IxDA Mentoring - MENTORING CIRCLES Guide

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For more details, please contact
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Introduction

This document is to help you get started with your Mentoring Circle session. Use this as a guideline rather than a rule. Modify them as you see fit.

What is a Mentoring Circle?

A mentoring circle is a mentoring session in a group format rather than a one-on-one session. Each circle or group is created based on a specific topic/interest. We would like to keep the group small and manageable, so each circle consists of up to 8 mentees and 2 mentors.

What's the process?

The process to get into the Mentoring Circles program is roughly outlined as follows:

1. The Mentoring Team send out a participations survey to collect the interest for mentors and mentees

2. The Mentoring Team assess the responses of interest from mentors and mentees

3. The Mentoring Team select the mentees, assigned them in the circles. Each circle will have limited spots up to 8 people. Depending on the demand and availability of mentors, there might be more than 1 group for the topic.

4. The Mentoring Team confirm the mentors and invite them for a briefing and orientation to:

    a. Provide more information on how the program will be run

    b. Confirm which circles you'll be assigned to

    c. Introduce you to your co-mentors

    d. Discuss any logistics needs and support and answers any questions you might have

5. Once each circle is confirmed, the mentoring team will announce and introduce the mentors and the selected mentees via email

6. The mentoring team will support you to organise and facilitate your 1st meeting. *See the 1st meeting section for more details.*

7. Prior to the 1st meeting, we recommend that the mentors meet-up before the 1st session with the support of the mentoring team to discuss the group's needs in more detail.

What is your role and responsibilities as a mentor?

Each group will have at least 2 mentors - so, you're not alone!

As a mentor in the circle/group, you are leading the group and are responsible to facilitate the sessions. You'll be sharing this responsibilities with the other mentors in your group.

The mentoring team will provide support as much as it is needed.

What is your role and responsibilities as a mentee?

You'll be one of many mentees in the group. So, we expect you to:

- Participate and engage with the sessions held in your group
- Attend all the sessions scheduled*
- Respect the time and commitments put in by your mentors and your peers.
- Collaborate and work together with your peers under the guidance of your mentors
- Be respectful to one another

*While exceptions might apply due to sickness, family commitments, etc. We expect that you are able to attend at least 80% of the sessions scheduled.

What topics and activities should I cover during the program?

Each circle will focus on a high-level topic (e.g Research, Interaction Design, etc). So your activities should be focusing on the relevant topic.

There's no set rules to how you might do the activities. It totally depends on the learning objectives. In the past, some groups had a very structured lesson type activity for each session, and other groups had a more loose structure from Q&A discussions to hands on workshops. So, it's totally up to you!

A good way to do this is to conduct a workshop in your first meeting to discuss what the learning objectives that should be covered in the rest of the program.

Mentors should work together to plan for the activities. To help with this, we recommend that the mentors meet-up prior to the 1st session with the mentoring team support to discuss in more detail. The mentoring team can provide you with some insights and learnings from the last round of the Mentoring Circles.

How often should the circles meet?

There are no set rules on this. It's up to each group to decide what's appropriate.
As a reference, in the past, most groups decided to meet once a fortnight for 2 hours and it seems to work quite well. Each group should discuss this in the first meeting.

1st Meeting

This is the most important session that would help set up your circles for success. We highly recommend that all participants to attend this 1st meeting.

Don't worry! We (from the mentoring team) will attend your 1st session and work with you to help you get started and set up for success.

The focus of your 1st meeting should be:

- Create a Group Charter together
- Define the learning objectives
- Plan your activities/cadence

Group Charter

One of the first important things we recommend you do is to create a **Group Charter**.

Mentoring circles is different to a one-on-one session. You'll be working with a group of people. Hence, it's important to have a **group charter** before you start. This allows you to set some rules and boundaries to how you will work together as a group and how you might be dealing with conflicts for the benefit of everyone in the group.

Allow at least 20 mins in your 1st meeting to discuss this. It doesn't have to be comprehensive. The purpose of this is to have an open discussion on how the sessions should run and align expectations between participants.

