

Mentoring Programme

Guidelines

Background

Women in Racing (WiR) created the first industry female Mentoring Programme a decade ago. The aim of the programme is to support the further development and professional growth of its membership and foster strong and lasting connections between its members.

Mentoring is a key objective of WiR, and since its inception over 125 women have been supported, many of whom now hold senior positions within the sport.

The Programme

The main function of the mentoring programme is to create relationships between mentors and mentees that will enable positive outcomes, career development and fulfilment. The mentors are experienced horseracing professionals who volunteer their time to provide tailored support, encouragement, connections and guidance to assist in the development of mentees.

The WiR Committee provide regular mentoring events which educate all those involved. The events provide mentors and mentees with the opportunity to network and learn through experiences such as webinars or panel discussions and gives opportunities to meet women in the industry organically. There is now a strong network of women at all levels of the sport who have benefited from the Mentoring Programme.

For more information on the programme please contact mentoring@womeninracing.co.uk.

How to apply

If you feel you would benefit from having a mentor through the WiR programme, please contact mentoring@womeninracing.co.uk.

Becoming a mentor

We welcome mentors from all backgrounds and try and have the widest range of experience and choice. If you feel that you have the relevant skills and experience to be a mentor as part of the WiR programme (please review the role definition attached as Annex 1 - WiR Mentor) do get in touch with the mentoring team via mentoring@womeninracing.co.uk.

A mentor would not be expected to have more than three (3) mentees at any one time. All mentors and mentees are asked to adhere to the following mentoring principles:

- 1) Mentoring is a constructive and developmental form of support.
- 2) Mentoring should be viewed as of mutual benefit to both mentor and mentee.
- 3) The aim of the mentoring relationship must be clearly outlined and understood by all parties at the outset.
- 4) The level of confidentiality that shall be adhered to must be defined at the outset and clearly understood by both parties.
- 5) Constructive feedback for the betterment of the mentoring programme is welcome
- 6) Mentors and mentees can request to change mentor or mentee.
- 7) The mentoring programme and all involved in it are committed to inclusion and equal opportunities.

Mentors are entitled to free WiR membership when registering through the website (worth £25.00pa). Please contact mentoring@womeninracing.co.uk for the code. Membership is the best way to stay informed of events and latest news impacting WiR and be involved in a strong and empowering network.

Sponsorship

A founding principle of WiR is to assist women to secure more positions of influence within the industry. A WiR sponsor holds a position of responsibility and actively promotes other women through providing opportunities and advocating career advancement by making use of the skills and connections of the mentoring group and WiR channels.

The requirement for contracting

To provide the foundation for the mentoring relationship, both parties are asked to agree to a working agreement which establishes boundaries and sets expectations. This is known as contracting and sets up the best chances of a successful mentoring relationship.

The following elements must be agreed in advance of the mentoring relationship:

1. Expected duration: although this may be reviewed and changed over time, an initial time frame should be set to provide focus.
2. The frequency of meetings: an agreement around how often the mentee and mentor expect to meet.
3. The format of meetings: the preferred format for the meetings (e.g. video calls, phone calls, in-person meetings).
4. Communication between meetings: what level or format of communication is acceptable in between meetings. This is important to ensure that mentors are not expected to reply to WhatsApp's outside of working hours, for example.
5. The aim of the mentoring: what specific goals or development are both parties hoping to achieve through the mentoring.
6. Confidentiality: what level of confidentiality is appropriate to be maintained.

Safeguarding

Due to the nature of the mentoring relationship, mentors may find themselves in a situation where a disclosure is made to them, or where they become aware that their mentee is in distress.

It is important to remember that mentors are not trained counsellors, and it is not appropriate to provide mental health advice to mentees.

The mental health charity MIND provides information on the [signs of distress](#) and the behaviours that it may cause, as well as tips on managing [stress and building resilience](#).

When faced with a disclosure or similar, mentors can provide support by listening, asking open questions, and signposting to relevant [support services](#).

[Racing Welfare](#) have also offered to support WiR mentors with any queries around safeguarding issues.

Annex 1 - Mentor Role Description

Role title: **Women in Racing Mentor (voluntary basis)**

Gives feedback about the mentoring relationship to: Women in Racing Committee's mentoring representative.

Background

Mentoring involves the passing on of support, guidance and advice as a form of learning and development. Our programme also encourages mentoring on specific female related challenges like being a working parent, maternity, menopause etc. The WiR mentoring programme connects women within the horseracing industry who have the relevant skills and are willing to provide their time as a mentor, with those who are seeking to benefit from a mentoring relationship.

Main duties

A WiR mentor helps their mentee to proactively manage their career development and improve their professional skills. They offer an objective perspective outside of the mentees direct work environment to assist with analysing issues and productively working through problems. They offer a supportive and nurturing framework.

Main qualities

A WiR mentor will be required to offer their mentee a safe space and support mixed with measured challenge. They are asked to make themselves as accessible as possible and offer a sounding board to the concerns of their mentee.

A mentor shall:

- Actively listen to their mentee, asking open questions to assist with problem solving and idea formation
- Share information, relevant experience, and suggest appropriate connections or contacts
- Provide advice relevant to career progression
- Offer support and encouragement
- Make recommendations for training, learning and development
- Maintain awareness of relevant opportunities that may benefit their mentees, such as the WiR bursary programme

A mentee shall:

Be encouraged to communicate circumstances concisely and clearly, clarify their understanding of issues, review and reflect, take responsibility for their personal development and career plan, consider different perspectives in a respectful manner, and maximise the outcome of the mentoring relationship.

There is no strict duration for a mentoring relationship, the assistance may be short or longer term. The expectations should be defined at the outset and then reviewed as necessary.

The meetings between mentor and mentee may be informal, as virtual or in-person meetings, phone calls, or messages.

When the relationship is deemed to have concluded the WiR mentoring representative should be informed by both parties.

If a mentee wishes to have a new mentor at a later stage to help them with their progression, they should get back in contact.

The WiR mentoring team is available on mentoring@womeninracing.co.uk for any guidance or questions as needed.