

## **Introduction to MENTORING**

### **What is mentoring?**

The term mentoring describes the relationship between an experienced, and sometimes older individual, referred to as a mentor and a person of lesser experience called a mentee. The mentor is usually a successful professional who “has been there, done that” and helps and guides another’s development.

### **What is the difference between mentoring and coaching?**

#### *Similarities*

- Both use questioning techniques and active listening
- Both involve a positive experience where individual growth takes place in a safe environment with individuals who care about each other

#### *Differences*

- A mentoring relationship is usually between a seasoned “pro” and novice. In coaching the individuals are more on equal terms.
- A mentor provides advice and instructs or directs mentees. The coach stimulates the individual to determine their own path of learning.
- Mentors develop plan of action for the mentee. With coaching the individual develops their own action plan with the support of the coach.
- A mentor actively helps with problem solving. In coaching the individual is stimulated to solve own problems by identifying alternatives and assessing best course of action. At times the coach allows the coachee to fail.
- A Coach asks questions and listens – coachee supplies answers.
- A Coach will suggest actions but the coachee makes final decision as to action.

### **Who can mentor?**

Individuals who are committed to helping others grow professionally. It is helpful if the mentor has completed training or an orientation on being an effective mentor.

### **What is the mentoring process?**

There are several widely used mentoring models. Over all the process usually entails;

1. Individual feels there is an issue (s) where they need outside advice and assistance
2. The mentor relates experiences and lessons learned – tell story about a similar situation
3. Mentor discusses application of their experience to the mentees issues and offers advice and alternatives.
4. Mentor helps mentee determine best course of action

The process consists of the mentor describing similar experiences and using effective questioning and listening techniques. The mentor provides advice based upon experiences.

The IAFC is grateful to the experienced chiefs who have volunteered their time and expertise to make these mentoring sessions available to FRI participants. The mentor and mentee may discuss agree to continuing the relationship past the individual meeting.