



Catholic Education Office
Archdiocese of Melbourne

SUPPORTING WOMEN *in their*
Leadership Journeys

RESOURCE **6** GUIDE

Support Structures and Strategies

- 6.1 Mentoring
 - 6.2 Coaching
 - 6.3 Women's Leadership Networks
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Be the way. Walk the talk.

TRINIDAD HUNT, INSPIRING LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN PROGRAM

6.1 Mentoring

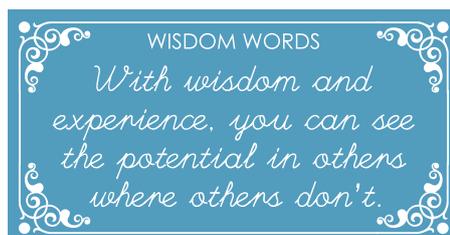
EXPLORING THE ISSUE

Mentoring is generally regarded as a process of one person gaining wisdom and getting practical help from another who is more experienced. Activities that are grounded in feedback and relationships (e.g. mentoring, executive coaching, interaction with peers) are rated as more effective for development than job experiences and education (McCauley and Van Velsor 2004).

Schools implement both formal and informal mentoring processes. Formal mentoring may be part of induction processes where a mentor is assigned to a teacher that is new to the school. These relationships are typically short-term and there may not be a natural connection between the mentor and mentee. Informal mentoring relationships occur naturally and develop spontaneously. They are usually based on mutual interests and ease between the mentor and mentee. Informal relationships are effective in promoting personal and career growth.

If the goal is leadership development, then it is important that the mentor partnership is mutually arranged, and that the mentor has the appropriate experience to make the process beneficial to the mentee (Valerio 2009, p. 41). The mentoring relationship can benefit both parties as it involves the exchange of learning, skill development and sharing ideas. Sharing ideas can generate new insights, new questions and new possibilities.

Same-gender relationships enable participants to experience role-modelling, with women learning about how other women have dealt with the challenges



associated with being a leader. Having a male mentor will enable women to see leadership roles from a different perspective (Valerio 2009, p. 40).

In her online article, '10 Powerful Career Strategies for Women', Hansen writes:

A mentor is often in a position you'd like to be in and has the clout and connections to guide you to a similar position. He or she is someone you probably have unusually good chemistry with who will share stories with you of his or her own climb to success. An effective mentor isn't afraid to criticise constructively (Hansen 2012).

THE WOMEN SAY

A common element in the stories of the *Round Table Forum* participants and in their success as leaders was the presence of a great mentor. The participants stressed the importance of knowing what qualities you wanted in your mentor and being strategic about choosing your own mentor. They had chosen mentors whom they admired and respected. Choosing a mentor from a different school setting can be advantageous as a more objective relationship can be achieved.

The mentoring referred to by the *Round Table Forum* participants was informal rather than part of a structured program. It provided them with an opportunity for receiving and giving feedback and for gaining an insight into their strengths and challenges. See also [Resource Guide 1.2, 'Know thyself – your strengths and challenges'](#).

SHARING THE LEARNING

For mentoring to be successful, the mentee needs to be clear about their desired outcomes. The more certain you are about your needs, the more likely you will find a mentor to meet those needs. It is important to have a plan for leadership development or your career path prior to selecting a mentor. Parameters need to be set where both parties agree upon the purpose and desired outcomes before mentoring commences. Feedback can then be freely given and received. Even in an informal mentoring relationship there needs to be some structure around when and how often to meet. Time needs to be set aside to meet so that professional dialogue can take place. It is also important to build in time for reflecting on the feedback that has been received.

The focus for mentoring can vary. McCauley and Van Velsor (2004) write about assessment, challenge and support as the different roles leadership play in the development of others. What areas need to be developed? Are there gaps in leadership skills? How will feedback be recorded? Will a journal be kept?

Measurement against leadership models such as the CECV Leadership Standards Framework (2005), the AITSL *National Professional Standards for Teachers* (AITSL, 2011), or the Atkinson-Consulting! *Catholic Leadership Capability Framework* (2012) could be a useful focus for mentoring meetings. Alternatively the focus could be on a personal trait or skill such as listening (see [IQ, EQ, SQ Leadership Inventory](#) in Resource Guide 1.2, 'Know thyself – your strengths and challenges').

Information to assist mentors is provided in [Appendix 1](#).

