

Mentorship is the influence, guidance, or direction given by a mentor.^[1] In an organizational setting, a mentor influences the personal and professional growth of a mentee. Most traditional mentorships involve having senior employees mentor more junior employees, but mentors do not necessarily have to be more senior than the people they mentor. What matters is that mentors have experience that others can learn from.^[2]

Interaction with an expert may also be necessary to gain proficiency with cultural tools.^[3] Mentorship experience and relationship structure affect the "amount of psychosocial support, career guidance, role modeling and communication that occurs in the mentoring relationships in which the protégés and mentors engaged".^[4]

The person receiving mentorship may be referred to as a *protégé* (male), a *protégée* (female), an **apprentice**, a learner or, in the 2000s, a mentee. Mentoring is a process that always involves communication and is relationship-based, but its precise definition is elusive,^[5] with more than 50 definitions currently in use,^[6] such as:

Mentoring is a process for the informal transmission of knowledge, **social capital**, and the psychosocial support perceived by the recipient as relevant to work, career, or professional development; mentoring entails informal communication, usually face-to-face and during a sustained period of time, between a person who is perceived to have greater relevant knowledge, wisdom, or experience (the mentor) and a person who is perceived to have less (the protégé).^[7]