



Minnesota WIC New Mentor Handbook

10-steps for New Mentors



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WIC Mentor Training

Introduction

“Treat a man as he is and he will remain as he is. Treat a man as he can and should be and he will become as he can and should be.”

–Goethe

Welcome new mentors. This handbook was designed to help new mentors learn the skills necessary to support and mentor their fellow staff members. Included in this handbook are ten steps to help new mentors learn more about the mentoring process. In addition to an overview of the ten steps, other resources are included that will be useful for both new and experienced mentors.

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is someone who uses their experience and skills to help guide others, empowering them to grow and learn. Ongoing mentoring is vital for helping staff members incorporate new skills learned in training into their daily practice. Mentors create an environment in which open communication and positive support help staff members at all levels develop participant-centered (PCS) skills.

What are the common duties of mentors?

Although each WIC agency will determine the type of mentoring and training system that works best for them, some of the common duties of mentors will include:

- Observing and mentoring staff members as they work to incorporate new skills
- Identifying resources and training needed to promote skill development
- Providing diverse learning opportunities to accommodate different learning styles
- Facilitating discussions to promote learning and exploring
- Exploring ways to recognize and celebrate staff achievement on an ongoing basis

Several of the steps that follow will focus on the first of these duties – conducting individual mentoring sessions. Along with training, individual mentoring is a powerful tool to help staff grow and integrate participant-centered skills into their daily practice.

New Mentor Training Checklist

Below are the tasks to be completed by new mentors. Tasks should be completed under the guidance of an advisor who is a current mentor, supervisor, or WIC coordinator. As tasks are completed, the new mentor will periodically check in with this advisor to discuss progress. The tasks listed below are designed to be completed in approximately 3-4 weeks but may be spread out over more time or completed in less time depending on the needs of the agency.

The sections that follow contain a more comprehensive description of all tasks along with any necessary forms or documents. Steps are designed to follow a logical progression but the order of steps may be modified as necessary. The advisor will assist the new mentor with working through the Training Checklist

| New Mentor Training Checklist | |
|--|---|
| TASK | Completed (✓) or NA (not applicable) |
| 1. Watch <i>Guidance for New WIC Mentors</i> presentation | |
| 2. Watch <i>Providing Feedback</i> video and complete exercise | |
| 3. Complete three observations using the observation tool | |
| 4. Conduct an interview with a current mentor | |
| 5. Watch a mentoring session (if possible) | |
| 6. Review resources on the MN WIC PCS website for Mentors | |
| 7. Conduct two mentoring practice sessions | |
| 8. Create/modify an agency mentoring plan | |
| 9. Ask for feedback | |
| 10. Practice, Practice, Practice | |

Task 2: Providing Feedback Video

Watching a Mentor in Action

As part of a PCS project initiated by WIC's Western Region, a professional mentor was filmed conducting a mentoring session with a WIC staff member. For this task, watch this 14 minute video and answer the questions below.

[Providing Feedback - WIC Participant-Centered Education \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rdl4rpzsT0&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rdl4rpzsT0&feature=youtu.be)



As you watch this video, listen for PCS skills used by the mentor and note how the mentee responds. Write down strategies and questions used by the mentor that you could use in your mentoring sessions.

Exercise

After completing the video answer the three questions below to complete the task. Discuss your responses with your advisor.

- **Question 1:** What were some of the PCS skills used by the mentor?

- **Question 2:** Which part(s) of the mentoring discussion do you feel were most important for the mentee's growth?

- **Question 3:** What are some things you might do differently as a mentor?

Task 3: Observations

During this task, you will complete three observations. For this task, you will simply observe without conducting a mentoring session after the observation. This is an opportunity to watch the interaction and observe the process without having to focus on the mentoring discussion quite yet.

If possible, observe multiple WIC staff members. This will allow you to observe different styles and approaches to counseling. Although certifications or re-certifications are ideal due to the amount of time spent with the participants, Additional Education and High Risk follow-up sessions are another great opportunity to observe nutrition counseling. If your focus will be clerical staff, it may be more effective to observe for a certain length of time, for example 30 to 60 minutes, rather than a particular number of appointments.

Use the guide on the following page during the observation to note effective PCS strategies and skills. You may observe individual as well as group education sessions. After the observations are complete, without disclosing names, discuss your overall impressions and insights with your advisor.

Some tips to remember for observations:

- Ask permission of staff member prior to the observation. Explain that you will just be watching and taking some notes currently but will not be offering any feedback.
- Ask permission of the participant before conducting the observation.
- Avoid intervening during the appointment if possible.
- After the session, thank the staff for their participation. If the staff member asks for feedback, limit the conversation to one or two affirmations or open-ended questions.