6.2 Coaching

EXPLORING THE ISSUE

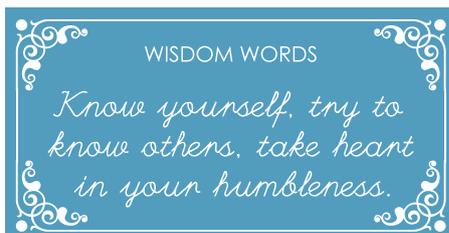
Coaching focuses on achieving results in relation to professional development or performance. Coaching typically helps leaders improve in self-awareness and self-management through the use of learning and action. The coach guides the learner through self-reflection and assists them to develop a plan of action to achieve their goals.

Coaching enables women to get better at the things that are important for their leadership role (interpersonal skills, communicating, delegating, time management, emotional self-management) due to the feedback loop* that is created. It accelerates the learning process as it provides feedback about performance and how the learner is perceived by others. The focus is on helping leaders to grow, rather than fix problems (Valerio 2009).

**A feedback loop is the process of providing people with information about their actions in real time, then supporting them to change those actions and move toward better behaviours (Goetz, 2011).*

THE WOMEN SAY

The Round Table Forum participants indicated that being coached as well as coaching others could assist their leadership development. Coaching enables women to focus on issues that are personal and related to self-improvement and specific areas of leadership development. It is an effective strategy to support women who are considering or commencing a leadership journey as it enables them to:



- tap into the experience of others
- recognise/identify a need for an area of development and/or growth
- be challenged, questioned and supported
- have time and space to focus on themselves.

SHARING THE LEARNING

Coaching programs such as *Coaching is a Conversation* and *Coaching Skills for Leaders* have been offered by the CEOM. Refer to the information below. Access to CEOM programs is via the Integrated Professional Learning System under *Professional Learning / My PL (IPLS)* on the [CEVN website](#).

Coaching is a Conversation

The *Coaching is a Conversation* program is a spaced two-day program presented by Trinidad Hunt. The program focuses on improving performance, which is one of the most challenging tasks leaders face. It centres on a conversational coaching model and is a non-confrontational approach based on engaging with the individual through **EmPower Questions**. Leaders develop questioning skills that empower individuals to think for themselves, make decisions and initiate action. In addition to questioning skills, the program develops effective listening skills.

In the program, participants are introduced to the **Mehrabian Communication Model** developed by Professor Albert Mehrabian. He helped identify the non-verbal and subtle ways in which people communicate.

The model indicates that the non-verbal ways in which people convey their feelings can have greater impact than verbal communication.

Another tool used in the program is the **Five-Step Clearing Method for Removing Barriers to Achievement** ([Appendix 2](#)).

This is a process that moves people to higher levels of personal and professional performance. It is used when the person being coached runs into obstacles on their way to a goal. The method removes blocks, reenergises the person, and creates a sense of personal empowerment.

Coaching Skills for Leaders

The *Coaching Skills for Leaders* program is designed to assist principals and senior leaders in coaching their staff and in developing a coaching culture in their schools. It has been developed as a result of recognising that principals are expected to lead and manage multiple and increasingly complex responsibilities in their core role of leading and supporting their community. Performance management requires provision of quality feedback and coaching skills are an integral component of this. The GROWTH coaching model is used wherein coaching skills such as listening, questioning, clarifying and providing feedback are developed (see [Appendix 3a](#)).

If leaders are interested in developing coaching skills in order to coach others, there are a number of programs that are available to assist them. Four coaching models are outlined in [Appendix 3b](#). Details for coaching organisations are included in [Resource Guide 7.3, 'Who's who'](#).

Leaders in Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne can refer to the [Leadership Continuum](#) web pages on the Catholic Education Office Melbourne website for CEOM professional learning activities and those offered by other providers.

6.3 Women's Leadership Networks

EXPLORING THE ISSUE

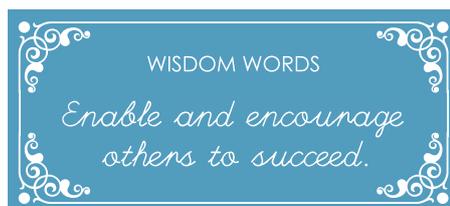
Barbara Watterston (2010) sums up the personal benefits of networking and participating in activities specifically focused on women. These include listening to experiences from existing female principals, sharing concerns, practical ideas to overcome self-doubt, discussing roles and expectations, finding answers to challenges, and sharing experiences with like-minded colleagues. She writes:

Participating in single-sex professional learning activities can provide a combination of personal and professional critical reflection, with the differing social dynamics creating a transformative space to address challenges, issues and enablers in a positive and highly successful way (Watterston et al. 2010, p. 26).

