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Glossary of Abbreviations

CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
DRM	Developmental Relationship Mentoring
EC	European Commission
LQF	Leadership Qualities Framework
ME	Mentee
MR	Mentor
MRCS	Mentoring Relationship Challenges Scale
NHS	National Health Service
NWDA	North West Regional Development Agency
NWMS	North West Mentoring Scheme
QUIPP	Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention
RCT	Relational Culture Theory
RHI-M	Relational Health Index – Mentor
SD	Standard Deviation
SHA	Strategic Health Authority
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
WUMS	Women in Universities Mentoring Scheme

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Mentoring receives a consistently favourable press and its merits and benefits are widely researched and acclaimed (for example Clutterbuck, 1995 and Harrington, 2011). Some advocates appear almost evangelical in their perspective and responses to the mentoring process. From offender schemes (Tarling, Davison and Clarke, 2004), to initiatives for small businesses (NWDA, 2010), the UK government continues to invest heavily in the concept of mentoring. Despite these plaudits mentoring relationships can occasionally founder and, due to the intensity of the relationship harm can be inflicted on both mentor and mentee alike. Such failing relationships are usually ascribed the provocatively charged label of 'toxic' mentoring (Feldman, 1999; Gray and Smith, 2000).

Both the human and financial implications of failed mentoring relationships are a serious problem for government investment. Although a relatively under-researched phenomenon the incidents of negative mentoring experiences are not uncommon (Simon and Eby, 2003). Investment in mentoring has grown, with a proliferation of progressive schemes addressing an array of specific issues, from adult substance misuse (Welsh Assembly, 2009) to workplace gender inequalities (EC, 2007). With investment ranging from thousands of pounds in small scale schemes to hundreds of thousands of pounds, the economic implications of failure are potentially significant. Hamlin and Sage (2011) argue that while research has studied the benefits of mentoring, there is little focus on what constitutes effective mentoring in formal settings, or the interpersonal processes involved. Allen and Poteet (1999:70) noted that research was "desperately needed to assess the specific design features" of successful mentoring programmes. The focus has been on the programmes themselves rather than the individuals within them, and findings have centred on programme improvements and objectives or better matching processes in order to understand successful mentoring (Eby and Lockwood, 2005).

The measurement of mentoring success however, is problematic and a uniform model for evaluation remains elusive. In one study (Gaskell, 2007) just 34% of organisations were able to successfully measure the impact of

coaching, despite the availability of adequate resources and substantial investment in the programmes. Demonstrating return on investment for enterprises involving soft skills can be challenging, particularly when endeavouring to separate the mentoring aspect from other influencing factors. Establishing return on expectation is however, a more manageable proposition and can prove valuable. Attempts to identify the impact of professional development interventions have generated some innovative approaches such as the 'isolation factor' identified in research by McGovern, Lindemann, Vergara, Murphy, Barker and, Warrenfeltz (2001). The study separates out the effects of coaching but is generated purely from the perspective of the participants, which arguably lacks objectivity. However its success is measured, the popularity of mentoring continues to grow and its benefits remain appreciated (CIMA, 2002). Ineffective mentoring may be avoided through understanding its characteristics and the rationale of failed relationships may prevent repetition, providing a valid objective worthy of further research.

The intent of mentoring is to empower mentees to take charge of their own learning and development and to achieve self-prescribed goals, while allowing the mentor to develop skills and learning associated with the process (Connor and Pokora, 2007:6). Ideally the relationship should imbue both parties with a positive experience stimulating their growth and development. Emergent concepts of mentoring recommend utilising a mixture of approaches to ensure positive mentoring, i.e. pushing and pulling styles (Cull, 2006), and recognising the influence of psychosocial support (Kram, 1983).   These approaches can be inhibited by toxicity in the relationship, potentially resulting in a sense of personal failure and intensifying the harm exacted on either or both parties as a consequence.

Literature on toxic mentoring is however sparse and empirical knowledge and understanding is limited as a consequence. Some researchers, for example, Fletcher and Ragins (2007:373), maintain that greater emphasis should be ascribed to the negative experiences rather than the benefits offered by mentoring or to the influence of mentoring models and methods used. Their

approach, however, attaches a disproportionate emphasis to incidents of negative experiences rather than to positive ones. Literature (Garvey, 2004; Allen, 2007; Hamlin and Sage, 2011) concerned with effective mentoring behaviours, has identified common elements that are recommended to prevent negative outcomes. A wide variety of symptoms can suggest 'toxicity'; ranging from the relatively mild example of a mentee consistently arriving late or cancelling meetings, to a mentor who burdens the mentee with his/her own problems. Therefore toxicity could be described as the result of any behaviour that harms the common purpose of the mentoring process. This is the basis on which toxicity has been defined for this study.

A number of preventative elements feature in developmental mentoring (Megginson, Clutterbuck, Garvey, Stokes and Garrett-Harris, 2006). Megginson et al (2006:19) described developmental mentoring, which is organisationally sponsored, as following a 'common pathway of evolution'. This process involves five stages, from the initial contact where rapport is established, through the mentoring process to the reformulation of the relationship at the end. The duration of the relationship requires awareness and specific behaviours in the dyad with each stage influencing the quality of mentoring. Hamlin and Sage (2011:768) identified many of their study's formal positive criteria as being consistent with those of a developmental mentoring model, for example, 'allows the mentee to think through issues and make own decisions'.

The context of this study is a mentoring scheme that uses a developmental mentoring model within a distance mentoring operation. This allows access to off-line mentors; a mentor outside the line-management role, a recognised 'best-practice' recommendation for successful mentoring (Clutterbuck, 1995). Additional to the off-line feature, the Scheme encourages dyads from different professions as well as organisations. To avoid confusion with mentoring at a geographical distance as opposed to a professional or organisational distance, the distance mentoring context will be referred to as 'Distal Mentoring'. The term 'distal' is therefore a new term adopted for this study and describes a dyad from differing organisations and/or professions. The

combination of these two elements; the developmental mentoring model as interpreted by the mentoring scheme, and the distal mentoring facility is suggestive of producing a successful mentoring environment potentially guarding against toxicity.

The term 'developmental' refers to the progress and growth of the relationship. Developmental mentoring should not be confused with the cognitive development of the individual discussed in Cox and Jackson (2010). For clarity, the developmental mentoring model used by the mentoring scheme forming the basis of this study will be referred to as the developmental relationship mentoring (DRM) model.

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between developmental relationship mentoring (DRM) and toxicity experienced during the course of mentoring relationships;

The following objectives have been set to fulfil this aim:
  a) Critically review the literature on toxicity in mentoring and DRM together with related concepts such as dysfunction,
  b) Review and evaluate documentary evidence produced by one specific mentoring scheme relating to its development and operation,
  c) Using a case study approach explore toxic experiences together with the use of a DRM model from a range of perspectives,
  d) Generate findings to clarify whether DRM is effective in prevention of toxic mentoring, making an original contribution to theoretical knowledge of toxicity and professional understanding in the field of mentoring.

This study further aims to perform an exploration of incidents of toxicity and prevention, and consider mentoring styles or models for comparison with data generated from a case study of an existing developmental mentoring scheme.

The North West Mentoring Scheme (NWMS) is part of a regional National Health Service (NHS) strategy to develop aspirant leaders. Mentoring is one of a number of delivery mechanisms adopted by the Leadership Qualities Framework (LQF) which was formulated to identify and develop desired qualities in effective leaders. While part of a leadership strategy the NWMS is

open to all staff regardless of role. The NWMS itself serves NHS organisations in the North West region and participation is voluntary.

While research has sought to identify causal factors of toxicity (Kram, 1988; Scandura, 1998), seemingly no study has been directed at establishing whether specific models or styles of mentoring can serve as toxicity preventative agents. There is however, some research (Garvey, 2004; Hamlin and Sage, 2011), that includes recommendations for preventing toxicity which adhere to the principles and techniques used in the DRM model that forms part of the context of this study. Research has identified elements that ensure effective mentoring, such as initial contracting to determine expectation outcomes (Spencer, 2007) and non-assigned relationships (Scandura, 1998). Solutions proffered conform to the DRM model's ethos of deep listening, powerful questions and solid contracting. This is coincidental as the NWMS was not founded with the intention of preventing toxicity but to provide leadership development for the NHS in the North West.

The DRM model adopted by the NWMS is based on the developmental mentoring model developed by Megginson et al (2006) that divides the mentoring process into five stages; building rapport, setting direction, progression, winding up and moving on. This structure provides direction and guidance to the mentoring process for both mentor and mentee and aims to help prevent and recognise relationship problems. Beech and Brockbank (1999), in their study of a mentoring scheme for 35 junior and middle hospital managers, related the dynamics of mentoring to Berne's (1977) work on ego states, whereby communication takes place between the positive aspects of those states. The nature of the DRM model appears to differ from traditional mentoring aiming to help people "take charge of their own development, to release their potential and to achieve the results that they value" (Connor and Pokora, 2007:6). This study will compare and contrast the DRM model to other forms of support as well as exploring definitions of the terms used. Literature, discussed in the next chapter, identifies which mentoring techniques are effective in the prevention of toxicity, many of these traits are found in the DRM model.

A feature of the NWMS is its regional nature and the encouragement of members to form mentoring dyads outside their own organisation through training and development. These external mentors support confidentiality and protect against ethical concerns. The techniques used in the DRM model require no specialist knowledge or expertise of the mentee's role and as a consequence dyads from different professions are encouraged. This regional approach is quite rare within the public sector where the majority of schemes operate internally within the organisation, except at senior level (Gibb, 1999:1059). The research seeks to establish whether this added dimension of external mentoring is connected to the prevention of toxicity.

All mentors are trained in the use of the developmental mentoring model and in this area I acknowledge 'insider' status. As a trainer on the NWMS I had initial contact with the members enrolled on the Scheme. This contact was through the delivery of mentor development training and mentee awareness sessions, along with network learning events, ongoing development, a regular newsletter and ad hoc advice and support. I was also a mentor and mentee in the NWMS therefore creating a risk that my mentor or mentees may wish to participate in the study. I was aware that the dependent nature of the relationship may influence data gathered through interview and in that eventuality their involvement would have been discounted. Participation in the survey however would remain unaffected by this relationship as it would be anonymous. Inevitably the study will be influenced by my 'insider' position. A practitioner undertaking part-time research in their place of work is an increasing phenomenon (Mercer, 2007) which is discussed in chapter 3. It should be noted that at the point of data analysis I was no longer in that position, having left the employment of the NWMS.

1.1 Definitions of Mentoring

Daloz (1999) describes the mentoring process as transformational for both mentor and mentee. As well as serving as a guide on the journey, the mentor provides a bridge between old and new beliefs. Ever more specialised and refined models of mentoring are being developed but generally they are facilitative and enabling in nature. Johnson and Ridley (2008: xi) describe

mentoring as 'dynamic, reciprocal, personal relationships' and identifies an outstanding mentor as someone who is 'intentional' about the role. Yet it is difficult to discern any clear or consistent definition of mentoring in general or its interrelationship with coaching, 'a concept derived from mentoring' (Garvey, 2010:352), in particular. This lack of clarity often leads to misunderstanding or misalignment of mentor and mentee expectations.

There are numerous sub-modalities such as executive mentoring and business mentoring which adopt generic mentoring and coaching techniques. Clarifying the appropriate terminology may allow the support provided to be categorised, its propriety to be evaluated and verified as to whether the protagonists are sufficiently qualified and experienced to provide such guidance. Many organisations have opted for a tailored approach; the Health Service, for example, has developed styles of support akin to mentoring, including, coaching, clinical supervision and preceptorship, with overlapping elements and a variety of approaches. Mentoring in nursing is actually closer to supervision in style. Any attempt to categorise mentoring is therefore challenging and some would argue irrelevant, Bush, Adam and Saunders (1992), for instance, contend that mentoring should avoid simplistic labelling.

The relationship between mentoring and coaching is equally blurred and this indistinct demarcation is due ostensibly to the nature of their interchangeable roles. Coaching implies a more focused, task-based approach solving specific needs or developing skills (Grant, 2003). Mentoring encompasses a more holistic, long-term approach (Clutterbuck, 2008) yet the developmental mentor often uses coaching tools. Mentors can provide their protégés with useful insights, enhancing their own professional life in the process while safeguarding retention and developing talent within an organisation. Coaching can refine employee performance, increasing productivity and again, improve retention of staff. Both mentoring and coaching facilitate and inspire development, enabling the individual to assume responsibility for their own learning. Parsloe and Leedham (2009) provides a useful reference in exploring the potential basic differences to be found between coaching and mentoring with, for example, the focus of learning, being short term for

coaching and long term for mentoring. The close relationship between mentoring and coaching requires a review of toxicity in coaching which is undertaken in the literature review in relation to symptoms and causal factors.

1.2 Toxicity

While use of the term 'toxic' has only found its way into the mentoring vocabulary relatively recently, research into relational dysfunction or failure, albeit sparse has existed for longer, as evinced by Kram's seminal work (1985). Other terminology used to describe toxic mentoring relationships include negative, dysfunctional and ineffective. Toxicity has surfaced in other guises. Megginson and Clutterbuck (2005:25) for example, suggested that descriptions for the characteristics of the 'mentor from hell' would be arrogance, over-familiarity, always talking and never listening. Perhaps such a hell-bound mentor would be better described as a tormentor (Feldman, 1999). Although infrequent, incidents of toxicity continue to plague the good name of mentoring. Its very existence is the antithesis of its intended outcomes and it represents both an anathema and an enigma to the profession. Anecdotal evidence of toxic relationships has revealed a variety of causes. Megginson et al (2006:202) conclude such relationships to be unpredictable and insecure, lacking trust and with questionable commitment. Clutterbuck (2004:28) describes 'toxic' mentors as having manipulative goals, misaligned organisational values or problems they transfer to the mentee. The relationship can be equally as damaging to the mentor. Kay and Hinds (2007:93) catalogue causal factors as lack of time, being unreliable, poor preparation and under-developed empathic skills.

1.3 Developmental Relationship Mentoring (DRM)

The five-phase developmental mentoring model on which DRM is based was formulated by Megginson et al (2006) and founded on concepts conceived by Kram (1985). It describes the structure and life of a mentoring relationship composed of five stages that build or develop over time: building rapport, setting direction, progression, winding up and moving on. The model progresses from the traditional perspective of mentoring, adopting characteristics similar to coaching (Megginson et al, 2006:253) by departing

from the role of mentor leading and advising the mentee, to one more reflective and passive in style, encouraging the mentee, through appreciative enquiry, to create their own solutions and pathways. The DRM mentor in this context may utilise coaching skills in mentoring practice although practical differences remain between the two approaches.

Table1.1 Themes associated with DRM, adapted from NWMS training literature (Appendix I: 6)

Theme	DRM
Timeframe	Ongoing relationship with a flexible timeframe
Agenda	Mentee driven; the mentee sets agenda
Process	Informal
Experience	Mentor does not need to be directly experienced in the mentee's field. However, the mentor may be sought for their relevant position/expertise or sponsorship
Development area	Career and personal development
Focus	Broader view of individual

The focus of DRM according to the NWMS is on the relationship taking a broader view rather than specific goals as displayed in Table 1.1. The DRM model is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.4 Mentoring in the NHS and the NWMS

The NHS has taken a piecemeal approach to mentoring schemes with initiatives often instigated by external bodies such as postgraduate deaneries (Dancer, 2003). Establishing the number of mentoring schemes operating in the NHS therefore is challenging. Many of the potential beneficiaries of mentoring are regarded and treated as independent from each other. Many discrete schemes exist for doctors, nurses, managers and executives with little collaboration between them. There is also confusion regarding the definition of mentoring, contributing to the lack of a clear understanding of the term. A range of mentoring programmes run within the NHS and studies have explored the regional perspective (Steven, Oxley and Fleming, 2008; Connor et al, 2000), but not on the scale or scope of the NWMS. This therefore provides a unique opportunity for research.

Mentoring schemes within the NHS tend to encompass specific organisations, professions or departments and are usually based on the traditional model of mentoring, defined by Ensher, Thomas and Murphy (2001:420) as 'a dyadic relationship in which the mentor, the senior person in age or experience, provides guidance and support to the less experienced person, the protégé.' The term 'protégé' meaning 'mentee' originates from the North American traditional model of mentoring. The NWMS has described its DRM programme as 'long-term with a broad focus, emphasising the needs of the individual'. The differences between the two models are evident, as outlined in the Table 1.2 below.

Table1.2 Differences between Traditional Mentoring and DRM (adapted from NWMS training literature, originally adapted from Megginson et al 2006:17)

Traditional Mentoring	DRM
Focussed on specialised groups i.e. graduates	Inclusive – available to all
Mentors in senior positions within organisation and expert/knowledgeable in mentee's field/area	Mentors from wide range of backgrounds, not necessarily expert in mentee/s field/area but experienced in relevant issues
Hierarchical model where mentor gives the protégé the benefit of their wisdom and provides advice and guidance	Model based on peer/relational mentoring, cross professional and cross organisational (within regional scheme)
Giving advice	Asking powerful questions
Organisational needs driven	Mentee driven
Outcomes are focused on career success	Outcomes extended to include personal development

This study draws on the experiences of individuals participating in the NWMS, a regional framework formulated at the behest of the Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) in the North West region. It is essential therefore that some background is provided on its organisational concepts, practice and philosophy.

The NWMS was set up in 2004 and provides both a consultancy resource and a confidential matching and ongoing support service to the Cheshire and Merseyside, Cumbria and Lancashire and Greater Manchester Strategic

Health Authorities, consisting of over 64 NHS Trusts. Membership has since been extended to external public services clients from local authorities. The NWMS is accessible to all NHS staff possessing either an existing managerial or leadership element to their role or to those with similar aspirations. Membership at the time of data collection (in 2011) consisted of 752 mentors and 1380 mentees, 2132 members in total. Managers account for approximately 40% of members. Regionally the largest membership is in Greater Manchester with 43% and the smallest in Cumbria with 4.6%. The NWMS provides a unique opportunity to study a group of similarly trained, like-minded professionals from a range of backgrounds but sharing the common NHS culture. Perspectives from this shared understanding of mentoring could provide a common base-line with which to measure understanding of toxicity.

The NWMS was conceived as part of a wider strategy to develop leadership capacity at all levels in the region to provide a cross-organisational mentoring service to NHS staff involving no reporting on participants or the mentoring relationships. It was initiated as part of the Leadership Qualities Framework (LQF) but has subsequently been expanded to become more inclusive.   The LQF was researched and developed in consultation with NHS leaders identifying 15 leadership qualities in 3 clusters: personal qualities, setting direction and delivering the service. DRM is used to support these qualities as in the examples provided in table 1.3 below.

Table1.3 How mentoring supports the LQF qualities, adapted from NWMS training (see Appendix II – Mentor Development Presentation, Slide 19)

Cluster	Quality	DRM can:
Personal Qualities	Self-Management	Encourage self-management to achieve solutions by deep listening techniques and using powerful questions rather than providing advice
Setting Direction	Seizing the future	Operate in a goal-setting environment encouraging the mentee to create and develop their own strategies
Delivering the service	Feeling empowered	Help the mentee take responsibility for the outcomes of the mentoring process and their own development and direction

Establishing whether individuals possess these qualities to the level required is determined by adopting a 360 degree assessment technique. This is a confidential, systematic collection of performance data extracted from a range of sources including individuals, their managers, staff who directly report to them and colleagues from both within and external to the organisation. Individual performance is rated in terms of the leadership qualities observed and the process culminates in a report that is explored, with a trained facilitator, providing a well-rounded and comprehensive picture of strengths and weaknesses leading to a personal action plan for the individual. This enables targets to be set against generic qualities, increases self-awareness and encourages ownership of development. The organisation benefits through improved individual performance, communication and team working. The NWMS developmental mentoring model is described in detail in Appendix I and discussed later in chapter 3.

1.5 Methodology

A case study approach was selected to provide insight into the toxicity phenomenon within its context utilising a range of sources. Baxter and Jack (2008) recognised the value of case study research for answering 'how' and 'why' type questions, and considering the influence of the context surrounding the phenomenon. The NWMS was ideally suited as a case study being populated by practicing mentors and mentees and therefore can be described as a relatively specialist group. The mentors were all trained in DRM techniques and the model was regularly promoted through training, awareness sessions and network learning events, consequently members could be described as informed. Although formally trained in this model mentoring styles can vary widely from developmental to traditional as mentors are encouraged to develop their own style for the benefit of their mentee. Membership consisted of a variety of roles ranging from clerks to chief executives, clinical and non-clinical. There was therefore a wide range of perspectives. Mentor and mentee viewpoints were sought in the study to provide a fuller perspective. The research sample offered an informed yet inclusive perspective for the study.

The case study involved a range of data collection methods including a survey of all 2132 members to identify their experience of toxicity in mentoring both within and outside of the Scheme. This provided some interesting data as to the extent of toxicity in mentoring. In depth semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 13 members to generate richer data from informed sources not only on their experiences but also their understanding of the term 'toxic' and any links with DRM.