Observer Coding Sheet: OARS

Listen for examples of the counselor's use of each of the OARS responses. As you hear them, place a hash (/) mark in the appropriate row. Make notes for examples of each type of OARS response that you heard.

| Counselor Response | Count (hash marks) | Good Example(s) |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------|
| O pen Questions | | |
| A ffirmations | | |
| R eflections | | |
| S ummaries | | |
| Other Goal setting Providing information | | |

Task 4: Mentor Interview

Conducting a Mentor Interview

For this task, conduct a short interview with a current WIC mentor (approximately 15-30 minutes). If there is not a current mentor within your agency to interview, contact your Regional Consultant who can assist with arranging a short mentor interview.

The goal of the interview is to ask current mentors for advice and guidance. Although each mentor will develop their own personal style of mentoring, listening and learning from other successful mentors will help you to build your own skills.

Below are some suggestions for possible questions to ask during the interview. These are suggestions only. Questions will be determined by the needs and interests of each new mentor. In task one, you answered the question “What are your main concerns around being a mentor?” This interview is a chance to share your concerns with another mentor and to receive support and guidance. Meet with your advisor to give them a short summary and highlights from the interview.

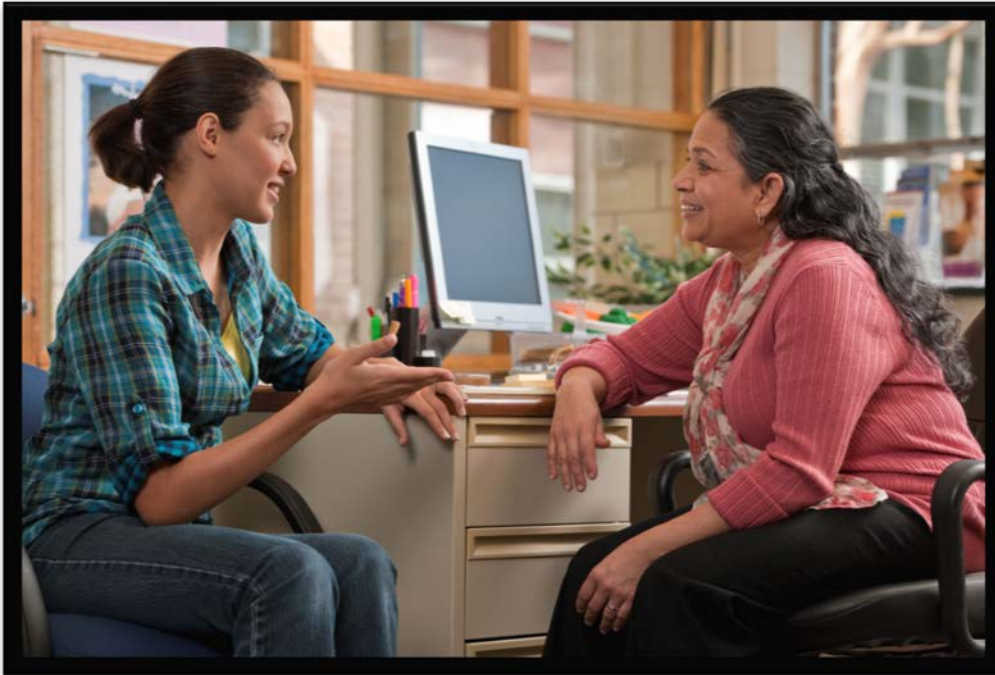
Possible Interview Questions

- What are the most important things to remember when conducting a mentoring session?
- What was your biggest challenge when you were first learning how to mentor? How did you overcome it?
- What successes have you had in mentoring?
- What were your biggest surprises about mentoring?
- What is the best way to help staff open up and talk after the WIC appointment?
- What are some of the typical challenges you see in terms of WIC staff and PCS skills? In what areas do you feel staff need more training?
- If you could only give one piece of advice to a new mentor, what would it be?
- What do you think are the most important skills for new mentors to work on?

Task 5: Watch a Mentoring Session

If there is another mentor within your agency, ask their permission to watch them conduct one or more mentoring sessions. If there is not a current mentor within your agency, consider contacting agencies in the area to see if their mentor is available and schedule a short visit. Your Regional Consultant can assist with this.

During the session, both of you will watch the interaction. After the session, while the mentor is having a discussion with the mentee, note elements of their style or strategies they use that would fit with your style. Take note of any questions that you have for the mentor.



After the mentoring session, take time to meet one-on-one with the mentor and ask any questions you have about the mentoring session. This is also an opportunity to ask them for any advice they have around mentoring. After the interview, meet with your advisor to give them a short summary and highlights from the mentoring session.

Task 6: Explore the Participant Centered Services section of the MN WIC Website

The Minnesota Department of Health, WIC website includes a Participant Centered Services section. This section is a centralized site for all PCS resources, including mentor documents. See <http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/training/pcs/index.html>.

