

Informal Mentoring Toolkit for Executives and Senior Leaders

Overview

Introduction In support of the Informal Mentoring: *Share What You Know* Initiative, the Human Resources Division (HRSD) is requesting that Executives and Senior Leaders reinforce the concept that informal mentoring is valuable to the organization as well as individuals, and can easily be incorporated into everyday activities.

Contents This publication contains the following topics:

Topic	See Page
Informal Mentoring Toolkit for Executives and Senior Leaders	2
Resources	6
Sample Icebreaker Activities	8

Informal Mentoring Toolkit for Executives and Senior Leaders

Background— the Informal Mentoring: *Share What You Know* initiative

The Informal Mentoring: *Share What You Know* initiative is an effort to expand on and reinforce the ways CalPERS empowers staff at all levels to seek opportunities for learning and career development. Beyond employee retention, a culture rich in informal mentoring opportunities also benefits CalPERS because it:

- Allows for learning about other areas of the organization and gives mentors and mentees a more global perspective
- Builds bench strength across the organization
- Enhances opportunities for professional and personal development
- Capitalizes on the breadth of experience in our diverse workforce
- Elevates knowledge transfer from information transmittal to the capture of practical experience and wisdom

In addition to the ideas and activities found in this toolkit, informal mentoring can be accomplished many different and very simple ways. Some examples of informal mentoring include:

- Meeting over coffee or lunch
- Participating on cross-functional or cross-divisional teams
- Going for a wellness walk or other break with an informal mentor or mentee
- Providing opportunities for job shadowing

Purpose of toolkit

This document includes suggestions for ways to feature informal mentoring in casual settings as well as incorporating it into structured activities, such as All Staff Meetings. Even if career development or informal mentoring are not mentioned specifically in every activity, the connections made between Executives, Senior Leaders and Staff will foster the openness that allows for future informal mentoring to take place.

Continued on next page

Informal Mentoring Toolkit for Executives and Senior Leaders, Continued

Division Chief brown bag lunch with staff

Recognizing that Executive and Senior Leaders are often pressed for free time in their schedules, one suggestion is to schedule a monthly brown bag lunch with a small number of staff. Depending on the size of the Division, this may be most appropriate for delegation to Assistant Division Chiefs.

In this casual setting, the Executive or Senior Leader are encouraged to:

- Share his/her story about the impact of mentoring (either as a mentor or mentee) in his/her own career or personal life
- Ask staff to share their own mentoring experiences and stories
- Describe what elements/activities are part of informal mentoring, such as:
 - Making informal mentoring a regular part of one on ones
 - Accompanying a manager or staff person to a meeting
 - Reaching out to manager or staff person in an area of personal or career interest
 - Asking if staff has any suggestions for additional elements/activities to enhance current efforts
 - Share what other divisions/units are doing regarding informal mentoring
 - Reminding staff that everyone can mentor

“The Division Chief is in” hour

Often, staff has very little opportunities to interact with Division Chiefs. By scheduling monthly get togethers/chats for one hour, staff is afforded opportunities to do so as well as have the idea that building these connections is a worthwhile and valuable work-related activity.

Continued on next page

Informal Mentoring Toolkit for Executives and Senior Leaders, Continued

“The Division Chief is in” hour (continued)

Division Chiefs are encouraged to:

- Schedule monthly “The Division Chief is in” hour in his/her office where casual conversation is welcome
 - In order to get the conversation kicked off, it might be a good idea to solicit participation from some staff ahead of time
- Host monthly “mocktail” hours in his/her office or other central location
 - Providing “mocktails” or other treats can reinforce the informal feel

Note: This concept would work equally well at levels above and below the Division Chief level.

Meeting mentoring week...all year round

In order to increase the number of opportunities for staff at all levels to connect with Executives and Senior Leaders, individuals can attend part or all of a staff meeting, or invite a staff member to accompany them to one of their meetings.

Executives and Senior Leaders are encouraged to:

- Invite a staff member to a monthly meeting (don’t worry about titles, levels, units)
 - Invite a staff member to a quarterly Leadership Forum
 - Be strategic regarding which staff are invited (i.e. invite staff who are interested in promotional opportunities or a management career)
 - Contact Career_Services@CalPERS.CA.GOV in advance of the meeting to coordinate staff attendance
 - Attend all or part of a project or other working meeting
 - This could be a regularly scheduled weekly or monthly Unit or Section meeting
 - Thank the staff and recognize the team’s efforts
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Informal Mentoring Toolkit for Executives and Senior Leaders, Continued

Monthly/ Quarterly All- Staff meetings

To further reinforce informal mentoring and provide additional opportunities to foster connections between staff at all levels, consider scheduling recurring timeslots on agendas for All-Staff meetings.

Division Chiefs are encouraged to set aside 10 minutes on each monthly/quarterly agenda to share ideas and activities related to informal mentoring such as:

- Icebreaker Activities
 - Please see page 7 for examples
 - Spotlight what individual units do within the Division to enhance role clarity
 - Invite other divisions to come and informally share what they do (no PowerPoint, please)
 - Share an overview of what informal mentoring is
 - Share success stories regarding informal mentoring
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Share what you learned

The Informal Mentoring: *Share What You Know* project team in HRSD has endeavored to put together a useful toolkit for Executives and Senior Leaders that is both effective and easy to use. Please let the team know what you have found useful about this toolkit or what you'd like additional support with by emailing us at Career_Services@CalPERS.CA.GOV.

Success stories play a major role in helping reinforce the concept that informal mentoring is an easy and worthwhile part of the culture at CalPERS. Please share what you've learned with us so that we might leverage it in supporting this initiative.

Resources

Introduction

There are many resources available to all staff at CalPERS that support the Informal Mentoring: *Share What You Know* Initiative. Executives and Senior Leaders are encouraged to take advantage of the following resources.

