraged** from offering personal advice. When discussing a problem situation, a Peer Mentor should help the mentee to look at the options available to them and possible consequences of each action.

How does a Peer Mentor assist women?

Some of the many areas in which a Peer Mentor may assist include:

➢ Goal-setting

➢ Learning ways to utilize opportunities for social interaction and networking.

➢ Emotional support

➢ Understanding the online environment

➢ Building employment skills such as interview techniques

➢ Building entrepreneurial skills such as small business and compliance regulations

What Peer Mentors DO NOT DO

Miss meetings with mentees

Mislead or misinform mentees

Solve problems on mentees' behalf

The EMPOWER program is for providing mentees with the

***Ability, Confidence and Knowledge* to seek employment.**

EMPOWER is not able to find jobs for the women

Responsibilities of Mentors and Mentees:

1. Mentors and mentees are expected to have contact approximately twice a month. Other contact may occur between mentoring meetings if agreed by both parties.

2. Mentoring meetings may take place at Centacare. However, it is possible to meet at alternative locations convenient to both the mentor and the mentee.

3. If you are unable to attend the planned mentoring meetings, please contact your mentor/mentee as soon as possible to see if arrangements can be made.

4. If you are unable to reach the mentor or mentee, please contact one of the Project Coordinators.

5. When appropriate, meetings may occur away from Centacare. For example, you may want to visit a TAFE. The mentee will need to cover her own costs in this case.

6. Each mentor and mentee is expected to keep a journal of her successes and challenges related to the Peer Mentoring Project throughout the length of the project.

7. Each mentor and mentee may contact the Project Coordinators to answer questions, offer suggestions and gain support.

8. Each participant is expected to be respectful of one another's ideas, feelings and beliefs.

9. Mentors are expected to behave in a professional manner in accordance with the policies outlined in the Peer Support Training Manual

Timeline for the Peer Mentoring Project

1. **Matching of mentor and mentee:** The unique skills and experiences of each mentor and mentee will be considered in matching them to a refugee participant. Most of the mentors will be refugee or migrant women themselves who have been successful in employment or small business in WA.

2. **Launch Event** will be held at the commencement of the project to provide participants with information about the program and an opportunity to meet mentors in a comfortable, group setting. Participants will discuss plans for the future, both as a group and with their mentors.

3. **Mentoring Program:** women will attend approximately two peer support mentoring sessions each month for up to six months. Age will not be a barrier. The length of the meetings will be dependent on the needs of the mentee and the availability of the Mentor, but we anticipate around 1.5 hours.

4. **A photo collage of the mentoring journey:** Each woman will compile a scrapbook and reflective journal documenting their mentoring journey, project activities, and with the mentors will describe on a monthly basis the activities undertaken, successes, challenges and insights.

5. **A wrap-up/closing event:** The project will conclude with a wrap-up session at Ishar where participants will reflect on the programme, discuss experiences and share recommendations. This event will involve community members, government departments, local businesses, service providers, the refugee women and the mentors.

Meeting your mentee for the first time

During the initial contact, the Peer Mentor will spend time getting to know the mentee and establishing a good rapport and trusting relationship. The Peer Mentor usually initiates a relationship by being honest, sincere and open.

Some areas that a Mentor may want to explore during the initial contact could be:

1. When did the woman arrive in Australia? Where did they come from? What are their feelings towards being in Australia? How has the family coped with the transition?

2. What leisure activities are they doing? What did they enjoy doing in the past?

3. How often do they get out of their home environment and when they do, what are some things that they do (i.e., shopping, going to church/mosque, visiting friends, going for a walk, etc.)?

4. What social contacts do they have?

During the initial meeting, the Mentor may also want to share some of her experiences related to settling in Australia, family background, employment situation, or other interest areas.

Subsequent meetings

A schedule of suggested topics has been created for the project. There are resources available for you to use if you feel you need them. These topics are suggestions only. You will be guided by the specific needs of the mentee.

After the first few meetings, the Mentor will use the information they received during the early meetings to explore ways of problem solving and goal setting. It is important that the Mentor uses effective problem solving and goal setting skills to assist the person in identifying what the actual problem may be and explore possible solutions to the problem.