In this section you will find:

- Minnesota WIC Nutrition Assessment Guidance and Materials
- PCS Skills Training Materials and Resources
- PCS Resources from Other States
- Projective Assessment Techniques
- Mentor Training Materials and Resources

For this task, take some time and explore the site and what documents and resources are available. Make note of any resources or activities you would like to use with staff in the future.

Task 7: Conduct Two Mentoring Practice Sessions

For this task, conduct two practice mentoring sessions.* An ideal mentee for this activity would be another mentor, supervisor or coordinator who also does direct service or a fellow WIC staff member that you feel will be supportive while you practice your new skills.

After each session is completed, spend approximately 8-15 minutes having a mentoring discussion with the mentee. For documenting notes during the session, use one of the observation sheets included here or feel free to create your own.

For more information on the mentoring discussion, review the presentation, *Guidance for New WIC Mentors* and consult the *Tips for WIC Mentors* handout.

Some important tips to remember:

- Before the session, ask the mentee what they would like you to listen for or focus on during the observation. This will help guide the mentoring discussion.
- Remember to start with evoking the mentee's own reflections about the session. Listen for any change talk or challenges they express.
- Let the conversation evolve naturally. Do not worry about what you will say in advance. Instead, use active listening to guide the conversation to where it needs to be.
- You do not need to share all of your observations. Focus the conversation on their priority areas and interests. If they expressed an area they are working on prior to the session, focus on that topic.
- Do not worry about the length of the session. Some conversations may be shorter and others may be longer. Short conversations can be just as effective as longer ones to help mentees grow.

After the mentoring session is complete, ask the mentee for feedback. Remain open and remember that any feedback will serve to strengthen future mentoring conversations.

Meet with your advisor to give them a short summary and highlights from your mentoring sessions.

* If your focus will be clerical staff, it may be more effective to observe for a certain length of time, for example 30-60 minutes, rather than a particular number of appointments.

COUNSELING OBSERVATION GUIDE: Sample 1

Agency _____

Date _____

Staff Name _____

Language _____

| Some Skills to Listen and Watch for: | Observations: Specific examples you heard or observed |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opens the Appointment/ Sets agenda • Affirms participant • Asks Some Open-Ended Questions • Completes most of assessment before educating • Allows time for participant to talk • Summarizes what participant has said • Works with the participant for next steps/plan • “Spirit” of PCS: shows genuine warmth; respectful; accepting and non-judgmental; avoids “should”, “need to” • Other? | |

An approach to providing positive feedback:

*Adapted from the Oregon WIC Program

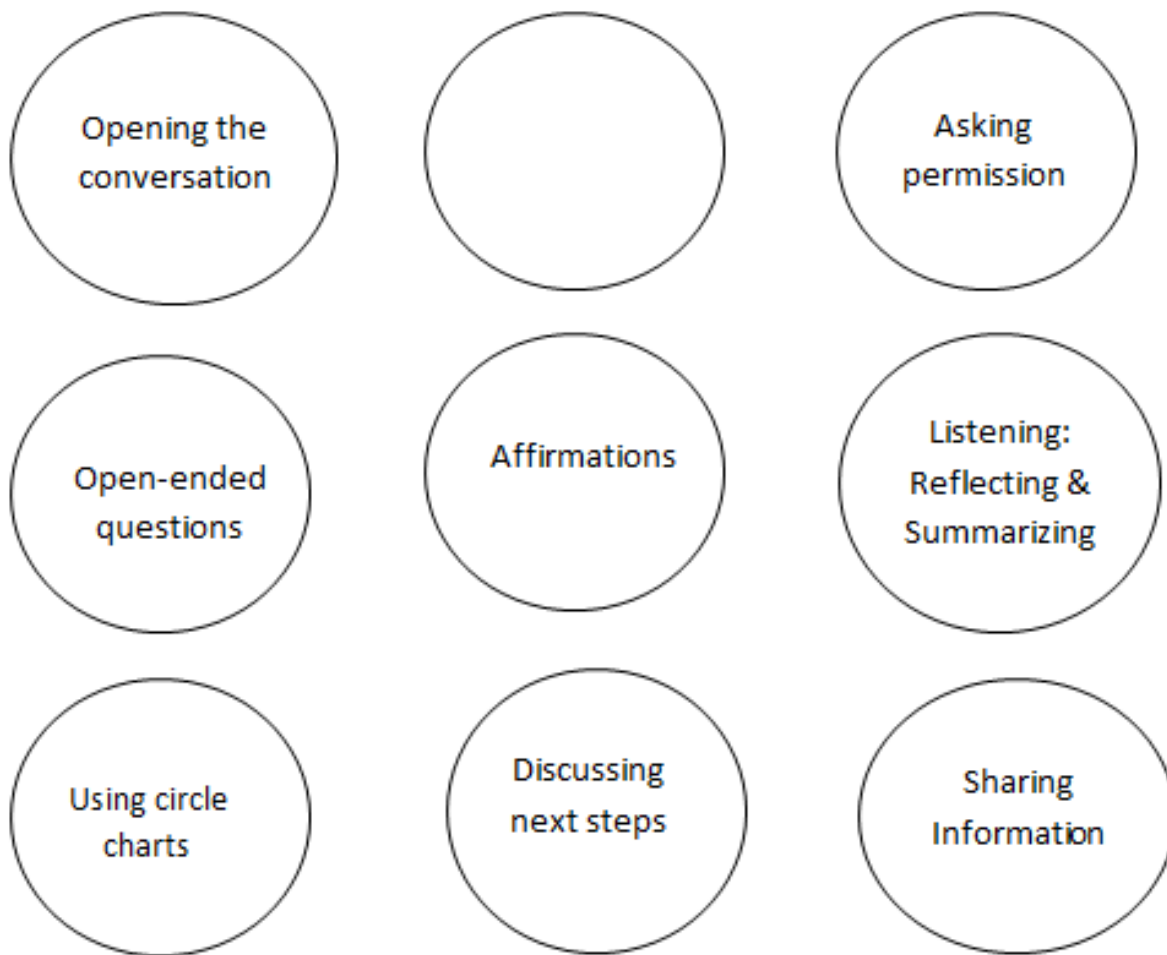
- How do you feel the appointment/visit went?
- What do you think went well?
- What might you do differently next time?
- Here are some examples of things I heard you say.
- Use as an opportunity to affirm skills staff are already using.