Learning Center

The Learning Center is located at LPN 3285

- The Learning Center page on Inside CalPERS at <http://intranet.calpers.ca.gov/HRSD/Pages/Learning-Center.aspx> has a robust search function that allows the user to search by title, author or subject.
- For resources related to Informal Mentoring, applicable searches include, but are not limited to:
 - Mentoring
 - Coaching
 - Icebreakers
 - Teambuilding
 - Motivation
- Sample resources for icebreakers and teambuilding include:
 - *201 Icebreakers: Group Mixers, Warm-ups, Energizers, and Playful Activities* by Edie West
 - *The Big Book of Team Building Games* by John Newstrom & Edward Scannell
 - *25 Problem-solving & Decision Making Activities* by Dave Francis and Mike Woodcock
 - *Thiagi's 100 Favorite Games* by Sivasailam Thiagarajan
- Sample resources for coaching and mentoring include:
 - *Coaching Basics* by Lisa Haneberg
 - *Coaching, Counseling, & Mentoring* by Florence Stone
 - *Masterful Coaching* by Robert Hargrove
 - *Coaching & Mentoring* by Harvard Business School Press
- Sample resources for motivation include:
 - *Make the Right Choice: Creating a Positive, Innovative and Productive Work Life* by Joel Zeff
 - *How Full Is Your Bucket?* by Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton
 - *1001 Ways to Energize Employees* by Bob Nelson
- Learning Center staff is also available via phone at 3-2576 or HRSD_Learning_Center@CalPERS.CA.GOV for support and assistance with resource selection and availability.

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Resources, Continued

Career Services Program

The Career Services Program (CSP) in HRSD:

- The CSP provides information and tools to assist CalPERS staff in meeting their personal career goals.
 - Career Analysts are available for support regarding Informal Mentoring efforts by emailing Career_Services@CalPERS.CA.GOV.
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Informal Mentoring

The Informal Mentoring: *Share What You Know* webpages on Inside CalPERS:

- General information about the Informal Mentoring Initiative
 - <http://intranet.calpers.ca.gov/HRSD/Pages/Informal-Mentoring.aspx>
 - Informal Mentoring Resources
 - <http://intranet.calpers.ca.gov/HRSD/Pages/Informal-Mentoring-Resources.aspx>
 - Video of the Informal Mentoring Kick-off featuring speaker and author Joel Zeff
 - <http://insider.calpers.ca.gov/apps/vid-center/screen.asp?movieID=101>
 - Encourage staff new to your area to watch the video in its entirety (approximately 90 minutes)
 - Host a “movie afternoon” for staff to watch the video
 - Select one of Joel’s “games” and the corresponding commentary (approx. 15-20 minutes) to view and discuss during a staff or team meeting
 - For more information and support, please contact CSP staff at Career_Services@CalPERS.CA.GOV
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Sample Icebreaker Activities

Introduction Please see below for a sampling of possible icebreaker activities to use in Unit, Section, or All-Staff Meetings.

Informal icebreakers Icebreakers can be very unstructured and used in groups of all sizes. Some examples of informal icebreakers are:

- Ask staff what they do for fun
 - This would work well in a small group or lunch session
- Ask staff what they wanted to be when they grew up
 - This would work well in a small group or lunch session
- Match the Division Chief to his/her photo
 - Numbering pictures of Division Chiefs from across CalPERS and asking staff to match them with the Chief’s name can also facilitate discussion of what each division at CalPERS does
 - This would work well in groups of all sizes
- Match Senior Managers with their hobbies
 - Numbering lists of hobbies and asking staff to match them up with Senior Managers in the Division can help build connections between staff and the Senior Management team
 - This would work well in groups of all sizes

Structured icebreakers For larger groups, it can sometimes be beneficial to have a more structured icebreaker activity. Some examples of more structured icebreakers are:

- Five of “Anything”
 - 4-6 people per group (divide larger groups into subgroups of this size)
 - Name the 5 all-time greatest movies (it could be 5 of anything, books, sports teams, characteristics of a successful team, etc.)
 - Teams must reach consensus
 - Report back to the rest of the group
 - Give each group 5-7 minutes to come up with their list. (You can give them as much time or as little as you have allotted on your agenda for the icebreaker)
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Sample Icebreaker Activities, Continued

Structured icebreakers (continued)

- Finish the Story
 - 4-6 people per group (divide larger groups into subgroups of this size)
 - First person starts the story
 - Each person in turn adds a sentence to the story
 - One person should be the scribe
 - Each group can have the same beginning to the story or different stories
 - Each group reads the story to the larger group
 - If each group starts with the same story it could be fun to see how the story changes by group
 - Story starters could be “I took a vacation to Hawaii,” “Yesterday I saw a blue bird in a tree” or perhaps even the first sentence out of a book
- That Was Then, This is Now, and Who Knows About Tomorrow
 - 4-6 people per group (divide larger groups into subgroups of this size)
 - You can use individual pieces of paper or flip charts, but you will need one flip chart per group
 - Divide the paper in three
 - First draw a picture of where they were or something they were doing 5 years ago
 - Then draw something that symbolizes where they are now
 - Third draw who, or where they hope to be in 5 years
 - Share the meaning of the pictures with the members of their small group

Note: One thing to consider with icebreakers that involve dividing a larger group into smaller subgroups is that people typically sit with their friends or close colleagues. To mix people up and foster interaction, consider dividing them by:

- A count off (for example, if you want a larger group to break up into 5 smaller groups, have people count off one through five. All the “ones” are a single group, all the “twos” are a single group, etc.)
 - Put dots or colored paper under the chairs
 - Different colored dots on the agendas
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