Undoubtedly the context of the NHS and its culture influenced the data and offered a specific viewpoint of toxicity, presenting a risk that alternative findings would result if the research was replicated in a different environment. However, because participants were drawn from such a wide-ranging professional base, the risk is considered acceptable. Although the image of the NHS consists of doctors and nurses, the reality of the staff base extends from biomedical scientists to accountants with over 300 different careers in existence. The survey sought experiences both within and outside of the Scheme so may have occurred outside the NHS.   Interviews followed the survey to provide greater insight into participants' toxic experiences.

Together with the participant interviews the NWMS coordinator was interviewed to provide an insight behind the scenes and demonstrate the original intent of the initiative. The focus of the questions included understanding of the term 'toxic', the symptoms and causes of toxicity, any links between prevention and the model along with the concept of external or distal mentors.

An analysis of the NWMS documentation was also undertaken to review the level of training received by members. Survey data was analysed using a computerised spreadsheet software package to gather demographic data as well as aspects such as causal factors that were explored via interviews. Interview and survey data was categorised to establish themes and patterns that would contribute to the study's conclusions.

1.6 Outline of the Study

The following chapter explores the existing literature on toxicity and the DRM model. It draws comparisons with other models of mentoring such as traditional and relational. Elements of mentoring such as the psychosocial function are also reviewed alongside an analysis of existing recommendations for prevention of toxicity. The review goes on to examine the regional element of the case study, potentially significant in the study's findings. The chapter is structured to explore two broad elements; toxicity and the DRM model, seeking links to prevention of toxicity. This is followed by a chapter exploring the model in more detail.

The fourth chapter explains the methodological approaches selected; an initial questionnaire identifying suitable participants followed by semi-structured interviews to provide depth to the data, along with an interview with the NWMS's coordinator to ensure triangulation. It also explores why a case study lends itself so appropriately to the research question and the accessibility to data that the NWMS provides. The researcher's position and how biases are avoided is considered. The chapter concludes by outlining how the data and analysis is pursued.

Chapters five and six present the data findings and an analysis of the results. Emergent themes drawn from the findings will structure these chapters. Data will be offered to further understanding of the relationship between DRM and toxicity in line with the study's original objective. Finally chapter seven will provide a summary of the significant findings and their implications for mentoring practice and future research opportunities.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This study aims to examine the relationship between the DRM model of mentoring and the phenomenon of toxicity. In order to do so it is first necessary to comprehend the nature of toxicity and to explore research already undertaken in assessing its causes, effects and preventative measures. Concomitantly, the rationale of the DRM model and its associated components must also be understood. While this connection has not previously been researched, many of the techniques used in the model have been identified as preventative measures in toxicity (Clutterbuck, 2004:124-127; Kay and Hinds, 2009:61-83; Johnson and Ridley, 2008:130; Hamlin and Sage, 2011:768). Once the complexities of toxicity have been explored, its interrelationship with the preventative features of developmental mentoring may be considered, to ascertain whether research in this area has been undertaken.

This chapter therefore addresses the extent of empirical research in three areas, namely Toxicity, Prevention and DRM. It does so both within the bounds of the mentoring field itself as well as in associated disciplines, and identifies any resultant models of toxicity or prevention. Exploring the existence of previous studies on developmental mentoring schemes, the chapter seeks any links between these and toxicity in terms of prevention. For each of the three areas; Toxicity, Prevention and DRM, four strands of research were discovered as outlined in the literature map (Figure 2.1).

To achieve a helpful framework for the study, the literature review searched a range of computerised data bases such as Business Source Complete, Emerald and Academic Search Complete along with online journals such as The International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council's International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching. Key search terms included: mentoring, developmental mentoring, toxic and toxicity, and associated disciplines investigated included coaching, counselling, management and psychology. The bibliography of each article was reviewed to identify additional references.

Studies were sought from the perspective of both mentor and mentee and in differing contexts i.e. both public and private sector initiatives.

Figure 2.1. Literature Map – Empirical Research: Areas and Themes
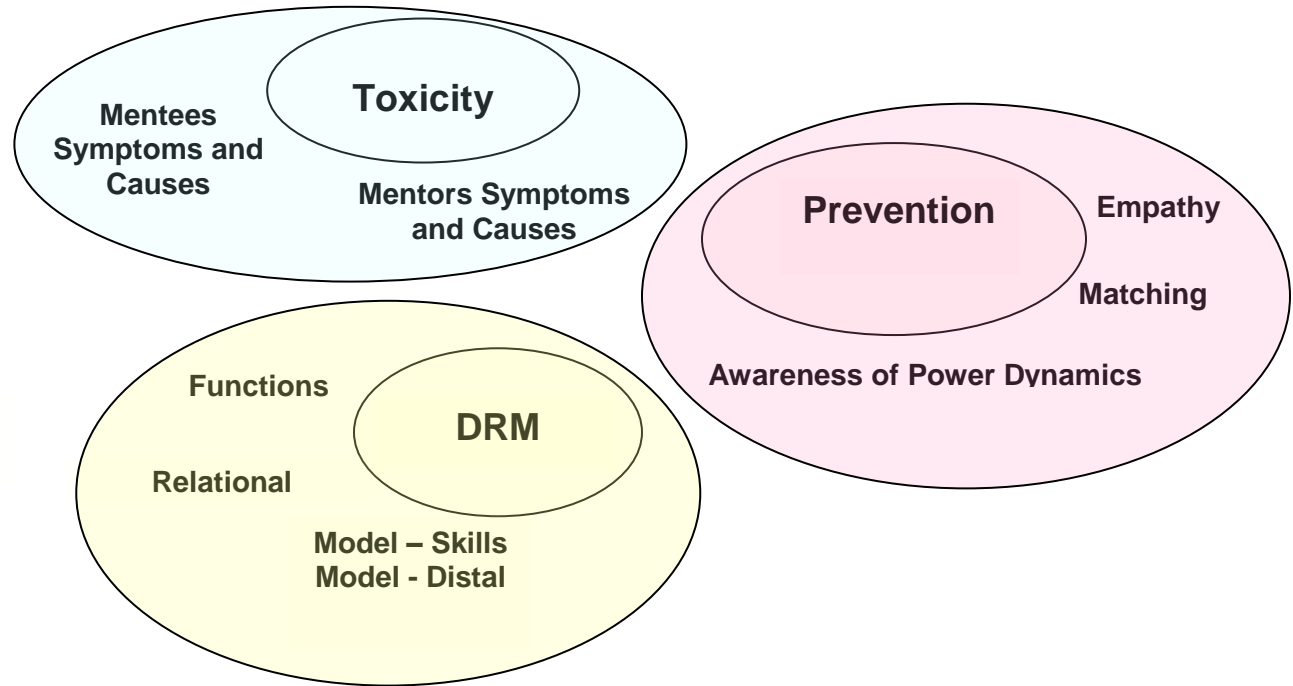
2.1 Toxicity

The term 'toxic' was originally used in relation to mentoring in a nursing setting (Darling, 1984) but has grown in relevance beyond that context. While some studies in the United Kingdom have explored the damaging effects of toxic mentoring, for example, Eliahoo's (2009) study of mentoring in the lifelong learning sector, far more research has been undertaken in North America. Early studies of mentoring by Levinson, Darrow and Levinson (1978) and Kram (1985) do acknowledge problems in mentoring relationships such as overdependence, however, compared to the abundance of studies on the positive aspects of mentoring there is far less research focussed on the exploration of toxicity. Eby (2007) attempted to map relational problems and their impact but Hamlin and Sage (2011:756), when noting the lack of empirical evidence in negative mentoring, suggests the need to study ineffective behaviours in the dyad. While there has been some attention on constructs and behaviours, few links have been made between non-traditional mentoring approaches and toxic experience.

Table 2.1 summarises the toxicity studies considered significant to this research, determined by the toxic features explored. The table outlines whether the study is qualitative or quantitative, and lists any limitations considered relevant to this research, for example, Eby et al (2000) used only quantitative data gathered from a survey without the opportunity for follow-up questions. All of the studies included in the table concern sponsorship mentoring schemes. These studies include Eby and McManus (2004), Eby, McManus, Simon and Russell (2000) and Hamlin and Sage (2011). The Hamlin and Sage investigation of effective and ineffective mentor and mentee behaviours holds particular relevance in relation to this study as it highlights the need for research into the relationship between developmental mentoring and negative behaviour (2011:768). They acknowledge the need for further research into negative and ineffective behaviours. They also recommend creating awareness of negative mentoring and providing training interventions to ensure behavioural competence. The study, however, focusses only on the beginning and middle phases of the relationship's duration, thereby missing it's ending where toxicity may arise during review and evaluation. This omission represents a research gap this study aims to fill.

Table 2.1 Summary of Toxicity Studies used in Literature Review

Authors and Title	Research Type	Toxic Features Discussed	Limitations
Mentee Issues			
Eby and Allen (2002), 'Further investigation of protégés negative mentoring experiences: patterns and outcomes'	Quantitative study 242 participants United States	Experiences clustered into manipulating behaviour or dyadic fit along with practical issues such as structural separation	Data gathered from the protégé only
Eby, McManus, Simon and Russell (2000), 'The Protégé's Perspective Regarding Negative Mentoring Experiences: The Development of a Taxonomy'	Quantitative study 277 participants United States	Meta-themes of negative experiences included: manipulative behaviours, lack of expertise, and match within the dyad. Recommendations include the dyad informally meeting to ensure workable match	Narrow demographic. No opportunity for follow-up questions as the data collected by survey not interview

Table 2.1 Continued			
Authors and Title	**Research Type**	**Toxic Features Discussed**	**Limitations**
Mentee Issues			
Eby and Lockwood (2005), 'Protégés and mentors' reactions to participating in formal mentoring programs'	Qualitative case study 63 participants United States	Unclear programme objectives, monitoring and mismatched expectations. Recommendations include clearer communication of roles, goals and outcomes	Participants were drawn from management programmes only
Neimeyer and Neimeyer (1986), 'Personal Constructs in Relationship Deterioration'	Quantitative case study 20 adults United States	Failing relationships shared less congruent constructs of social reality and were mismatched in their expectations	Study of personal friendship as opposed to professional relationships
Kilburg and Hancock (2006), 'Addressing Sources of Collateral Damage in Four Mentoring Programs'	Qualitative action research 149 dyads United States	Lack of assessment and reflection on issues for the dyad and mismatches due to lack of dialogue to clarify expectations	Focus on issues experienced by mentoring coordinators
Spencer (2007), "It's Not What I Expected" A Qualitative Study of Youth Mentoring Relationship Failures'	Qualitative case study 31 participants United States	Identified 6 contributing factors: abandonment, motivation, expectations, mentor skills, family interference, and support. Recommended establishing expectations within the dyad	Over representation of mentors in study. Focus on early terminating relationships
Simon and Eby (2003), 'A Typology of Negative Mentoring Experiences: A Multidimensional Scaling Study'	Quantitative multidimensional scaling study 16 participants United States	Differences in toxicity between psycho-social and career-related	Multidimensional scaling normally examines clearly defined concepts not abstract experiences
Mentor Issues			
Feldman (1999), 'Toxic mentors or toxic protégés? A critical re-examination of dysfunctional mentoring'	Theoretical paper of mentee contribution to toxicity	Proposes that mentee's are equally likely to cause toxicity and mentors can be equally damaged by it	Conclusions drawn from existing research and theory

Table 2.1 Continued			
Authors and Title	**Research Type**	**Toxic Features Discussed**	**Limitations**
Mentor Issues			
Eby and McManus (2004), 'The protégés role in negative mentoring experiences'	Qualitative case study 99 mentors United States	Explored protégé's role in creating toxicity	Focus on most negative experience only
Eby, Butts, Durley, Ragins, (2010), 'Are bad experiences stronger than good ones in mentoring relationships? Evidence from the protégé and mentor perspective'	Quantitative study of 242 mentors and 238 protégés United States	Studied the impact of negative mentoring	Wide cross section from students and businesses without consideration of their effect on results
O'Neill and Sankowsky (2001), 'The Caligula Phenomenon Mentoring Relationships and Theoretical Abuse'	Theoretical paper of dysfunctional mentoring relationships	Theoretical abuse in mentoring and mentor motivation	Conclusions drawn from existing research and theory
Hamlin and Sage (2011) 'Behavioural criteria of perceived mentoring effectiveness'	Qualitative case study 20 participants United Kingdom	Negative mentoring behaviour criteria found in both mentor and mentee	Data from the beginning and middle phases of the relationship only

The following two sections discuss literature that has focused on the perspective of the mentor and the mentee, the symptoms of toxicity, and the causal factors contributing to it.

a) Mentee – symptoms and causes of toxicity

Table 2.1 displays a range of qualitative and quantitative studies focussed on issues for mentees. Eby and Allan's (2002) study of protégé's negative mentoring experiences identified mismatched expectations as causing high toxicity, and Eby and Lockwood (2005) later confirmed that this was a common issue in toxicity. Eby and Allan (2002) also found that scheduling difficulties and geographic distance were contributing to toxicity. Specific problems identified by protégés included mentor neglect and structural

separation where the mentor retired or changed job. Mentors recognised feelings of personal inadequacy as problematic. Other studies (Neimeyer and Neimeyer, 1986 and Kilburg and Hancock, 2006) also highlighted the issue of mismatched expectations and related it to a lack of contracting suggesting a relationship with toxicity. Spencer (2007) related unfulfilled expectations to motivation issues but also recommended clearly establishing expectations. While the literature suggests that the activities associated with contracting, for example, establishing goals and clarifying expectations, would address toxicity, it remains a recommendation rather than a viable research interest and therefore represents a further gap.

Simon and Eby (2003) is one of the few studies to observe a difference between mentoring models in terms of toxicity experienced in their study of 16 negative experiences. Findings linked career related mentoring with toxicity where, for example, the mentor lacked the technical skills to help the mentee, and psycho-social mentoring with a lack of interpersonal skills. Hamlin and Sage (2011) also recognised the difference between models noting that many of the criteria in their model of positive mentoring effectiveness were consistent with Megginson et al's (2006) developmental mentoring model.

A quantitative taxonomy of protégés' negative mentoring experiences by Eby et al (2000), surveyed 277 students on their negative mentoring experiences participating in an executive development programme at a large North American university. The sample group was taken from senior to top level management positions in both the private and public sector. The traditional mentoring model used was defined as 'a developmental relationship in which a more advanced or experienced person, the mentor, is committed to providing career and/ or personal support to another individual, the protégé' (Eby et al, 2008). Data was gathered by questionnaire introduced at the participant's 360° process and the methodology consisted of narrative self-report accounts of negative mentoring.   The results showed that a significant 84 participants had experienced at least one unfavourable mentoring experience, symptoms of which ranged from mismatches within the dyad, distancing behaviour, manipulative behaviour, lack of expertise, to being

generally dysfunctional. The study concluded that the mentor's motives for engagement were crucial, as were effective matching and monitoring, particularly in a traditional model where the pairings are arranged through arbitrary and involuntary assignment. The study highlights the frailties of poor mentoring scheme design and inadequate safeguards. However, as it focussed entirely on the protégés' perspective it may not offer a true representation of toxicity. It is possible, for example, that the perception of distancing behaviour could in fact represent helping behaviour such as the mentor encouraging independence.

In disciplines outside of mentoring the issue of toxicity has largely been ignored under that denotation, although studies and theories do exist on failing relationships. Neimeyer and Neimeyer (1986) consider the role of personal constructs in deteriorating relationships, specifically in their validation function, whereby each individual formulates a construct to understand their environment then looks to their partner to validate and approve that construct. The study found that compared to developing relationships, failing ones shared less congruent constructs. It also noted functional differences displayed in the formative stage of the relationship and that successful relationships developed to deeper and more intimate levels of understanding which failing ones could not attain. Neimeyer and Neimeyer (1986) submit this to be suggestive of early validation leading to a more successful partnership. The validation function is evident in the DRM model through activities such as contracting, paraphrasing and non-judgmental listening skills explored in detail in the next chapter

Several studies have identified the symptoms associated with toxicity experienced by mentees. Carnell et al (2006) describes the factors that can hinder mentoring and coaching such as confusion over expectations, lack of commitment, lack of respect and non-voluntary participation. More subtle causes include counter-transference; where the mentor can be unwittingly influenced by the mentee's own feelings expressed through non-verbal behaviours (Lee, 2010).

In a study of 16 negative mentoring experiences Simon and Eby (2003) found that perceptions of toxicity are influenced by psycho-social and career-related factors and ranged from minor to serious experiences. For example, mismatching or poor fit of the mentoring dyad in terms of personality, work style and values was considered minor by participants as it was undertaken with no toxic intent. However, while considered minor the issue appears to be common. Eby and Lockwood (2005) reported that 20% of the protégé sample experienced misaligned expectations along with 12% reporting neglect and lack of commitment from the mentor and a further 10% suffering structural separation whereby the mentor for example had changed a job or retired during the process. In response to their role of traditional mentor, where the protégé would seek advice and guidance, 14% of mentors experienced feelings of inadequacy. Kilburg and Hancock (2006) in an active research study of 149 mentoring teams over a two year period also found recurring problems for the dyads through mismatch as well as poor communication recommending dialogue prior to the beginning of the relationship. Similarly Spencer (2007) in her case study of youth mentoring relationship failures also found unfulfilled expectations contributing to toxicity along with factors of poor skills and motivation. Additionally Ensher and Murphy's (1997) quantitative study of 142 mentees, conducted through a social exchange perspective, found that mentees need to develop clarity around their expectations of mentors. Social exchange theory asserts that individuals conduct relationships on the perceived ratio of benefits to costs.

Issues of the match or fit of the dyad were also considered minor in Eby's (2007:323) categorisation of mentoring problems. Three different severity levels associated with mentoring problems found recurring themes such as mismatches, mentor neglect, skills shortages, manipulation, expectations and boundary violations. Noting that the assortment of definitions of mentoring problems related either to the relationship as a whole or specific experiences within it, she strived for a detailed understanding of the characteristics culminating in her Continuum of Relational Problems (2007:325, Figure 13.1). The Continuum catalogues impediments in terms of low, moderate and high severity and is summarised below:

Figure 2.2 Adapted from Eby's Continuum of Relational Problems

Low Severity	**Moderate Severity**	**High Severity**
Minor problems such as: -superficial meetings -poor engagement -unmet expectations -growth minimised	Taxing problems such as: -uncomfortable meetings -minimal engagement -disappointment -growth negated	Severe problems such as: -hostile meetings -disengagement -violated expectations -growth undermined
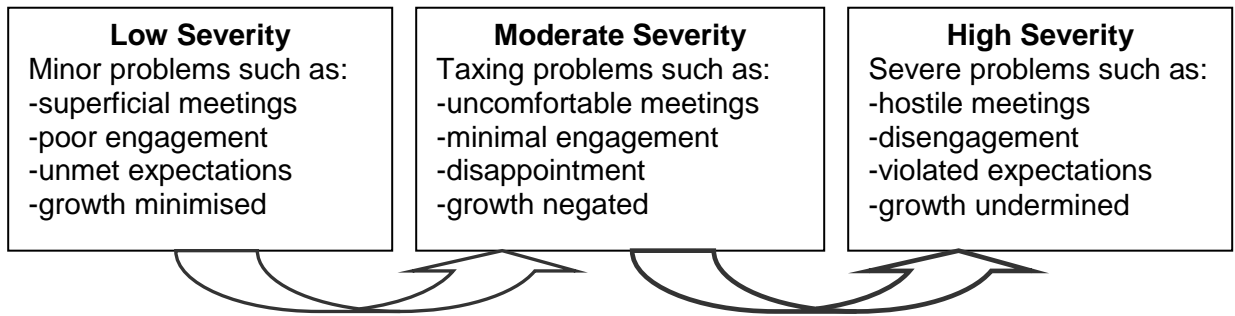
In addition to this continuum Eby (2007:333-335) identified the significance of emotional investment. Her adaptation of Rusbult's theory of close relationships (1983) provided the foundation for the Investment Model of Mentoring Relationships (2007:333-335) which deduces that the higher the investment put into a relationship the higher the cost of leaving it. Through this model Eby viewed relational problems in the context of the mentoring relationship as opposed to independent of it. Even a successful mentoring relationship at some point may encounter short term toxicity such as conflict. Eby's model can be seen as unique as it considers the mentoring relationship holistically, recognising that it consists of both positive and negative elements. However, while the model considers both mentor and protégé perspectives it relates to traditional, hierarchical mentoring relationships where the power dynamics are significant.

b) Mentors – symptoms and causes of toxicity

As the summary in Table 2.1 identifies, few studies have been undertaken that purely explore the mentor's experience of toxicity and yet its impact can be just as devastating as for the mentee. Feldman (1999) contends that while culpability for toxicity is usually attributed to the mentor's role, specifically in a traditional model, the mentee has in fact an equal influence on the dynamics of the relationship, and Feldman empathises with the mentor on the potential damage facing them in this scenario. The critique explores the deterioration from a weak relationship to a destructive one and reviews the ramifications for both mentor and mentee. Feldman expresses the difficulties in measuring and monitoring mentoring relationships when it encompasses such diffuse

approaches from traditional to peer mentoring. He further suggests that while protégés reactions and feelings have been explored in some depth, the mentor's viewpoint has been largely overlooked. There is, however, growing awareness of the effect of toxicity on the mentor (Eby and McManus, 2004; Allen, 2007) although Eby et al (2010) contend that damage to the mentor, while upsetting, is not as serious as the effect on the protégé due to the influence and the hierarchical position of the mentor. This hierarchy does not relate to developmental mentoring where the power dynamics are more equally distributed and any toxicity therefore can be equally destructive. While there have been both theoretical papers (Scandura, 1998; Feldman, 1999) and empirical studies (Eby and McManus, 2004; Eby and Lockwood, 2005) this remains an under-researched issue.

