



Code of Conduct



INTRODUCTION

Our Code of Conduct sets expectations to ensure best practice when providing mentoring. It provides necessary guidance and general expectations of professional conduct and behaviour, sets expectations for how mentors should conduct themselves, enables them to evaluate their practice for improvement and development, and can be used as a baseline for dealing with complaints or any issues that may arise.

The code highlights the difficult issues and decisions that often need to be made. It provides a clear account of what behaviour is considered ethical, correct or right in the circumstances. Where a breach of the code occurs, it allows involved parties an opportunity for complaint and resolution. It places certain responsibilities on Steer Up Mentor's when a complaint has been made against them, or when Steer Up becomes aware that a Mentor has behaved in an unethical manner.

The Code is arranged into four sections and covers our general expectations of professional behaviour and conduct:

1. Terminology
2. Working with Mentees
3. Professional Conduct
4. Excellent Practice

1) TERMINOLOGY

a) For reasons of brevity this Code where appropriate refers to:

- Coachees, mentees, supervisees and students as 'Mentees'
- Coaches, mentors, supervisors and trainers as 'practising Mentors' or 'Mentors'
- Coaching, mentoring and supervision work as 'professional work'
- Coaching, mentoring and supervision as 'profession'.
- Organisations, companies, youth groups and employers as 'sponsors'.

b) I acknowledge that the terms 'profession' and 'professional' are being used for activities that are not under statutory regulation but are being increasingly professionalised and self regulated.

c) I acknowledge that the titles 'coach', 'mentor' and 'supervisor' are not protected and may be used by anyone in the field of practice, Mentor or not Mentor of a professional body.



2) WORKING WITH MENTEES

Context

2.1 When professionally working with Mentees in any capacity I will conduct myself in accordance with this code, committed to delivering the level of service that may reasonably be expected of a practising Mentor.

Contracting

2.2 Before working with a Mentee, I will ensure that this code has been made available to them, and explain and make explicit my commitment to abide by this Code. I will also ensure Mentee's and sponsors are aware of Steer Up's complaints procedures.

2.3 Before starting to work with a Mentee, I will explain and strive to ensure that the Mentee and sponsor know, and fully understand, the nature and terms and conditions of any coaching, mentoring or supervision contract, including financial, logistical and confidentiality arrangements.

2.4 I will use my professional knowledge and experience to understand my Mentees' and sponsors' expectations and reach agreement on how we plan to meet them.

2.5 I will be open about the methods I use, and on request will be ready to supply the Mentee and sponsor with information about the processes involved.

2.6 I will ensure that the duration of the agreement is appropriate to achieve the Mentee's and sponsor's goals and will actively work to promote the Mentee's independence and self-reliance.

2.7 I will ensure that the setting in which any coaching, mentoring, supervision or training takes place offers optimal conditions for learning and reflection and therefore a higher likelihood of achievement of the goals set in the agreement.

2.8 I will always put my Mentee's interests first but at the same time safeguard that these interests do not harm the interests of the sponsor.

Integrity

2.9 I will accurately and honestly represent my relevant professional qualifications, professional body to which I belong, experience, training, certifications and accreditations to Mentees, sponsors and colleagues.

2.10 In communication with any party, I will accurately and honestly represent the value I provide as a coach, mentor or supervisor.



2.11 I will ensure that no false or misleading claims are made, or implied, about my professional competence, qualifications or accreditation in any published, promotional material or otherwise. I will attribute ownership of work, ideas and materials of others to the originator and not claim it as my own.

2.12 I will act within applicable law and not in any way encourage, assist or collude with conduct which is dishonest, unlawful, unprofessional or discriminatory.

Confidentiality

2.13 When working with Mentees, I will maintain the strictest level of confidentiality with all Mentee and sponsor information, unless release of information is required by law.

2.14 I will have a clear agreement with Mentees and sponsors about the conditions under which confidentiality will not be maintained (e.g. illegal activity, danger to self or others) and gain agreement to that limit of confidentiality where possible unless the release of information is required by law.

2.15 I will keep, store and dispose of appropriate and accurate records of my work with my Mentees, including electronic files and communications, in a manner that ensures confidentiality, security and privacy, and complies with all relevant laws and agreements that exist in my operating country regarding data protection and privacy.

2.16 I will inform Mentees if I am receiving supervision and identify that the Mentee may be referred to anonymously in this context. The Mentee should be assured that the supervision relationship is itself a confidential relationship.

2.17 If the Mentee is a child or vulnerable adult, I will make arrangements with the Mentee's sponsors or guardian to ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality in the best interests of the Mentee, whilst also complying with all relevant legislation.

Inappropriate interactions

2.18 I am responsible for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern all physical and virtual interactions with Mentees or sponsors.