It is suggested that only one goal at a time be worked on. If too many goals are being worked on at the same time, it may result in the person being overwhelmed and frustrated and none of the goals being accomplished.

The EMPOWER program is for providing mentees with the
Ability, Confidence and Knowledge
to seek employment.

EMPOWER is not able to find jobs for the women

Possible topics for discussion

This list is a guide only. The topics may vary according to the needs of the mentee.

Topic	Focus
Introduction	Program overview Getting to know each other Life story - positive experiences of mentor Set expectations for the program
Goal setting and identifying strengths	Define goals via discussion Choose an area to focus on, form sub-goals Identify resources needed to achieve goals Mindset for success Identifying achievements and strengths
Australian workplace environment	Realities of Australian workplace – have to apply for many jobs before success Casual vs contract work Basic legal rights at work Reality of promised conditions versus actual conditions
Interpersonal skills	Time management and organisation Australian workplace cultural expectations Communication skills
Self-care	Identifying current self-care practices Managing anxiety, managing disappointment When to ask for help, why to ask, how to ask, from whom to ask
Financial management	Budgeting Saving for a goal Financial literacy
Legal rights and responsibilities at work	Support services, dispute processes
Interview skills	Discuss previous interview experiences Interview practice Preparing job applications; selection criteria
Developing a work search plan	Identify local employment by type, skills requirements and pro-employee sociability factors such as days/hours/shift times of work, distance from home, public transport
Networking	
Starting your own business	What is an Entrepreneur? Government start-up support Financial, legal, regulatory obligations
Using technology	Using Word Using email etc

Peer Mentoring Skills

1. Empathy

Empathy is a communication skill, which shows caring and understanding. It lets the other person know that you have really listened, recognized their feelings and you are willing to continue to listen. Empathy is also the basis for trusting and caring. It is important to identify what the person is actually saying and respond in a way that shows your understanding of how they really feel.

There are two steps in providing an empathetic response.

1. Identify:

In providing empathetic responses it is important that you listen to the person very carefully. Also make sure to use appropriate eye contact and that your body language shows that you are really listening. It is important to get the full message of what the person is saying.

Accurately identify the feelings of the mentee, be as specific as possible.

2. Respond:

Respond to those feelings in a way that shows the person you really understand how they feel. This is also sometimes called "Mirroring" because you reflect back what the person has said.

Here are some examples of empathetic responses:

> **Mentee:** "I try to help my son at school but I cannot understand the system here"
>
> **Response:** "It sounds like you get very frustrated when ...."

> **Mentee:** "I just don't know what to do. I don't know whether to go to school or to go out and find a job. I just don't know what I should do."
>
> **Response:** "It sounds like you have a decision to make and you are not sure which to make."

Mentee: "Now that I have come to Australia I cannot see my friends and family. I just stay at home with nothing to do."

Response: "It sounds like you are really lonely right now."

1. Asking Questions

Asking the right questions will help your mentee explore their thoughts and feelings.

There are *closed ended* questions and *open-ended* questions.

Closed ended questions end in 'yes' or 'no' or one word answers.

These types of questions may be:

> *Did you go shopping today?*

These types of questions usually end or stop the conversation.

Open-ended questions are different. They allow the person to explore what he or she is thinking or feeling. Open-ended questions sometimes start with *What* or *How*. These questions keep the person talking. Some of these questions may include:

> *What happened when……?*
> *How do you feel about what that person said?*
> *What were you thinking?*
> *What would you have liked to tell that person?*
> *What did you want him or her to do?*
> *What were you thinking about the other person at that time?*

2. Values Clarification

Values Clarification is similar to empathy. However, instead of reflecting back what the person's feelings are, you are reflecting back what *seems important* to them. However, you make no judgment of these values and you show the individual that you accept her as a person. In values clarification, you help the person to explore what she is actually thinking about a particular problem.

Reflective Values Statements:

After you allow the person to explore how they are thinking or feeling about a particular problem, you can reflect these thoughts in a reflective value statement. For example:

It is very important to you that _____ .

