



# **SEAOSC**

# **Mentorship Program**

## **SEAOSC Mentor Handbook**

### **Introduction to the Mentorship Program**

The SEAOSC Mentorship program offers Emerging Members, Mid-level Members, and Established Members opportunities to meet in a formal mentorship program setting to encourage open and honest dialogue while helping Mentees define their career goals, identify roadblocks, and take ownership of their own growth and development. It also provides Mentors who are current and future leaders an opportunity to share practical insights and to improve their leadership proficiency. The broad goal of the mentorship program is to collectively strengthen and engage the community and profession of Structural Engineers in the Southern California region and beyond.

This Mentor handbook was developed as a guide for new Mentors and a refresher for seasoned Mentors. It provides a program overview, guidance on the structure of the mentoring sessions, and some practical tips and resources that can be referenced throughout the year.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Structural Engineering, Engagement, and Equity Committee of the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California for their work on the SE3 project and mentorship program and for sharing their resources and experience upon which we have based this program.



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## Program Timeline

<b>March</b>	Mentor training (virtual or in-person) Mentorship Program Kick-Off Event
<b>April - July</b>	Monthly meet-ups with mentee Program coordinator check-in
<b>August - October</b>	Monthly meet-ups with mentee Program coordinator check-in Mentorship program 6-month check-in
<b>November - February</b>	Monthly meet-ups with mentee Program coordinator check-in
<b>March</b>	Mentorship program annual event / matching of new participants Rematching as need for new or current participants Exit survey or calls with those not continuing with the program

## Benefits to Being a Mentor

- Support the future of the profession by passing on knowledge, skills and experience from one generation to another, empowering mentees and nurturing talent
- Increased engagement, commitment, motivation, career satisfaction through meaningful contributions, and a deeper appreciation for the value you have to offer
- Exposure to new ideas, perspectives and insight into other areas of the industry
- Enhanced leadership, management and communication skills with potential for accelerated career mobility
- Access to authentic relationships, emotional support through dialog, and potential for decrease in job stress and conflict
- Incentives & discounts to attend SEAOSC events with Mentees

## Your Role as a Mentor

- Develop mutual trust and respect
- Provide guidance, advice, and feedback
- Keep yourself and others accountable to their goals.
- Allocate good quality time to mentoring.
- Follow organizational values and ethical norms.
- Listen actively and provide constructive feedback.
- Welcome the chance to give something back to the profession.



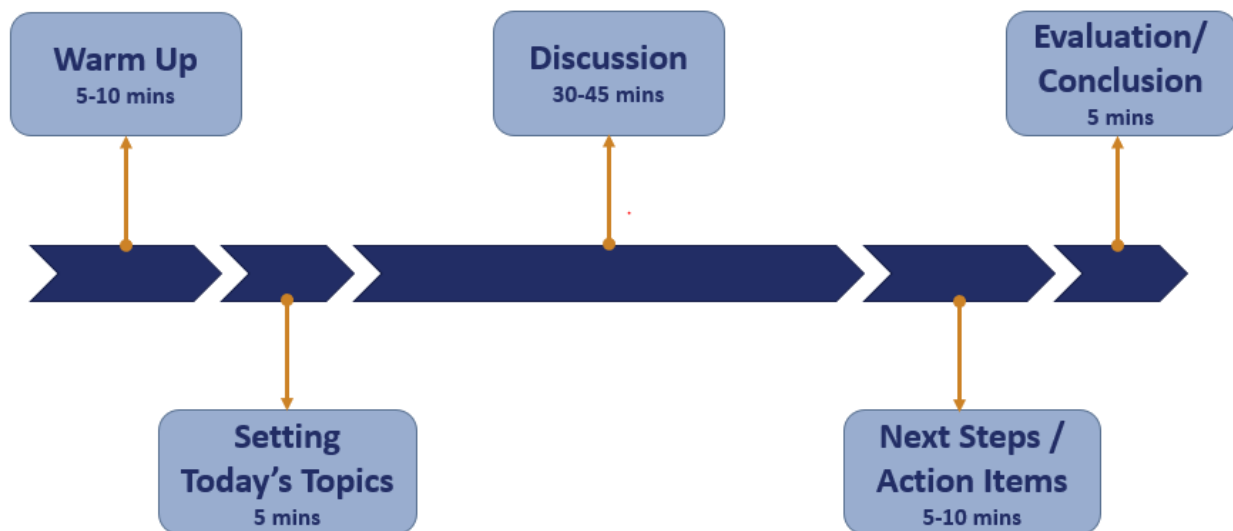
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## Do's and Don'ts as a Mentor

