

MENTORSHIP THROUGH L.E.A.D.S.

1.1 HISTORY OF MENTORSHIP

As a training and development tool, mentoring is not new. It has its origins in Homer's epic poem, The Odyssey. Odysseus entrusted the education of his son Telemachus to his trusted friend and counsellor, Mentor. The foresight of Odysseus using an elder, experienced person to guide and train an inexperienced person has not been lost throughout history and today, more and more, it is seen as an essential tool to assist the newcomer upon his or her entry into a profession.

1.2 MENTORSHIP

Mentorship is defined as the training of younger, less knowledgeable persons by those older and more experienced. A mentor is defined as a trusted and experienced counsellor who influences the career development of a protégé in a helping environment, promoting both personal and professional development.

1.3 MENTORING FOR L.E.A.D.S. MEMBERS

Mentorship can occur in many ways. Forms of mentorship that are available through L.E.A.D.S. include:

- Collective mentoring
- Area or issue specific support
- Regional mentoring
- Optional mentoring opportunities arranged through the L.E.A.D.S. office

1.4 IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

The topic and notion of mentoring has emerged as we have recognized the increasing need for educators to pay close attention to the wealth of knowledge they possess and are capable of contributing to systems and others.

Such sharing is both necessary and beneficial especially given feelings of isolation that new members can experience, and that some new members have limited, if any, central office experience.

Mentorship may be seen as a two-way path of learning and sharing, but is often set up with an expert or experienced colleague guiding a "new comer".

1.5 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT AND BENEFITS

All new members to L.E.A.D.S. and any experienced members who feel that they could contribute to the professional growth of a colleague should participate. The process must be intentional in that both parties must want to be involved in growth and development in the profession.

The mentee should experience gains in self-awareness, confidence and management competence as well as an increased understanding of what the position entails.

Mentors gain the satisfaction of positively influencing the career of a junior colleague. The process also provides mentors the opportunity to sharpen their own skills and thinking.

1.6 THE MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIP

Some important considerations and practical suggestions to enhance a mentor-mentee relationship:

- Trust must be established
- Expectations should be developed
- The approach should be flexible
- A developmental relationship is important
- Mentors should hone their support and assistance strategies

1.7 BECOMING INVOLVED

The personnel in the L.E.A.D.S. office will facilitate the formation of mentorships by collecting the names of individuals who are willing to serve as mentors and those who are interested in being mentored.