Motivation and willingness to mentor is also discussed by Allen (2007) in her review of research from the mentor's perspective. She notes that negative experiences can lead to reluctance to mentor again and that frameworks need to be established to understand influencing factors for mentor behaviour. Earlier Eby and McManus's (2004) study of 90 mentors had found a continuum of protégé behaviours that contributed to dysfunctional, ineffective and marginally effective experiences. They observed that mentors had different relational needs to mentees and while some negative experiences were common to both mentor and mentee, there were significant differences such as submissiveness, unwillingness to learn and jealousy amongst mentees.

While Eby and McManus (2004) and Allen (2007) considered the constructs of relational dysfunction, they do not explore the psychological theory that may underpin such behaviours. In exploring the consequences of therapists experiencing dysfunctional responses to their client, Beck (2005:112-118) recognises the advantage of developed self-awareness in the therapist to firstly identify the negative reaction, and then conceptualise it in order to identify and deal with areas of vulnerability. Response strategies include developing the therapist's competence, setting realistic expectations for the dyad and moderating expressions of empathy. Beck presents a case study of

a client adopting a child ego state (Berne, 1966), and how her response was over- empathised causing her to adopt the parent ego role while the dyad remained static. In mentoring, dyads adopting similar ego roles may be perceived as toxic, disrupting the adult ego state required for a coherent sense of identity (Stuthridge, 2006).

Focus of research on toxic mentors is understandable in traditional mentoring due to the inherent power dynamics initially established and typical of the relationship. O'Neill and Sankowsky (2001) explore theoretical abuse in mentoring, a more subtle form of toxicity previously established in psychotherapy.   Theoretical abuse is often disguised in more positive terms and occurs when mentors impose their understanding or meaning of events onto mentees. It is a more covert form of toxicity where the mentor is acting unintentionally or through 'projective identification' as described by Lee (2010:27) in reference to coaching relationships.   O'Neill and Sankowsky's paper explores the influence of mentor motivation on non-intentional theoretical abuse and the influence of the mentee who can collude with this toxicity. It recognises the need for both parties to monitor behaviours and establish 'internal barometers' (O'Neill and Sankowsky, 2001:214) to avoid such toxicity.

Even in engagement mentoring; mentoring that seeks to re-engage disaffected young people, there are examples of toxicity for the mentor. Colley (2003:15) in her critical analysis of mentoring cites a case study using engagement mentoring gone awry. This resulted in a negative effect on both parties and instilled a sense of failure in the mentor when the mentee did not respond to the process. Neither party seemed aware of what was expected of the other. The mentee was dealing with issues, including bereavement that the mentor was both unprepared for and unqualified to deal with. Such situations can be averted through contracting, provided the mentor appreciates certain boundaries, in terms of either their personal limitations or when more specialised referral is required.

Eby and Lockwood's (2005) case study of formal mentoring schemes, as described in table 2.1 under Mentee Issues, did identify some common issues in toxic symptoms along with specific challenges confronting the mentor and mentee. The study focussed on two contrasting organisations, one in communications and the other in health, both offering formal, traditional mentoring style programmes on a voluntary basis. Data was gathered through interviews on 24 mentors and 39 protégés providing a representative sample of 12% and 20% respectively. Mismatching comprised the main source of problems for mentors and protégés combined, and as a result of this and related studies such as Eby and McManus's qualitative study (2004) and Eby and Allen's quantitative study (2002) it is now a recognised issue in mentoring. This is discussed further in section 2.2.

<u>Toxicity Summary</u>

From the above it can be seen that there can be multiple causes for toxicity in a relationship, from mentor burn-out to mentor negative affect (Eby et al, 2008) where the mentor has a tendency to present a negative world viewpoint. Hamlin and Sage (2011) observed positive and negative behaviours in both mentors and mentees in their critical incident case study, concluding that a successful relationship is reliant not only on the competence of the mentor but the behaviour of the mentee. They recommended awareness sessions for the dyad to understand expectations and roles. It seems that few researchers have focussed on toxicity in mentoring practice although it accounts for a notable proportion of mentoring experiences. Little attention has been paid to the causes of unsuccessful mentoring relationships, with the exception of mismatching, in particular the effect of mentor and mentee negative behaviours. The features of the DRM model such as empathy and listening skills lead to deeper understanding within the relationship according to the NWMS. This understanding promotes validation of the dyad at an early stage and will lead to a more successful outcome (Neimeyer and Neimeyer, 1986). Behavioral effectiveness in mentoring has an insufficient empirical knowledge base and there is a lack of research in the interpersonal processes involved (Hamlin and Sage, 2011). This lack of research emphasises how little is

understood of the psycho-social element of mentoring and its relationship to toxicity and offers justification for this study.

2.2 Prevention

This section explores literature concerned with the prevention of toxicity. The section is divided into three subsections discussing significant elements of the mentoring relationship in terms of prevention of toxicity: empathy, matching and awareness of power dynamics. While there is a range of practitioner literature in terms of prevention, empirical research is sparse. In the course of identifying problems in mentoring, the earlier works of Levinson et al (1978) and Kram (1985) cautioned against lack of awareness within the dyad of potential problems without offering any suggestions for prevention. Subsequent work has seen much greater enthusiasm to discover preventative procedures. In a case study of a destructive relationship, Kram (1988:10) reasoned that underlying factors resulted from life or career changes evident through tensions, conflict and low empathy. Offering an 'open systems perspective' (Kram, 1988:19)) as a potential solution she was able to link the transition from conflict to understanding each perspective, identifying concerns and causes and recognising any psychosocial change. She identified understanding the other's perspective, encouraging an empathic stance and recognising psychosocial changes as fundamental to this approach. They enable the individual to acknowledge that events beyond their control can be improved by altering both perceptions and reactions to them, rather than by seeking to change the events themselves.

Practitioner literature exploring causal factors (Garvey, 2004), and potential solutions (Zeus and Skiffington, 2005), identify skills involved e.g., clear contracting. Lewis (1996:167) highlights the subtle distinction between the terms 'wrong' and 'not going as well as they might', particularly relevant given the negative associations attached to the word 'wrong'. The key causal factors that emerged were lack of chemistry, conflict of role, too directive a style, poor listening skills and generally underdeveloped skills. Lewis also recognises the mentee's contribution to toxicity. Preventative measures are similar to those incorporated in the DRM model, discussed in part 3 of this

review including constructive feedback and enhancing skills such as sensitivity, empathy and perception (Lewis, 1996:168-9).

a) Empathy

A number of mentoring studies, explored in this section, suggest that empathy potentially has a role in the prevention of toxicity. Standing (1999:12) identified mentoring dispositions such as understanding the mentee's needs and 'expressing care and concern' as the basis of a nurturing relationship that could guard against toxicity. Hargreaves (2010), in her qualitative evaluative study of a mentoring/coaching scheme which interviewed 12 mentors/coaches and 8 clients, noted that the hope of many of the clients was to feel some control through the constructivist approach of the process. By constructing knowledge with the empathic mentor or coach, the client's confidence grew and enabled them to better cope with the hierarchical nature of the organisation. The skill of the mentor in this process is significant as found in an earlier paper by Cox (2005), in her case study of 52 mentoring dyads in a community mentoring scheme. She used the phrase 'empathic authority' to describe the authority entrusted to the mentor by the mentee over time as sufficient rapport is achieved. This is a key development in the relationship whereby roles are established and confirmed; the mentor enabled by the mentee to confer empowerment. This requires a high level of skills on behalf of the mentor, and without appropriate training and development the risk of toxicity is increased.

In Liang, Tracy, Taylor and Williams' (2002) quantitative study of the importance of relational qualities in mentoring, such as empowerment and empathy, the Relational Health Index – Mentor (RHI-M) is used to measure their impact on college-age women. The study of 296 students found that the quality of the mentoring relationship in terms of engagement, authenticity, empathy and empowerment may have a greater impact on success than previously thought. Through acknowledging the importance of more tangible elements such as matching criteria, the study concludes that a combination of these are more likely to avoid pitfalls rather than the greater importance attributed to structural considerations over relational virtues.

Ensher and Murphy (2011) in their quantitative relational study of 309 protégés using the Mentoring Relationship Challenges Scale (MRCS) found that relational challenges, such as demonstrating resilience, significantly impact on relationship satisfaction. Eby, Butts, Durley, and Ragins (2010) in their quantitative study of negative mentoring relationships concluded the need to consider the relational context in their impact. They suggest that empathy is important in the empowerment of the mentee but it is also significant for the empathy-giver. Figley (2002) however, in his review of psychotherapists' lack of self-care also argues that the cost of empathy can lead to compassion fatigue, a form of carer burn-out.

b) Matching

Practitioner literature on how to successfully match mentoring dyads varies with the existence of a number of theories, from the use of learning styles (Hay, 1995) to the administrator-assigned 'hunch method' (Blake-Beard, O'Neill, McGowan, 2007:623).   Empirical research in matching also has a range of focusses from gender (Gray and Goregaokar, 2010) to complimentary skills such as organisational insights (Ensher and Murphy, 2005). Matching has been criticised for forcing a relationship that should occur naturally, i.e. the dyad attracted to each other independent of the organisation or scheme requirements (Allen, Finkelstein and Poteet 2012). This is linked to formal programmes where the quality of the relationship tends to be lower than informal mentoring (Underhill, 2006). Choice-based matching may encourage greater investment from the mentee (Kahn and Greenblatt, 2009). Cox (2005), discusses the choice of mentor, who is identified as a role model, concluding that this can work well provided it is the mentee's choice. Megginson et al (2006:248) agreed that providing a range of mentors for the mentee to choose from can be successful. Blake-Beard et al (2007:624) warn, however, that a weakness of this approach is that the dyad is more likely to select based on similarities and comfort, thereby avoiding possible challenge and growth. Research has argued that specific matching of, for example, ethnicity, can be valuable (Campbell and Campbell, 2007), although the effectiveness of matching remains unclear.

Peer mentoring lends itself well to a regional matching perspective although McCauley and Guthrie (2007:586) were conflicted over whether peer learning partnerships should be matched to existing peers or unfamiliar colleagues from more distant parts of the organisation thus recognising the potential influence such distancing has on participants' sense of trust and confidentiality in the relationship. They concluded that the participants should be included in the decision making having explored the dynamics of the differing scenarios.

The emphasis on matching dyads within some schemes is considerable. Women in Universities Mentoring Scheme (WUMS), for example, matches dyads anonymously using set matching criteria before the applications are considered by the Match Review Panel (WUMS, 2010). Some studies show that considered matching is more effective in terms of successful outcomes. Parker (2010) examined the effect of matching on teacher retention in a quantitative study involving 8,838 teachers, finding that those who had been purposefully matched were more likely to remain with the organisation. However, Cox's (2005) qualitative research of a community mentoring project suggests that matching is more complex. As the real needs of the mentee do not emerge until after the matching process and can change over time, necessary information to ensure a successful dyad would not exist at the time of initial matching.

Coll and Raghavan (2004) in their paper on setting up a mentoring scheme advise that matching should be based on initial selection criteria, ensuring that mentors are voluntary and meet the criterion and that mentees meet qualifying objectives determined by policy. In contrast Fleck and Mullins (2012) in their case study of 39 students in a peer mentoring programme found that initial dyad compatibility was not considered essential. The debate on the best way to match and its importance in terms of successful outcomes for the dyad remains unresolved.

c) Awareness of Power Dynamics

In mentoring theory there is evidence of awareness of power dynamics with recognition that the traditional mentor-led approach oversimplifies the complex power structures involved (Jones and Brown, 2011). Jones and Spooner (2006), for example, explore the power shift in relationships. Their qualitative study of 21 coaches and high achievers in business and sport found that mutual respect was fundamental in establishing the relationship. This shift also incorporates the growing profile of mentoring and the focus of research of power dynamics in mentoring.

Mismatched, uneven or abused power within the mentoring dyad can lead to toxicity. Cox (2005) explores the significance of power dynamics and the need for the mentor to empower the mentee over the duration of the relationship to prevent overdependence. Taking this a stage further Brockbank and McGill (2006:18) argue that power within the relationship can be influenced by the power balance and culture within the organisation and that the dyad could be operating within that political dimension in ignorance of this limitation. However, Brockbank and McGill have not conducted research in this area. More recently, Davenport and Early's article (2010:72), discussing consultant and client relationships in the financial services sector, describe 'position power', referring to a job role or status within an organisation, as wielding power and influence within the relationship thereby affecting its dynamics. Eby et al (2000) also identified mentor position power as an example of negative mentoring experiences for mentees.

In their article on mentoring relationship challenges Ensher and Murphy (2011) explore the link between power strategies and mentoring enactment theory (Kalbfleisch, 2007) where the mentor sets challenges for the mentee before increasing commitment to the relationship, thus echoing Berne's (1966) ego states. This theory suggests that the use of power dynamics, wielded with benevolent intent, can fortify the mentoring relationship and protect against toxicity, with of course the converse being true. According to Ensher and Murphy (2011) power does not necessarily sit with the mentor, the mentee also has some control. Earlier, Beech and Brockbank (1999) had

suggested that within a hierarchical relationship mentoring could develop dysfunction when the subordinate mentees used their power within the dyad to block the process.

Scandura (1998) observed that power dynamics in a mentoring relationship may be exacerbated by power differentials in gender and could lead to dysfunction. Research, however, offers contrary findings as to whether cross or same gender dyads contribute to toxicity.   Elliott, Leck, Orser and Mossop (2011), for example, in their qualitative study of 15 mentors, found that participants were uneasy in cross-gender relationships, and gender-role stereotypes, consciously or unconsciously caused dysfunction. This agreed with earlier research by Ragins (1997) which concluded that same-gender dyads achieved higher outcomes. However, Sosik and Godshalk's (2000) quantitative study of the effects of gender in cross-gender dyads on the mentoring relationship identified that female mentors where perceived as providing more psychosocial support than male mentors. This was confirmed in their later study (Sosik and Godshalk, 2005), focusing on supervisory roles and gender.   The study 217 mentoring relationships identified that cross-gender mentoring dyads secured greater psychosocial support than same-gender dyads. A link between female mentors and psycho-social skills was later supported by Allen and Eby (2004) in their quantitative study of 249 mentors. Gray and Goregaokar (2010) point out that women can feel reluctance towards initiating a cross-gender mentoring relationship in case the approach is misinterpreted but equally the lack of female role models present difficulties of access. However, O'Brien, Biga, Kessley and Allen (2010:10) from their meta-analysis of gender differences in mentoring conclude that gender differentiation may not be as widespread as previously thought. The question of whether gender power dynamics can influence prevention of toxicity remains under-researched.

Some literature (Brockbank and McGill, 2006; Davenport and Early, 2010) suggests that many of the issues created in power dynamics are derived not only from the mentor but also the mentee, the organisation, and the position held by the individual within it. Knowledge or position that is used

detrimentally appears more likely to occur within a traditional mentoring relationship, where the mentor is in a power position in the mentee's organisation. Literature also acknowledges that power can be used positively to benefit the mentoring process (Ragins1995; Ensher and Murphy, 2005; Johnson and Ridley, 2008).

Prevention Summary

While there are few empirical studies focussed on prevention this section has demonstrated a link between the quality of mentoring and less tangible elements such as empathy. Empathy, matching and awareness of power dynamics have been identified as key in the mentoring relationship where potential issues could be stemmed. Much practitioner advice exists regarding the process of matching, however, as Liang et al (2002) found a more successful mentoring relationship is likely to benefit from a combination of elements. This section has also explored how awareness of power dynamics could aid prevention of toxicity and avoid the pitfalls associated with it by using it in a positive way, i.e., by encouraging independence in the mentee. There is a significant lack of research in the area of prevention.

2.3 Developmental Mentoring

This section presents research relating to the foundations of the Developmental Relationship Mentoring (DRM) model, compares sponsorship mentoring to relational and psycho-social functions, and finally considers the significance of external, distal mentors in this case study.

The origins of developmental mentoring appear to come from Kram (1985) who identified two broad mentor functions:

i. Sponsorship based on the mentor's senior position in an organisation
ii. Psychosocial which focuses on interpersonal development.

In table 2.2 below the two main functions of mentoring; sponsorship and psychosocial are compared with relational mentoring. Ragins (2007:374-6) identified that there were three variations associated with sponsorship

mentoring that relational mentoring addresses, the table demonstrates the similarity between relational and psycho-social.

Table 2.2 Comparison of Relational, Traditional and Developmental Models

Relational - 'Power With'	Sponsorship (Traditional)- 'Power Over'	Psycho-social (Developmental) - 'Power Exchange'
Variation 1: Two-sided, equal and highly visible in terms of reciprocal benefits Ragins and Verbos (2007)	One-sided, hierarchical relationship benefiting the protégé Johnson and Ridley (2008)	Two-sided, equal relationship benefiting both mentee and mentor Megginson et al (2006)
Variation 2: Outcomes focus on development of interdependence and connection with others Fletcher and Ragins (2007)	Outcomes related to career success, i.e. advancement, independence, autonomy Johnson and Ridley (2008)	Outcomes can include traditional career indicators but also relational outcomes Connor and Pokora (2007)
Variation 3: Power shared: the mentee's expertise is recognised and mentor's vulnerability encouraged Fletcher and Ragins (2007)	Power relationship of 'teacher' and 'student' Fletcher and Ragins (2007)	Power equally divided: the mentor does not need specific expertise in the mentee's field to be useful Megginson et al (2006)

The sponsorship function describes traditional mentoring (also referred to as the North American model) and the psychosocial function describes the interpersonal skills underpinning developmental mentoring (also known as the European model). Although other models of mentoring have been identified (Standing, 1999) the traditional and developmental models have been recognised as the emergent albeit contrasting models of mentoring (Megginson et al, 2006; Clutterbuck, 2004).   As seen from table 2.2 both psycho-social and relational mentoring are more closely aligned than sponsorship mentoring.

As clarified in the introduction, the term 'developmental' refers to the relationship rather than the individual, as Clutterbuck (2004:109, Figure13) explains in his comparison between North American sponsoring or traditional mentoring and European developmental mentoring. Charting the relationship

over time, Hay's (1995:3) 'developmental alliance' between mentor and client recognises the development of both parties and the greater role of the mentee in the developmental model. The developmental relationship meets the individual's development needs, and is also described as evolutionary mentoring (Brockbank and McGill 2006:117).   Evolutionary mentoring, according to Brockbank and McGill (2006) recognises the mentee's social reality, which could include an oppressive or discriminatory environment that may inhibit learning. The mentor gains understanding of the mentee's subjective world and can help the mentee to evolve into a position of personal power, aiding learning and development. Developmental mentoring also takes this broader, holistic view of the client.

a) Psychosocial Function of Mentoring

Psychosocial related mentoring models providing personal development are more evident in non-hierarchical organisations (McManus et al, 2007) where status and position are not relevant to the support offered. However, Fletcher and Ragins (2007:385), regardless of the model used, recognise the importance and influence that the organisational context can introduce to mentoring relationships, particularly within models that challenge conventional wisdom or organisational views. Following Kram's two mentor functions (1985), an additional function was identified by Scandura and Viator (1994), and Ensher and Murphy (1997) being, role modelling. In a later quantitative study, Ensher, Thomas and Murphy (2001) confirmed this classification identifying from their study three types of support from a mentor; social or psycho-social, role-modelling and vocational or career-orientated. They found that different types of mentors offered a variety of benefits to protégés but clearly understanding the support offered was vital.

Scandura's (1998) typology, based on a review of mentoring literature of negative mentoring styles found the following classifications; difficulty, negative relations, spoiling and sabotage. The typology recognises the division between psycho-social and vocational and the majority of studies have focused on the more traditional form of mentoring. It appears that greater levels of toxicity have been found in sponsorship mentoring. However,

I would argue that further research would be necessary to ascertain whether this is due to the higher number of toxic incidents in sponsorship mentoring or a lack of research in psychosocial mentoring.

Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz and Lima (2004) describe the purpose of the psychosocial function as holding subjective outcomes, such as career satisfaction and the sponsorship function as holding objective outcomes such as promotion. Allen et al (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of existing empirical work on mentoring within organisational settings to compare the success of outcomes between subjective and objective mentoring functions. Their findings suggested that mentoring is more closely associated with subjective rather than objective indicators. Indeed psychosocial functions are more dependent on the quality of the mentoring relationship and satisfaction with the mentor due to the intensity of the relationship. Higgins, Chandler and Kram (2007) assert that a mentor is someone who provides high level psychosocial and career support and therefore corroborates Kram's mentoring functions.

b) Relational Mentoring

Relational mentoring contrasts with traditional or sponsorship mentoring in that it takes an interdependent view of the relationship in terms of growth and development for the dyad, and has more in common with psychosocial skills. In their review of mentoring, Fletcher and Ragins (2007:374-6) identified three variations to traditional mentoring or limitations found in traditional mentoring that may be addressed by the relational perspective. These variations can be detected in the literature as presented in table.2.2 above. The three variations, drawn from Relational Culture Theory (RCT), (Fletcher and Ragins, 2007:377), are; the benefits associated with the relationship, growth-fostering interactions, and systemic power.

Fletcher and Ragins (2007:375) identified the third challenge (Variation 3 from Table 2.4) as the significant element of power and potential conflicts within a hierarchical mentoring relationship such as motivation. Garvey (2004:173) drawing on research into both public and private sector organisations also

connected power with motivation with mentors often citing the desire to put something back into the organisation possibly distorting deeper concerns of insecurity or arrogance, or political ambitions to extend one's influence. Relational mentoring challenges this traditional perspective in particular, as it encourages vulnerability and the 'no-blame' environment as competencies rather than inadequacies. However, even in a voluntary scheme the issue of motivation may remain and this could lead to toxicity from the perspective of the mentor as discussed earlier.

Fletcher and Ragins (2007:374) go on to describe relational mentoring as a two-directional, interdependent and mutually beneficial process which recognises the broader range of mentoring and how it can influence positive relationships, both formally and informally, at work. The influence of mentoring is considered in more depth in Ragins' (2010) overview of relational mentoring applied to self-structures of mentoring and mentoring schema theory. Schema theory describes maps of mentoring experiences that guide behaviours and expectations. Ragins concluded that those who have enjoyed successful mentoring past experiences are more likely to have positive self-structures or mentoring identities. This conclusion however could be applied to any form of mentoring and not confined to relational mentoring alone.

c) Developmental Mentoring (DRM) Model

The DRM model takes a holistic perspective of the relationship by recognising the potential for toxicity and highlighting prevention techniques so the relationship begins with a strong awareness of possible pitfalls. A positive shift in power is demonstrated by the DRM model in the transference from mentor-centred to mentee-centred behaviours.

The model's origins in Megginson et al's (2006) five-stage model of developmental mentoring, was formulated from an earlier four-stage model (Kram, 1985). The four stages of Kram's model were derived from her 1983 biographical interview study of 18 mentoring relationships within one organisation in North America. Her four-stage model consists of Initiation; where the dyad meet and establish the relationship, Cultivation; where the

relationship develops, Separation; where the relationship has come to an end and Redefinition; where the association may or may not continue in another guise, perhaps as a peer mentoring relationship. Kram (1985) used this model to describe the transition of the mentoring relationship. She also observed that mentoring consists of two primary functions; career development akin to traditional mentoring and psycho-social more related to developmental mentoring.

Although growing in use little has been written about the developmental model, nor has it been adequately researched, however, some work exists which refer to the psycho-social function. Karcher, Kuperminc, Portwood, Sipe, and Taylor's (2006) review of mentoring programmes also refers to the developmental model in psychosocial terms, encapsulating the facilitative nature of the five-phase model but differing in terms of goals. They describe the application of the model to youth mentoring schemes as purely facilitative, geared to enhancing overall social, cognitive and emotional development. Subsequently they develop the instrumental mentoring concept focusing on skills development or specific goals. In a professional development setting the five-phase model, while being facilitative in nature, can encompass the specific focus usually attributed to coaching and in Karcher et al's (2006) own terms, be instrumental and skills-based.

There are two key elements associated with the DRM model as used by the NWMS which are explored in the next two sections. Firstly the theoretical principles that underpin the model and existing literature relating to the skills employed in DRM are highlighted and this is followed by a short discussion of the distal mentoring element.

Element One - Skills
The DRM model consists of five phases that describe the life of the mentoring relationship. Phase One of the DRM model which the NWMS describe as the Contracting phase recommends negotiating skills to formalize the relationship and agree how it will work. Megginson et al (2006) identified that the skills required to successfully seek a way of working together included establishing

a contract in an open, non-judgmental and collaborative way. The benefit of a clear, agreed contract has also been explored in practitioner literature, for example in relation to peer mentoring (Holbeche, 1996) along with re-contracting as the relationship changes (Day, De Haan, Blass, Sills and Bertie, 2008). In Hart, Blattner and Leipsic's (2001) qualitative study of practicing coaching and therapy professionals, different approaches to contracting were identified.   Contracting in therapy was described as less defined than coaching's more formal and structured approach. Coaching contracts extend to quarterly reviews and fixed time-lines, whereas therapists may not even use them. Contracting as used in DRM is positioned between these two extremes and is a key principal underlying the model.

Phase Two is described as Understanding and addresses goal setting where the use of diagnostic frameworks aid diagnosis and correlates to Kram's (1985) Cultivation stage. Godshalk and Sosik's (2003) study of the effects of goal-setting on 217 dyads found protégés using goal-setting tools reported higher levels of psychosocial support, career development and career satisfaction. Establishing needs at an early stage clarifies and motivates the process of implementation later in the relationship (Cox, 2013).

Phase Three; the Analysis phase, involves challenging the mentee as well as recognising achievements and is a highly active and productive stage. This phase helps the mentee to analyse using skills such as powerful questions. Clutterbuck (2005) describes asking such questions as a basic skill of mentoring but it is a skill that often causes concern for novices (Cox, 2013)

Phase Four, Action Planning, identifies options for the mentee then requires a detailed action plan, recognised as an effective tool in learning transfer (Cowan, Goldman and Hook, 2010). This correlates to coaching approaches such as the GROW model (Alexander, 2006) which culminates in a final stage; the Will to act.

Phase Five Implementation and Review moves away from Kram's original concept and Megginson et al's adaptation in that the two distinct phases are

combined. The key skill associated with this phase is giving and receiving constructive feedback. However, there is a lack of guidance on ending or redefining the relationship, a recognised issue in mentoring (Johnson and Ridley, 2008:145).

Megginson and Clutterbuck (2009:238), point out that mentoring is perceived more as a social movement with less emphasis on skills. Certainly, as a movement it has been used to address a range of social causes (Freedman, 1991) and there is less focus on skill but as the profession grows more instructional literature is emerging.

There is little research on the skills utilised in the DRM particularly in relation to toxicity. However, some elements have been identified in practitioner literature (Johnson and Ridley, 2008; Hamlin and Sage, 2011) and there is a recognition that toxicity can be caused by poor mentoring and inter-personal skills (Scandura, 1998).

Element Two - Distal Mentoring
While off-line mentoring (mentors external to the line management of the mentee) has been recommended (Clutterbuck, 2004) and there is some research on the effectiveness of mentors external to the organisation (Hale, 1995; Baugh and Fagenson-Eland, 2006), there is none external to the profession   Mentors tend to be internal as the sponsorship mentoring model requires the mentor to have knowledge and experience of the organisation, and coaches, who do not rely on such knowledge, are often external (Kerr and Landauer, 2004)

It is unclear, therefore, based on existing research if the 'distance' of the mentor can impact toxicity. Off-line mentoring is claimed to reduce the risk of problems (Clutterbuck, 2004) by increasing confidentiality (Mueller, 2004). The Women in Universities Mentoring Scheme (WUMS) evaluation report (2010) also found that participants valued the process being outside the organisational culture. Eby and Lockwood's (2005) case study, however, warned that geographic distance between mentor and protégé may hinder a

close relationship due to financial and travel considerations although they acknowledge that e-mentoring may alleviate this.

A literature search into cross-organisational and cross-professional mentoring produced either peer mentoring articles or networking literature unconnected to distal mentoring as understood in this study and were therefore disregarded. The majority of research on toxicity has centred on the North American model of traditional mentoring despite a growing recognition of the role psycho-social skills play in relationship quality. It has also focussed on the early stages of the mentoring relationship, identifying solutions found in the developmental model. While off-line mentoring has been explored there is little research into the benefits of distal mentoring and its potential role in toxic prevention adding further justification for this study.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has explored the research relating to the symptoms and causes of toxicity in relation to both mentor and mentee and in fields related to mentoring such as counselling. It has discovered existing models of toxicity; Eby's Continuum of Relational Problems (2007:325) and the consensus of practitioners on effective preventative measures. The review then probed the DRM model comparing and contrasting it to other interventions i.e. traditional and relational, offering examples from both public and private programmes. Finally, it briefly examined the role of distal mentors and off-line mentoring with indications that distal mentoring may guard against such organisational and positional influence as the dyad operates outside organisational and professional boundaries.

Although some case studies of toxicity have been undertaken, as summarised in Table 2.1, they refer to the traditional, sponsorship style. DRM, as an emerging model of mentoring is under-researched as is its relationship with toxicity. Hamlin and Sage (2011) noted that more empirical research is needed to explore the efficacy of best practice models such as Kram (1985) and Eby et al (2000) particularly in relation to negative mentoring in non-North American cultures.

The review also found that some research had been undertaken into toxicity in relation to the traditional sponsorship model with many of the preventative techniques being present in developmental mentoring. The relationship between developmental mentoring, off-line mentoring and prevention of toxicity is an uncharted area. It therefore provides a unique opportunity as a case study to explore the relationship between the three elements: DRM, external or distal mentors and prevention of toxicity. The case study methodology is ideally suited to provide rich data from an informed source potentially illuminating this phenomenon and this is more widely explored in the next chapter. Hamlin and Sage (2011:774) also identify this methodology as vital and recommend such studies across a range of organisational sectors and settings.

The final conceptual framework, shown below in Figure 2.3, displays the gaps in research identified in this review.

Figure 2.3 Final Conceptual Framework showing gaps in existing research
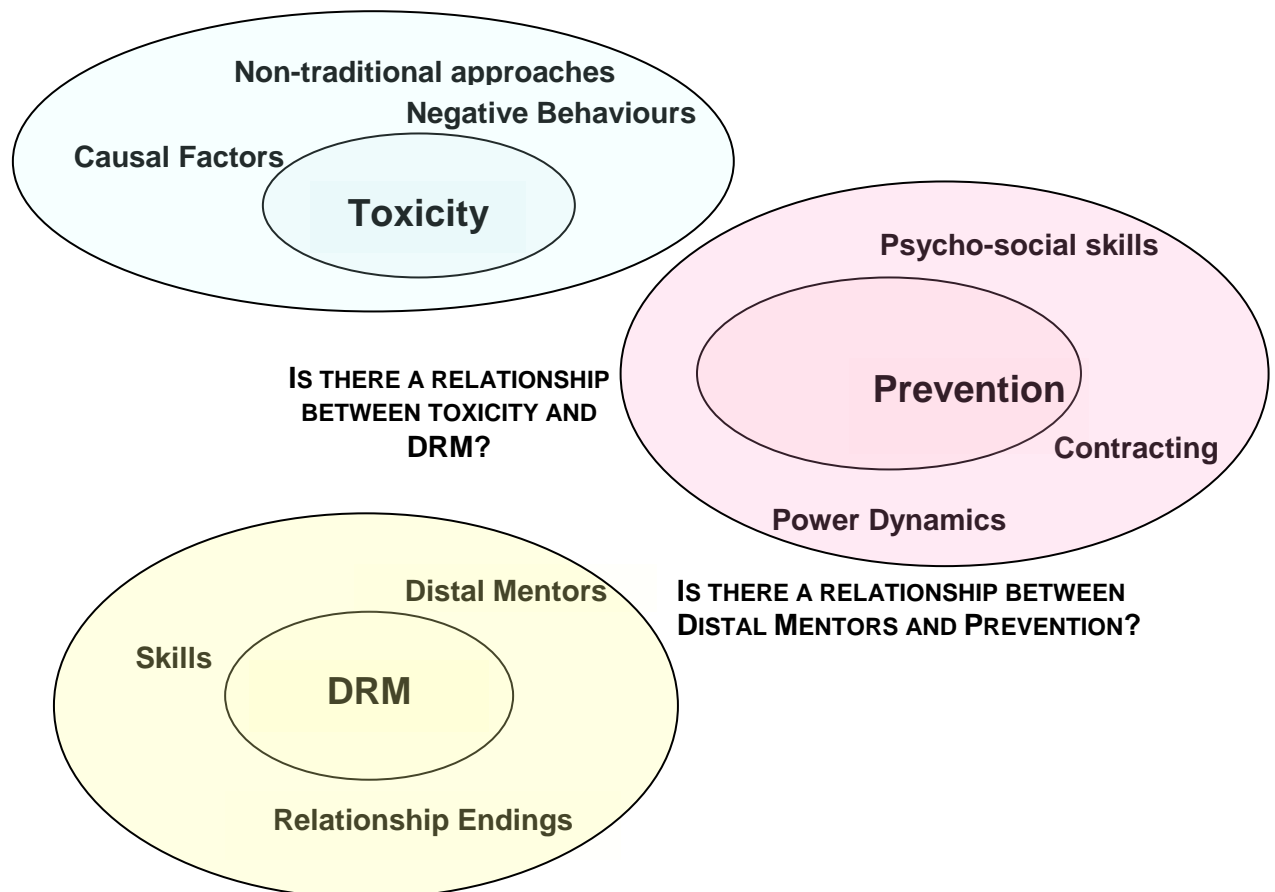
This research seeks to address the main gaps shown in Figure 2.3, specifically the relationship between toxicity and the DRM model, as well as distal mentoring, toxicity and prevention. While some studies have included or focussed on the public services setting (Eby et al, 2000; Hamlin and Sage, 2011), little research has explored regional mentoring scheme settings despite their existence. The studies that have been undertaken have focussed on specific professional areas such as Connor, Bynoe, Redfern, Pokora and Clarke's (2000) evaluation of a network of senior doctors as mentors. Many of the studies focus on sponsorship mentoring rather than developmental despite the fact that many corporate cultures favour developmental mentoring (Gray and Goregaokar, 2010). The constructs explored in this review have been duly contextualised and will be developed and revised in the final chapter to report the relationships between constructs and the emergent themes (Baxter and Jack, 2008:553.) The next chapter provides a detailed overview of the DRM model drawing on analysis of the scheme documentation and the features explored in this chapter.

Chapter 3 DRM Model

This chapter considers a detailed explanation of the DRM model as interpreted by the NWMS through the documentation. The chapter explores each phase of the model, particularly the theoretical principles utilised to achieve its intended aims. It is compared to Megginson et al's model (2006) to provide an understanding of its evolution and its distinctiveness from the original.

The DRM model is defined by method and approach as opposed to outcomes and is therefore more closely associated with the psychosocial function. Rather than benefitting only the mentee, the mentor also develops through the process, similar to Jones and Brown's (2011) reciprocal mentoring model. As reported in the literature review, Megginson et al's (2006) model outlined the five phases as: Building Rapport, Setting Direction, Progression, Winding Up and Moving On to describe the transition of power in the relationship from mentor to mentee. The DRM model promotes the use of power or influence in their training materials where the various mentor responses are selected to develop the mentee, progressing from mentor-centred behaviours to mentee-centred behaviours (see Appendix I: 11 Mentoring Styles.)

Table 3.1 Adapted from Megginson et al (2006:19-21) Five-Stage Model

Five-Phase Developmental Model	
Phase	Power Shift
1. Building Rapport/Contracting	Mentor/Mutual
2. Setting Direction/Understanding	Mutual
3. Progression/Analysis	Mentee
4. Winding Up/Action Planning	Mentor/Mutual
5. Moving On/Implementation	Mentee

Megginson et al's (2006) model was founded on Kram's (1985) four-stage model of Initiation, Cultivation, Separation and Redefinition and has evolved under the NWMS to extend the core period associated with Progression/Cultivation to include Analysis and Action Planning, reducing the closing two stages of the relationship to one termed Implementation.

Megginson et al (2006) describe 'Building Rapport' as the stage where the dyad decides whether or not they can work together through open dialogue using rapport skills. 'Setting Direction', the second stage, refines the purpose established in the first stage by setting goals. Stage three is considered to be central to the relationship, where the mentee gradually leads the process creating a power exchange. Stages four and five deal with ending the relationship, through review, celebration and its reformulation. The NWMS elaborated on these stages using practical techniques as indicated in Figure 3.1 below:

Figure 3.1 NWMS Developmental Mentoring Model
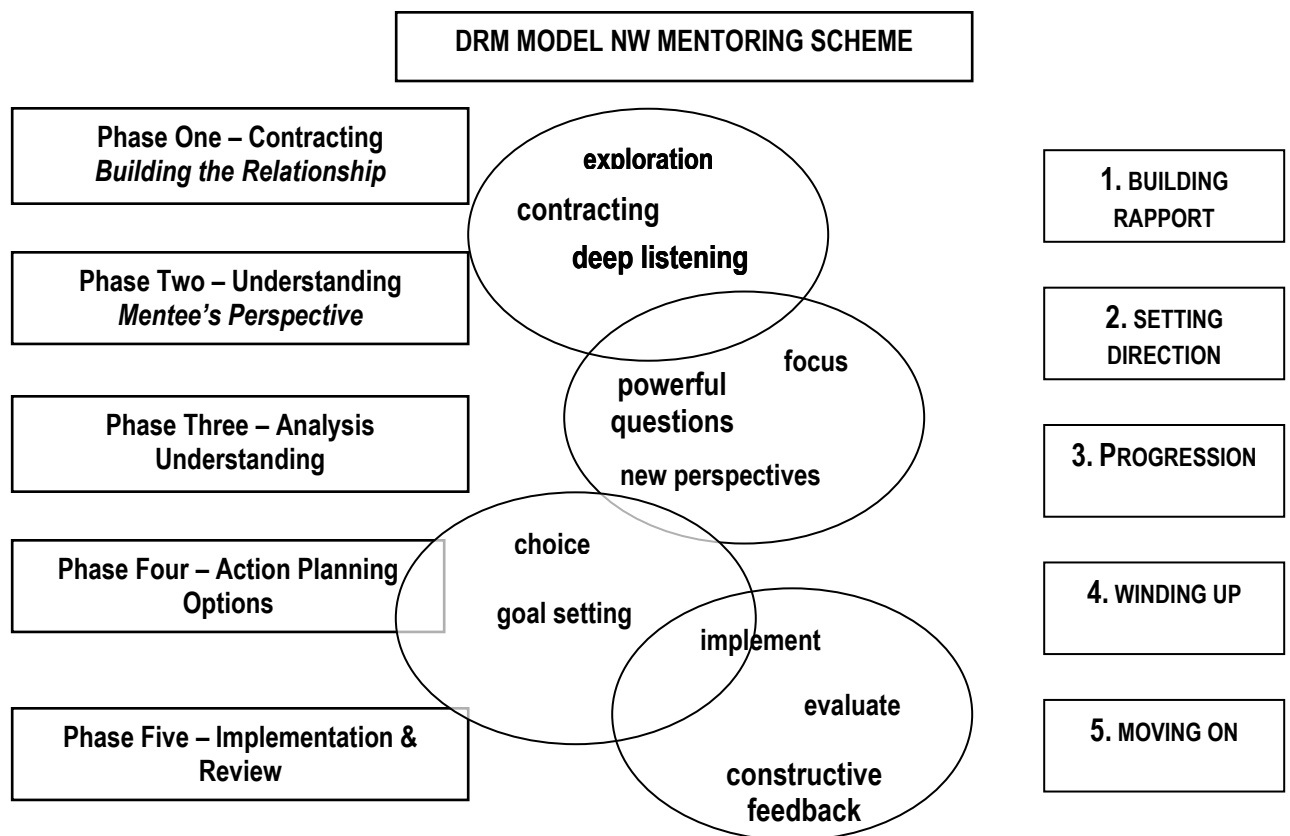
a) Phase One

Megginson et al's (2006:19-21) initial rapport building stage determines whether a relationship is viable through exploration of value alignment, respect and expectations, in order to enable the dyad to achieve agreement of

purpose. The NWMS translates this phase into a more detailed and practical guide emphasising contracting as key to the exploration stage (see table 4.2). The NWMS contends that by achieving a joint agreement through exploration of ground rules, boundaries and expectations, an effective rapport can be established providing the trust necessary for the mentee to share and confide during the process. Literature supports the contention that contracting in the initial stages protects the dyad from toxicity (Johnson, 2002:93; Eby and Lockwood, 2004) however Moberg and Velasquez (2004:98) argue that contracting implies an equal relationship whereas the mentor is in a position of power and the relationship is inherently unequal.