COUNSELING OBSERVATION GUIDE: Sample 1

Examples of what each one might sound like in a real WIC visit:

| Counseling Skill | Examples |
|--|---|
| <p>Opens appointment/set agenda: Certifier starts off appointment by greeting the participant, telling participant his/her name, setting the agenda and taking steps to build rapport with participant.</p> | <p>Hi – My name is Sally. Today we are going to check Joey’s height, weight and iron and then go over some health questions. Is that all right with you?</p> <p>Right off the bat, what are any questions or concerns that you have that you want to make sure we talk about today?</p> |
| <p>Affirms participant: Certifier seizes appropriate opportunities to make (genuine) affirming statements. (probably the single most important skill to master!)</p> | <p>That’s wonderful that you recognize that!</p> <p>You’re already a step ahead of the game!</p> <p>You have lots of great questions!</p> <p>What a great idea!</p> <p>Look how well he’s growing with your breast milk!</p> |
| <p>Uses open-ended questions: Certifier uses open-ended, non-judgmental questions to engage participant.</p> | <p>So how’s your pregnancy going?</p> <p>How’s she adjusting to that?</p> <p>How do you feel about how her weight is now?</p> <p>What are some of Araceli’s favorite foods?</p> |
| <p>Completes the assessment before educating: Certifier waits to offer advice/education until he/she has completed the majority of assessment</p> | <p>You are concerned that Brittany is still on the bottle. What are some things you’ve already tried around weaning?</p> <p>So your mother says that what you are eating is making baby fussy when he breastfeeds – what else have family or friends said about your breastfeeding Roshana?</p> |
| <p>Allows time for participant to talk: The “talk time” is balanced between the certifier and the participant</p> | <p>[CPA does not dominate the conversation. The participant does 50% or more of the talking during the visit.]</p> |
| <p>Summarizes: Certifier summarizes what has been said and asks for feedback to see if she has correctly identified participant’s concerns.</p> | <p>So Linn, you would like to breastfeed Pri until she is 6 months old, although you are worried that you don’t have enough milk and your mother is pressuring you to give formula. Did I miss anything?</p> |
| <p>Works with participant for next steps: Certifier works with the participant to determine next steps, plan (if ready), or next nutrition education opportunity.</p> | <p>It sounds like you would really like your family to eat more vegetables, and you are looking for new ideas. We have a Fabulous Veggies class in 2 months that has lots of great ideas from other moms – would that be something you’d be interested in going to?</p> |
| <p>“Spirit” of PCS: warmth, respect, acceptance, non-judgmental</p> | <p>[CPA accepts participant for who they are and what their interpretation of the world may be, even if she doesn’t agree with it; avoids saying “you should, you need to”; shows genuine warmth</p> |

Circle Chart for Observations and Coaching: Sample 2



How ready are you to consider making a change in _____?