Women report that single-identity programs offer a safe, supportive way to share experiences that cannot easily be discussed in mixed company (Valerio 2009). This is particularly the case for women who are isolated in their role or in a predominantly male environment.

Coleman (2009) highlights ongoing concerns about attitudes to women once they were in leadership roles. 'Women reported experiencing particular difficulties with gatherings of other head teachers. Gatherings in rural and suburban areas tend to be very male dominated' (p. 16).

Women's networks provide the opportunity to have access to highly regarded female role models, which may be lacking in the school environment (Valerio 2009). This enables women to learn more about how other women are



successful and manage to achieve their professional goals.

Seeking educational networks such as subject associations and online organisations can be beneficial. Informal collegiate networks can also provide a welcome source of encouragement and advice, a chance to problem solve and debrief collectively, an opportunity to celebrate successes and to build strong relationships.

THE WOMEN SAY

Participants in the *Inspiring Leadership for Women* program experience a safe space to share their aspirations, fears, ideas and experiences. Evaluation data show that participants grow in confidence, purpose and leadership skills over the three days of the program. The participants in the *Round Table Forum* acknowledged the benefits of this safe space and identified a need for women's leadership networks. They indicated that formal leadership networks set up for principals and deputy principals have mostly male members, due to the imbalance in women taking up these roles.

Some participants found these networks intimidating, particularly if they were new to their role. It was sometimes difficult to express ideas or be heard in groups that had an established hierarchy of operation.

SHARING THE LEARNING

Women need to feel they are able to contribute confidently to existing networks including those with predominantly male

memberships. If women develop their knowledge of the purpose of the network and how it operates, they can then find ways to contribute. Women already in these groups can make it their role to support new members in network meetings so they do not feel overwhelmed. In addition, women can ensure that there are induction processes in place for new members to make them feel welcome and enable them to contribute effectively.

Establishing a Network

When establishing a network, start by defining its purpose and what you expect from it. Set terms of reference, expectations, and develop ground rules for how members will work together. A network can be formal or informal, be set for a specific length of time or for a specific purpose, be face-to-face or electronic. It is important that everyone is clear about the purpose and aims.

When setting up more formal networks, it is important to establish and document clear goals and plan how the achievement of these goals will be measured. Data will need to be gathered over time to determine if the goals of the network have been realised. Writing an action plan is useful for keeping the network focused and can also be given to new members so they are clear about the purpose and activities of the group.

Women's networks should create a safe space for sharing and have strategies in place to support women who may feel less confident participating in discussions and raising issues. Strategies could include making sure the meeting chair is rotated, all members have input into the agenda and having a structure that ensures all members can share in the dialogue.

Other things to consider are the target group for the network, location of meetings (if face-to-face) and resourcing. Networks may need ways to communicate with their members virtually.



References

Participating in networks can be demanding for the women who run them, so to maintain enthusiasm some recommendations are:

- Make sure your network is well run and organised so that members' time is well used.
- Publicise your network or forum's successes so that current and potential members can see the value of the network or forum.
- Include organisational profiles of network members in communication.
- Keep your network a friendly, supportive space for women by developing a code of conduct.
- Encourage members to open up their organisation's events and training to other network members.
- Ask interesting speakers or guests to come along to network meetings.
- Hold events to look at specific issues affecting women leaders.
- Get external organisations to host events.

More detailed advice about running a network is included in [Appendix 4](#).

THESSALONIANS 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

CORINTHIANS 9:6

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

ST MARY OF THE CROSS Diary entry, 12 January 1909

Love one another, bear with one another and let charity guide you in all your life.

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Appendix 1

SUPPORTING MENTORS

It is important that mentors have appropriate training. The following information can be used as a guide for those planning to mentor others.

