GUIDELINES FOR TWO MENTORS WORKING TOGETHER IN ONE GROUP

There is no hierarchy of mentoring. The former designations of Administrative Mentor and Co-Mentor no longer apply. There are only Mentors, fully equal and both duly accredited. We are not using "co" language any more. We will use the term "administrator" for the Mentor who takes care of the paper work et al. During the group sessions themselves, there should be no discernible difference between the mentors. There may be a "mentoring" relationship between the more experienced Mentor and the less experienced Mentor. Mentors can and ought to learn from each other.

Issues of which to be aware:

Use a reputable leadership, personality and communication styles instrument to discover your preferred leadership and communication styles. (We suggest something like Meyers-Briggs, the Clifton Strengths Finder, or the Enneagram. Discuss the results of these exercises with each other paying attention to how your different styles "work" together. Note where your styles complement each other, and identify areas where mutual accommodations may be necessary. Discuss and decide how your differences might be used to the group's advantage, as a blessing.

Mentoring itself is a relational role, whether it is with another mentor, or as the mentor of a group. If you will be mentoring the group in collaboration with another mentor, each of your personal skills needs to be worked on together and the relationship requires honest communication between the two of you. You may want to review pages 14-15 and 21-22 in the Reading and Reflection Guide on listening skills.

If possible, after each session, debrief the session and what happened in it. If not possible after each session, be sure to debrief with each other on a regular basis.

Be supportive of each other in the EfM sessions. Respectful differences of opinion are fine. Behaviours around those differences that distract and detract from group learning are inappropriate, and ought to be avoided. Be careful about undermining one another's authority and refrain from open criticism. Discuss any issues you may have privately.

Before the EfM sessions start, write norms for how you will work with each other. Revisit them as necessary. Share your norms with the group.

Pay particular attention to group dynamics if one of the mentors is making the transition from being a student in the group to being a mentor. This can be a challenging and sensitive time of transition requiring work, skill, attention and tact on the part of both mentors.

Be clear with each other and with the group about your individual, personal expectations.

Each Mentor should rotate roles leading TR and doing text discussions. Both Mentors should be present for every session, if possible. Mentoring is a full time job; do not indulge in alternating weeks and extended absences.

If there are difficulties in the relationship between the two mentors, it may be helpful to invite the group to offer their observations and suggestions. Discuss the issue in the group. You may bring in a mediator, a trainer, a coordinator or the director of EfM to assist in this discussion.

If the relationship must end:

Having already set the terms of a possible dissolution in your norms:
Review
Renegotiate

If the review and renegotiations and bringing in outside help do not resolve the problems, then be sure to let the group know how the group will continue; another mentor brought in etc.

These guidelines were written and subsequently revised by the participants at a Canadian Training of Trainers, in August of 2014.