0----1----2----3----4----5----6----7----8----9----10

| | |
|---|---|
| + | - |
|---|---|

Next Step:

Circle Chart for Observations and Coaching: Sample 2

Identify next steps using Circle Chart/Options Tool

- Show staff person the Circle Chart for Mentors
 - Explain the purpose of the chart
 - Highlight strengths
 - Give suggestions for areas to work on
“This chart shows different skills that staff can work on to strengthen their interactions with clients. Based on today’s observation, it looks like ____, ____, and ____ are going well. A few areas you might work on are _____. Or, you might have a different area you’d like to work on. What are your thoughts?”
- Encourage staff person to select one skill/strategy/behavior to work on and ask them to elaborate:
 - Why did you pick _____?
 - How might you benefit from making this change/working on this skill?
 - What ideas do you have for making this change?
 - What can we discuss today that could help you feel prepared to incorporate _____ into your client visits?
- Summarize next steps and express confidence in their counseling abilities. Consider using the STEP model:
 - Summarize** - Summarize the important points from your discussion, highlight ‘change talk’
 - Thank** - Thank them for being willing to talk to you, for giving you some good ideas and for being willing to share
 - Express confidence** - There is power in saying, “I know you’ll succeed”
 - Praise** - Affirm/compliment them

Offer future support

- Assess future needs: *“What kind of support could you use in the future? How can I help?”*
- Arrange follow-up, if appropriate

Show appreciation for your staff’s willingness to being observed and receiving feedback

“Thank you so much for letting me sit in on your visit. I learn so much from doing these observations. I appreciate the time you’ve given me today.”

Larson Sturtevant Consulting, LLC

PCS Observation Form for Mentors - Sample 3

PCS Skills

Opening the conversation

Open ended questions

Active listening

Reflective listening

Affirmations

Silence

Eliciting participant ideas first

Asking permissions

Closing the conversation

Using Ed Materials effectively

Time Started _____

Time Finished _____

Strengths/Opportunities/Examples:

Tips for Mentors

Prior to the appointment:

1. Explain the process
2. Ask about the skills they are working on

After the Appointment:

Elicit self-reflection

- What did they think went well?
 - What could have gone better?
 - Where do they need more support?
1. **Focus on staff needs and interests**
 2. **Limit feedback**
 - Use examples, specifics
 - Affirm skills they are already using
 - Use observations to support discussion
 - Brainstorm challenges
 3. **Encourage goal setting**
 4. **Summarize**
 - Establish next steps
 - Offer support

Task 8: Create/Modify Agency Mentoring Plan

Introduction

In this task, you will document your plan for mentoring. Having a written plan in place will help to ensure that mentoring takes place on a regular basis and becomes a sustainable part of your agency's staff development plan.

It is possible that your agency already has a mentoring structure and plan in place. If this is the case, for this task, review the plan and make any adjustments necessary to fit with your schedule.

If there is not a current plan in place, one will need to be created. If there are other mentors within the agency, work together to create the plan. Additionally, it is important to work in conjunction with agency management on the plan. Creating a mentoring plan can be as simple as writing down what you plan to do and when you plan to do it. Although you can create your own, an example of a planning document is provided on page 20. You may use this template to document your plan.

Mentoring plans will vary considerably from agency to agency depending on staff size, number of mentors, schedules and other factors. If your agency has multiple sites, think about what would work best at each site. You may need individual plans for each site within the agency.

Mentoring Frequency

As a first step, determine how often staff members will be mentored and who will do the mentoring. If there is only one mentor within the agency, they may need to dedicate more hours per month to mentoring. Think about how you would handle any challenges that may arise and write down a plan for approaching the challenges. Your plan should consider new staff members who will need more mentoring when they are first starting out.

Additional Activities

Next, determine what other activities would help your staff develop their PCS skills. On page 21 you will see some examples of other staff development activities. Choose one or more activities that would be appropriate for your staff to support ongoing learning and skills development. Make sure to limit activities to what will be achievable within your agency.

Mentor Meetings

If there are several mentors within an agency, the mentoring plan should specify how often the mentors will come together and meet. This could be quarterly for an agency with a well-established mentoring program or more frequently for an agency with a new mentoring system. These meetings are a time when mentors can share successes and challenges, discuss any common themes observed across staff and consider the need for additional training. It is also a time to plan additional staff development events such as activities at staff meetings. If you are the only mentor, this could be a meeting with your supervisor or WIC coordinator to inform them about the progress of mentoring and any successes or challenges you have had.

Accountability

In addition to having a plan, being accountable is another way to ensure that mentoring sessions take place. After coordinating this plan with your supervisor, coordinator or other mentors, plan how you will document the number and timing of mentoring sessions. Note this in your plan as well. This element of accountability will help to ensure that mentoring is sustainable and takes place on a regular basis.

