



Scottish Ambulance Service Reverse Mentor Programme Training Session

Empowering knowledge exchange to bring meaningful change to inequalities in Healthcare

Welcome & Structure of Today

- Welcome & Introductions
- Why Reverse Mentoring?
- Understanding Reverse Mentoring
- Core Mentoring Skills
- Practice



Why reverse mentoring?



Small groups or Pairs



What do you want to get out of the programme?



How do you think it will be beneficial to SAS?



Time 10 mins then feed back



Addresses Inequality and Promotes Inclusion

Breaking Systemic Barriers

Reverse mentoring helps dismantle barriers related to ethnicity, gender, and identity within organisations.

Fostering Open Dialogue

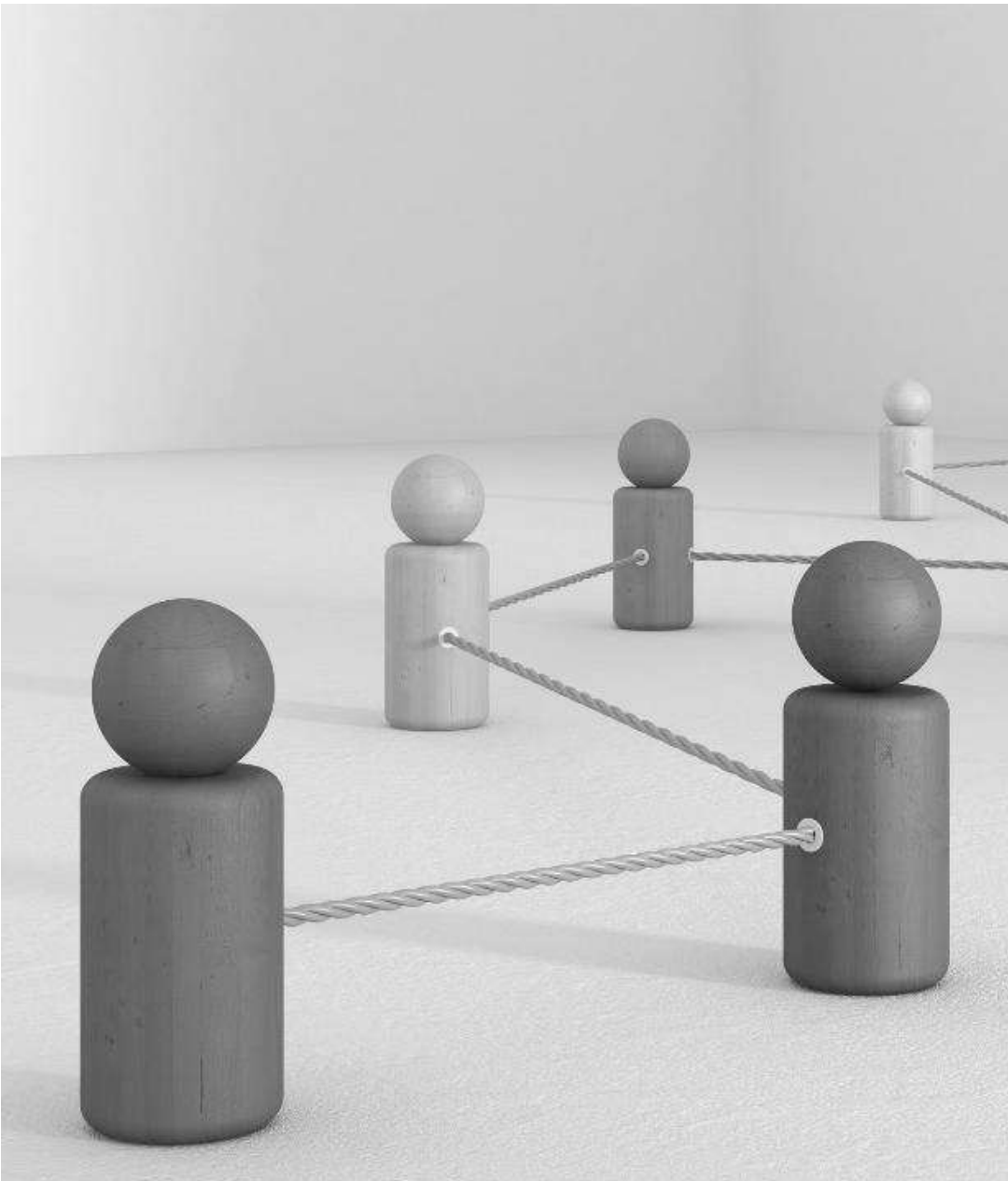
Engaging in open dialogue with underrepresented mentors reveals **hidden** challenges to leaders.

Embedding Inclusion Practices

Programmes align with strategies to embed diversity and inclusion into organisational culture and wellbeing.

