



IMMIGRANT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM  
**MENTOR TOOL KIT**



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## CONTACT:

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# INTRODUCTION

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## NIAGARA WORKFORCE PLANNING BOARD

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The **Niagara Workforce Planning Board (NWPB)** is one of 26 regional planning boards in Ontario making up the Local Boards Network, partly funded through Employment Ontario. Each year, NWPB provides labour market planning tailored to local economic realities, and our activities and projects support communities in achieving their economic goals. NWPB's role is one of facilitation and communication, with a focus on bringing community stakeholders together to identify labour force issues and develop solutions. We strive to ensure that all information on community initiatives and actions are disseminated in an accurate and concise manner throughout the Niagara region.

## NWPB'S IMMIGRANT MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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**NWPB's Immigrant Mentorship Program** works in partnership with the local Employment Ontario network to pair internationally trained professionals (ITPs) with individuals established in their field for an 8 week mentoring program designed to introduce them to Canadian workplace culture and their industry in Niagara, and to provide them with meaningful personal and professional connections. Participation in this program requires a commitment of a minimum of 12 hours; however, many mentors and mentees continue remain in touch long past the conclusion of the formal mentorship.

# MENTORING RELATIONSHIP



## ROLE OF THE MENTOR

Mentors and mentees alike look forward to a productive and rewarding mentoring experience. Building an open and enjoyable relationship of mutual respect will be your key to achieving this goal. Your ability to create and maintain a relationship will be a significant part of your success.

Please remember that *the role of a mentor is **not** to find a job for the mentee.* This expectation can put an unnecessary strain on your mentoring relationship. Instead, maintain a focus on helping the mentee gain a better understanding and knowledge in the three key areas addressed by the mentoring partnership:

**W**orkplace culture  
in the Canadian context

**I**nformation  
about the profession, industry, sector

**N**etworking  
to build professional links

## SUCCESSFUL MENTORING IS ALL ABOUT:

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- Conversation
- Sharing of knowledge, information and experiences
- Learning from each other
- Opening doors
- Providing inspiration
- Confidence building
- Validating another's experience
- Transferring knowledge and experience so that a person can achieve success in a new situation

## STAYING FOCUSED

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It is inevitable that you will get side-tracked, distracted, or slowed down by various developments during your time together. Here are a few tips for what you can do at each meeting that may help you stay focused on your goal:

- **Follow up on earlier commitments** – what has been achieved? What challenges came up? How can they be addressed?
- **Check on new developments in the mentee's life** – do they present a new opportunity or a new challenge that needs to be addressed?
- **Attend to anything that needs immediate attention**, including a lack of motivation.
- **Briefly go over your goals and milestones** – are you still on target?
- **Work on a topic or issue that you have selected for the day.**
- **Identify next steps**, with deadlines and outcomes.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## DO I HAVE TO FIND MY MENTEE A JOB?

No, your role is not to find your mentee a job. The objective of the mentoring relationship is to prepare your mentee for job readiness by exposing them to professional networks and providing advice.

## WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE ANY CONCERNS OR PROBLEMS REGARDING MY MENTORING RELATIONSHIP?

The Niagara Workforce Planning Board will make every effort towards ensuring a positive experience for both the mentor and the mentee. However, it is natural that not all relationships will be perfect. In case of conflict or difficulty, please speak with **Josie Faccini** ([josie@niagaraworkforceboard.ca](mailto:josie@niagaraworkforceboard.ca)). Both mentor and mentee will be asked to comment on the situation, and action will be taken to rectify it.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM DOING A GOOD JOB?

Open communication is key to any good relationship. Throughout the mentoring relationship you should be speaking with your mentee about whether or not you are fulfilling the goals set at the beginning. You will also be asked to provide feedback on your progress and experience throughout the mentoring relationship. NWPB's Mentorship Manager will also regularly check in with you and your mentee to ensure that everything is going smoothly.

# BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP



Building a relationship with your mentee is the first priority in the mentoring process. This relationship is the vehicle that is used to understand real needs and issues in the learning process.

