

Preparing for Mentorship

Who's Who in the MentorAbility Experience?

Mentor:

That's you! The mentor can be an employer, manager, employee, or another professional with an interest in sharing work experience and insight.

Protégé

The mentee or job seeker. They may be exploring career options or actively looking for work.

Service Provider

The supported employment professional who facilitates and supports your mentorship experience. They may be a MentorAbility site partner or hub coordinator.

You're a MentorAbility Mentor! Now What?

We're glad to have you on board as a mentor with the MentorAbility program. We think you'll find this a rewarding experience, one that could have lasting impacts on you and your workplace.

Because MentorAbility mentorship happens in a single session, being prepared ensures maximum benefit and enjoyment, for both you and your protégé. This quick guide is designed to give you some ideas on how to prepare and what to expect.

Understand Your Role:

Your primary role is to use your knowledge and experience to advise and support a person experiencing disability who is interested in a career in your industry.

As a mentor, you play a key part in:

- Planning the MentorAbility experience
- Establishing a welcoming, professional relationship with the protégé, and
- Contributing to the protégé's personal and professional growth...

All while developing your own knowledge, awareness, and comfort in building a more inclusive workplace.



You will prepare for the mentoring experience with the support of a service provider (and, if relevant, your HR representative, manager, and/or employer). The mentorship should match the protégé's interests, your objectives, your strengths, and the resources available.

Consider your own objectives and expectations, and what you have the space and time to provide. Will this be on-site or virtual? A 1-hour meeting or a longer experience?

The mentorship could be any of the following:

- An informational or "practice" interview,
- Advice about career paths,
- A tour of the workplace/meeting employees,
- Job shadowing or observation, or
- A work based mentorship experience, in which the protégé performs tasks alongside an experienced staff member.

The protégé may or may not require considerations around physical or communications accessibility. If you have questions or need support at any time, your service provider is available.

Prepare For the Mentorship

If possible, share some information about your organization and yourself with the protégé before the meeting (your LinkedIn profile, resume, career, etc.).

Consider what information about your career would be valuable for someone hoping to work in the field:

- What was your education/career path?
- What do you do on a daily basis?
- How did you get your job?
- What struggles did you face along the way? Mistakes? Successes?
- What did you do when starting a new job to help you fit in or advance?
- What do you know now that you wish you knew when you were starting out?

Enjoy the MentorAbility Experience

You are ready for this! Here are a few tips to help set the tone for the day:

- Greet the protégé on arrival. Take a friendly, informal approach.
- Get to know each other. Be sure to direct your questions and answers to the protégé, even if the service provider is also present.
- Be encouraging, positive, and patient—just as you would with anyone looking to you for career advice!
- If possible, show the protégé around the workplace and introduce them to other staff who can speak to the different roles.
- Be an active listener, ask for opinions, and be open to what the protégé can teach you or share with you.
- Only make commitments that you can keep.
- Have fun! This can be a valuable, memorable experience for all parties.

At the end of the planned MentorAbility Experience, thank the protégé and ask any final questions you may have. The protégé understands that this is a mentorship opportunity and will not expect any formal employment offers.

What Happens Next?

Whether the completion of your MentorAbility session is the end of your relationship with the protégé or just the beginning, we suggest taking time to reflect on the experience. What did you learn? What can you do to make your workplace more inclusive?

Reach out to the service provider who facilitated your mentoring experience! The MentorAbility network is available before, during, and after the mentorship to support you. We have a wealth of resources and insight to share as we all work together for a more inclusive and accessible Canada. Get in touch!

<https://supportedemployment.ca/mentorability/provincial-hubs/>