Basic Qualities of Mentors <i>(Clark 2009)</i>	Mentor's Responsibilities <i>(Canberra YMCA 2009, Online Mentoring for Women)</i>
Being a good role model	Provide a safe learning environment
Being a good listener	Assure confidentiality
Committing to others' growth and development	Be reliable and keep commitments with the mentee
Showing empathy	Allow the mentee to drive the relationship
Being approachable and transparent	Provide guidance, ideas and resources to assist your mentee's learning
Knowing one's strengths and challenges	Encourage and assist in goal setting
Being a life-long continuous learner	Nurture confidence-building
Giving honest advice when needed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving constructive feedback • being open-minded and able to value different perspectives. 	Be prepared to be self-reflective and understand the perspective you bring to the relationship Use a respectful, constructive approach when providing feedback

Appendix 2

THE CONVERSATIONAL COACHING MODEL

The Five-Step Clearing Method for Removing Barriers to Achievement

TrinidadHunt.com

Often times, during the course of everyday life, the people we are coaching run into obstacles, hurdles or stumbling blocks on the way to a goal. These may be anything from time constraints, interruptions, inertia due to a failed attempt at change, or any number of other things.

If the individual has bumped into barriers regardless of whether the issues are external or internal, use the Five-Step Clearing Method. This method will dissolve the blockages, reenergize the person, and ensure their sense of personal empowerment.

What I personally love about this process is that it's simple yet powerful and it produces profound results. It penetrates any impediments to the goal while at the same time, releases any energy blockages that the person may be experiencing in his or her own inner drive. It has the power to transform inertia into energy and turn apathy into action.

Managers have told me it works wonders when used with project teams that have hit a bottleneck. Teachers have used it in the classroom to clear barriers to effective class participation or a less than functional social emotional learning environment. Principals tell me they have had great success with dissolving silos between departments.

Appendix 3a

GROWTH COACHING MODEL

Further, all three groups have reported that they have used this method at home with their own children when one or another of them had hit a wall they couldn't get through. In short, this conversational model has helped hundreds if not thousands of people when they are helping other people.

Further, it is a method that anyone can use with any block or barrier to successful achievement. I have used it to clear my own barriers to success and I have internalised it so much that whenever I bump into a stumbling block I clear myself internally and move on quickly.

The Five-Step Clearing

Goal

- Can you restate the goal you're working on?
- Let's restate the goal you're working on.
- So the goal is ...

Brainstorm Barriers

- You say you ran into some obstacles, what were they?
- What got in the way?
- What other barriers did you run into?
- What else? (Continue until every single thing is communicated and on paper.)

Benefits

- What benefits will you receive if you can break through these barriers?
- What would the benefit be if you could achieve the goal?
- Would there be a benefit to breaking through? And what would that be?
- What other benefits would there be?

Brainstorm Strategies

- Let's brainstorm and see if we can come up with as many strategies as we can to get around these barriers so you can achieve the goal.
- What else could you do?
- Keep going. Anything else?
- Is that it?
- Great. Let's take a look at what we've got here.

Action Step

- Where would you like to start?
- Where would you like to begin?
- What are the first couple of things you'd like to start on?
- Use questions to set next meeting:
 - How about meeting again in a week to see how it's going?
 - Would Wednesday or Thursday be better for you?
 - Morning or afternoon?

8 steps of coaching



© 2009 Growth Coaching International

For more information about the GCI coaching approach visit www.growthcoaching.com.au.

Appendix 3b

OTHER COACHING PROGRAMS

There are number of programs available that assist leaders to develop coaching skills. Organisations like *Growth Coaching International* and *Group Eight Education* provide models to follow during coaching and helping others to work through an issue. A key aspect of all of these models is questioning skills.

Model 1 <i>Élan Enterprises LLC Trinidad Hunt</i>	Model 2 <i>Growth Coaching International</i>	Model 3 <i>Insight SRC</i>	Model 4 <i>Group 8 Education</i>
A conversational model of coaching using EmPower Questions	Uses the acronym GROWTH	Uses the acronym GROW	Uses the acronym DREAM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe space • Identify current state • Brainstorm alternatives • Energise action • Action/Praxis • Follow up/Follow through 	<p><i>Relationships – Building trust</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals (what do you need to achieve) • Reality (what is happening now?) • Options (what could you do?) • Will (what will you do?) • Tactics (how and when will you do it?) • Habits (how will you sustain success?) <p><i>Results – Celebrating the results.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal (clarify context and direction) • Reality (the current situation) • Options (probe the possibilities) • What next (actions from conversation) 	<p><i>First clear the space</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define or describe the issue • Reality (what is the present reality) • Envisage or evoke the future • Alternative courses of action • Make it happen <p><i>Coaches are provided with a set of questions for each aspect.</i></p>
Second session and further follow-up			In addition, the acronym REACH is used to check in on learning from action.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warmth • Insight/Learning <i>EmPower</i> Questions (what went well) • Action <i>EmPower</i> Questions (focus for coming week) • Wrap (set the next meeting) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Reality (Facts) • Emotions (what feelings emerged) • Acquire (what was learnt) • Connections (implications of learning) • What Happens next <p><i>Completion</i></p>

