Types of Mentoring Relationships

Highly Structured

Virtually No Structure

Short Term, Spontaneous → Long Term, Even for Life

1 ◆ Highly structured, short term

The relationship is formally established for an introductory or short period, often to meet specific organizational objectives. For example, a new employee may be paired with a senior person for an organization's orientation.

2 ◆ Highly structured, long term

Often used for succession planning, this relationship involves grooming someone to take over a departing person's job or function or to master a craft.

3 ◆ Informal, short term

This type of off-the-cuff mentoring ranges from one-shot or spontaneous help to occasional or as-needed counseling. There may be no ongoing relationship. This type of intervention is often thought through and heavily change-oriented.

4 ◆ Informal, long term

"Friendship mentoring" consists of being available as needed to discuss problems, to listen, or to share special knowledge.

Source: Shea, Gordon F., Mentoring *(3rd ed.), 2002*