Making the plan

On page 22, there is a sample of a mentoring plan from a fictional WIC agency. This is an example for illustration purposes only. Your plan may look quite different. Agencies will vary in the number of mentors they have. Some larger sites or agencies might have several mentors and have a very different plan from a very small agency. Some agencies choose to have dedicated mentors for administrative or peer counselor staff and others do not. In some agencies, the mentor may also be a supervisor or coordinator and in other agencies they may be a member of the staff that was selected for this additional role. If your site provides group education, your plan will include mentoring facilitators of group sessions as well. In this example, there are three mentors within the agency and each will dedicate approximately eight hours per month to mentoring. Time spent on mentoring may vary depending on agency resources and staffing issues.

Although planning is vital to the success of a mentoring program, it is also important to be flexible. Some staff may need more support or mentoring than is planned. Additional circumstances may arise and the plan may need to be adjusted. It is helpful to review the plan at least yearly to assess for any needed modifications.

Meet with your advisor to review the plan and make any necessary adjustments.

Mentoring Plan

Agency Name _____ Date _____

Mentor Name(s) _____

I Mentoring Sessions

Current Staff Members:

How often will staff receive mentoring? _____

Describe the process (may differ across sites and by staff role) – use additional sheets as necessary

Special consideration for new staff members:

How often will staff receive mentoring? _____

Describe the process

II Other Staff Development Activities

Describe other activities that will take place (specify frequency and content)

III Mentor Team Meetings

Describe when mentoring team meetings will take place

Staff Development Ideas for WIC Mentors

- Conduct a short activity at staff meetings around PCS skills or strategies.
- Facilitate a short discussion on a PCS topic at staff meetings.
- Send emails with staff development resources to interested staff.
- Read books around counseling or other PCS related topics. Create a journal club to discuss.
- Audiotape or videotape a WIC session. Listen or watch the tape and discuss the session with mentee.
- Add a PCS goal to the yearly staff evaluation process.
- Initiate 5-minute morning “huddles” to discuss daily news and encourage teamwork.
- Send weekly or monthly emails with best practices or short counseling tips.
- Share trends from observations at staff meetings (strengths and areas to strengthen).
- Set a shared weekly or monthly goal that focuses on a particular skill or PCS topic (e.g. goal setting). At the end of the time period, initiate a discussion about successes, challenges, and tips.
- Collect feedback through comment boxes and staff and participant surveys and discuss at staff meetings.
- Collect challenging scenarios from staff and role play or discuss alternatives approaches.
- Initiate periodic peer-to-peer observations.
- Conduct a daily journal writing activity for staff to note successes, challenges, and tips. Have staff journal daily for a month. Facilitate a discussion at a staff meeting. Ask staff to come prepared to share their most important observations, challenges and tips.
- Highlight one example of a successful participant interaction from a mentoring session (with permission from the staff member). Highlight strategies, skills or best practices that led to the success.
- Identify resources and training opportunities (online trainings, videos) and keep a folder for interested staff.
- Encourage activities to promote wellness behaviors and role modeling among staff such as activity challenges and healthy cooking demonstrations using WIC foods.
- Lead team building activities.
- Ask a different nutrition staff each month to present a 10-15 minute talk on a common nutrition topic encountered at WIC along with 2-5 easy tips or suggestions that can be provided to participants.
- Utilize a self-assessment questionnaire for staff to identify where they may need additional practice or support.

Example of a Mentoring Plan

Background about site:

South Site (main site):

8 CPAs (including two mentors; one mentor is also the BF Coordinator) // 2 breastfeeding peer counselors // 3 administrative staff // 1 WIC Coordinator

North Site:

4 CPAs (including mentor who is also the site supervisor) // 1 administrative staff

Mentoring Plan - **SAMPLE**

Agency Name _____ **Pretend WIC** _____ **Date** _____ **3/15/2016** _____

Mentor(s) Name **3 Mentors: Molly Mentor, Wendy WIC, Patti PCS**

I **Mentoring Sessions**

Current Staff Members:

How often will staff receive mentoring? **One time per month (minimum)**

Describe the process:

- **South Site:**
 - Wendy and Patti will each mentor for a total of 7 hours per month. Each will have a team of 5 staff to mentor. Wendy's team will include 3 CPA's and 2 Peer Counselors. Patti's team will include 3 CPA's and 2 administrative staff.
 - Wendy will mentor on the first and third Tuesday morning of each month. On the first Tuesday, Wendy will mentor CPAs. She will observe 1-2 appointments per CPA. On the third Tuesday morning of the month, Wendy will sit with the Peer Counselors. She will listen in on calls and observe any in person counseling. She will mentor each peer counselor individually and have a joint conversation to discuss any common themes, tips or best practices.
 - Patti will mentor on the second and fourth Thursday mornings of each month. On the first Thursday morning, Patti will mentor CPAs. She will observe 1-2 appointments per CPA. On the fourth Thursday morning, Patti will sit with the administrative staff, observe interactions, and provide mentoring.
 - Patti and Wendy will mentor each other at least one time per month.