Empowering Marginalized Voices

Reverse mentoring empowers marginalized voices and drives meaningful cultural change at all levels.



Flips Traditional Hierarchies

Challenging Power Dynamics

Reverse mentoring disrupts traditional knowledge flow by empowering employees with less power as mentors.

Fostering Humility in Leadership

Senior leaders embrace vulnerability and openness through reciprocal learning relationships.

Promoting Inclusive Culture

Reverse mentoring encourages valuing contributions from all organisational levels to enhance trust.

Driving Innovation Through Diversity

Breaking down hierarchies fosters innovation by actively seeking diverse perspectives.



Builds Empathy and Cultural Intelligence

Fostering Empathy Through Mentoring

Reverse mentoring helps leaders understand minority experiences, fostering empathy and reducing unconscious biases.

Enhancing Cultural Intelligence

Exposure to different backgrounds equips leaders to navigate diverse workplaces with cultural awareness.

Driving Inclusive Leadership

Empathy gained from reverse mentoring promotes inclusive policies and improves team dynamics and engagement.

Adapting to Societal Changes

Leaders use insights from reverse mentoring to align their leadership with the needs of their workforce and the population we serve.



Strengthens Engagement and Retention



Enhances Junior Staff Engagement

Reverse mentoring recognises and values junior employees, boosting their confidence and leadership skills.



Builds Senior Leader Connection

Senior leaders develop a stronger connection and reinforce commitment to inclusive practices through mentoring.



Strengthens Organisational Culture

Mutual mentoring relationships reduce turnover and support succession planning by nurturing future leaders.



Above all it's one
step closer to
reducing health
inequalities in
our communities

Understanding Reverse Mentoring



Principles of Reverse Mentoring



Understanding Perspectives

Reverse mentoring focuses on sharing perspectives rather than giving leadership advice or solving problems. It enriches leadership through fresh insights.

Power Dynamics Challenge

Mentors may feel intimidated by senior mentees, creating unique power imbalances that require careful management with respect and clear roles.

Psychological Safety Importance

Creating an environment where mentors feel safe to express insights without fear is essential for open, honest dialogue and trust-building.

Addressing Misconceptions

Clarifying what reverse mentoring is not and reviewing successful examples helps mentors navigate relationships and build trust effectively.

Understanding Perspectives



- You are not expected to have all the answers. Your role is to share your experiences and perspectives.
- This is **YOUR** experience. Whilst the mentee might be able to empathise, they will never have walked in your shoes.
- Share your feelings.
 - How did it make you feel?
 - Ask them how it would make them feel, if they were experiencing the same circumstances.

Power Dynamics



Intimidation factor: Mentors may feel nervous engaging with senior executives.



Cancelled meetings or lack of follow-up can reinforce perceived power imbalance.



Risk of tokenism if conversations aren't meaningful or sustained.

How to manage power imbalance

Clarify roles and boundaries
early in the relationship.
(Contracting)

Mutual respect and
openness: Frame sessions
as learning, not
performance evaluation.

Psychological safety: Create
space where mentors feel
their insights are valued and
can speak without fear of
negative consequences.

Psychological safety

- The belief that you can speak up without risk of punishment or humiliation.
- Without psychological safety, mentors may hold back insights, and the programme loses impact.



Psychological safety



- Ability to speak freely without being judged should be discussed at the contracting meeting.
- Mentors Can Challenge Safely if They Feel Unsafe:
- Pause and Reframe - If a comment feels dismissive or triggering, say: "I'd like to pause and revisit this later—I need a moment."
- **Use "I" Statements** – *"I felt uncomfortable when that was said. Can we explore why?"*
- **Redirect with Respect** - *"I appreciate your view—could we sit with my experience a bit longer?"*
- If behaviour breaches agreed norms, chat through with the programme lead or anyone in the OD & Wellbeing Team

Addressing Misconceptions

”Mentors give advice to help leaders become more successful”

Reality: Reverse mentoring is not about helping leaders climb the ladder.

It’s about sharing lived experiences of race and ethnicity, highlighting barriers, microaggressions, and cultural insights that influence organisational culture and inclusion.

Example phrase: *“I’m here to share what inclusion looks like from my perspective, not to advise on the steps you need to take”*



Addressing Misconceptions

“It’s one-way learning”

Reality: Both mentor and mentee gain. Mentors build confidence and visibility as advocates for equity; mentees gain deep understanding of racial dynamics and systemic bias—insights they can use to shape policy and leadership behaviour.

Example phrase: *“This is a two-way exchange—your openness helps me feel heard, and I’m hoping that my perspective helps you lead inclusively.”*



Addressing Misconceptions

“It’s informal and unstructured”

Reality: Successful programmes addressing race and ethnicity use clear objectives, matching criteria, and confidentiality agreements to create psychological safety. Without structure, conversations risk becoming superficial or tokenistic.

