Initial Questions for Mentors and Mentees

Objective: Minimize the time needed to uncover relevant information about the mentee -- that will enable you to provide valued coaching and advice.

Career Patterns
- What have been two-three accomplishments in your career that you're proud of? Why?
- What have been your favorite USAID assignments (projects)? Why?
- What makes a really good (bad) day at work for you?
- What are your general strengths (people skills, technical skills) that have helped you?
- What skills or experiences do you think you need to cultivate (people skills, technical skills) in order to be an excellent leader at the next level (e.g. team leader, mission director, AA)?

- What have been disappointments (or shortcomings) with yourself in your career? What happened? What did you do to address them?
- What are a couple of areas where you lack confidence or feel insecure?

General Career Goals
- How do you see your career progressing?
- What keeps you here?
- What specific discoveries are you hoping to make over the next three months?
- Picture self at the next level (office director, mission director…). What will you need to develop or do better in order to do a great job in that position?

The Mission Environment
- What have been relevant issues, opportunities or events at the Mission that have affected you and your staff in recent months (directly or indirectly)?
- How would you characterize the mission's environment and morale?
- Where can I find useful information about the Mission, its current projects and strategy?

Learning Patterns
- Who has been an inspiring mentor or coach for you? Why? What did she or he do/say? How did you change as a result of the experience?
- What style of supervisor (colleague) are you most (least) comfortable with?
- What kind of feedback are you looking for? What best works for you?
- What is your style or approach for learning new information or a new skill?

Previous Feedback & Perceptions
- What has been feedback that you have received about yourself?
- What are examples of kudos from others -- supervisors or colleagues?
- What are examples of tough, developmental feedback from others? Did it surprise you (i.e. possible blind spot)?
- How well do you handle developmental and tough feedback?

The Role of Personality
- Have you taken tests such as Myers Briggs (DiSC, Emotional Intelligence, other)?
- From such tests, what did you learn about yourself? What might be relevant for work?

Additional Questions

Objective: Uncover issues and provide value as a mentor in each session.

Mentor Skills…	
Build quick trust with the mentee.	Prove that you are listening.
Challenge your initial assumptions about the issue (e.g. is it a matter of skill and/or will?)…	Probe deep enough -- to assess/diagnose the issue -- before giving advice/coaching.
Check for non-visual understanding if mentee expressed doubt or confusion.	Use questioning or Socratic method to let the mentee discover the answer her/himself.
Use a communication style that fit the mentee's style (such as more relaxed or more energetic).	Act as a proponent of the mentee if needed – building her/his confidence or motivation?

General and Icebreaking Questions
- How was the week?
- How have things been going?

Uncovering "Skill" Gaps for the *Task*
- Experience: What has been your experience with _____?
  Tell me about it? How did it go? What was easy (most challenging) for you?
  (If no experience) What skills will be relevant to get the job done well?
  What do you think are the steps to get it done well?
- Understanding: What parts are most/least clear?
  What obstacles do you anticipate? How would you get started?
  Which steps in the process do you consider most critical?
  Can you give me an example…?
- Tools/Support: Do you have the tools/support to do a good job? If not, what are options?
  Who else would be involved in this? What are their tasks relative to yours?

Uncovering "Will" Gaps for the *Task*
- Motivation: How do you feel about _____?
  What do you find the most (least) interesting (challenging) with this task?
  Do you see why it's important? What do you see as personal results/ benefits?
  Among your other responsibilities, where does this fit, in terms of priority?
  What else on your plate would take priority over this?
- Confidence: Are you confident/ comfortable with this task?
  Which tasks in the project are you most/least comfortable with?
  What would need to happen to make you feel more confident?
- Security: Do you have sufficient support from your supervisor or colleagues to do a good job? If not, why? If you do not succeed, what's the worst that will happen?
  Well, how do you feel about _____?

Virtual (non-visual) Mentoring
- I hear some uncertainty. Can you explain? Are you sure…?

I cannot see you (well), so if you have any doubts or misunderstanding, please let me know.