



**EDCO**  
**Mentorship**  
**Program:**  
**Creating Your**  
**Discussion**  
**Guideline**



Economic  
Developers  
Council  
of Ontario

A discussion guideline is a valuable tool for keeping the mentorship relationship on track. Here are some ideas for topics of discussion. Choose which themes are most relevant and interesting for your mentorship experience. Some resources and ideas have been provided below to assist with facilitating the discussion.

## Starting Out

- Determine the preferred method of communication (e.g. phone, email, Skype, in-person)
- Determine the frequency of your discussions (e.g. monthly)
- Discuss confidentiality to build trust in your relationship
- Discuss a few goals you hope to achieve during your mentorship experience
- Identify themes for each session that are relevant to your goals

## Getting the Most Out of Your Experience

- Prepare for the meetings by reviewing notes and action items from the last meeting.
- Be open about successes and challenges you have experienced.
- Be an active listener. Take notes and ask questions.
- Review goals set in the beginning of the relationship.
- Take initiative and ask for feedback. Remain objective.
- Summarize the meeting and discuss action items for the next meeting.

## Session Theme Ideas and Resources

- **Introductions**
  - Discuss both of your career and educational backgrounds
  - Discuss your goals and objectives in the mentoring program
  - Discuss scheduling and forms of communication
- **Career Planning**
  - Seek to understand how you got to where you are today – was it a straight path or did you zig-zag along the way?
  - Outline your thoughts on what you would like your career to look like
  - Discuss five- to 10-year planning and how you plan to achieve your goals
  - Are your goals realistic given your current job, education, out-of-work responsibilities and commitments, etc.?
  - Discuss skills and on-going professional training needed to achieve these goals
  - [Five Tips to Improve Your Career Development](#)
  - [Using a SWOT Analysis in Your Career Planning](#)
  - [Developing a Strategic Vision for Your Career Planning](#)

- **Trends in Economic Development**

- What trends do you see impacting the future of our profession?
- How can your community/organization better prepare for these disruptions?
- What are hot topics today that weren't on the radar five years ago?
- Where do you see the profession of economic development heading?

- **Work-Life Balance**

- Do you think you have a good work-life balance? If yes, how do you maintain this balance? If no, what would you change?
- Do you often find yourself checking social media, emails and text messages?
- Do you need to switch gears and explore a new direction?
- [Canadian Mental Health Association: Work-Life Balance Quiz](#)
- [Forbes: How to Really Measure Work-Life Balance](#)
- [Ted Talk: How to Make Work-Life Balance Work - Nigel Marsh](#)
- [Ted Talk: Can we "have it all"? Anne-Marie Slaughter](#)

- **Leadership and Teamwork**

- What is the difference between leadership and teamwork?
- What traits make a good leader?
- How can you improve your leadership or teamwork skills?
- What challenges do you face in being part of a team?
- How do you effectively lead or be a part of a multi-generational team?

- **Economic Development Officer (EDO) Relationships**

- EDOs are expected to work with many different organizations, senior staff, and municipal councils. What are some issues you've experienced with these relationships and how have you resolved them?

- **Resolving Economic Development Issues or Identifying Opportunities**

- EDOs are often tasked with solving issues in a community or identifying new opportunities. Brainstorm some ways to address current issues in your community and identify new opportunities to facilitate economic development.

- **Leading from Where You Are**

- Can you only lead when you are in a managerial role? Can you influence others as a front-line employee? Here are some articles and videos to show you that, yes you can lead right from where you are sitting today.
- [Lead From Where You Are and With All That You Have - Lolly Daskal](#)
- [How to Lead from Where You Are - Society for HR Management](#)
- [How to Spark Leadership - Angie Morgan](#)

- **Relationship Building**
  - Relationship building skills are key to successful teamwork.
  - [Tedx: The Power of Relationship Building](#)
  - [5 Communication Practices to Help You Earn the Respect of Your Team](#)
  - [Transformational Leaders Build Relationships - Dr. Greg Halpern](#)
  
- **Multi-generational Workforce**
  - Our workforce is more diverse than ever, with 4-5 different generations all co-existing in the same workplaces.
  - [The secret to a satisfied multigenerational workforce? Globe and Mail](#)
  - [What are the different generations in the workplace? - Lindsey Pollak](#)
  - [How to Train a Multi-Generational Workforce - Audie Mccarthy](#)
  
- **Difficult Conversations**
  - Difficult conversations are bound to happen in our work life, whether it is with a customer or employee. Through strong leadership and teamwork, these difficult conversations can be easier to navigate.
  - [Handle Difficult Conversations at Work - Harvard Business Review](#)
  - [10 Tips to Help You Conduct Difficult Workplace Discussions](#)
  - [Video Demonstration of Difficult Conversations - Dalhousie University](#)
  
- **Evaluation**
  - Discuss what worked and what didn't in your mentoring relationship
  - Provide suggestions to help future mentoring teams for next year's program