2.19 I will avoid any romantic or sexual relationship with current Mentees or sponsors. I will be alert to the possibility of any potential sexual intimacy with the aforementioned parties and take appropriate action to avoid the intimacy or cancel the engagement in order to provide a safe environment.



Conflict of interest

2.20 I will not exploit a Mentee or seek to gain any inappropriate financial or non-financial advantage from the relationship.

2.21 To avoid any conflict of interest, I will distinguish a professional relationship with a Mentee from other forms of relationships.

2.22 I will be aware of the potential for conflicts of interest of either a commercial or personal nature arising through the working relationship and address them quickly and effectively in order to ensure that there is no detriment to the Mentee or sponsor.

2.23 I will consider the impact of any Mentee relationships on other Mentee relationships and discuss any potential conflict of interest with those who might be affected.

2.24 I will disclose any conflict openly with the Mentee and agree to withdraw from the relationship if a conflict arises which cannot be managed effectively.

Terminating professional relationships and on-going responsibilities

2.25 I will respect a Mentee's right to terminate an engagement at any point in the process, subject to the provisions of the coaching, mentoring or supervision service agreement.

2.26 I will encourage the Mentee or sponsor to terminate the coaching, mentoring or supervision engagement if it is believed that the Mentee would be better served by another practising Mentor or a different form of professional help.

2.27 I understand that my professional responsibilities continue beyond the termination of the professional relationship. These include:

- Maintenance of agreed confidentiality of all information relating to Mentees and sponsors
- Safe and secure maintenance of all related records and data that complies with all relevant laws and agreements that exist in their country regarding data protection and privacy
- Avoidance of any exploitation of the former relationship, which could otherwise call into question the professionalism or integrity of the Mentor or the professional community
- Provision of any follow-up that has been agreed to.

2.28 Mentors are required to have a provision for transfer of current Mentees and dissemination of records in the event of the Mentor's incapacitation, or termination of practice.



3) PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Maintaining the reputation of the profession

3.1 I will behave in a way that at all times reflects positively upon and enhances the reputation of an increasingly professionalised service.

3.2 I will demonstrate respect for the variety of practising Mentors and other individuals in the profession and for the different approaches to coaching, mentoring and supervision.

Recognising equality and diversity

3.3 I will abide by Steer Up's diversity statements and policies.

3.4 I will avoid knowingly discriminating on any grounds and will seek to enhance my own awareness of possible areas of discrimination.

3.5 I will be cognisant of the potential for unconscious bias and seek to ensure that they take a respectful and inclusive approach, which embraces and explores individual differences.

3.6 I will challenge in a supportive way any colleagues, employees, service providers, Mentees or participants who are perceived to be using discriminatory behaviour.

3.7 I will monitor my spoken, written and non-verbal communication for inadvertent discrimination.

3.8 I will engage in developmental activities that are likely to increase my self-awareness in relation to equality and diversity.

Breaches of professional conduct

3.9 I accept that any breach of the code that is upheld in a complaints procedure may result in sanctions including loss of Steer Up membership. Steer Up may share details of such breaches with third parties in the interest of Mentee safety, upholding quality standards and maintaining the reputation of the profession.

3.10 I will challenge another Mentor if they have reasonable cause to believe that they are acting in an unethical manner and, failing resolution, will report that person to Steer Up.



Legal and statutory obligations and duties

3.11 I will stay up to date and comply with all relevant statutory requirements in the country in which my professional work takes place and work within any organisational policies and procedures in the context in which I am working.

3.12 I will have the appropriate professional indemnity insurance to cover my coaching, mentoring and supervising work for the country in which I operate.



4) EXCELLENT PRACTICE

Ability to perform

4.1 I will have the qualifications, skills and experience appropriate to meet the needs of the Mentee and will operate within the limits of my competence. I will refer the Mentee to a more experienced or suitably qualified practising Mentor where appropriate.

4.2 I will be fit and healthy enough to practice. If I'm not, or if I'm unsure if I'm able to practice safely for health reasons, I will seek professional guidance or support. Where necessary or appropriate, I will manage the termination of my work with the Mentee and refer them back to Steer Up so that they can be provided with an alternative Mentor

On-going supervision

4.3 Where requested, I will engage in supervision with a member of the Steer Up team with a level of frequency that is appropriate to my coaching, mentoring or supervision practice.

4.4 I will ensure that any other existing relationship with the supervisor does not interfere with the quality of the supervision provided.

4.5 I will discuss any ethical dilemmas and potential, or actual, breaches of this Code with the Steer Up team for support and guidance.

Continuing professional development

4.6 I will develop my level of coaching and/or mentoring competence by participating in relevant and appropriate training and/or continuing professional development (CPD).

4.7 I will endeavour to contribute to the professional community in a way that is appropriate to my level of expertise. (i.e informal peer support to fellow practising Mentors)

4.8 I will systematically evaluate the quality of my work through feedback from Mentees, Sponsors, Steer Up and other relevant parties.