Phase one of the model focuses on the preliminary meetings incorporating the contractual elements of the relationship covering, for example, the ground rules and expectations. This clarification is thought to reduce the risk of toxicity through preventing misunderstanding of roles or misalignment of expectations (Murray, 2001:167). Thorough contracting is a vital component in securing a successful outcome, and literature on toxicity, explored in chapter two, identified it as significant in prevention (Johnson and Ridley, 2008). By using appropriate communication through non-verbal behaviours and for example, mentor and mentee self-disclosure, the dyad can establish ground rules, expectations, objectives and boundaries, and essentially, build trust. The key skill adopted by the mentor is rapport building, reflecting the importance of the mentor-mentee bond in a collaborative relationship (Jones and Brown, 2011:406).

This phase encourages the dyad to explore collaboratively their communication approaches, in order to accumulate understanding of how this may influence the mentoring relationship. Tools to promote understanding, for example, Learning Styles Questionnaire (Honey et al, 1982) are made available to members. These psychometric tests can aid the recognition of potential tensions in styles or approaches that can be diagnosed, discussed and remedied prior to interaction, avoiding possible conflict. Other models such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, 1987) which identifies personality type, and Belbin Team Roles (Belbin, 1981) exploring team

behaviours, are also encouraged at this stage depending on their accessibility to the mentor. Harper (2008) in her phenomenological study of six coaches found that such tests can raise awareness for both coach and coachee but warned that current training in the administration and interpretation appears inadequate.

The phase evolves once rapport has been established, encouraging a strong, trust-based dyad and bilateral mentoring agreement. It could also be revisited later to either review or reinvigorate the relationship. This phase could be established as early as the initial meeting or may require several sessions before the contract is successfully agreed. The NWMS training pack (Appendix I: 22-Checklist) contains a contracting checklist to assist the dyad in drawing up a comprehensive contract. The NWMS training focuses on this phase, considered vital to the success of the relationship, and this is supported by literature on prevention of toxicity identified in the review.

b) Phase Two

During phase two, the mentor formulates an understanding of the mentee, establishing his/her current situation and goals for the future. Megginson et al (2006:20) describes this phase as 'Setting Direction' and it includes goal setting. The NWMS (Appendix I: 10) refers to it as 'Understanding the Mentee', utilising verbal and non-verbal signals, aiding the mentee in expressing themselves in more specific terms whilst valuing their opinions and providing feedback. Rapport building matures during this stage and becomes particularly poignant when exploring values and motivation as the mentee reveals more of their story.

The NWMS's focus on stock-taking for the mentee is designed to review their strengths, weaknesses, circumstances and context to help achieve a better understanding. It is, perhaps, closer to Kram's stage of Cultivation, in intent, as it strengthens the relationship and trust within the dyad. This is achieved using deep, non-judgemental listening and empathy skills to ensure the mentee feels understood, offering them validation.

Neimeyer and Neimeyer (1986) argue that early validation leads to more successful relationships and that failing relationships share less congruent constructs.

Deep listening skills (Appendix I: 28 - How to listen) can uncover underlying feelings of which the mentee is initially unaware, the process of talking and listening creating understanding, similar to Cox's (2013:53) authentic listening mode. Mentees are enabled, through the mentoring process, to take stock of their situation and review such issues as experience, skills, and personal circumstances within the organisational context. Areas open to exploration can include current role priorities, career history and the future. This clarifies the purpose of the collaboration. The nature of the issues raised and the depth of reflection required often occupies more than one session. In terms of prevention of toxicity, based on evidence presented in the findings chapters, phase one could be regarded as addressing the practical arrangements and ground rules and phase two as deepening the relationship through mutual understanding and empathy. Feelings that surface in this phase can be powerful and on occasion upsetting for the mentee. Even if competency boundaries have been settled in the earlier phase, the mentoring session can still risk slipping into a counselling activity. This may create a situation for which the mentor is unprepared and unqualified to facilitate and while the NWMS documentation and training discuss professional and competency boundaries there is little guidance on to how to respond to such a situation.

c) Phase Three

The Progression or Analysis phase provides the platform for mutual learning as the mentee broadens their insight and the mentor challenges discrepancies between, for example, self-perception and organisational needs. Reaping this mutual understanding within the dyad allows a shift in power from mentor to mentee.

The dyad works together to monitor and analyse progress, helping the mentee to achieve awareness and understanding and acknowledge his/her own role in events. The intention of DRM is that the use of deep listening techniques and

powerful questioning, creates within the mentee a sense of being fully understood and empathised with, forming an impression of expertise, even where ignorance is admitted. The relational mentor may be politically astute even though it is the mentee who possesses the technical expertise, yet the dyad is still able to work together addressing issues as a team, each recognising the other's contribution. The DRM mentor uses skills to create an environment of trust allowing the mentee to speak freely, encouraging a creative milieu for the mentee to develop solutions and explore ideas which fully recognise their expertise. Non-judgemental, deep listening and powerful questioning can unlock rigid perceptions sufficiently to allow alternative options or solutions to be considered (Appendix I: 30-Asking Powerful questions). Cox (2013:112) however, warns that the risk of bias is inevitable, for example 'variable-depth parsing' where focus is concentrated on what the coach finds interesting or personally relevant.

The NWMS documentation points out that mentor behaviour may alter from being passive in the second phase to being more challenging, if deemed appropriate (see Appendix I: 11-Influencing Styles). Adopting a more passive style when the mentee needs guidance and advice could impede momentum, and a more directive approach could prevent the mentee's involvement in the analysis, potentially disempowering them. The purpose of this third phase is to explore issues in greater depth, encouraging frankness and bridge any gaps between perceptions. A number of tools are available to the mentor to facilitate this process including, listening and reflecting, questioning, empathy, and self-disclosure models such as Johari's Window (Luft et al, 1955). The use of other tools are encouraged such as lifelines, SWOT analysis (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), and competence analysis (McKimm, Jollie and Hatter, 2003). Hamlin and Sage's (2011:768) lay model of positive mentor behaviours recommended the use of the mentor's 'tool-kit' of various models and techniques to support the mentee. Underpinning these tools are techniques such as powerful questioning (Appendix I: 30-Asking Powerful Questions) to involve the mentee to generate their own solutions (Connor and Pokora, 2012:21).

d) Phase Four

Phase four differs from Megginson et al's (2006:20) model where 'Winding Up and Moving On' is addressed in phase five. In the NWMS, phase four is concerned with the main purpose of the collaboration and consists of two stages; identifying opportunities and selecting appropriate options. A range of options is recommended which can emanate from either party although the mentee is encouraged to lead the process by providing potential initial suggestions. The mentor can stimulate this by challenging the mentee to shift perspectives and is in the tradition of solution-focused self-directed learning (Cavanagh and Grant, 2010:57).

Other techniques used include brainstorming, where all potential ideas are generated, force-field analysis where alternatives and consequences are considered or setting an action plan for a course most likely to succeed. The mentee's own ideas often surpass those of the mentor, fully justifying the case for holding back interventions. The action plan includes a range of tools including option appraisal, pathways, resource identification, contingency planning and timescales and a SWOT analysis approach (Appendix I: 15 – Action Planning).

e) Phase Five

The five-phase model then advances to the 'Winding Up and Moving On' stages where goals have been achieved, successes celebrated and plans made to move on before any risk of dependency sets in. The mentee puts the action plan into practice after which the process of review can occur. This helps to secure autonomy and responsibility for the mentee's own development. The relationship moves from the mentor's influence through skills such as deep listening and challenge, to mentee-centred behaviour; where the mentee arrives at potential solutions (see Figure 3.2 below.) The mentor's awareness and judgement of the appropriate mentoring style applied; from clarification to solutions, is vital to secure a satisfactory conclusion (Appendix I: 13 – Which style to use and when).

Figure 3.2 Mentoring Styles to Facilitate Mentee Autonomy (Appendix I: 11 Influencing Styles)

MENTOR LED

DEEP LISTENING

CLARIFICATION

CHALLENGING

PROBING

INTERPRETATION

CLARIFICATION

DIAGNOSIS

OPTIONS

SOLUTIONS

MENTEE CENTRED
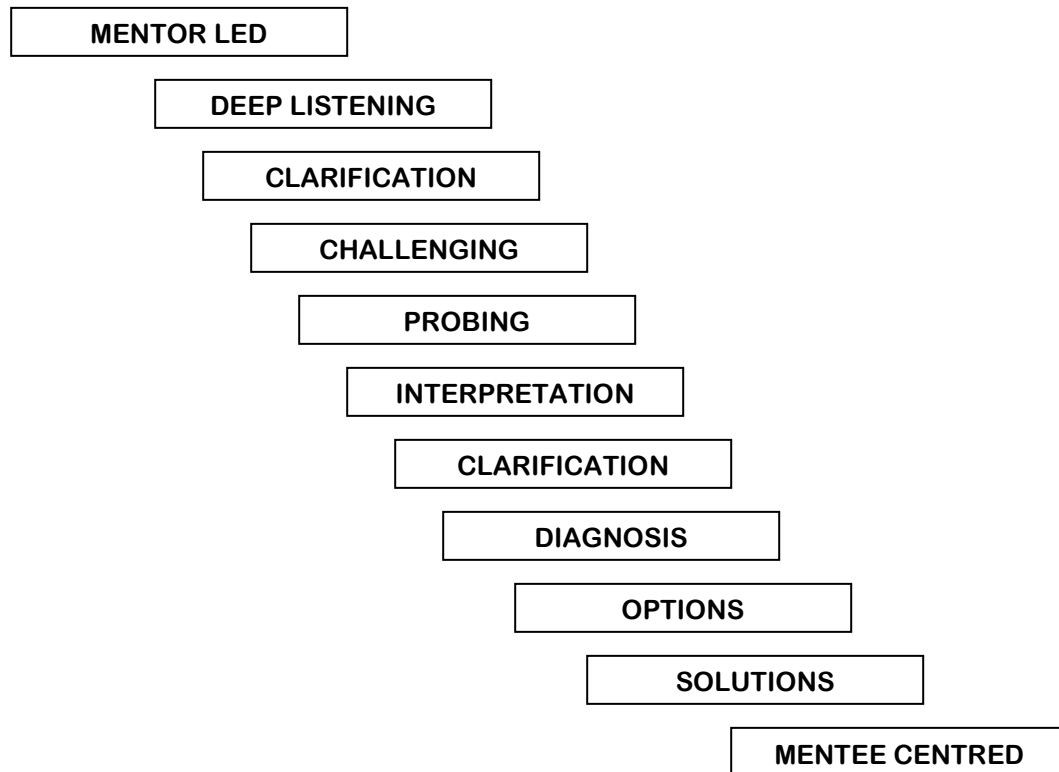
The DRM model could be regarded as in alignment with Egan's (2002:169) 'just society'. This is based on Smaby and Tamminen's (1979) concept of relationships founded on mutual respect and shared planning, with the model's refinement empowering the mentee with responsibility.

Phase five is described by the NWMS as the outcome of the mentoring process. The two stages; implementation of the action plan and review of the results, culminates in a decision to either re-contract or end the process. While some guidance does exist on ending the relationship and is mentioned in the Contracting Checklist (Appendix I: 22) it is noted that Megginson et al (2006:20) devote two distinct phases; phase four – 'Winding Up' and phase five – 'Moving On', to finishing the relationship. The implications of this are discussed further in the next chapters.

Megginson et al's model (2006) was based on Kram's (1985) informal, traditional four stage model and adapted for application on organisationally supported developmental mentoring. The NWMS further modified the five phase developmental mentoring model into a more usable framework in the context of its training environment. According to the NWMS Coordinator at the time:

> "It was practical to make some amendments to the programme… there was a real need to refine what we had. It needed to be experiential learning for the participants, and more around the top tips as opposed to huge amounts of theory and academic research." Coordinator NWMS

The NWMS mentor training involves a developmental day which is mandatory. It consists of:

- the background of the NWMS
- the benefits of mentoring
- a discussion of the definition of mentoring
- the DRM model; its stages, the techniques and tools used
- a range of practical exercises culminating in an observed mentoring session.

The Coordinator found the original material unsuitable for a one day training course:

> "The one used today has been streamlined significantly and a lot has been taken out of it. I remember my first experience of running a development day with the old material and it was very intense with too much information." Coordinator NWMS

Along with initial training for the mentor there is a condensed version of the training for the mentee and this is supplemented by ongoing development and networking events.

The DRM model, as used by the NWMS, emphasises the importance of contracting and using empathic skills in the training, with practical exercises, and supporting material. This pragmatic approach to contracting is similar to that adopted by Mullen and Schunk's (2012) utilisation of the initiation phase

of Kram's four phase model which embraces connection and groundwork. The empathic skills are akin to those used in Carnell, MacDonald and Askew's (2006) learning-centred conversation; active listening, open questioning and being non-judgemental. The DRM model generally encompasses recommended best practice and while it was not specifically designed to address toxicity, it could be argued that many of its elements may do so.

<u>Summary</u>

Chapter 3 has established the differences and similarities between Megginson et al's five phase developmental mentoring model and the NWMS model. The rationale behind the model's adaptation by the NWMS was to create a more practical, technique-focused representation while retaining much of the original concept. Phases one and two, utilising specific skills such as rapport building are believed to be influential in the prevention of toxicity. Much of the NWMS documentation and training focuses on contracting to establish clear expectations and trust and the initial phases are regarded as important. This is in contrast to phase three analysis which uses skills that define the developmental mentoring model; powerful questions, deep listening skills. There is little guidance on dealing with toxicity or when mentees require more specialist support such as counselling. Guidance on ending the relationship has been reduced from two phases to one.

The concept of network support and mentoring outside the organisation has been developed through the regional aspect of the NWMS, with the detachment of the mentor and the organisation offering greater confidentiality to the mentee. While this aspect of the NWMS is not perceived as part of the DRM model, the literature explored in the review supports the premise that this confidentiality and therefore trust may be significant in the prevention of toxicity. In recognition of this the regional aspect of the NWMS should perhaps be considered as a fundamental part of the model.

Chapter 4 Methodology

The development of my philosophical stance in relation to the study's focus of toxicity can be traced back to secondary school where in place of a mentoring influence I was exposed to, at worst, toxic and, at best, disinterested teachers. My perception of this significantly influenced my experience and ultimately the learning decisions that set my initial career path. My later career in professional development benefited from lifelong learning. I developed a passion for mentoring and particularly its uses in dysfunctional and destructive working relationships. I drew a connection between this and my experience at school and reflected on how a positive mentoring intervention could have impacted my choices and how detrimental a toxic influence can be.

My philosophical stance at school could be described as the epistemological realist (Johnson and Duberley, 2000:151). I believed that notions possessed a reality independent of myself and outside of my control. This view is in conflict with the ethos of mentoring which as I later discovered, deals not in tangibles but in interpretations and abstractions. It is a set of ideas, approaches, techniques and tools that can become a way of life for the experienced mentor, often unwittingly practised by the non-mentor, and can be within the control of the individual. My philosophical worldview therefore changed and could be better described as interpretivist, shifting from a purely objective world to the idea that our understanding of it can only be subjective (Easton, 2010). In this study I will be interpreting the experiences of the dyad which are unique and the process of the research recognises that subjectivity.

The original intention of this research was to investigate the extent of toxicity in mentoring using a grounded theory methodology which could ALSO infer a constructivist, interpretative view (Charmaz, 2006), acknowledging my own influence and the participants' role as co-researchers. Grounded theory is a strategy of inquiry where a theory is developed to explore a phenomenon that is grounded in the views of its participants, suggesting that the theory is created as a consequence of those views (Creswell, 2009). Academic understanding is therefore based on the theories derived from the data and not pre-formed ideas or hypotheses. However, the study's purpose evolved to

investigate the relationship between DRM and experiences of toxicity, directed at one particular mentoring scheme that adopts that model.

It was considered therefore that a case study approach would be most suited to this research because of its suitability to understand social or organisational processes (Hartley, 2004) in recognition of the contextual implications of the setting, the focus of the model and its potential with toxic relationship prevention. While the research addresses an existing phenomenon and its inter-relationships, the strategy selected was theory building to allow the theory i.e. that a relationship exists between DRM and prevention of toxicity, to emerge from the data (Andrade, 2009). Theory building more appropriately applies to a single small scale case study. The case study also placed the study's participants centre stage whilst ensuring my own background, position and interpretation of the research was acknowledged. A case study acknowledged the individual interpretation and subjective meaning of the toxic experiences allowing complexity of views to be expressed (Creswell, 2009), elucidating without narrowing the data's profundity.

McDonnell et al (2000), in their multiple case study approach for a policy research project, consider how practical concerns can influence research design. Their study's design was guided by both theoretical considerations and pragmatic issues. This adaptability is typical of the flexibility associated with case study methodology and justified in the study by the quality of data produced. The switch in focus from investigating the extent of toxicity in mentoring to theory building in relation to a specific model in its real-life context consequently ushered in a case study approach. Salminen et al (2006) observed that the use of a case study on a little known phenomenon can provide rich content and data suitable for theoretical and professional application.

The case study strategy was thus more suited to the revised purpose of this study and better acknowledged the bias and 'proximity to reality' of the researcher (Flyvbjerg, 2006). It also recognised that the mentoring model itself formed the cornerstone of the study. As Yin (1994:1-3) suggests case

studies are an appropriate approach where a contemporary phenomenon exists in a real life context and a 'how' or 'why' question is being posed. This study posits such a question, asking how the DRM model, as used by the NWMS, might impact toxicity. This inquiry arose from existing empirical knowledge (identified in the literature review) linking prevention with many of the aspects and skills associated with the DRM model. The boundaries of the phenomenon were unclear, which gave justification to the need for the rich data attainable from a case study. The case study will contribute to theoretical knowledge by providing a developmental view of toxicity currently unrepresented. It will also offer professional knowledge for practitioners when designing mentoring schemes. This particular study could also be described as Instrumental (Baxter and Jack, 2008:549), as the case is of secondary interest with the predominant focus being on providing insight into the relationship between the model and experiences of toxicity in mentoring.

The small scale of this case study will enable an in-depth exploration of the influence of the model on toxic experience. The participants were selected by theoretical sampling (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007) based on their use of the model. Participants were selected on the basis that they had been trained or were experienced in the DRM model in order to provide an informed perspective. While the term 'toxic' provoked some discomfort all interviewees were selected on the basis that they had experienced toxicity as defined by this study. A discussion of the term was included as part of the interview. A more positivist study with a control group of traditional mentors could have been used to trace any cause and effect relationship. However, this would have been difficult as there was no control group available.

4.1 Context

Case study approaches, as described by Patton (2002:439) can focus on people, critical incidents or various settings. In terms of this study, the focus is the DRM model within the NWMS context of the NHS emphasising the regional element of the Scheme.

To participate in the NWMS the mentor is required to undergo a one day training course and ongoing annual development. The course comprises of information on the NWMS and the commitment required from members, together with an introduction to the DRM with a practical emphasis allowing skills to be practised. Annual development includes the provision of master-classes: covering a range of subjects from neuro-linguistic programming to ethical scenarios, network learning events with plenary sessions covering techniques such as emotional intelligence, developmental transactional analysis and QUIPP (quality, innovation, productivity and prevention). Networking and a sense of mentoring community is actively promoted through such events.

Prospective mentees are offered an awareness session covering the DRM stages and techniques along with an introduction to the NWMS and the regional mentoring network, attendance, however, is not mandatory. The mentee can join simply by completing an on-line application form. Information is provided on the website (www.nwmentoring.nhs.uk) and includes tabs on information and guidance for both mentors and mentees, news of events and training, access to the on-line application process and links to the leadership qualities framework and quarterly newsletters. See Appendix III for training and other relevant promotional materials.

As Figure 4.1 below shows, the research took place in planned stages, beginning with the Scheme documentation analysis used to provide a greater understanding of the training and awareness experienced by members. This was followed by a quantitative survey. The purpose of this was twofold; to identify interview participants, and allow a broader understanding of emergent themes which were further explored in the interviews. Interviews were then undertaken with both mentor and mentee groups as well as the Coordinator to provide methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1970).