Your ability to create and maintain the relationship will be a significant part of your success. Here are some points to consider that may require special emphasis:

- Take time to get to know your mentee. It is best to gain your mentee's trust before offering advice.
- Ask a lot of open questions.
- Make every effort to understand your mentee's challenges and issues.
- Be honest.
- Reinforce your mentee's strengths.
- Listen actively.

The mentoring process is focused on understanding and meeting the needs of internationally trained professionals. We have identified the following as areas that should be focused on:

- **Understanding** Canadian workplace culture
- **Identifying** skills required by market demands
- **Improving** professional terminology
- **Developing** self-marketing strategies
- **Confidence-building** in a new culture
- **Selecting** programs and resources to upgrade technical skills
- **Locating** publications and workshops on recent developments in your industry
- **Establishing** professional networks
- **Supporting** and encouraging efforts to become professionally established

Together, mentors and mentees are responsible for ensuring decisions are made about:

- Meeting schedules
- Meeting location
- Frequency and nature of contact between meetings
- Signing the mentorship agreement
- Interruptions to be permitted
- Boundaries (to what extent personal issues will be incorporated)

Mentors are not expected to be career counselors; mentees have access to this service and job search coaching through their referring agency. If you feel your mentee is not “job search ready,” please advise our Mentorship Manager, **Josie Faccini**. She can be reached at [josie@niagaraworkforceboard.ca](mailto:josie@niagaraworkforceboard.ca) or by phone at **905-641-0801, ext. 126**.

# CULTURAL AWARENESS



For new immigrants, securing employment is a top priority. Understanding and awareness of cultural nuances become increasingly important for newcomers and everyone they interact with, especially in the workplace.

Intercultural understanding is often challenging due to the differences in verbal and non-verbal communication. Some of the factors that come into play include misinterpretation of terminology or body language, false assumptions, discomfort with certain culture-specific behaviours or habits and, more importantly, lack of knowledge in how to address these concerns in an effective and sensitive manner.

Cultural differences can vary widely in how they manifest. Differences in attire and their significance, or the meaning behind what appears to be a simple physical gesture are just two examples. In one culture, taking initiative can be considered an attribute; in another, a sign of aggression. Business culture differences among countries may have to do with concepts of teamwork and time. In some collectivist cultures, teamwork is valued over individualism. In other cultures, varying perceptions of time and deadlines may need to be understood.

## KEY VALUES FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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- **Awareness:**  
Being aware that your mentee may be acting or speaking contrary to your expectations may simply be due to their own cultural norms and language interpretation.
- **Knowledge:**  
Applying your understanding of cultural differences to resolve both obvious and not so obvious culture bound situations.
- **Skills:**  
Combining your awareness of cultural differences with the knowledge that you may be acting in a culture-specific way and applying effective communication, positive regard and non-judgmental listening.

In this mentoring relationship, both you and your mentee are embarking on a voyage of discovery. Your mentee will benefit from learning the nuances of Canadian work culture, and you will experience personal development through education about other cultures.

# CODE OF CONDUCT



## THE MENTOR'S CODE

- Treat your mentee with respect and sensitivity.
- Conduct the relationship as professional first and social second.
- Keep any disclosure confidential unless your mentee grants permission otherwise.
- Focus on providing knowledge and insight into the Canadian workplace.
- Do not assume the role of counsellor, regardless of issues brought to the table.
- Support your mentee in achieving their goals.

## THE MENTEE'S CODE

- Do not ask or expect your mentor to provide you with a job.
- Actively seek employment throughout the mentoring relationship.
- Maintain professional conduct without expectation of friendship.
- Take the mentoring relationship seriously by striving to meet all commitments.
- Commit to achieving your goals.
- Communicate with your mentor at agreed upon times.

# YOUR FIRST MEETING



Here are some tips for making the most of your first meeting as a mentoring pair.

