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Cross-Agency Mentoring

Do

Share your expertise by mentoring a key person in a mainstream community organisation.

Story

An experienced Occupational Therapist from the mental health service met each month with the Access Manager of the local museum. As a result, a varied programme of opportunities was developed and a person with mental health issues joined the museum's advisory group.

Hints & Hazards

When establishing mentoring, address the following issues: who is the session for; what records will be kept; will individuals be discussed by name; will anyone else be informed of the content of the discussions; and what do we do if the arrangement is not working? Some agencies want to establish a mentoring arrangement outside of work time and this should be explicitly discussed.

Some of the difficulties that arise are a result of bringing together the different cultures of the two organisations. It can be helpful to explore the different viewpoints, and especially where differences may be masked by using the same words, but meaning quite different things (e.g. do people mean the same by phrases like 'person-centred', 'learning difficulty', 'inclusive' etc).

See Bates (2002, p25) for a summary of this approach in the context of volunteering.