

Over 400 mentoring competency statements...help yourself!

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Repertory Grid mentor statements produced during a CPD Forum meeting

A verbatim summary from Andrew Gibbons

You will recall, the statements below were generated by you, sorting sets of three cards at a time from a pool of nine people you know well enough to contrast mentoring competence with reference to the following sentence:

In terms of what it takes to be a skilled Mentor, what specifically makes two similar, and different to the other one?

Helpful statements – what does a skilled mentor do?

1. Listens to the whole issue before commenting.
2. Very direct in approach.
3. Sympathetic but fair.
4. Professional attitude - direct.
5. Gives advice but expects one to make own decision - whether in line or not.
6. Patience.
7. Does not seek to blame - stays neutral.
8. Finds time to help.
9. Questions to find the main problem.
10. Gives controversial views.
11. Will give honest answers.
12. Takes a light hearted view.
13. Would give good advice.
14. Gives honest answers.
15. Gives a view to suit the situation.
16. Tries to help in any situation.
17. Would give honest opinion.

18. Advise on correct policy.
19. Takes a light hearted view.
20. Gives helpful answer.
21. Follows up discussions for development ideas.
22. Good range of networks and contacts that can be utilised.
23. Appreciates effects of personal concerns.
24. Not intimidating - easy to approach at any time.
25. Proactive approach to development.
26. Knows what they are talking about - good at own job.
27. Realises the reality within which you work.
28. Questioning, and helps think through.
29. Always interested and focused on my needs and development during a mentoring session.
30. Always relaxed and smiling.
31. Talks on the same wavelength about training and development.
32. Often initiates a mentoring session.
33. Actively questions me.
34. Waits for me to make statement then comments.
35. Always seems to have plenty of time to talk, not waiting to do something else.
36. Rarely if ever speaks on the telephone - but often face to face.
37. More focused on what I am doing - always questioning and interested.
38. Demonstrates personal concern for me outwith the work role.
39. Calm approach, persuasive, model to follow.
40. Encouraging.
41. Approachable at all times.
42. Makes sure your work is successful - helpful and constructive, modest despite high achievements.
43. Well prepared in advance - stimulating company.
44. Keeps in touch, makes a number of small points.
45. Persistent to achieve 'perfect' result.
46. Imaginative, thinking of novel solutions, noted for hard work.
47. Available on telephone.

48. Very encouraging in what I want/can achieve.
49. Are a role model in terms of their own achievements.
50. Makes me believe in my potential.
51. Is easy to talk to in both a social and work capacity.
52. Takes in and remembers my past experience.
53. Able to bring humour into work-based discussion - helps me feel at ease.
54. Keeps a conversation interesting and 'alive'.
55. Introduces options which may not have been considered.
56. Keeps to an agenda to ensure the job is done.
57. Is well respected in their position.
58. Talks to me as an equal.
59. Good role model, proactive, I respect and like them, logical thinker.
60. Intellectually focused, passive/receptive.
61. Has clear career objectives, always has time.
62. Supportive.
63. Intellectually stimulating/challenging.
64. Can make time for discussion, intellectually challenging.
65. Clear thinker, problem solver.
66. Understanding of relevant issues, always has time.
67. Wide knowledge to consider solutions.
68. Willing to listen supportive of ideas, I like them.
69. Intellectually challenging.
70. Makes time for you, intellectually challenging.
71. Logical thinker.
72. Approachable, problem solver, relevant knowledge.
73. Stretching, approachable.
74. Broad knowledge to guide through process.
75. Theoretical base to pose solutions.
76. Readily accessible.
77. Challenges assumptions and questions actively.

78. Meetings are an opportunity to exchange information.
79. Mentor keeps issues personal to Mentor out of Mentor/student exchange.
80. Mentor is supportive of students' achievements and does not give the impression of feeling threatened.
81. Mentor is happy for student to develop their own style of dealing with issues.
82. Mentor is able to interact socially with student.
83. Mentor is able to stand back from mentoring relationship when it is no longer relevant but can still interact with student.
84. Shows empathy, decisive.
85. Sees the broadest picture.
86. Optimistic outlook.
87. Commitment is important.
88. Forward thinking.
89. Straight talking.
90. Practical approach adopted.
91. Open to persuasion.
92. Great patience.
93. Extroverted, rounded person, pragmatist.
94. Interested in people.
95. Inquiring minds, various interests.
96. Listening skills, warm personality.
97. Active family life.
98. Happy.
99. Active listener, non-judgmental.
100. Gives considered guidance, objective.
101. Is open to new ideas.
102. Helps to explore causes.
103. Suggests ways to overcome difficulties.
104. Is open to having views questions.
105. Helps in planning for the future.
106. Offers alternative visions for the future.