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on action strategies to handle challenges.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fix problems for the mentee.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share your experience</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell the mentee what to do</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help the mentee(s) explore potential solutions, opportunities, and possibilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be tempted to do favors for the mentee that you would not do for others.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empower the mentee to handle his/her problems independently.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foster dependence</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage the mentee by listening and goal setting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk more than you listen.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Point the mentee in the right direction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discredit their goals and ambitions</li></ul>

## How to structure the mentoring sessions

# MENTORSHIP SESSION MEETING MAP





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## Guidelines for the Mentoring Sessions

- Participate in regular meetings and be on time.
- Come prepared with topics of discussions.
- Coordinate with mentees to set missions, goals, expectations, and any boundaries.
- Identify and monitor tasks assigned to the mentee.
- Maintain confidentiality to develop mutual trust. The information given and received among group members should be held in confidence.
- Create an environment where you can openly and candidly discuss “real” issues.
- Be present, stay engaged, ask thought-provoking, high-value, open-ended questions.
- Draw on your own experience to share insight, wisdom, and knowledge; share challenges you have faced and strategies you have used in similar situations – both successful and not.
- Identify relevant literature and other resources, including contacts.
- Respect each individual’s opinions - don’t be too quick to judge. Show empathy and understanding.
- Help evaluate risks involved in decisions/actions; look out for the mentee’s best interest
- Be open and give constructive feedback to the mentee.
- Take notes as needed for follow up and summarize action items.
- If there are any issues with the Mentee or sensitive topics, reach out to a coordinator.

## Mentor toolbox

- **Questions to start the first conversation**
  - What is your educational and professional background?
  - What is your current role and how long have you been with the organization?
  - What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
  - What are your short-term career goals? Long-term career goals?
  - What do you see as my role as a mentor?
  - What ground rules should we set?
  - What topics should we avoid?
  - What do you think will be challenging about this relationship?
  - Are there any topics of urgent interest?
  - What topics do you want to cover in our conversations?
  - What do you hope to gain from this relationship?
  - How do you prefer to communicate between meetings?
  - When is the best time for you to meet?



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- **Potential Questions from Mentees**

- What was instrumental for you in getting to your current position in your company?
- What skills should I try to develop or enhance if I want to become a leader in my firm or profession?
- How can I improve my professional visibility?
- How do you manage work-life balance? What are your suggestions?
- Are there any groups or organizations that have been instrumental in shaping your career?
- Do you have any general tips for time-management? Professional development and/or soft skills that are particularly useful in becoming an excellent structural engineer or leader?
- What's been your biggest career struggle and how did you overcome it?
- What are your favorite productivity sites, tools, and apps?
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- **Giving Feedback**

- Deliver it as soon as possible.
- Be encouraging and supportive.
- Make sure you are clear on the issues and the effects.
- Be open to receiving feedback.
- Never be angry or belittling.
- If you need to give negative feedback, do it in person.

- **How to be a good listener**

- Show genuine interest.
- Minimize distractions.
- Be patient and not interrupt.
- Keep up with the speaker's flow of ideas.
- Provide clear feedback to show that he/she is listening.
- Identify the central issues.
- Avoid evaluation until the whole story has been stated.
- Take notes to provide a memory aid.
- Analyze and reflect back on what has been said.
- Summarize key points at the end of the conversation.
- Notice vocal factors: it's not what is said, but how it is said.
- Maintain eye contact to indicate receptivity and friendliness.
- Be aware of facial expressions.
- Maintain an open position with arms and legs uncrossed.
- Minimize moving around too much and fiddling with objects.
- Allow pauses and time for reflection.



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- **How to Deal with Challenging and Sensitive Issues**

- Create a safe space.
- Ask permission.
- Understand the issue/educate yourself.
- Determine...
  - *What is the problem or issue?*
  - *How frequently does the problem occur?*
  - *Have previous attempts been made to try to solve the problem? If so, what happened?*
  - *Do others appear to have the same problem?*
  - *What actions or strategies have been successful in the past? What didn't work?*
- Contact the program coordinators for resources and assistance.

- **Asking Permission**

- Demonstrates respect.
- Builds rapport.
- Minimizes assumptions.
- Frames the situation.
- Creates trust and cooperation.
- Gives a clear indication of where the conversation is going.
- Ask Questions such as:
  - "Can I share...?"
  - "Can we spend some time brainstorming...?"
  - "Would you like to...?"
  - "It sounds like.... Can we explore...?"
  - "I'd like to.... Is that okay with you?"
  - "Can I take a moment to run through what you just said?"

- **Coaching vs Mentoring**

COACHING	MENTORING
• Measures performance	• Doesn't measure performance
• Coach drives the relationship	• Mentee drives the relationship
• Coaching can be standardized	• Mentoring is personalized



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- **Asking Powerful Questions**

- Keep your question simple.
- Pause.
- Prompt the mentee.
- Remember that there are no wrong answers.
- Use the right type of questions.