Figure 4.1 Diagram of Research Process, embedded – multiple units of analysis

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

REGIONAL MENTORING SCHEME (NWMS)

1. SCHEME DOCUMENTATION ANALYSIS

2. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE TO 2132 MEMBERS

3. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW WITH COORDINATOR

4. INTERVIEWS WITH PARTICIPANTS
Semi-structured interviews with 10 mentees (2 were also mentors)
Semi-structured interviews with 5 mentors (2 were also mentees)
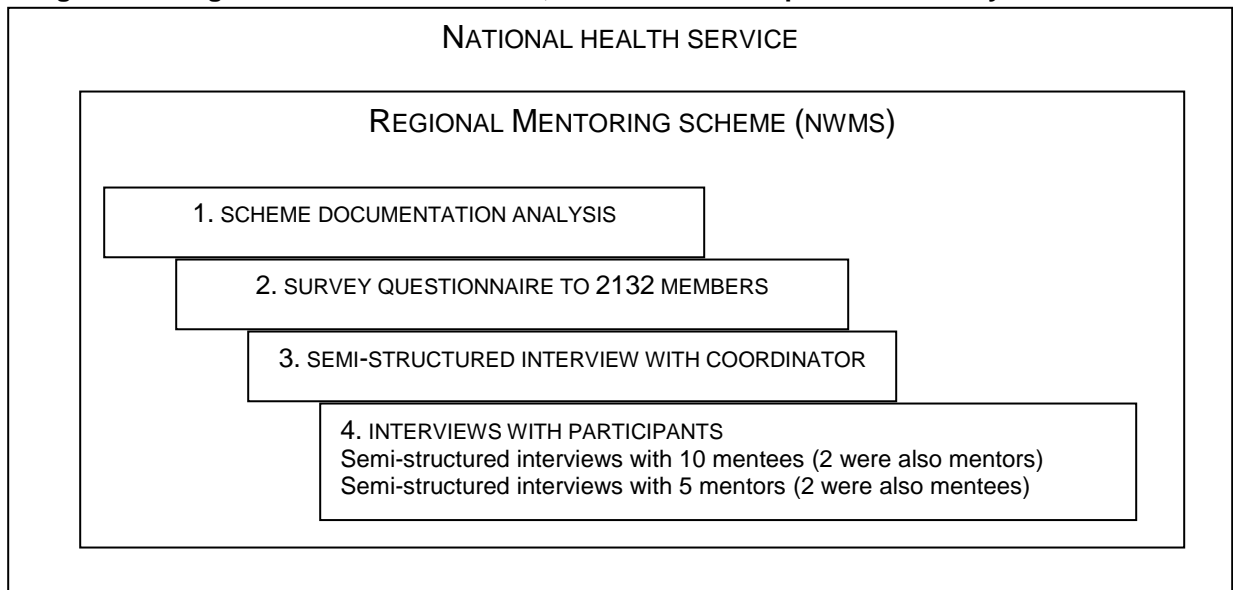
4.2 Participants

The NWMS consists of a wide variety of professionals and roles can range from clerks to chief executives and from administration to clinical. Managers form the largest section of its membership.

The study sample therefore was drawn from the NWMS and consisted of 752 mentors and 1380 mentees, so in terms of the social spectrum it represents a relatively specialist group. The mentors are all trained in DRM techniques and consequently can be regarded as informed and provide a wide range of roles and perspectives.

Table 4.1 Breakdown of members' roles in NWMS

Roles	Mentor	Mentee
Chief Executive/ Non-Executive	58	8
Consultant/GPs	106	63
Director/Senior Manager	264	545
Middle/Junior Manager	177	557
Band 1-4/Other	147	207
Total	**752**	**1380**

In order to identify participants who have experienced toxicity in mentoring the study surveyed all members of the NWMS; 2132 mentors and mentees. A sampling frame was provided by the NWMS's group emailing system which was utilised to automatically contact all members, together with a link within the email taking the respondent directly to the on-line survey tool for a quick and simple process. A survey is the most convenient way to reach such a large group to gather a wide range of data. Fink and Kosecoff (1998:27) suggest clearly establishing the intent of the survey; its objectives, what answers it seeks and a time limit for completion. The purpose of this study's survey was to understand the extent and nature of toxicity experienced by respondents, and identify those interested in further exploration of their experience. Complex questions were avoided to aid speed and convenience and ensure that respondents would complete the questionnaire.

The survey invited respondents to indicate whether they wished to participate in interviews requesting contact information. Table 4.2 displays some demographic information relating to the interviewees such as gender, experience and role. Only 3 interviewees possess a clinical background which, while representing only 23% of the sample, broadly correlates with the overall general demographics of the NWMS's total membership which consists of 32% categorised as 'clinical'. Non-clinical professions in the NHS are not, as a rule, offered access to professional mentoring schemes, unlike the clinical roles which benefit from a range of supportive programmes such as preceptorship in nursing. This incongruity may well contribute to the higher proportion of non-clinical staff attracted to the NWMS which is open to all.

Table 4.2 Interview participants' demographics

	Mentors	Mentees	Both
Female	2	7	2
Male	1	1	
Inexperienced in mentoring		4	
NWMS members when toxicity occurred	1	4	1
Non-clinical	2	7	1
Clinical	1	1	1

The demographics of the participants provide a reasonable balance in terms of distribution from mentors, mentees, roles and gender. Despite the higher female to male ratio and mentee to mentor ratio, the participating group mirrors the wider NWMS demographic and thereby presents a realistic reflection of the context. There is a wide range of experiences from NWMS members both from within and outside of the Scheme providing a broad view of toxicity from "information-rich clients" (Salminen et al, 2006:5). These 13 in-depth views, alongside the survey analysis, the Coordinator's perspective and the NWMS's documentation should therefore satisfy the requirements of a case study to both represent the complexity of the subject (Baxter and Jack 2008) and test theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). The case study is grounded in theoretical understanding (explored in chapter 2) of how toxicity can be prevented. This approach conforms to Flyvbjerg's (2006) rebuttal of the contention that case study research can only be useful to generate hypotheses rather than build theory.

4.3 Data Collection

Figure 4.1 details the research process in planned stages showing the multiple units of analysis embedded within the NWMS within the context of the NHS. The following data was collected from the four sources in the above process:

- a review of documentation; including training and reference materials,
- a survey sent to all 2132 NWMS members,
- a semi-structured interview with the NWMS coordinator
- semi-structured interviews with selected participants, both mentors and mentees, probing experiences of toxicity

The survey provided a broad view of toxicity in mentoring relationships, from which key themes were developed and explored further in the interviews. This multi-sourced approach contributes towards triangulation and offers a fuller view which will contribute to the phenomenon's overall understanding by each providing "one piece of the puzzle" (Baxter and Jack, 2008:554).

<u>a) Documentary Analysis</u>

Data collection began with a review of NWMS documentation to gain an insight into the level of training received by mentors and the amount of information the mentees are exposed to. Information was derived from application forms, training materials, the website, workbooks and references and reviewed to form an understanding of the model and to explain why the sample group is described in the study as 'specialist'.

The documentation was analysed using Eisenhardt's (1989:540) within-case analysis approach, whereby a detailed 'write-up' of each 'site' is undertaken to cope with the amount of data. Along with the 'write up's, my own observations were noted and to provide 'rich impressions' (Bourgeois and Eisenhardt, 1988) and I considered the documentation and what it was revealing about the Scheme. This approach enabled a depth of understanding of the training provision and DRM model. Throughout the study's analysis, all resources were analysed from the viewpoint of the DRM model or where a different model was explored, in comparison or relation to it.

Table 4.3 NWMS Documentation Purpose

Resource	Purpose	Contents
Workbook	Reference manual for Mentors to support practice	• DRM phase details and skills involved • Additional models such as the Johari Window • Ethical scenarios and discussions
Pack	For mentors and mentees	• NWMS background and Code of Ethics • Frequently Asked Questions • Learning Style Questionnaire and Lifeline exercise • Further Reading Recommendation
Website	For existing and prospective members	• An explanation of mentoring • A calendar of training and network events • Quarterly newsletters • Links to organisations of interest • Background to the NWMS
Delegate packs from events, advanced courses and the mentoring community		

<u>b) Survey</u>

Participants in this study were initially invited to complete an anonymous survey using an on-line tool, as a result of which some were invited to interview. Interviewees were provided with a participant information sheet and consent form (see Appendix V).

The use of a survey as part of a case study methodology was influenced by Eisenhardt's (1989) recommendation that it can be synergetic where quantitative evidence can reveal relationships not obvious from qualitative data. It can also confirm qualitative theory. The survey was particularly guided by Creswell's 'checklist of questions' (2009:147) in its design, and Eby's 'continuum of relational problems' (2007) in its content. The intention of the survey was to:

- Gather facts about participants
- Establish their experiences of toxic mentoring
- Evaluate and explore the nature of toxic mentoring
- Seek participation in the main research study.

To encourage participation the questions, both descriptive and inferential, were designed to be both straightforward. They were preceded by a brief explanation of what is meant by the term 'toxic mentoring'.

Although Coolican (1994:136) advises keeping questions to a minimum, careful consideration was given to the wording of each question as advised by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:250). They warn of the dangers of poorly worded questions, the influence on the response and the resultant confusion and potential for inaccurate answers. A proposed questionnaire was therefore piloted through a focus group and, following feedback on its design, adjustments were made. The final version (appendix IV) contained ten items ranging from factual information, such as the length of mentoring experience, to rating questions such as the scale of toxic impact from 'no impact' to the 'breakdown of the relationship.'   Data gathered from a survey provides a broader understanding of the context of the phenomenon as is

appropriate to case study research (Baxter and Jack 2008:554) and with this intent the questionnaire sought to establish the following:

- the level of mentor/mentee experience,
- the circumstances of toxicity, for example when the toxicity occurred and how it presented,
- the factors which may have contributed to, or caused the problems, through category questions, offering specific options while allowing additional comments to explain or add any other outcomes or causes of toxicity,
- the scale of the toxic impact on the relationship,
- details of potential interview participants.

It was both hoped and expected that the questionnaire would provide interesting supplementary demographic data, particularly considering the size and nature of the audience as trained and experienced in the DRM model of mentoring.

The survey resulted in 141 returned questionnaires with 41 respondents reporting toxic incidents in their capacity as either mentor or mentee or in both roles. This represents a response rate of 7%, discussed in more detail in the findings. A computerised spreadsheet software package was used in the analysis of the questionnaire. The data was downloaded from the on-line survey tool into an Excel spreadsheet. The worksheet was copied for each analysis focus; causal factors, symptoms and general toxic analysis. Variables such as NWMS members and non-members, mentors and mentees, experienced and inexperienced, were identified. Cross tabulation was used to establish data relationships, for example, the number of non-member mentees who experienced mentor lack of skills as a causal factor of their toxicity. The survey analysis while basic, guided an understanding of the concepts being researched. The labels; NWMS members and non-members are used to describe the respondent's status when toxicity occurred. All respondents were members of the Scheme.

c) Interviews

Of the 41 survey respondents who had experienced toxicity 14 agreed to take part in an interview and ultimately 13 of those participated, together with the NWMS Coordinator. This was deemed sufficient because the interviews represented three of the five sources of data for analysis; the perspectives of mentors, mentees and the Coordinator, along with the analysis of the NWMS documentation and analysis of the survey data. The intention of the interviews was to illuminate the survey findings in terms of definition, symptoms and causal factors. As the requirements were quite specific the resulting group was not expected to exceed the presumed number of approximately 12 who would proceed to the interview phase. Had the number exceeded that a more practical data gathering method would have been utilised such as interviews conducted by telephone.

Both mentor and mentee viewpoints were sought to create a wider perception and interviews with the Coordinator of the NWMS provided triangulation. Interviewees were also asked about their experiences of toxicity within and outside of the NWMS and this included mentoring in other sectors. Overall the sample offers an informed yet inclusive perspective for the research.

The interview questions were constructed using the literature review, the survey and a pilot interview (see Appendix V for the interview schedule). For example, the interview question seeking the interviewee's understanding of the term 'toxic' had not been asked of survey respondents. While the survey participants had been furnished with a definition, interesting responses regarding toxic symptoms led to the inclusion of the interview question about definition.

The interviews were semi-structured and audio-recorded. They were expected to last for no longer than one hour. While transcription of the recordings represented significant additional work, it was considered important to remain close to the data. This method of data collection was selected to allow emergent themes to be fully explored. Limitations, such as the interviewee's filtered view (Creswell, 2009:179), which describes the way

indirect information can be distorted by individual perceptions, was considered acceptable as the subjective impact of the toxic experience on the participant formed the basis of the research.

As with the questionnaire, a pilot interview was conducted. The noisy location interfered with transcription which highlighted the importance of environment. Maintaining the interviewee's focus on the question proved difficult which led to the decision to use the interview schedule as a guide for the dyad, working as a team to ensure the interview remained focussed. It was noticeable that there were more questions put than were required necessitating an adaption in style to use fewer and more open questions, allowing the interviewee to lead the way and tell the story.

The first part of the interview was to revisit the Participant Information Sheet (Appendix V) issued with the invitation along with the Consent Form. The survey responses were also reviewed to refresh the memory of participant experience and aid the interview process. The participant was treated as co-researcher, as DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006:314) described; "…more a participant in meaning making than a conduit from which information is retrieved." The interview schedule was used by both interviewee and researcher to guide and focus the conversation. Each participant was invited to give an in-depth narrative of their experience, whether it had occurred within or outside of the NWMS and what type of mentoring; DRM, traditional or peer, was involved. Consideration was also given to possible causal factors, the impact on the individual and whether a link existed between prevention of toxicity and DRM and the NWMS regional aspect. Participants were also asked for their understanding of the term 'toxicity' in mentoring. The findings of causes, symptoms and impact could then be compared to the survey and literature analysis undertaken in those areas.

Creswell's (2007:156) stages for data analysis for representation in a case study includes data managing, reading, describing and classifying. Use of a computerised data analysis tool such as NVivo to manage and analyse interviews was considered unnecessary in view of the relatively small scale of

the study. A more hands on approach would offer greater intimacy with the data and extending this philosophy to the data transcription further increased the feeling of closeness.

The use of standard software applications such as Word and Excel were considered capable of sufficient organisation of files, forming initial codes, adding description, and permitting appropriate categorisation to establish themes or patterns. This would allow the data to be interpreted to present an in-depth view of the case.

The use of Eisenhardt's (1989) 'within case' analysis described earlier presents a practical solution for dealing with the amounts of data arising out of a case study, and the transcribed interview data for this study consisted of over 30,000 words. The technique involves making detailed notes, usually descriptive, to promote intimacy with the data. The notes or 'write ups' produced were more reflective, to include impressions of the interview, and proved helpful in analysis. These reflections contributed to the overall picture being formed creating a reminder that the interview data was just one element of the overall case and not to be regarded or reported independently (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Tracy (2010) argues that multiple sources of data, including researcher viewpoints, encourage consistent interpretation.

Each interviewee was assigned a unique code to promote the security and confidentiality of the data and for ease of identification in the analysis if required. The code assigned the initials 'Mr' to the mentor, and to a mentee 'Me', followed by the response number; i.e. the order in which their survey response was received. The response number allowed data to be checked at source using a computerised spreadsheet and also simplified interpretation of data for presentation.

Table 4.4 below shows details of the interviewees and the scale of the impact the experience had on them. The scale ranged from 1 indicating little or no impact, to 10 representing the complete breakdown of the relationship.

Table 4.4 Interview participants

Interviewee	F = female M = Male	Toxicity as mentor (5) or mentee (10)	Impact Scale 1 - 10
Me8	F	Mentee outside the scheme	8
Me9	F	Mentee outside the scheme	10
Me14	F	mentee within the scheme	7
Me16	M	mentee within the scheme	3
Mr42	F	Mentor outside the scheme	5
Me49	F	Mentee outside the scheme	9
Mr60	F	Mentor within the scheme	10
Me63	F	Mentee within the scheme	10
Me109	F	Mentee outside the scheme	3
Me117	F	Mentee within the scheme	2
Mr132	M	Mentor outside the scheme	7
Mr133	F	Mentor within and outside the scheme	5
Mr/Me138	F	Mentor and mentee outside the scheme	4

Braun and Clarke (2006:86) describe the initial stage of thematic analysis as when the analyst begins to notice patterns of meaning and interest during the data collection. The literature review identified causes and symptoms as significant themes in toxicity. These themes surfaced from the interviews along with the role in prevention of DRM and, interestingly, the influence of external mentors accessed from the network within which the Scheme operated.

<u>4.4 Validity</u>

Quality issues were addressed during the research design and ongoing mindfulness of need for credibility (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) increased as the interviews progressed. It was important to maintain vigilance against leading the interviewee, for example, by directly asking if the regional aspect of the Scheme influenced prevention even though Kvale (1994) argues that leading questions are under-used and do not necessarily reduce reliability. A greater risk, due to the subject matter, was the temptation to counsel interviewees.
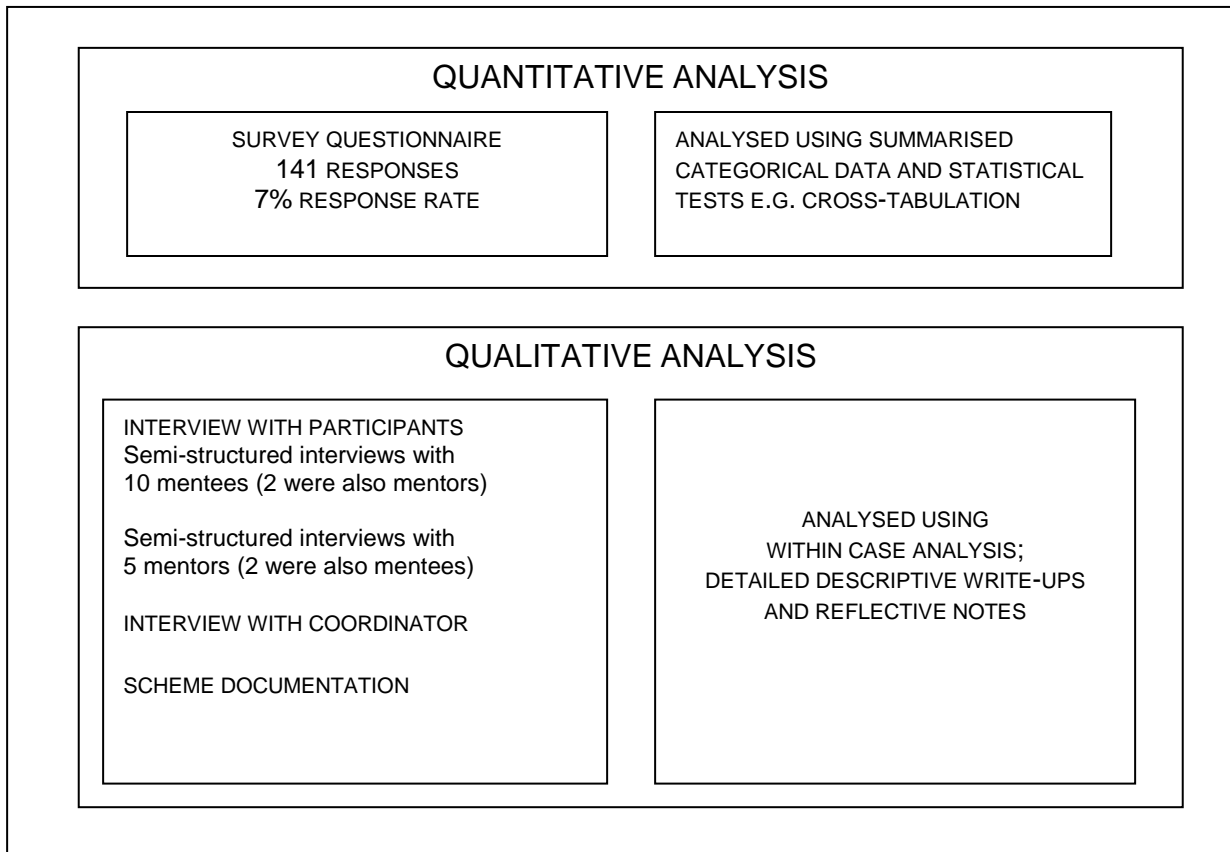
Pope and Mays (2006:19) recommends developing, through awareness, techniques to overcome this and other pitfalls. Price's (2002) 'laddered question' technique increases awareness within an open interview allowing the researcher to adapt to the interviewee and respond more sensitively. This is achieved through selecting levels of questions at appropriately responsive moments such as directive/action questions initially followed by knowledge/philosophy questions in response to the interviewee's answers. An example of this technique was demonstrated in the interview with Mr60 when recounting her toxic experience which was unresolved for her. In her narrative she displayed some confusion and uneasiness and in order to aid her understanding I used a question, "Did you contract?" This moved Mr60 from within the experience to explore the reason behind her mentee's behaviour thereby confirming her response and aiding closure. The use of knowledge questions can help the interviewee deconstruct a response, thereby validating its intent. This technique was adopted to individualise interviews whilst based on a standard question and ensured a more robust validity and ethical awareness.

Coolican (2006) warns that semi-structured interviews can boost the threat of succumbing to interviewer bias by influencing the participants and their responses to favour the researcher's position. The question of bias and influence on this study by virtue of my role as trainer and scheme member was carefully monitored to ensure collection methods were appropriate and provided a true representation of the phenomenon. In their review of the influences of feminist research Wellington et al (2005:114-115) argue that it is more acceptable for researchers to take their place in the research and that this 'insiderness' enhances and enriches the findings. However they warn of sharing a 'commonality of experience' highlighting the importance of applying robust scrutiny to avoid assumptions whilst maintaining the researcher's 'full voice'. Careful preparation for the interview was paramount in order to retrieve the fairest and most faithful account. This shared understanding was evident from the pilot interview and resulted in the interview schedule (see Appendix V) to guide the process and guard against my assumptions influencing the participants' responses.