107. Fits new ideas into existing world-view.
108. Suggests how to deal with effects.
109. Helps address day-to-day issues.
110. Offers a coherent simple vision for the future.
111. Shows flexibility with mental models.
112. Good listener, approachable, knowledgeable of individual needs.
113. Questions well, good listener.
115. Active and organised, encourages feedback and regular reports.
116. Allows individual to 'get on with job', and ask questions when necessary.
117. Encourages development and initiative, allows professionals to make their own decisions (after all they are qualified!).
118. Good individual advice.
119. Good listening skills and approachable.
120. Listening and 'people' awareness.
121. Stability, approachable, good experience.
122. Drive, 'high profile'.
123. Understanding nature.
124. Wise, and good communicator.
125. Responsive.
126. Professional, wise, and structured.
127. Business knowledge and experience.
128. Respected and knowledgeable in their field.
129. Senior individual who is respected. Makes time for people.
130. Are experienced mentors.
131. Enthusiasts in their field.
132. Very easy to approach and talk.
133. Lives good practice.
134. Enthusiastic about mentoring.
135. Very supportive, and makes time.
136. Very knowledgeable about developmental issues.
137. Patient, accommodating.

138. Encouraging, understanding, good listener.
139. Tolerant, confidence booster.
140. Patient, friendly, sympathetic.
141. Quietly interested.
142. Enthusiastic, supportive.
143. Inquiring.
144. Had clear career objectives.
145. Like them.
146. Able to make difficult decisions.
147. Took time for people.
148. Able to 'fit in' with office culture.
149. Younger, with 'new' ideas.
150. Excellent organisational skills, so clear leads.
151. Considerate to others.
152. Female (shared experiences).
153. Good listener, fun, good company, so I enjoy spending time with them.
154. Sensitive and active listener.
155. I know him well.
156. Nonconformist, so can come up with different ways of looking at things.
157. Older, with ideas based on experience.
158. Enabling, caring, open and facilitative.
159. Respectful of authority, supportive.
160. Trusting, supportive and genuine.
161. Prepared to learn with you, and has a genuine desire to empower.
162. Empowering, sees learning as mutual, supportive and challenging.
163. Nurturing relationship, sees learning as mutual, supportive and challenging.
164. Genuine caring approach.
165. Trustworthy, enables rather than controls.
166. Task centred, accepts being challenged, prepared to compromise.
167. Gives constructive and positive feedback.

168. Gives total respect, authority, is informed, cares, and gives constant positive feedback.
169. Allows you freedom and confidence to make mistakes.
170. Is interested in me.
171. Empathetic, trained Counsellor.
172. Practical.
173. Strong, independent thinker.
174. Professional, trustworthy as confidante - I like them!
175. I respect her professionally.
176. Good listening skills, non-judgmental.
177. Approachable, good listener.
178. Is concerned about the individual being mentored.
179. Sound judgement - able to distance themselves/ be objective.
180. Experience in management
181. Interested in developing the Mentee to help themselves.
182. Good listener - ready to listen and set time aside.
183. Genuine concern about welfare, providing secure backdrop to develop necessary skills.
184. Providing space for development to occur - guidance from a distance.
185. Rewarding development with praise.
186. Actively interested - encouraging me to develop skills/training and follows up post course/event.
187. Truly understanding value of development and keen to provide an equal basis to discuss matters.
188. Impartial regarding route development should take.
189. Keen to allow me to make own decisions.
190. Provides subtle guidance but still ensures I make any decisions.
191. Regular contact.
192. Proactive approach.
193. More distant relationship making Mentor a more impressive character.
194. Helpful, good listener.
195. Positive - strong leadership.
196. Forceful, willing and capable.
197. Attentive listener, encourages.