You seem to _____ when you think_____ .

You don't seem to like it when _____ .

Examples:

Mentee - "Ever since I have been in Australia I have not been able to attend English classes as I have small children"

Response: "Learning English is very important to you

3. Listening
Communication skills include listening and sharing.

4a Eye Contact and Body Language
Eye contact and body language can impact on how a person feels when you are talking to them.

4b Taking Turns

It is important to recognize different cultural practices around the nature of having conversations.

One area that can be difficult to navigate is when you experience pauses in conversation.

This is also known as 'turn-delay' or 'response-delay'. A pause in conversation is actually part of the conversation, but between two people can be misinterpreted. For example you or your mentee may think the other person is disinterested, reluctant, or confused. Extended pauses often tempt one speaker to unwittingly 'fill in the gap' and this can effectively destroy a conversation if it becomes too frequent.

Turn-taking strategies

1. Speak, and then ask

   Get the conversation going with your opinion, then ask your mentee a question

2. Asking for and giving opinions

   Do you like that idea?

   What do you think?

   Does that make sense to you?

3. Fillers for pauses.

   Let me see….

   Let me think….

   The thing is….

   What I mean is….

4c   Poor Listening

Robertson (1994) describes the following list as the ten most common bad listening habits.

1. Lack of interest in the subject
2. Focus on the person, not on the content
3. Interrupting
4. Focus on the detail, missing the big picture
5. Force-fitting their ideas into your mental models
6. Body language that signals disinterest
7. Creating or allowing distractions
8. Ignoring what you do not understand
9. Letting emotions block the subject
10. Daydreaming

Barker and Watson (2000) suggest the following as irritating listening habits:

1. Interrupting the speaker.
2. Not looking at the speaker.
3. Rushing the speaker and making them feel that they are wasting the listener's time.
4. Showing interest in something other than the conversation.
5. Getting ahead of the speaker and finishing her thoughts.
6. Not responding to the speaker's requests.
7. Saying, "Yes, but . . .," as if the listener has made up his mind.
8. Topping the speaker's story with "That reminds me. . ." or "That's nothing, let me tell you about. . ."
9. Forgetting what was talked about previously.
10. Asking too many questions about details.

Problem Solving and Goal Setting

Now that the person has explored what she has been feeling and thinking, you can move on to problem solving. To find solutions to problems there are several steps one can take.

1. Select One Problem:

There may be several problems that the person may be expressing, however, it is important to take one problem at a time. In selecting a problem to assist the person in developing a solution, look for the biggest problem or a problem that might affect other problems.

2. Define the Problem:

After you have selected a problem, define what the problem really is. When does it happen? How often does it happen? How does it happen? Be as specific as possible.

3. Develop Objectives:

What are the final goals? Are these goals realistic? What are the benefits of these goals?

4. The Price You Pay for Not Solving the Problem:

What will she be losing, such as feelings, self-concept, relationships with others, physical pain, etc.?

5. Rewards for Not Solving the Problem:

Look at the good feelings that the person gets such as sympathy from others, caring, attention or thinking of good things in trying to avoid working on your own problems.

6. Look at Alternative Solutions:

Assist the person in coming up with her own alternative solutions. Try not to give suggestions, however, if the person forgets a possible alternative, assist her in thinking harder or point out a possible alternative.

7. Clarify These Alternatives:

Which ones are realistic and which ones are not; explore how the person would feel about trying this alternative; look at the best and the worst possible outcomes of this alternative.

8. Choose an Alternative to Try:

After clarifying each alternative, select which one to try. Be sure the individual with the problem made the decision and not you.

9. Develop a Plan of Action:

Determine each step, time limits, rewards for each step, and support. Take one step at a time, and allow for setbacks and disappointments. Discuss solutions to possible setbacks and/or disappointments.

Problem Solving and Goal Setting cont.

Setting goals has been shown to help motivate people and is a great way to keep them focused towards accomplishments they wish to achieve. Setting a SMART goal has the following essential parts: **S**pecific, **M**easureable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, **T**ime Based

For example, a SMART goal for a woman that has a goal of getting a job may be:

Within the next year, I will submit one job application per month and accept all offers of interviews even if only to gain experience.

