Mentoring Clinical Occupational Therapists Offering Vocational Rehabilitation in Public Healthcare. Critical Reflections on Four Years’ Experience.
Ingredient list:

• Framing mentoring
• Background
• What not to do
• What worked
• Critical reflection
• Summary and suggestions on positioning mentoring to impact occupational therapy
“Overused and much abused” – Janis Ian
Mentoring is a professional relationship in which an experienced person (the mentor) spends time with a less experienced colleague (the mentoree) in developing skills and knowledge that will enhance the less-experienced person’s professional and personal growth.
Transforming the Vocational Rehabilitation Services of Occupational Therapists in Gauteng Public Healthcare through Action Learning Action Research.
The first ‘mistake’: Workshops

We need a new plan.

Plan
Identified problems

Act
Held practical onsite workshops

Reflect
Practices were not improving.
Another ‘mistake’: User manuals

- **Plan**: User Manuals
- **Act**: Developed User Manuals
- **Reflect**: Practice was not improving
- **We need a new plan**
“I have come to realise that you cannot fix clinical occupational therapy practice by remote control. I have to get involved at the coalface. It is only by working alongside clinicians within their everyday practice realities that there is going to be transformation.”
What not to do …

• Don’t kick down doors
• Don’t formalise the mentoring program
• Don’t sweat the small stuff
• Don’t fraternise with the management
What worked ...

• Mutual consent
• Allow clinicians to set the place, format, content and time frame for mentoring
• See one, do one, teach one
• Be one of them
• Avoid power relations and catch what they drop
Mentoring in real time clinical practice is hard
The personalities of the mentor/mentee affected the quality and the speed of the transformation
There is value in workshops and user documents
Mentoring is time consuming and expensive
The Action Learning Action Research approach was central to the success of the mentoring that took place
“End? No the journey does not end here.” - Gandalf

Mentoring offered with an ALAR approach can change occupational therapy vocational rehabilitation practice. To establish mentoring as a change agent within occupational therapy we need to

• develop a mentoring culture
• foster the political will
• find, train, regulate and remunerate mentors
• generate and publish evidence