198. Uses plenty of initiative, strong character.
199. Similar in sharing career path.
200. Practical careers options and suggestions according to the circumstances, skills and potential.
201. Supportive.
202. Love and friendship.
203. Intellectual dialogue.
204. Gave different perspectives mature thoughts, elderly.
205. Motivates to achieve common goal.
206. General knowledge with contacts.
207. Skilled in balancing giving out information with making you find it for yourself.
208. Very open, creates a feeling of encouragement for asking questions.
209. Knowledge on tap in specific area.
210. Gives feeling of planned/constructive development and interaction of/with others.
211. I have respect for their breadth of knowledge and understanding.
212. Takes an interest in the individual - values their views and what they say.
213. Is an element of a professional relationship - not always discussing strictly professional issues.
214. Sets specific time aside to be available for consultation - you know they will always be there then.
215. Very empathetic to problems.
216. Is removed from immediate work situation, which may be positive.
217. Encouraging of my needs and future - concerned.
218. Balance between corporate and individual needs.
219. Wanting to open me up to new possibilities - encouraging to look to the future.
220. Open - listening - unconditional support, truly encouraging.
221. Listening, concerned, supportive, understanding.
222. Professionally encouraging.
223. Personal concern, empathy, positive, supportive.
224. Clear goals.
225. Shows unconditional warmth and encouragement.
226. Demonstrates an objective interest in people.
227. Able to focus with whom interacting in balanced way.

228. Able to probe below the superficial.
229. Passionate, caring interest in the professional arena.
230. Shows real wisdom, tempered with compassion focused on the person.
231. Shows common sense, accepting and forgiving behaviours - sees the real person, and their real context.
232. Although both are male, not afraid to show their caring, feminine side.
233. Shows practical ways of doing things and solving problems.
234. Looks at things from a psychological perspective to detect the underlying patterns.
235. Is more democratic and allows me space to express my feelings.
236. They have a spiritual perspective and their comments are philosophical - always opening out new possibilities of meaning.
237. Is facilitative.
238. A lot of care in what s/he says, and a genuine regard for a transpersonal truth.
239. Practical and focused, but allows space.
240. Does care for me as an individual.
241. Her advice didn't seem good 20 years ago, but it does seem profound now.
242. Interested in me personally, genuine concern.
243. Draws out my ideas and is willing to use them.
244. Able to identify specific needs and goals to achieve set objectives.
245. True passion for learning and developing others, deep understanding of the value of development.
246. Supports work and personal objectives, and encourages ambition.
247. Willing to debate, argue, discuss.
248. Easy to talk to, makes me feel worthwhile.
249. Genuine interest in me and in development of people.
250. Understands the 'bigger picture', can see how objectives interplay.

Less helpful statements – what does a less skilled mentor do?

1. Can direct conversation back to self - digresses.
2. Does not take situation seriously.
3. A tendency to impatience - not thoroughly listening.

4. May not be there when needed.
5. Will follow party line.
6. Not to be troubled.
7. Will ensure his back is covered.
8. Will tell you what you want to hear.
9. Gives the company view/policy.
10. Protects the company in any situation.
11. Protects the company situation.
12. Encourages to develop at time, but does not follow up.
13. Advice etc tends to be from himself and own resources only.
14. Offers 'lip service' support, but gives impression of no real interest.
15. Own success makes them intimidating to approach.
16. Reactive approach to development.
17. Gives impression of being ineffective in own role, therefore not much 'use' to you.
18. Lack of understanding of the reality of life in your position.
19. Does not question - through lack of understanding, or interest or just accepts what you say.
20. Loses interest during a meeting fairly quickly.
21. A bit nervy and jumpy - on the edge - smiles 'though.
22. Not always on the same wavelength - facial expression - looks confused.
23. Rarely initiates a discussion.
24. Always appears keen to get the meeting over with and move on to the next thing.
25. Generally speak via telephone.
26. Interested in what I have to say but ready to move on to themselves at any point.
27. Concerned only with work related development - not personal.
28. Changes mind and is unpredictable.
29. Antagonistic - poor example in leadership.
30. Discouraging.
31. Remote attitude.
32. Leaves you to sink or swim - bullying attitude - too conscious of their own status.
33. Handles meetings without preparation, boring, on a different wavelength.

34. Quickly loses patience and accepts a lesser result.
35. Dogged approach, generally considered lazy.
36. Unapproachable, except on formal occasions.
37. Doesn't inspire me with confidence.
38. Does more talking about himself than listening - relates situation back to his own experience.
39. Doesn't have a deep understanding of my work/background etc.
40. Can react defensively.
41. Talks about own achievements too much.
42. Strays off the point.
43. Not easy to make contact with.
44. Accepts all of students' statements.
45. Information only flows from student to Mentor.
46. Mentor divulges information about how Mentor has had problems with certain individuals.
47. Mentor expects student to echo style of Mentor in facing challenges.
48. Mentor is unhappy about interacting socially with student.
49. Mentor finds it difficult to break off mentoring relationship when it is no longer appropriate.
50. Dictatorial, forgetful, leads to repetition.
51. Quick to fly off the handle.
52. Very cynical.
53. Overtly political motivations affect every action.
54. Doesn't think consequences through.
55. Tendency to say what it is thought you want to hear.
56. Political and financial considerations determine actions.
57. Closed mind.
58. Irritated by those who do not get the point fairly quickly.
59. Introverted, inexperienced.
60. Not interested in people.
61. Closed mind, not interested outside job.
62. Talker, cold, distant personality.
63. Not confident, innocent, accepting.