## BEFORE THE MEETING

- The mentor can review the mentee's resume to gain a better understanding of the mentee's professional background and professional objectives.
- The mentor and mentee should have a conversation with the Mentorship Manager to discuss the match and explore any ideas they may have.
- Review roles and expectations from the mentoring commitment.
- Read over and sign the mentorship agreement and code of conduct that you received at the orientation session or from the Mentorship Manager.

## AT THE MEETING

- Take time to get to know each other. Share professional histories and find similarities and differences. Mentors can cover specific information on what they do at work and what their position means in the organization.

- Discuss logistics, such as:
  - Best time of day or week to get in touch. A recurring meeting time often works best.
  - A convenient place to meet.
  - How long to wait if someone doesn't show up for a scheduled meeting.
  - Best method for keeping in touch between meetings.
  - What's expected between calls or visits.
- Set boundaries for the mentoring relationship. Discuss and seek clarity about:
  - Whether it is okay for the mentor to offer feedback on professional norms about clothing, grooming, nonverbal communication.
  - Whether it is appropriate to address language issues.
  - Whether it is appropriate to discuss behaviours that each of you may find offensive.
  - What's expected between calls or visits.
- Discuss confidentiality. Be very specific about things which you feel should stay confidential.
- Discuss challenges or barriers to meeting such as travel and child care.
- Decide what you want to achieve together and set priorities given the time frame and scope of your roles.
- Sign the mentorship agreement.

## AT THE END OF THE MEETING

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You should go away with:

- the feeling that you know more about your mentee
- an agreement on your learning goals and priorities
- one or two meetings booked in advance
- an action plan for your first two or three meetings
- a task, or tasks, for the mentee to work on between meetings

# SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



Some mentoring pairs benefit from structure and others are comfortable with a less formal plan. Different priorities may require different strategies and approaches. You can do the following:

1. Work together in your meetings to address the priorities that are highly relevant to the mentee's goals.
2. Seek referrals to other programs or services when the mentee's needs are highly relevant and the mentee is prepared to address them, but the mentor can only provide limited support. Consult the Mentorship Manager for suggestions. The mentor may also make referrals within his or her networks.
3. Redirect the mentee to training options for areas where the gaps in skills and knowledge are significant.
4. Postpone discussing priorities that are not highly relevant to the mentee's goals.

Consider this quick guide for ideas. You may also consult the sample agenda in the following section:

## TOGETHER YOU CAN

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- **Share information** about your work culture and your current or former workplace. Talk about how work culture varies from one place to another and from one country to another.
- **Review cover letters and resumes** to ensure that they are stylistically meeting industry standards.
- **Share experiences** from past interviews.
- **Practise telephone screening interviews** by reviewing typical interview questions. Talk about how telephone interviews tend to be structured and how best to prepare for it including how to leave an effective voicemail.
- **Discuss “what if” scenarios** of challenges people may face in the workplace and develop solutions.
- **Find opportunities for job shadowing** (within or outside the mentorship), volunteering and professional consultancy.

## MENTORS CAN

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- **Find a way for mentees to showcase their work**; for example, invite them to speak at a “lunch and learn” session in your department to share insights about workplace culture and the way in which business operates in other countries.
- **Where appropriate, invite mentees to meetings**, briefings or training sessions at your workplace to observe how your organization functions and as an opportunity to learn about Canadian workplace culture.
- **Invite mentees to industry events** or lectures and discuss the topics presented.
- **Help mentees build an effective network**: introduce them to your industry contacts; invite them to lunch with colleagues; help them to set up informational interviews with your colleagues.
- **Review the mentee’s job search activities** and set weekly targets.

There are many activities that may contribute to a successful mentoring relationship. It will be up to both of you to determine the best path to follow. To start off, here are a few ways in which the mentor might support the mentee:

- Setting goals
- Developing an action plan
- Problem-solving
- Following through with a plan or commitment

Once you have assessed job search areas to focus on, revisit the mentee's goals:

- Is the goal realistic?
- Is it achievable in the given time frame?
- Is it necessary to identify more manageable interim goals instead?
- Does the mentor have the resources to help address these gaps?