- **Types of questions**

- **Information-seeking questions** - There is often a need to gather facts and perceptions in a mentoring conversation. It is also important not to make assumptions and not to move into problem-solving until you are sure that you have a true understanding of the situation.
  - *“How did you respond to that?”*
  - *“What options have you considered?”*
- **Challenging/testing questions** - One advantage of having a dialogue with a mentee is to explore alternative points of view.
  - *“What are your reasons for saying that?”*
  - *“What has led you to that conclusion?”*
  - *“Do you think other people would see it that way?”*
- **Action questions** - Mentoring is not just about talking; it is about getting informed decisions and acting on them.
  - *“What could be done to improve the situation?”*
  - *“How might you go about achieving that?”*
  -
- **Hypothetical questions** - Thinking and talking through scenarios allows practice in a safe environment and can lead to a rehearsal or role play of a planned event to build skills.
  - *“What would you do if...?”*
  - *“How would you handle...?”*
  - *“If you had done..., what do you think would have happened?”*
- **Diagnostic questions** - This type of questioning is used to find the root of a problem – in order to separate the symptoms from the cause – by inquiring about the issue and prompting reflection on the experience.
  - *“Why do you think they responded that way?”*
  - *“What happened immediately before this event?”*
  - *“What other factors are contributing to the situation?”*



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- **Prediction questions** - Remaining non-directive can be a challenge, yet sometimes you may see potential pitfalls in someone else’s plan. When it comes to making big decisions, it is essential to consider the possible unforeseen consequences. Therefore, prediction questions are good for risk management.
  - *“What are the likely outcomes if you take this course of action?”*
  - *“What are the likely consequences of this?”*
  - *“If you do nothing, what will happen?”*
- **Extension questions** - Critical thinking skills are an asset that increases one’s ability to learn and grow.
  - *“What are the implications of...?”*
  - *“What insights have you gained as a result of...?”*
  - *“What have you learned from this incident?”*
- **Generalization questions** - Current and past experience provides important learning opportunities as long as we take time to reflect and draw useful conclusions.
  - *“Are there some principles here that you could apply in other situations?”*
  - *“What could you do differently next time?”*
  - *“How is this situation similar to others you have dealt with?”*
- **What is your mentor style?**

Mentorship can take different forms. You may be more active in problem-solving with your mentee. Others may be better listeners who provide guidance for mentees to come to conclusions on their own. Understanding your style and communicating that to your mentee will help create a more effective relationship and avoid unnecessary misunderstandings. Here are eight different types of mentors. Visit <https://www.togetherplatform.com/handbook/mentor> for more info.

Advisor	Directs their mentees to the right course of action. Shares their experiences and expertise to offer advice. An advisor is ideal for mentees looking to follow the same career path.
Protector	Creates a safe space, provides support, and helps prepare for growth by guiding mentees to avoid mistakes that would be detrimental to their careers. A protector is ideal for mentees who may be in transition which can be stressful and involve some risk.
Developer	Provides guidance based on observation, listens, points out positive qualities and encourages them as well as any red flags. Empowers mentees to handle issues independently.





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Broker	Determines areas the mentees want to develop and provides them with opportunities to grow such as connecting them with experts in those areas. A broker is ideal for mentees who may not talk a lot but are hungry to pursue learning opportunities.
Challenger	Focuses on helping mentees develop strong problem-solving skills and positively provokes or push towards highest standards. A challenger is ideal for mentees who want someone to “tell them how it is.”
Clarifier	Acts more like a companion to mentees, providing direction to fill in knowledge gaps. A clarifier is ideal for mentees who are independent and can pursue their growth without much guidance.
Sponsor	Advocates for mentees through their credibility in the profession and vast network. A sponsor is ideal for mentees looking for professional growth and help in advancement.
Affirmer	Listens and gives support, empathy, and understanding. An affirmer is ideal for mentees who respond well to a soft shoulder and need a trustworthy mentor to talk through difficult or stressful issues.

- **Bibliography and Resources**

Many of the mentor tool box resources were from the following resources. Please visit the sites for more detailed information.

- “Women’s Empowerment Principles [Mentoring in the Workplace](https://www.weps.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/WEPs_GUIDANCE_Mentoring_in_the_Workplace_0.pdf)” guide. ([https://www.weps.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/WEPs\\_GUIDANCE\\_Mentoring\\_in\\_the\\_Workplace\\_0.pdf](https://www.weps.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/WEPs_GUIDANCE_Mentoring_in_the_Workplace_0.pdf))
- “Together Mentor Handbook” (<https://www.togetherplatform.com/mentor>)
- The Structural Engineer, Engagement, and Equity Committee of the Structural Engineers Association of Northern California: SE3. (<http://se3project.org/best-practices.html>)