Use the following structure below to help you with the conversations:

Topic	Questions to think about
House rules	- Think about if the use of mobile phones allowed during the sessions? - Keeping the space in the same or better conditions to where you find it? - Clean up after sessions? - How many breaks needed? For how long?
Communications	What tools do you want to use to keep the communications going? E.g. Slack? WhatsApp? Email?

	• Any channels of communications to avoid? • Any time is off-limits/uncontactable? • How would you like the behaviour/style communication to be formed in the group? (e.g. Open communication, honesty, etc)
Feedback	• How should you provide feedback/critiques?
Commitments	• How often should you meet? • How long the sessions should be? • Additional homework time? How long? • Is there a minimum number of attendees required for the meeting to go ahead? (As you might need a minimum number of people to attend for group activity) • If the meeting is cancelled, what should happen? • If someone coming in late, what should happen? ○ E.g. late jar? **If someone can't make it to the meeting:** • How should they notify the group? • How should they be updated so they can catch up?
Decision Making	• If you need to make a decision on something, how would you approach that? e.g. anonymous voting? poll? etc
Conflict Resolutions	• How would you deal with conflicts (as they arise)? • How would you escalate the issues/concerns? • How should we (mentoring team) support you?
Confidentiality	*You might come across a situation where you need to treat confidentiality and data sharing carefully. Have a discussion to what rules should apply and what the group be comfortable with.* • How should you treat confidentiality in the group? • Should 'What happened in the group stays in the group' rule apply? • If showing any client work as an example, can they be shared?
Food and drinks	*If your session runs after hours (i.e. during dinner time) you should discuss how you want to make sure that everyone feels comfortable and not hungry during the sessions. Unfortunately, IxDA Sydney would not be able to provide any funding to cover food or drinks. However, with some creativity, everything is possible. Have a think about:* • Do you need food during sessions? • Who is going to provide food and drinks? • Should you organise a food roster? or should everyone chip-in for some Pizza or take aways?

As you can see, there are a lot to discuss in your group charter. Some things that might be obvious to one, might not be obvious to others. So it's important to do this properly.

Learning objectives

Once you've done the group charter, you can now discuss the learning objectives of the circles.

As mentioned above, this can be done with a quick workshop and discussion as a group on what topics you would like to be covered.

Cadence

Once you know the learning objectives, you can now start planning and discuss how you want to run the activities. You can decide the cadence of the meeting and start putting some schedules together.

Remember that the program will run for about 12 weeks (From August to November) in total. Keep this in mind when planning your activities for the group. For example, if you decide to have a fortnightly session, this means you might only be able to fit in 6 sessions in total.

2nd meeting, 3rd, and so forth

We expect that you're all set up to run this circle by now. The mentoring team involvements will reduce over time. However, please contact us if you need support.

Last meeting

Finally, you've reached your last meeting! In this meeting, it's all about wrapping up and retrospectives.

We recommend that you allow 20-30 mins to do a retro on how the program has been for you. The mentoring team can come along to this session and help you facilitate the retro session.

Some of the topic for discussion for retro:
- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- How it can be improved?
- Any suggestion/feedback to put forward to the IxDA Sydney Mentoring committee (We always love to hear your feedback - good/bad!)

Code of conduct

IxDA is committed in creating a safe and respectful community. We expect you to adhere to the IxDA Global Code of Conduct policy.

In addition, we (IxDA Sydney) treat **confidentiality, privacy and data sharing** very seriously. We would like to ask you:

- Respect the privacy of everyone in the group
- Respect the confidentiality of your group discussions (where applicable)
- Be clear on the intention/purpose of sharing other people's data/work and always ask for consent from the owner/creator of the work before sharing

If you have any doubts, please check with us and contact us at mentoring@ixdasydney.org

That's all from us. I hope you'll find this guide useful to you. If you have anything you would like to add to this guide or if you have any questions, please contact us at mentoring@ixdasydney.org

All the best and good luck!