Being the researcher and trainer on the NWMS implies that my own experience and knowledge of DRM is part of the very context being studied. Bogdan and Knopp Bilen (1982) advise that most researcher bias is superficial and will not contaminate rich data but rather offers a route into the study that increases understanding. This proved true of my own role and experience which provided insight and empathy with the participants rather than colouring interpretation. This impartiality was bolstered by leaving the role prior to the analysis stage of the study which added further distance.

The study adopted an interpretivist focus with a research question that only guided the data collection and analysis. Key decisions were made in the planning stage regarding collection and analysis of data, although the choice of case (NWMS) was presented as part of the phenomenon of interest (toxicity and the DRM model) which prompted the initial decision to research. The interviewees can be regarded as a specialist group in that they have experienced toxicity and the DRM model. However, this may also represent bias in that survey respondents who had not experienced toxicity may have used the traditional model. The typical characteristics of a case study were observed (Willig, 2008) as the importance of context and the use of triangulation. Triangulation was particularly important to demonstrate validity and strengthen the authenticity of the research.

The determination to honestly represent the data continued through to the analysis stage; to fairly report the data, as well as the writing process; ensuring that sentences were framed honestly, and were meaningful to the study's intent. While transferability can be challenging with a single case study because of its uniqueness, some analytical generalisations can be reproduced in different contexts. For example, if the study provides evidence of a link between the DRM model and prevention of toxicity, the study's analysis methods could be used in a different context such as other public services or private organisations. Figure 4.2 shows the process of different types of analysis within the methodological framework used.

Figure 4.2 Diagram of Analysis Methods

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
141 RESPONSES
7% RESPONSE RATE

ANALYSED USING SUMMARISED
CATEGORICAL DATA AND STATISTICAL
TESTS E.G. CROSS-TABULATION

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

INTERVIEW WITH PARTICIPANTS
Semi-structured interviews with
10 mentees (2 were also mentors)

Semi-structured interviews with
5 mentors (2 were also mentees)

INTERVIEW WITH COORDINATOR

SCHEME DOCUMENTATION

ANALYSED USING
WITHIN CASE ANALYSIS;
DETAILED DESCRIPTIVE WRITE-UPS
AND REFLECTIVE NOTES

4.5 Ethics

The main ethical concerns identified in this study were:

- Duality of role as researcher and NWMS member/trainer
- Interaction between researcher and participant
- Potential damage to the participant when recalling the toxic experience
- Fair representation of data

Anticipating ethical considerations prior to the study and being vigilant to their minimisation is paramount to ensure that both the participants and the integrity of the research are protected (Creswell, 2009:87-93). Flexibility and the ability to re-examine one's own values and ethical perspective when faced with dilemmas are also important (Glen, 2000). The reflective process was applied throughout this study through the holistic way in which I work. Although time-consuming, as each re-visit requires the section's concerns and requirements

to be reflected upon, it is also thorough and robust in its continuous re-evaluation.

The nature of the qualitative analysis involved significant interaction between the researcher and the researched. Wellington et al (2005:103) consider assumptions relating to human nature and agency such as social influence; do we act in an independent way or respond to our environment? Whilst the interview sample consisted of volunteers without sway of reward they might have felt compelled to comply if they regarded the researcher as prominent in the scheme or continued to see me as a 'teacher' or in a position of authority. This threat was considered unlikely however, as the group consisted of confident professionals, certainly in terms of the 'mentors' and because the NWMS itself actively encourages self- reflection and awareness.

Acknowledgment of the potential influence on interviewees of my 'insider researcher' status was explored in chapter 1 and earlier in this chapter. As a trainer, mentor and mentee on the NWMS at the time of data gathering this presented a concern. Five of the thirteen interviewees were known from training and networking events but not through a mentoring relationship. Rather than limit the exchange, the familiarity with the five known interviewees enhanced rapport, enabling participants to readily share sometimes difficult experiences. There was no noticeable difference in rapport between this group and the previously unknown participants. However, for those who appeared uncertain or nervous I engaged in interview reciprocity, where experiences are shared to encourage openness (Mercer, 2007). This interactive technique proved successful but has attracted criticism from those wary of influencing the interviewee (Creswell, 2007). Being mindful of this risk such reciprocity was confined to the beginning of the interview to establish rapport. I had also worked directly with the Coordinator, however, at the time of the interview she had left the organisation avoiding any constraints resulting from a line management relationship. There was a risk that the Coordinator, due to her position, could be identifiable. This was discussed with the Coordinator who was comfortable with possible identification. However, the

risk was considered minimal as the role had several incumbents over the life of the research.

It is reasonable to conclude, in this context, that both mentors and mentees participated from a genuine interest in the research and the desire to contribute to solving issues they have personally experienced. Like McNiff (2008:359) it was endeavoured to employ 'epistemic responsibility' by 'standing outside the practitioner researcher self' and allow the voices of the participants to be clearly heard.

The participants gave their informed consent to the study through a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix V) detailing the purpose and benefits of the study, confidentiality, data storage and use, along with research contacts and how to raise concerns should they arise. A Consent Form (Appendix V) was signed after discussion and the opportunity to clarify study participation. The interview involved revisiting potentially disturbing or upsetting experiences, and was therefore structured in a sympathetic way maintaining the participants' welfare as a priority with the offer of further support from an independent, qualified party.   Careful preparation for the interview was paramount in order to retrieve the fairest and most faithful account. Consideration was given to the language used to describe themes arising from the data minimising bias.   Being mindful that ultimately the study's findings would be accessible to participants guided its integrity.

Another ethical risk was the urge to mentor interviewees when they recalled potentially upsetting or unresolved experiences. Although contingencies were in place to offer further support should it be required, I felt able and qualified to support the individuals through the unresolved issues. This was achieved by interrupting the interview to explore the issue with them as scheme trainer and advisor. The recording continued, to avoid distraction or disruption of the interviewee or miss anything relevant to the research, but only exchanges considered appropriate to the research were transcribed.

The NHS demands specific ethical requirements for any research that is undertaken. This involves a formal application considered by the Local Research Ethics Committee, although all research is subject to national level review overseen by the National Research Ethics Service. The application requires details of the proposed research, methods and participants along with any perceived risks and the justification for the study. The interviews were conducted away from NHS premises which neither contravened ethical requirements nor required special approval. Logistically, as interviewees were located throughout the North West region separate approvals may have been required from each NHS trust and would therefore have been unworkable. However, interviews held off site inadvertently proved beneficial to the process as interviewees felt more relaxed, and the risk of work-related distractions were avoided.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face except one which was undertaken, for practical reasons, by telephone. While this proved to be one of the longer interviews there was no discernible difference to the others. Sturges and Hanrahan (2004) discovered, in their study of telephone and face-to-face interview comparison that no significant differences arose from the choice of interview modes. The interviews were digitally recorded and faced common challenges to high quality recordings such as background noise and other factors as outlined by DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006:318). To minimise these risks two recording devices were used and the interviews transcribed as soon as practicable, usually immediately afterwards. Along with the transcriptions 'write-ups' were added to help pick out significant themes and offer personal thoughts and reflections.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has explored the choice of approach for the question of how toxicity in mentoring can be prevented by using the DRM model. The NWMS offered an opportunity to access participants practicing or experienced in mentoring and was considered suitable for a case study. Five data sources were used. The documentation used by the NWMS and accessed by its members was analysed to provide a better understanding of the training and

awareness underpinning the Scheme. A survey was sent out to 2132 NWMS members with a response rate of 7%. While the response rate appears low, it cannot be determined whether this was due to the survey being disregarded by members who have not experienced toxicity or a lack of interest in completing the survey. A case study approach with multiple sources of data provided separate perspectives enabling a convincing and valid thematic analysis to be built.

The question of researcher positionality has also been considered, reflecting upon each interaction with participants and questioning whether they have been represented or re-presented fairly and accurately (Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2006:31). The design of this research embodies the theoretical perspective and acknowledges the assumptions and positionality of the researcher, recognising that a case study should be self-reflexive throughout to monitor subjectivity (Simons, 2009). Although the relationship between DRM and toxicity is difficult to measure, it is, nevertheless better understood through this case study's multiple perspective design, which also allowed a continuous review and consideration of the data as each perspective was analysed.

The intention of the research question was to explore toxic experiences within the contextual relationship of the DRM model from a range of perspectives; mentor, mentee, coordinator, and review the effectiveness of the model in terms of its influence on toxicity. The following two chapters fulfil this function through examination of the data gathered using the categorical aggregation technique (Creswell, 2007) to establish the existence of patterns which are displayed thematically. Chapter 5 presents the analysis of results in thematic sections. It analyses the quantitative data gathered from the initial survey of the NWMS. It also addresses the issue of understanding toxicity through consideration of its symptoms and the participants' own definitions of the word. Direct quotations have been adopted to ensure polyvocality (Thody, 2006) to foster both a fairer and truer representation of the individual's intended meaning. Chapter 6 reflects on causal factors; external, such as conflicting roles, and preventable, such as poor contracting. It displays

findings by reflecting on the DRM model, prevention of toxicity, and the role of external mentors. While the Coordinator's interview was incorporated with the other participants, any additional insights were attributed separately. This recognises both the Coordinator's expert knowledge of the NWMS and her role as 'informant' rather than 'respondent' (Simons, 2009:107).

The next chapter presents the findings from the documentation review, survey and interview data on the definition of toxicity and explores the relationship between toxic symptoms and the impact on the individual.

Chapter 5 – Understanding Toxicity

The purpose of this chapter is to present findings that build an understanding of toxicity through consideration of its perceived symptoms and the participants' own definitions of the word 'toxic'. An analysis of the documentation review, survey results and interview data is presented in order to offer a range of perspectives. The analysis will ascribe and classify symptoms of toxicity from the survey rated according to the intensity of its impact. The perceived impact of toxicity was assessed through responses to the survey question: "On a scale of 1 – 10, what was the extent of the impact on the relationship?" The 1-10 scale is hereafter referred to as the Impact Scale. To avoid drawing conclusions prior to appropriate analysis the study adopts a variety of qualitative analysis approaches. These range from the quasi-statistical, using word frequencies to identify definitions of toxicity to template where text segments are arranged by matrix analysis. Editing approaches were used to allow a more interpretive and flexible approach.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first provides a brief review of the documentation, initial survey and subsequent interview data, followed by definitions of toxicity drawn from that data. Definitions were described from three distinct perspectives; the dyad, the mentee and the mentor. However, the mentor perspective referred to negative mentor behaviours and could be regarded as a mentee viewpoint as it focuses on the effect on the mentee rather than the mentor. The final two sections explore the relationship between toxic symptoms and the impact on the individual, seeking any correlation between specific symptoms and intensity of experience. It considers the issue of the chronic effects of toxicity and their impact. Throughout the findings comparisons are made to existing models of negative mentoring (Eby, 2007; Hamlin and Sage, 2011).

5.1 Documentation Review

In line with the case study approach, a range of data was gathered from five sources: a survey of NWMS members, semi-structured interviews with mentors, mentees and the NWMS Coordinator, and the NWMS's documentation review. The review was performed through an analysis of

supporting materials (Appendices I-III), training documents, and ongoing development events to ascertain their significance in the mentoring process and their impact on protection against toxicity. The review concluded that this material offers comprehensive information providing members with the opportunity to "re-learn, reflect and retool" for their ongoing mentoring relationships (Terrion, Philion and Leonard, 2007:53). A summary of documentation is displayed in table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 NWMS Documentation Review

Documentation	Contents
Website www.nwmentoring.nhs.uk	Background, Definition Joining instructions Details of events, Contact details
Pre-training documentation for mentor and mentee	Detailed joining instructions Pre training exercises: Lifeline, Learning styles questionnaire
Mentor Workbook	Five phases of DRM, Associated tools and techniques
Newsletter	Details of news and events
Networking event literature	Referring to specific event

The website provides an overview of developmental mentoring, the background of the NWMS, joining instructions, development opportunities and contact details. While there is some information for prospective mentors and mentees regarding the developmental mentoring model, survey results suggest that not all fully understood the concept. Mentors are required to attend training but mentee awareness sessions are only recommended. Preparation exercises are provided to enhance training but completion is not mandatory. The mentor workbook and development opportunities provided for mentors promote the developmental mentoring model and the survey suggests that mentors do have a greater understanding and awareness compared with mentees. 50% of mentees who had experienced toxicity within the NWMS cited incidents that demonstrated a lack of understanding or clear expectations compared with only 25% of mentors and this suggests that greater awareness is needed.

The documentation originated from materials commissioned by the Strategic Health Authority who initially engaged a consultant to produce a development programme. The current training remains similar to the original in intent, the five phase developmental model of Megginson et al (2006). There are numerous opportunities to practise techniques within a range of learning styles congruent with blended learning approaches according to the NWMS. The training provided, therefore, is practical and focused and is supported by the documentation.

The main resource given to mentors is a workbook (see Appendix I). This presents a view of mentoring in general and the DRM model in detail. It incorporates an explanation of the stages of the DRM model, as used by the NWMS, along with associated models and frameworks that can be used as tools in the mentoring process.   The focus of the support and training materials on psycho-social skills, such as developing empathy, have proven long-lasting effects in terms of behavioral change (Boyatzis, 2007:455). Despite this there is a strong argument for introductory training and preparation (Hamlin and Sage, 2011).

The matching process is facilitated by way of a 'mentee-select' computerized programme based on a range of categories such as the profession and seniority of mentors, and their location as well as a statement describing their mentoring experience and an indication of the style of support they would offer. While many argue that matching is critical to the success of mentoring (Chao,2009, Bell,2011), Cox (2005) suggests that pursuit of the perfect match may be unnecessary, as the definitive needs of the mentee often only emerge during the course of the relationship and therefore cannot be anticipated. Findings from the current study suggest that the process has failings and while matching was not specifically identified as a toxic cause from the survey, one mentee interviewed suggested there was potential for mismatch:

> "I found it really difficult to get matched with somebody….it was on job titles and I was getting matched with people who were junior staff to me which wasn't the relationship I needed." Me63

Whilst the matching process of the NWMS is less controlled than some schemes, ongoing support and mediation is offered along with ethical guidance, based on the European Mentoring and Coaching Council's guidelines. There is little guidance however, on how mentees should approach their selection of the criteria-based matching database offered by the NWMS (see Appendix I:4).

The regular networking events promoted by the NWMS seek to embed learning and development within the profession. As Lankau and Scandura (2007:112) point out when referring to Thomas and Ely's (1996) "learning-and-effectiveness paradigm," such forums not only promote awareness but proactively allow the development of mentoring skills. The documentation review found a comprehensive support structure in terms of knowledge, learning and skills development for members, however, although attendance is recommended at least once a year it is not mandatory.

No specific written guidance is provided advising members on how to deal with toxicity and while members of the NWMS team are promoted as a further resource in terms of providing advice and guidance, it is not clear how or under what circumstances this resource would be taken up.

Prospective mentees are usually drawn to the NWMS to facilitate a transition in their career, be supported in a new role or achieve career goals and pathways. Although specific issues may be tackled, the NWMS generally attracts individuals with positive aspirations seeking to improve and develop, and its members participate on a purely voluntary basis. The NWMS claims that its broader regional aspect is advantageous and this is proactively marketed as a core principle and promoted as a cross-organisational and cross-professional format.

Benefits advanced to members include the opportunity to spend regular, reflective time with a mentor who can both support and challenge on work

issues and, rather than providing answers, encourage the mentee to discover solutions and take ownership of their own development. There is an emphasis on confidentiality and providing a 'safe' environment for members to share, unfettered by requirements to monitor or report back to the workplace. Mentees are encouraged to seek mentors from outside both their profession and their organisation as the key skills of deep listening and powerful questioning cultivated by the DRM model are generic, requiring no specific job knowledge. A mentor, unencumbered by fixed perceptions of personalities surrounding their mentee or of internal organisational politics, arguably fosters an unbiased culture and, unburdened by specialist or technical knowledge of the mentee's work, can deliver support devoid of personal opinions or premeditated convictions. This premise is innovative and has limited support in existing literature (Clutterbuck, 2004; WUMS, 2010). Findings presented in chapter 6 support the benefits of an external mentor.

The range of supporting documentation available for members is set out in table 5.1. Information provided by the NWMS website, training and development materials and newsletter deliver sufficient promotion of the developmental mentoring model. However, while mentors are required to undertake initial training, attendance at ongoing development events is not mandatory. Awareness sessions are offered on a voluntary basis and members are encouraged to access developmental mentoring information, exercises and tools.

5.2. Survey Analysis

A summary of findings from the initial survey questionnaire is shown in Table 5.2a below, including an indication of whether toxicity occurred while the respondent was part of the NWMS. The summary also indicates the extent of the respondents' experience in mentoring, i.e. over 12 months practicing as a mentor or mentee, and at what stage of the relationship the toxicity occurred.

Table 5.2a Initial Toxicity Survey Analysis of Respondents

	NWMS Mentors%	NWMS Mentees%	NWMS Both%	
Respondents who experienced toxicity (29% of sample)	37%	56%	7%	100%
Within the NWMS	22%	34%		
Outside the NWMS	15%	22%	7%	100%
Experienced in mentoring	37%	34%		
Inexperienced in mentoring		29%		100%

The survey response rate was 7% with 141 members completing. While the response may be considered low it is consistent with previous NWMS member survey response activity. 29% of respondents reported experiencing toxicity in a mentoring relationship. This is in fact lower than previous research on the extent of toxicity (Eby and Allen, 2002; Simon and Eby, 2003). Whether this indicates an increased awareness of prevention of toxicity, or is merely a reflection of the study participants as a group experienced in mentoring, is impossible to determine. Fourteen of the survey respondents who had experienced toxicity agreed to take part in an interview and all but one of those participated along with the NWMS Coordinator.

All the mentors who had encountered toxicity (37% of respondents) were experienced (practicing for over 12 months), ranging from 12 months to 18 years with an average of 6 years (SD=4.76). 34% of mentees were experienced with an average of 5 years (SD=4.18). This indicates that toxicity can strike even the most seasoned dyad. The majority of mentors were experienced with regard to their involvement both within and outside the NWMS. Interestingly while experienced mentees encountered toxicity both within and outside the NWMS, all the inexperienced mentees were members of the NWMS. This could indicate a need for greater support by the NWMS for their mentees.

A slightly higher proportion of toxic incidents were reported by respondents while members of the NWMS, 56% compared to 44% externally. This could be due to better reporting or possibly higher expectations of trained and

experienced members. Expectations may also be influenced by the model of mentoring used; sponsorship mentoring focuses on career outcomes whereas developmental mentoring directs the emphasis at personal development (Clutterbuck, 2007:643). A failure of understanding or a mismatch of the model being used or expectations of the process by the dyad may trigger a toxic outcome or premature ending (Johnson and Ridley, 2008:77). The interviews suggest that many of those experiencing toxicity were not following the guidelines devised for the DRM.

Table 5.2b shows that toxicity occurred more frequently between the first and fourth meetings for mentors with a far lower incidence at initial or later stages. The least likely time for toxicity amongst mentees was between the third and fourth meetings when the relationship would have been well established.

Table 5.2b Initial Survey Analysis of When Toxicity Occurred

	Number of NWMS Mentors	Number of NWMS Mentees
When? Initial meeting	2	5
When? 1-2 meetings	6	6
When? 3-4 meetings	4	1
When? Later	2	7
6 respondents made more than one selection, 2 respondents did not select		

The highest incidence of toxicity for mentees occurred in the later stages perhaps reflecting poorly managed relationship endings. Mentors however did not report experience of toxicity at the same stage of the relationship. This incongruous outcome between mentors and mentees could indicate a lack of awareness by the mentor. These results support the findings of Eby and Lockwood (2005:452) in their study of two formal mentoring programs which identified a unique protégé problem labelled as 'Structural Separation' where the mentor moved on without formally ending the relationship; "…the relationship kind of disintegrated…" Megginson et al (2006) advocate preparing for a good ending that enables the mentee to move on. The NWMS (see Appendix I: 16) recommends reviewing and celebrating the dyad's

achievements, although it offers no advice on how to deal with feelings of loss that may be associated with the end of the relationship.

The survey also sought an indication of the severity of the toxic occurrence by use of an Impact Scale, rating the experience between 1 for no impact and 10 representing the complete breakdown of the relationship. 17% scored low (1–3 on the scale), 37% medium (4-6), and 46% reported a high impact (7-10). 29% of mentees compared to only 17% of mentors scored high on the impact scale, although proportionately, there were a greater number of mentees. Only 17% of the toxic incidents reported were considered low suggesting that when encountered, toxicity can create a potent impact. This reinforces the findings of previous studies (Simon and Eby, 2003, Kilburg, 2007) that toxicity can significantly affect individuals particularly in areas such as job satisfaction and stress, and can cultivate frustration and anxiety.