SMART-goals. Retrieved from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SMART-goals.png

S Specific	This is an exact goal, rather than something vague.
M Measurable	This goal is measurable, i.e. 'every month'
A Attainable	This goal is realistic. It's better to set small, but challenging goals and then build on them, than to set a goal that is far out of reach.
R Relevant	This is a goal that may serve the woman's preferences as opposed to other people's wishes. Applying for a job per month may fit in with her lifestyle and the things that are important to her better than for example, applying every fortnight.
T Time Based	The goal has a timeframe.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is based on one's individual right to privacy, both expressed and implied. Confidentiality means that any information that the mentee tells you or implies will not be given or disclosed to others except under certain circumstances.

There are certain circumstances that may arise which allow you to, or make it your obligation to, inform an appropriate source about the information that you receive.
These circumstances would include:

1. If you, as the Mentor, believe that this person may cause injury to herself or another person. Even though this information was given in confidence, it is your obligation to protect this person and this may mean revealing it to an appropriate person.

2. If the mentee informs you she is intending to commit an unlawful act which you believe is possible and you are unable to otherwise prevent her from carrying out, it is our obligation to disclose this information to the police.

If either of these situations does arise, you should immediately do the following:

➢ Contact one of the Project Coordinators. Phone numbers are on the front page.
➢ If these contact people cannot be reached, you may call a help line in your community.
   o Lifeline 13 11 14
   o Beyond Blue 1300 224 636

Dealing with problems – *what happens if...*

Your Mentee…..

Your mentee may disclose problems to you that will impact on achieving the goals you have set.

If you need to speak to someone about the wellbeing of yourself or your mentee:

1. Contact one of the Project Coordinators. Phone numbers are on the front page. We are available to help you.

2. You may like to contact the Counsellor at Ishar - Dr Bernadette Wright   9345 5335

3. If these contact people cannot be reached, you may call a help line in your community.

   Lifeline 13 11 14   **Beyond Blue 1300 224 636**

You as a Mentor…..

Make notes on how you will address any potential problems within your Mentorship

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Recording and evaluating mentoring – *keeping a record...*

Keeping a Journal

Once a month, the Mentor and Mentee are requested to complete a journal entry. This is done through the website. Please go to http://empower-project.com.au/ and then click Mentor Resources. Scroll to the bottom and click on EMPOWER Monthly Mentor Journal. The password is empowermentor2019.

Guidelines:

1. Start with the date of the meeting, the length of the meeting and location.

2. Add a brief summary of the discussion and any activities decided upon.

3. Write objectively. Avoid making judgments and conclusions. Document the mentee's feelings, statements with quotes. ("My mentee stated that she felt very angry at her husband.")

4. Outline any problems or challenges you experienced

5. Outline any progress towards the mentee's identified goals

6. Include your thoughts and reflections on the mentoring experience, including any questions or concerns.

7. Include the objectives for the next session or overall objectives for long-term work.

8. Maintain confidentiality in writing case notes, keeping files, and verbally.

The journals are a very important part of the Peer Mentoring Project. The journals will help to facilitate better communication between the Peer Mentor and the Project Coordinator on how well the mentee is progressing in their employment goals, if they need any additional support and information on future goals that the mentee may need to work on.

Consumer Grievance

Curtin University in an effort to assure quality of services and concern for women, provides for the following Consumer Grievance Policy and Procedure**:**

A. Filing a Grievance: Any mentee who feels she has been treated unfairly by Curtin staff may file a grievance by contacting the Curtin Project Lead.

B. Arrangement of Meeting With the Mentee: The Project Lead will in writing contact the mentee within ten (10) working days and make arrangements with the mentee for a meeting to discuss the grievance.

C. Appeal to Curtin University Ethics Committee: If, as a result of the meeting with the Curtin Project Lead, a grievance remains unresolved, the client may file a written request for a grievance hearing with the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Ethics Officer
Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee
Ph: 9266 9233

Manager, Research Integrity
Ph: 9266 7093
Email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

empower-project.com.au