

## Mentor Policy

### Ensuring safe and effective relationships

#### The Forum and Relationships

1. The European Leadership Forum's vision is to unite, equip, and resource Evangelical leaders across Europe to renew the biblical church and evangelise Europe. Thus, at its annual meetings, and at networked events across Europe, the Forum seeks to facilitate informal support networks and friendships as well as more formal leader-to-leader mentoring and partnerships. This places relationships at the heart of the Forum strategy.

#### Mentoring Trust and Power

2. Mentoring is an intentional, but flexible, relationship of trust, in which one person (the mentor) enables another (the mentee) to develop their potential and gifting for the service of God's Kingdom. The Forum recognises however that wherever one person seeks advice, mentoring or support from another, there is a difference of 'power' and an implied hierarchy in the relationship that could lead to the development of inappropriate behaviour.

#### Inappropriate Mentoring

3. There are several ways in which these relationships can become inappropriate or even abusive. First, over-directive advice that is given without sufficient thought or reflection may be serving personal needs for control and authority on the part of the mentor, rather than the real needs of the person who seeks their help. Second, misunderstanding about the aims of a leader-to-leader relationship may lead to unnecessary emotional hurt, particularly where sensitive emotional issues may be involved or the mentor attempts to deal with issues outside his/her knowledge and experience. Third, there is the risk of inappropriate emotional bonds developing between the mentor and mentee, leading to unhealthy dependencies and, in some extreme cases, the possibility of inappropriate sexual behaviour.

#### Guidelines

4. Given the variety of informal as well as more formal mentoring relationships that may take place across the Forum annual meetings, networks and initiatives, it is not possible or desirable to develop detailed guidelines that try to cover all eventualities. However, the following broad principles should guide all mentoring relationships and **the Forum requires all Forum mentors, speakers, and other Forum leaders to have read and to support them.**

## Guidance for those involved in leader to leader mentoring

### A. Recognise the risks

The most important principle is to recognise that all relationships which involve disclosure of personal information and the seeking or offering of advice involve an imbalance of power. They therefore carry the risk for inappropriate behaviour and it is critical that all those involved in ELF activities recognise this risk and take steps to minimise it.

### B. Manage expectations and ensure there is a shared understanding of the nature and aim of the meeting

The aims of any meetings between a mentor and mentee should be clarified to ensure a shared understanding and to avoid raising unrealistic expectations. In particular the aims should be realistic given the limited time and number of sessions that is likely to be available at Forum events. Typically, Forum mentoring involves a single meeting. But if more than one session happens, it is important to agree to the scope and aims of the mentoring session and to make the boundaries clear.

### C. Ensure that you have oversight and accountability

All mentors offering regular mentoring or structured support/advice should be in some form of accountable relationship in which they receive support and informal supervision for their work. This need not be over-formalised and the level of accountability will depend on the type of mentoring being undertaken. It is important however that all those involved in mentoring should be able to seek advice and support should they need it.

### D. Remember that standards differ between cultures

It is important to beware of cross-cultural differences as to what is considered appropriate. That is why it is advisable to err on the safe side, and to ensure that both parties are comfortable with the circumstances before the session begins.

### E. In the event of a complaint/ concern

If either party in a mentoring relationship is uncomfortable or has a complaint or concern, this should, if possible, be discussed and resolved between the parties in the first instance. It is often possible to clarify a misunderstanding or correct a false impression between parties, but even if this is the case, we want there to be accountability in the mentoring process. When there is a concern or complaint, we ask that the mentor or mentee please write the Forum Mentoring Advisor at [confidential@euroleadership.org](mailto:confidential@euroleadership.org) to ensure that we monitor the issue. Tony Myrick, who was a pastor for 20 years and currently serves as FOCL Vice President of Forum Strategy and Education, will receive and address these concerns.