- Because there is sufficient staff coverage at the South Site, clinic scheduling will not be adjusted to accommodate the mentoring sessions. (this will be modified if long wait times are experienced)
- If scheduling conflicts arise, mentoring will be rescheduled during the month.
- North Site:
 - Molly will mentor staff on the 2nd Wednesday morning of each month (4 hours total). On this morning, scheduling will be reduced slightly to accommodate the process. The goal will be to observe 1-2 appointments per staff member. If a scheduling conflict arises, mentoring at the North Site will be moved to the third Wednesday of the month.

New staff members:

How often will staff receive mentoring? After initial training is complete and staff members are functioning independently, new staff will receive two mentoring sessions a month for three months. Additionally, during this time period, mentees will observe their mentor at least 2 times per month. After this time period, mentors will choose to extend the intensive mentoring period or move the staff to the standard mentoring plan noted above.

Describe the process: See above

II Supportive Staff Development Activities

Describe other activities that will take place (specify frequency and content)

- At each monthly staff meeting, mentors will facilitate a 15-20 minute PCS activity. PCS activities may include: skill building exercises, facilitated discussions around a PCS topic, or role plays.

III Mentor Team Meetings

Describe when mentoring team meetings will take place

- **Quarterly mentoring meetings.** During meetings, mentors will discuss common themes from observations, brainstorm any challenges and plan the activity or discussion for upcoming staff meetings. Each mentor will report on the number of mentoring sessions completed for the previous quarter.

See attached for a calendar with mentoring activities.

Sample Mentoring Calendar

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------------|---|--|--|--|--------|
| Week 1 | | 8:30-12:30 Nutrition staff with Wendy | | | |
| Week 2 | | | 8:30-12:30 Mentoring at North site with Molly | 8:30-12:30 Nutrition staff with Patti | |
| Week 3 | | 9:00-12:00 Peer counseling staff with Wendy | | | |
| Week 4 | 9:00-10:00 Mentoring meeting at South Site (Quarterly) | | | 9:00-12:00 Admin staff with Patti | |

Task 9: Ask for Feedback

After practicing your mentoring, it is time to ask your advisor to watch a mentoring session and offer you feedback and suggestions. Your advisor may use the attached competency-based rating scale to discuss areas of strengths and challenges. This guide will help your advisor offer suggestions to help improve your mentoring.

Review this guide prior to the observation with your advisor. The skill development scale describes how mentors might progress as they practice and grow in their mentoring skills. These indicators may help determine when you may need more training or ongoing practice in a particular area. The goal is to develop to the point where you consistently use the skills in the last column entitled “demonstrates competence.” This may not happen immediately but will happen eventually as you practice and improve your skills. Welcome any feedback or suggestions provided by your advisor.

Suggestion: It may be helpful to complete a self-assessment before your meeting with your advisor. See page 29 for an example of an assessment that will explore your beliefs and confidence around mentoring. Share this with your advisor and discuss any challenges or areas where you may need to focus more energy.

Optional Task: If you are the only mentor in your agency or feel you would benefit from additional coaching, contact your Regional Consultant to schedule a coaching visit. During the visit, share your agency’s mentoring plan and ask for any feedback or suggestions.

Mentoring – Skill Development Scale

| ACTION | Training needed in this area | Ongoing practice and mentoring needed | Demonstrates Competence | Comments / Suggestions |
|--|--|--|--|------------------------|
| Elicits self-reflection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not elicit self-reflection from mentee • Mentor begins the discussion by providing feedback • Discussion is focused on mentors feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asks few open-ended questions • Mentor does the majority of talking and providing feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses open-ended questions to elicit self reflection • Actively listens to mentee • Expands and probes further on any change talk • Talk time between mentor and mentee is balanced | |
| Employs affirmations to evoke confidence and growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not use affirmations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses simple affirmations not tied to specific skills • Uses numerous affirmations with little prioritization or self-reflection from mentee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses complex affirmation tying skill use to outcomes • Limits affirmations to a few priority areas | |
| Tailors mentoring discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring discussion is focused on the mentors thoughts and comments • Discussion does not follow a logical flow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spends some time on the needs and interests of the mentee but this is not the focus of the discussion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailors mentoring discussion to the needs and interests of the mentee in the spirit of PCS • Uses specific examples from the WIC session to focus the discussion • Discussion follows a logical flow | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Uses reflective listening to encourage change talk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not use reflective listening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses some reflective listening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses reflective listening effectively to encourage and build motivation around skill use | |
| Limits feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides feedback in many areas without prioritizing • Feedback is critical in nature • Mentor misses signs of resistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits feedback to a few areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions, tips and ideas are incorporated into the discussion effectively as needed • Mentor asks permission before sharing unsolicited advice • Mentor reacts to any signs of resistance | |
| Uses goal setting strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No discussion around goal setting • Mentee is not involved in a discussion about skill development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals for mentee primarily determined or suggested by the mentor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentee engaged in a discussion around goals • Mentor and mentee work together to explore strategies and brainstorm challenges • Goals determined by mentee | |
| Summarizes session and plans next steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not summarize session • Does not discuss next steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizes session • Asks about next steps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses summaries effectively to reinforce motivation and action items • Asks about next steps • Elicits additional support needed • Sets time for next mentoring session • Mentor expresses confidence in mentee | |