64. Isolated.
65. Half empty - pessimist.
66. Questions whether difficulties are real.
67. Has relatively fixed mental models.
68. Challenges when views are questioned.
69. Selfish, inexperienced in mentoring.
70. Inability to listen - personal knowledge.
71. Passive, appears disinterested at times.
72. A 'policing' approach i.e. checking to ensure work is undertaken.
73. Stifles independence and initiative by 'policing'.
74. Approachable - not always the best trait in mentoring.
75. Unplanned approach.
76. Less approachable.
77. Negative.
78. Reactive.
79. Pre-occupied, and although understanding of issues, does not always act upon them.
80. Not particularly well respected.
81. Not known for mentoring skills.
82. No enthusiasm.
83. Distant, detached, impersonal.
84. Intimidating, self-obsessed.
85. Distant, self-interested.
86. Overbearing, impatient, intolerant.
87. No clear objectives - drifting.
88. Indifferent to this person.
89. Indecisive.
90. Had little time for discussing things.
91. Considers self first.
92. Didn't listen.
93. Boring.

94. Makes decisions and not open to discussion.
95. Not active listener.
96. Defensive, sexist.
97. Controlling, untrustworthy, task-oriented and single-minded.
98. Untrustworthy, dishonest and unsupportive.
99. Needs to keep control, genuine caring approach, but can't cope with criticism.
100. Challenging, dogmatic, and unsupportive.
101. Needs to control information, genuine, yet weak when challenged.
102. Only gives feedback when asked, supportive conditionally.
103. Impatient, judgemental.
104. Influenced by others' views of them, therefore advice guarded.
105. Weak in character, limited interest.
106. Not sure if going to stab you in back, unprofessional, tells me her problems - do I like her?
107. I question their own judgements sometimes.
108. Listened, but exchange with their own experiences rather than concentrating on issues in hand.
109. Distant.
110. Inexperience of being managed or managing well.
111. Superficial interest only - always 'too busy'.
112. Thinks it makes them popular/well liked by staff.
113. Little experience in mentoring staff - little experience of being mentored himself.
114. Subtle indifference.
115. Viewing opportunity to mentor as chance to forward own career - revelled in developing skills that ultimately developed barrier.
116. Short of time and distance making Mentor distant.
117. Gave impression that s/he lacked any real interest in assuming mentors' role.
118. Ego got in the way of mentoring at times.
119. Limited time, making them difficult to approach.
120. Passive, disorganised.
121. Partial towards the Mentee.
122. Patronising.

123. Often errs to making you find the information yourself, but often gives the impression this is because she does not know it herself (does a Mentor need to be knowledgeable in your subject?).
124. Doesn't have respect for them always.
125. Often goes overboard in correcting style rather than substance.
126. Very aloof management style - physically isolated from rest, not easily accessible.
127. Not sufficient time found to develop strong relationship.
128. Not truly listening, interested in their, not my, agenda and needs.
129. Too concerned with corporate or their agendas
130. Controlling, conditioning, circumscribed, limiting.
131. Not open too black and white.
132. Closed off, personally focused, limiting.
133. Non-listening, narrow, low expectations.
134. Not person focused, task not people.
135. Negative.
136. Shows self-interest in interaction.
137. Somewhat aloof.
138. Very intense- uncomfortably so.
139. Tries too hard to be pleasing - fails to grapple with real issues.
140. Academic interest only - lacks involvement, commitment personally.
141. Rather semi-detached, keeps their wisdom for academic, non-people-related issues.
142. Tends to talk in frameworks, models, theories, little to do with reality.
143. Sometimes takes a managerial line and detaches herself.
144. Strong focus on organisational goals - individuals tend to be seen mainly in that context.
145. They both like to control me by insisting on their way of doing things.
146. He cares, but wants his own solution - other solutions are made to seem less good.
147. Imposes.
148. Her motives aren't to be trusted, she doesn't care for me as an individual.
149. Suggested short term solutions - but I can't remember what was said.
150. Only business-focused.
151. Gives impression of being superior to me.
152. Out of depth when challenged about real, valued, learning opportunities - quite shallow.

- 153. Focused on limited work-based objectives.
- 154. Weak personality, crumbled when challenged.
- 155. Gives impression of being better.
- 156. Went through management motions.

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