# SAMPLE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

## Introduction

- Share cultural background and work history
- Review cover letter and resume
- Discuss previous job search strategies
- Set realistic weekly activity targets
- Review job postings and advertisements
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location

## Interview Practice

- Discuss job search activities in home country
- Review job search activities
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location

**Optional:** arrange for colleagues to participate in practice interview sessions as interviewers.

## Professional Development

- Share any relevant industry professional certification and/or licensing requirements
- Recommend professional journals and publications
- Discuss articles
- Discuss use of industry-specific language and terminology
- Review sample email etiquette policy, if any
- Continue review of job search activities
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location

## Identifying Career Goals

- Discuss long-term goals
- Clarify strategies for achieving goals
- Discuss what is important to employers or the industry in general
- Continue review of job search activities
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location

## Employer Contact and Networking

- Discuss importance of networking
- Discuss networking strategies used in home country
- Discuss strategies for building relationships with potential employers
- Review contact list and networking activities
- Discuss responses and feedback from employer contacts and networking
- Discuss “did wells” and “next times”
- Continue review of job search strategies
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location

## Telephone Etiquette/ Telephone Interview

- Discuss dos and don'ts of telephone interviews and voice messages.
- Discuss “did wells” and “next times.”
- Continue review of job search activities.
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location.

**Optional:** practice leaving a voice message confirming date and time of next meeting.

## Information Interview

- Share personal and company's networking practices.
- Discuss the purpose of information interviews.
- Conduct mock information interview.
- Discuss networking strategies and practices.
- Contact colleague or another mentor to meet with mentee.
- Facilitate information interview.
- Continue review of job search activities.
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location.

## Networking

- Share information about a networking event.
- Discuss the dos and don'ts of networking.
- Discuss the use of safe small talk.
- Talk about joining a professional association.
- Introduce mentee to colleagues and observe mentee's interactions.
- Continue review of job search activities.
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location

## Workplace Culture

- Discuss experience at a networking event.
- Discuss cultural differences relating to the workplace.
- Discuss effective workplace practices, such as how to integrate into teams.
- Discuss "what if" scenarios of challenges people may face in the workplace and develop solutions.
- Continue review of job search activities.
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location.

## Action Planning

- Continue discussion of effective workplace practices; recommend articles.
- Provide an example of action planning from your own experience. Discuss.
- Have mentee share plan of action for the next two months.
- Discuss any questions or concerns mentee may have regarding action plan.
- Continue review of job search activities.
- Set/confirm next meeting date and location.

# NETWORKING



Effective networking is your key to career success in Canada. Networking can help you build lasting relationships and improve your access to information, resources and job opportunities.

## WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Developing a list of broad contacts – people you've met through various social and business functions and leveraging them into your job search. People you met in unexpected places can offer you job leads, advice, or information about a particular company or industry. They can also introduce you to other influential people.

You can assist your mentee in building a network, pointing the way to organizations that may prove the most helpful. You can also advise how to manage those relationships in the early stages of network building.

## EFFECTIVE NETWORKING TIPS

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- Have a reason for meeting someone – something you may have in common.
- Express interest in who they are or what they do. Make an effort to get to know them.
- Share something of common interest.
- Find a reason to follow up with further contact.

## WHEN MEETING SOMEONE FOR THE FIRST TIME

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- The first 30 seconds can determine how open someone will be to spending time with you.
- Think through your opening line – say something engaging and brief.
- Ask a few good questions to help stimulate conversation.
- Pay attention. Listen.

## WHEN ATTENDING EVENTS OR OTHER NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

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- Set a goal for how many contacts you wish to make and strive to meet it.
- Make notes on the back of business cards to remember a quality about them.
- When in conversation, maintain eye contact – in North America, it conveys interest and self-confidence.
- include others in conversations.
- Find a reason to stay in touch with a note or email.
- Learn to express and accept “Thank You”.

# FEEDBACK TOOLS

## Resume & Cover Letter:

	Needs Improvement		Average		Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Resume</b>					
Format					
Content relative to position					
<b>Cover Letter</b>					
Format					
Grammar					
Content relative to position					





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