Appendix 4

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A NETWORK

When establishing a network, start by defining its purpose and what you expect from it. Set terms of reference, expectations, and develop ground rules for how members will work together. A network can be formal or informal, set up a specific length of time or for a specific purpose, be face-to-face or electronic.

Defining the Purpose

With so many competing demands on women's time, it is important that networks have a clear purpose. Make sure everyone is clear about the purpose of the network, which might be to:

- support women on their leadership journey
- encourage women to accomplish their goals, visions and intentions
- develop leadership capabilities
- discuss particular issues facing women in leadership
- listen to women leaders, speakers, female role models
- watch a webinar or videoconference on a relevant topic
- network virtually or electronically with others who are geographically isolated
- learn and dialogue around a particular topic
- increase the number of women aspiring to leadership
- implement a program or initiative
- organise a specific event such as a Women in Leadership dinner.

Establishing Procedures and Processes

It is important that all members feel they can have their say and this should be written into the ground rules. Create a safe space and have some processes in place to create opportunities for women who may feel less confident to participate in discussions and raise issues. Processes could include making sure the meeting chair is rotated, and that all members have input into the agenda and share in the dialogue.

The network will provide opportunities for people to contribute their ideas, ask questions, brainstorm etc., and occasionally things come up which are not quite relevant to the moment but could be followed up. One strategy for dealing with these is to record them on the *Parking Lot* – a sheet of flip chart paper on the wall at each workshop/meeting, to which anyone can add their idea/question etc. The network leader is responsible for following up answers to the questions at a later date.

Ensuring Resources

Consideration should be given to the resources needed to run a network. Resources include catering; communication and promotional materials; electronic equipment, audio visual equipment (computers, data show projectors, iPads, videos); software; catering; and storage. People should be assigned to roles to assist with the running of the network. The venue for meetings could be a school, regional office, external location, private home or conference venue, which will influence running costs. Find out about other groups that might be useful for information for your network such as universities, education systems, education groups. They may be able to provide resources and advice.

Specifying the Target Group

Who will the target group be? Members could be women:

- in the local area
- across regions
- with specific leadership roles (Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Teaching and Learning, etc.)
- with common interests
- who want to learn together
- who come together to run a specific event or activity
- who have a common bond such as attending a professional learning activity together.

Maintaining Enthusiasm

Participating in networks can be demanding for the women who run them, so to maintain enthusiasm:

- make sure your network is well run and organised so that members' time is well used
- publicise your network or forum's successes so that current and potential members can see the value of the network or forum
- include organisational profiles of network members in communication
- keep your network a friendly, supportive space for women by developing a code of conduct
- encourage members to open up their organisation's events and training to other network members
- ask interesting speakers or guests to come along to network meetings
- hold events to look at specific issues affecting women leaders
- get external organisations to host events.

Appendix 4 CONTINUED

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A NETWORK

Ensuring Effective Communications

Your network will need ways to communicate with its members and may even 'meet' virtually. The following ideas may be useful:

- A website or webpage (keep this regularly updated).
- An electronic newsletter is a cheap, quick and effective way to disseminate information both within the network and externally.
- Use online tools for creating templates and systems for a regular newsletter or email bulletin (professional email broadcast systems).
- Search LinkedIn, which operates the world's largest professional network on the Internet with more than 200 million members in over 200 countries and territories.
- Facebook is easy to use and it is simple to create a basic holding page for your organisation, which can then be found when people search. The page should be refreshed at least once a week with useful and relevant information.
- NING is an online service to create, customise, and share a social network.
- Twitter is one of the easiest ways to raise awareness of your network or forum and to disseminate useful information. It can be a useful resource for developing a community around your network.
- Blogs are like online diaries where information and thoughts are posted by the blog's author and people can comment. Examples include: Trinidad Hunt's blog and the Leadership Standards Framework website under *Thoughts*.