Training and Skill Development: Self-Assessment Checklist

For the following statements, please indicate if you disagree, are neutral (neither agree nor disagree), or agree.

| Features/Indicators | Circle One | Additional Comments |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. I understand the purpose of mentoring. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 2. I believe that mentoring is an effective way to encourage skill development. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 3. I am confident in my mentoring skills. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 4. I elicit self-reflection from the participant before sharing my feedback. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 5. I can identify change talk in most mentoring discussions. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 6. I encourage my mentees to do much of the talking and exploring during the mentoring conversations | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 7. I focus the mentoring session on areas of importance for the participant. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 8. There is a written mentoring plan in place for my agency. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 9. I have a plan for when I will conduct mentoring sessions. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 10. I use trends and feedback from mentoring to plan other staff development activities. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 11. I continue to work on developing my own participant-centered counseling skills. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |
| 12. I value my role as a mentor. | Disagree/Neutral/Agree | |

Task 10: Practice, Practice, Practice

The final task for new mentors is to continue to practice regularly. Like counseling, mentoring is a skill that will grow and develop over time. A benefit of mentoring is that you are able to get immediate feedback from the person you are mentoring. Over time you may see your conversations becoming more productive with mentees sharing more and reflecting on their successes and challenges. Staff members will also get increasingly comfortable with mentoring which will help facilitate the process.

You will find a mentoring style and approach that works best for you. Feel free to experiment with different strategies. As you try different things, it may be helpful to keep a journal. You can note strategies or questions that were successful and those that were not. You may find that one approach may work better with one person while someone else needs quite a different approach. Continuing to try new things will improve your overall mentoring skill set.

Just as you learn from your successes, you learn from your mistakes as well. Challenges in mentoring can lead you to make adjustments and course corrections that will improve your mentoring skills. Watch for signs from the mentee that indicate a change in approach is needed.

In the WIC setting, it is common for barriers to arise such as staffing shortages. During these times it may be difficult to mentor as frequently as planned. If possible, do not discontinue mentoring entirely but instead scale it back. Even one or two sessions per month will keep your mentoring skills intact.

List of Resources for Mentors

Mentoring Resources

Book: *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen M. R. Covey. The author discusses the importance of establishing trust and how to achieve it.

Book: *A Game Plan for Life: the Power of Mentoring*, John Wooden and Don Yaeger. An inspirational guide to the power of mentoring.

Website: [Mentoring Works Articles \(http://mentoring-works.com/articles/\)](http://mentoring-works.com/articles/). In this website from the professional mentor Ann Rolfe, there are several articles about mentoring under the *Resources* tab.

Oregon WIC Listens: The Oregon WIC Program has several documents for mentors on the following website:

<https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/wic/Pages/orwl.aspx#support>

Staff Training Resources

WIC Services Toolkit: A collection of 16 short staff training modules. Each training focuses on a different topic and can be completed in approximately 30-40 minutes.

Order a copy of the DVD from the WICWorks website:

https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/wicworks//Sharing_Center/gallery/staff2.html#tool

Nevada WIC Cares: At the bottom of the website below are training resources for WIC mentors: A collection of 11 modules covers a variety of counseling topics with exercises and facilitated discussions for staff. <http://nevadawic.org/wic-staff/nv-wic-c-a-r-e-s/>

Oregon WIC Listens: The following web page from the Oregon WIC Program contains many resources and training materials to help staff adopt participant-centered services.

<https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/wic/Pages/orwl.aspx>

Washington WIC Connects: The following web page from the Washington WIC Program contains several short 20-30 minutes activities for staff along with additional resources to help staff members build their participant-centered skills.

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/PublicHealthSystemResourcesandServices/LocalHealthResourcesandTools/WIC/Training/WICConnects>

Videos/audio-recordings

The behavioral science guys: The following website contains several videos relevant for participant-centered counselling and ideal for staff meeting discussions. These videos are also available on YouTube. <http://www.crucialskills.com/category/bs-guys/>

Brené Brown: On the following website, there is a short video on empathy that is well-suited for a staff meeting discussion. <http://brenebrown.com/>