Example phrase: *“We’ll agree ground rules so you feel safe asking questions, and I feel safe sharing my experiences.”*



Core Skills for Mentors



Setting Expectations and Boundaries

Takes place during first “contracting” meeting. See handout for guide.

Structured Contracting Approach

Establish clear expectations, roles, meeting frequency, and duration at the start of mentoring.

Establish Purpose

Ask WHY the mentee volunteered for the programme and ask what their goals are.

Confidentiality and Trust

Highlight confidentiality as essential for building trust in mentoring relationships.

Defining Boundaries

Discuss appropriate boundaries to ensure mutual understanding and respect.

Checklist

Use the checklist handout during the first meeting to gain confidence.



Active Listening and Powerful Questions



Active Listening Techniques

Active listening means fully focusing on the speaker, acknowledging their views, and responding thoughtfully.

Be attentive. Stay in the moment.

Listen 'with fascination'



Using Powerful Questions

Open-ended questions encourage reflection and deeper conversations that reveal new insights

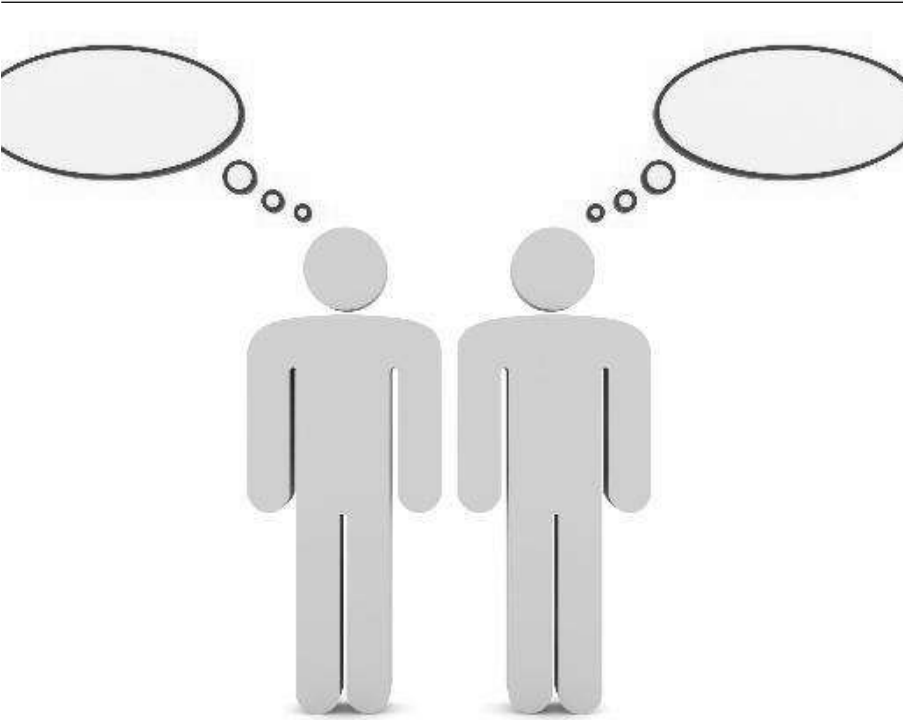
What would you like to get out of today's session? Why is that important to you? What's getting in the way at the moment? What would make it easier to get to your aim? Having heard my own experience, what lessons do you think you could apply? What support do you need for change to happen? Who can give this support?



Building Rapport and Trust

Establishing trust enables respectful, insightful communication that fosters meaningful change

Eye contact, open body language, mirroring and matching.



Managing Discomfort and Bias

Acknowledge Discomfort

Recognise feelings of discomfort without avoiding difficult conversations to foster open dialogue. Adopt 'Adult' ego state.

Use Curiosity and Non-Judgment

Explore differences with a curious mind while maintaining a non-judgmental stance for deeper understanding. "I'm sensing that what I said didn't land well...how could I have explained it differently?"

Manage Tense Moments

Learn techniques to respond effectively to tension and steer conversations toward constructive outcomes. "Where should we take this next to get closer to where you said that you wanted to be at the start of the session?"

Self-Awareness and Reflection

Encourage mentors to examine their own biases and assumptions through self-reflection for better mentorship. "From what we've discussed today, which parts have resonated most with you?"

Role Plays and Group Debrief

Practical Role Plays

Mentors practice real mentoring conversations through role plays to build skills like active listening and powerful questioning.

- Contracting Session
- First Real Session

Reflective Feedback

Participants reflect on their role play experiences and share insights, receiving constructive feedback from peers and facilitators.

Group Debrief Sessions

Group debriefs highlight challenges and successful strategies to reinforce key training takeaways and build confidence.