Table 5.3 Impact of Toxicity on Survey Respondents

Impact Scale	%	% Mentors	% Mentees	% Both
Low impact 1 - 3	17	5	12	
Medium impact 4 – 6	37	15	12	10
High impact 7 - 10	46	17	29	

The survey revealed 29% of respondents reporting toxic incidents in their capacity as either mentor or mentee or in both. Notably more mentees (56%) experienced toxicity, suggesting a greater risk of toxicity to the mentee. Eby and Lockwood's study (2005) examining two formal programmes found a number of problems experienced by the protégés; mentor neglect, unmet expectations, mentor separation, compared to only one issue for mentors; feelings of inadequacy. This study may contribute to the justification for the existing focus on the mentee's perspective in literature.

The survey gathered information seeking self-diagnosis of the causal factors, categorising them as; trust issues, personality clash, lack of communication, lack of commitment, mentor neglect, mentee disinterest, and other. The

causal factors offered included cultural differences, chemistry or personality clash, conflicting roles or responsibilities, life or career changes, mentor lack of skills, unknown, other. The 'other' option requested specification.

The causal elements were selected for the study as they had featured in the literature review as themes significant to toxicity in previous studies (Spencer, 2007, Eby and Lockwood, 2005). As the two most vital features relevant to the intentions of the research; symptoms and causes, an initial analysis of the survey provided a useful foundation for comparison with the results generated by the interview data to both clarify and validate survey findings. Analysing the survey concentrating on these two features helped to keep the research focussed.

Figure 5.1 below compares the level of impact experienced by mentors and mentees. 29% of mentees experienced significantly higher toxic impact compared to just 17% of mentors. Medium impact was similar for both groups; 17% of mentees to 20% of mentors. More than twice as many mentees (12%) experienced low impact compared to mentors (5%).

Figure 5.1 Level of Impact of Toxicity Experienced by Mentors and Mentees
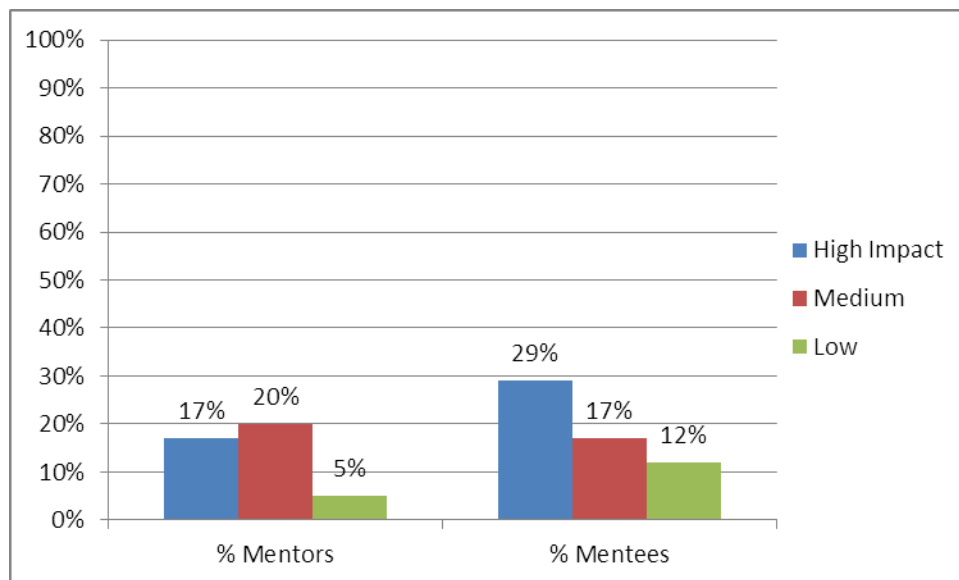
The level of impact the toxic symptoms inflicted upon all respondents is shown in Figure 5.2 below. The scale ranges from 1, indicating little or no impact, to 10 representing the complete breakdown of the relationship. Categories of symptoms: trust, personality clash, lack of communication, lack of commitment, mentor neglect, mentee disinterest and other, were drawn from existing research (Eby, 2007, Eby et al, 2000, Allen, 2007, Scandura, 1998) and adjustments following the pilot survey.

Figure 5.2 Impact of Toxicity Experienced by Respondents
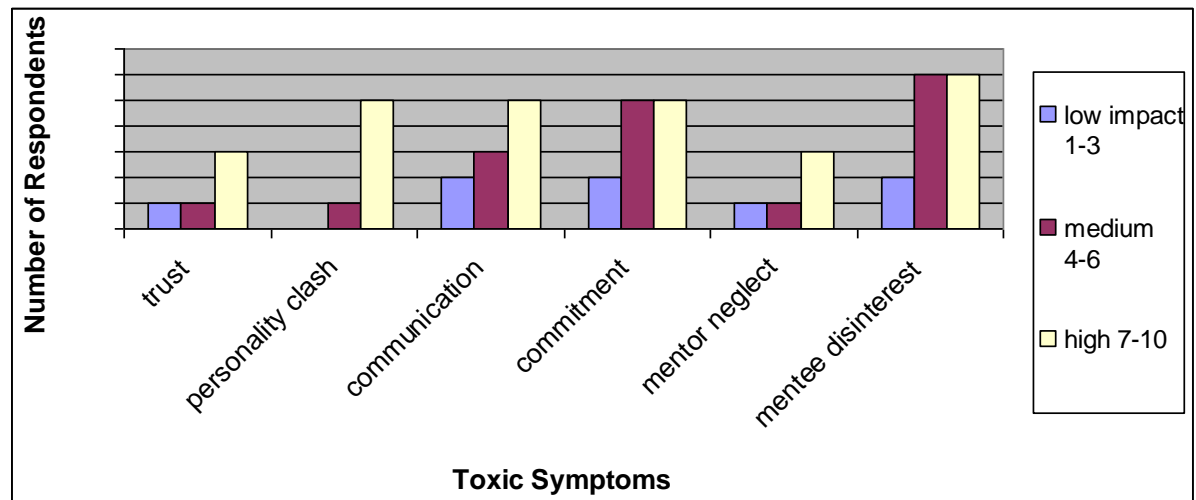
10% of respondents identified trust issues and mentor neglect as toxic symptoms, with 11% selecting personality or chemistry clashes. Although infrequent, these symptoms were more likely to produce a high toxic impact. Mentee disinterest proved the most common symptom with 27% of respondents having experienced it. This symptom also caused the highest impact with 24% scoring medium to high on the impact scale. Trust issues were experienced only by mentees outside of the NWMS. Personality clashes also occurred more frequently outside the NWMS with a ratio of 6:1. Mentee disinterest however was more prevalent within the scheme (18%). Fuller analysis of the interviews in chapter 6 may demonstrate whether the model has any connection to these statistics.

Analysis from the interviews shows that similar symptoms can produce widely varying impact. Interviewees Me14 and Me109, for example, both cited

mentor neglect as one of the causal factors involved in the toxicity yet the impact score differed from a 3 to a 7. This is discussed more fully in the next chapter and while no two experiences can ever be the same it does raise the question of perception and subjectivity.

5.3 Defining Toxicity

Part of the interview process asked participants to compose their own definition of toxicity. The questionnaire did not seek a definition but offered one in the invitation to participate (see Appendix IV). The definition provided was:

> The use of the word 'toxic' to describe failure in mentoring is a term that has been used in many previous studies. The purpose of this study is to examine how a developmental mentoring model, as used by the North West Mentoring Scheme, impacts toxic or failing mentoring relationships. When a mentoring relationship goes 'wrong' it can be damaging to both mentee and mentor. Examples of toxicity include practical issues such as missed appointments to more serious problems such as manipulative goals.

A summary of the interview participant's definitions is set out in Tables 5.4a, 5.4b and 5.4c below. The descriptions offered are categorised in three groups: the dyad perspective, the effects on the mentee, and the viewpoint of the mentor. Of the fourteen responses (including the Coordinator interview) half believed toxicity applied to the relationship itself or effects on the dyad as an entity, using terms such as 'beyond rescue' or 'a barrier'. Five responses considered toxicity to result in consequences for the mentee, inducing arrested development. Two connected toxicity purely to mentor' behaviours, for example, 'the aims of the mentor aren't true and honourable'. A link between toxicity and lack of skills in vital areas such as listening and rapport was observed together with a loss of values.

Table 5.4a Interviewees' Definitions of Toxicity by Dyad

Perspective	In terms of	Example of Toxic Definition
D y a d	Mechanics of the relationship	"Anything that can go wrong with a mentoring relationship, so it could be lack of contact, an inconclusive result…it could be quite broad". Mr132
	Immediate and chronic effects for both parties.	"…like nuclear waste, it did carry on seeping, at the time and later on as well. It's obvious but also not obvious, it permeates through not only that relationship but also the effect it has on the individual and the mentor. For me it's about undermining the mentee and undermining their ability to make decisions." Me9
	Insidious effect on relationship which is difficult to recognise.	"…a poor mentoring relationship, extremely poor because the word toxic is quite strong, when you sent that survey round I thought - God, that's what it was." Mr133
	Obstacle to the relationship	"The word is weighted really, there was a barrier, I couldn't ask for what I wanted and she couldn't give me what I wanted, so both of us were a barrier." Me117
	Rapport in the dyad	"It means things are getting in the way of building a good rapport between the mentor and the mentee, they could be organisational, personal, or wider than that." Mr42
	Relationship breakdown	"Unhealthy, unhelpful relationship, its actually detracting from your own confidence. I don't like the word toxic; the relationship has broken down, beyond rescue… I'd like to think you can rescue it." Mr138
	Model reference	"…instead of it being beneficial, it has the opposite effect." Mr60

Table 5.4a displays quotations from the interviewees when asked for a definition of toxicity. The descriptions relate to the dyad rather than the individual. In reference to damage to the 'mechanics of the relationship', the definition recognises the broad range of issues the word could encompass, highlighting perhaps the case for a continuum of meanings, categorising differing problems. The challenges to framing such categorisation are discussed in the next sections.

The insidious effect of toxicity, often difficult to recognise particularly for the victim, is noted along with some aversion to the powerful word 'toxic' itself, again suggesting a need for flexibility or a range of definitions. Me138 suggested that the term 'unhelpful' was more useful. Some of the descriptions offered a longer term view of toxicity. Participant descriptions vividly encapsulate the chronic damage resulting from toxicity, an under-researched consideration. Many also recognised barriers in relation to toxicity, preventing the relationship from developing, impeding rapport in the dyad and signaling the breakdown of the relationship.

Table 5.4b views toxicity purely from the perspective of the mentee describing the impairment of growth and barrier to development. The definitions are personal, referring to self-esteem and emotional wellbeing, recognising the potential damage such experiences can inflict.

Table 5.4b Interviewees' Definitions of Toxicity by Mentee

Perspective	In terms of	Example of Toxic Definition
Mentee	Development of the relationship	"…there's no growth, it doesn't need to be toxic in the sense that it's going backwards but there's no growth." Me8
	Resultant effects	"Loss of self-esteem, feeling worse about myself as a result of it." Me49
	Effects on individual and relationship	"It's obviously quite poisonous…. unhelpful….put a hold on someone's development and has a negative effect on their emotional wellbeing. Something that is not going anywhere, leads to a dead end, definitely not symbiotic and it's not flourishing." Me14
	Chronic effects	"…it's gone seriously wrong. Now I don't feel personally hurt, but at the time I felt really hurt by the nature of the relationship. I probably measure toxicity by the lasting effect it has, the toxic element would stay." Me63
	Loss of values	"Where the relationship has become infiltrated, the values you set off in the beginning have gone by the wayside, where agendas come into play, where it's detrimental and where you lose focus." Me16

Although the examples in table 5.4b are all from mentees, many mentors initially considered toxicity in light of the mentee rather than themselves. As the quotations in table 5.4c indicate, when defining the word, the mentor tends not to be considered.

Table 5.4c contains mentor-focussed definitions of toxicity, embracing the mentor's intent and behaviours rather than the effect any toxicity would have on them. Although research generally acknowledges that toxicity can damage both parties, when identifying a particular role, concern is primarily directed at the mentee. The mentor is viewed as the less vulnerable partner (Feldman, 1999). This focus however is not reflected in recent empirical research (Eby, Durley, Evans and Ragins, 2008) where interest has extended to the mentor. It acknowledges the sometimes devastating effects inflicted by a toxic mentee which can result in a reluctance to continue mentoring (Allen, 2007). This study found that most definitions, as shown in Table 5.4a, related to the dyad, perhaps recognising the potential of the relationship to engender damage to all involved. Descriptions such as 'there's no growth' (Me8), and it 'leads to a dead end' (Me14) suggest that toxicity relates to the relationship rather than the individual. It raises the question of whether the individual alone is responsible for the toxicity, or the combination of the dyad provokes such negative behaviours.

Table 5.4c Interviewees' Definitions of Toxicity by Mentor

Perspective	In terms of	Example of Toxic Definition
Mentor	Mentor's intent	"deep rooted …poisonous…where the relationship might do more harm than good…where the aims of the mentor aren't true and honourable in terms of the relationship." Me109
	Mentor behaviours	"A mentor who didn't listen, who brought the conversation back to themselves, who interrupted unnecessarily for their own purposes, almost used the relationship as a means to boost themselves… lacking in perspective and self-awareness and any ability to reflect on their action and questions and behaviours." Coordinator

The findings therefore focus concern on the mentee with the mentor only considered when viewed from the dyad perspective. The mentor's point of view is, therefore, apparently disregarded, lending support to later findings that the care of the mentor is not seen as a priority.

Findings suggest that while some perceptions are clearly accountable to one role, for example, poor skills of the mentor or overstepping boundaries by the mentee, the majority could be exhibited by either party, such as lack of contact or commitment. However, poor skills found in a mentor could arguably be akin to disengagement by the mentee, both behaviours creating a barrier to an effective relationship.

Definitions directed at dyads described barriers and obstacles to the relationship and hinted at toxicity's insidious nature. The challenge of recognising toxicity is similar to O'Neill and Sankowsky's (2001) theoretical abuse, where the mentor imposes his/her understanding onto the mentee. Although possibly non-intentional it remains a covert form of toxicity. When respondents describe toxicity from the perspective of mentees, their vulnerability is highlighted with frequent reference to loss of self-esteem, values and growth. Reported mentor behaviours produced darker descriptions such as 'poisonous', 'doing more harm than good', and 'using the relationship for their own ends'. These more disturbing views do represent infrequent occurrences but are no less troubling, particularly in terms of long-term damage.

The more chronic effects of toxicity and the lasting damage that can occur were also evident from all perspectives, with one interviewee describing toxicity as: *'nuclear waste…seeping through the relationship….at the time…and later on.'* Another described how she measures toxicity, *"…by the lasting effect it has…the toxic element would stay."* The longer term toxic harm is an under-researched phenomenon.

Truly dysfunctional relationships are unlikely to be sustainable as in the case of Me9, whose mentor broke confidentiality and trust, rending the relationship

unworkable. Just as disturbing however, are the less serious but ineffective mentoring relationships which are much more likely to endure. A case in point was Mr133 who felt undermined by her mentee but endured the process anyway leading to self-doubt and loss of confidence. As Ragins, Cotton and Miller (2000) in their study of formal and informal mentoring argue, dissatisfying or marginally satisfying mentoring can be worse than no mentoring at all. It follows that merely ineffective relationships could be regarded as more toxic than overtly dysfunctional ones which are quickly abandoned. As one mentor observed,

> "I wonder if the focus on toxic mentoring misses aspects of unhelpful mentoring…it's not either good or toxic, it's a progression. It would be useful to see how relationships shift." Mr138

Scandura (1998:453) similarly suggests that even with good intentions where the relationship is not seen as negative, it can still be dysfunctional in the sense that goals cannot be achieved within it.

Undoubtedly, there are many more contributing facets, but, in essence, toxicity is any behaviour that impairs the common intent of the mentoring process. Any resultant sense of personal failure could in itself aggravate the harm inflicted on either or both parties and lead to chronic effects, explored later in this chapter.

Haggard, Dougherty, Turban and Wilbanks (2011), in their literature review of the definition of mentoring, argue that researchers' perceptions of mentoring can influence research outcomes and a well-defined construct is required. This study demonstrates that many definitions, perceptions and constructs emerge when approaching a mentoring relationship and how misalignment of understanding can lead to toxicity. For example, Me117 had no clear idea of the DRM model when joining the scheme and her mentor failed to provide the necessary guidance. In addition, the survey showed many examples of lack of understanding, for example, regarding the function of mentoring:

"Mentor/mentee relationship unclear - mentor lack of skill" Me49

"Mentoring did not help to address the issues that I felt I had at the time" Me100

"Both not really knowing what to do" Me117

"Mentee being a higher grade than mentor and in a differing field of work" Mr135

"The relationship should have come to an end but as a mentee I didn't have the confidence to 'end' it and the mentor chose just to let it ride" Me109

There was also confusion in terms of the mechanics of the scheme or the support available:

"Could not find a mentee due to lack of response to 6 invitations" Mr74

"Months of delay on finding a mentor as no one got back to me" Me48

"People being made to attend" Mr133

The DRM model is designed to overcome this lack of clarity through initial and continuing contracting, and findings of this study suggest that contracting is key in a successful mentoring relationship. The study however, also found that confusion does in fact exist implying that contracting is not always undertaken and that more awareness is needed. Examples of toxicity highlighted during the interviews often demonstrate a lack of clear contracting.

"I think that was partly where we went wrong because I didn't get a clear idea of what he wanted." Mr60

Most interviewees disliked use of the term 'toxic' or considered it too intense or dramatic to accurately illustrate their experience. The word is undoubtedly emotive and could be replaced by milder terms such as ailing, failing or dysfunctional. Its potential to do harm however is unmistakable, making the stronger term justifiable. It is important to remember however that toxicity may not be fatal and might merely require an antidote.

5.4 Symptoms of Toxicity

The Impact Scale used in this study categorised toxic experiences as being of low, medium and high toxicity seeking to match respondent's symptoms to toxic impact. Research explored in the literature review acknowledges the significance of understanding toxicity through examination of its symptoms. This has given rise to such models as Eby's Continuum of Relational Problems (2007:325) which was summarised in the literature review (Figure 2.2). Eby identified three significant points on her continuum where problems were categorised as low, moderate and high severity. This study's Impact Scale mirrored this categorisation with low (1-3), medium (4-6) and high (7-10) toxic impact. Similarly the symptoms in each category are alike; misaligned expectations were recorded as minor and trust issues and hostile interactions were of higher severity. However, not all categories conformed to Eby's; unmet expectations being of low severity on Eby's continuum caused high toxic impact in this study. Eby concluded that minor relational problems could be summarised as minimising personal and professional growth, moderate problems would negate growth and serious problems could undermine growth.

Other models have been developed in the search for understanding, such as Scandura's (1998) four potential dysfunctions in mentoring relationships which identified differing intentions between psycho-social and vocational mentoring. More recently Hamlin and Sage's (2011) model of negative formal mentoring effectiveness highlighted mentor and mentee behaviours and categorised them according to Eby et al's (2000) taxonomy of negative mentoring. Hamlin and Sage found that the negative behaviours manifested by the 10 mentors and 10 mentees from a public services organisation, fitted to some extent to the taxonomies established. Findings from the current study supported Hamlin and Sage's lay model such as failure to give the relationship appropriate priority by the mentor or lack of preparation for the session by the mentee. Hamlin and Sage dealt with mentor and mentee experiences separately building on Eby et al's (2000) taxonomy of negative mentor behaviours and Eby and McManus' (2004) taxonomy of negative mentee behaviours.

The findings from the study's interviews in relation to negative mentee behaviours, shown in Figure 5.3, agreed with two of Eby and McManus's (2004) four themes; 'unwillingness to learn', displaying unresponsive and defensive behaviours, and 'ineffectiveness', presenting difficult and spoiling activities. No evidence was however found of the remaining two themes of 'performance below expectation or 'general dysfunctionality'. Hamlin and Sage (2011) supported the 'performance below expectation' theme finding. This may reflect the context of their study, which followed Kram's (1985) two-function mentoring model; career development and psychosocial functions. Specifically, Hamlin and Sage found three of the five 'career development' and two of the four 'psychosocial' functions. The 'performance below expectation' theme in Hamlin and Sage's study follows the career development function. The DRM findings follow the psychosocial function which is closely aligned to the model's purpose.

The four themes displayed in Figure 5.3; disengagement, disruption, negativity and lack of commitment correspond with medium to high levels of toxic impact according to the Impact Scale selected by respondents. This may indicate a lack of resilience or lack of awareness of toxicity by mentors.

Figure 5.3 Examples from interviews of toxic mentee behaviours

Disengagement
- ♦ "she was very disengaged from the whole process".   Mr42.Impact Scale 5

Disruption
- ♦ "(she) made me feel really guarded…I felt I was almost being picked on…"
                                                                                        Mr133.Impact Scale 5

Negativity
- ♦ "(he) was quite negative… difficult to engage…standoffish."   Mr60.Impact Scale 10

Lack of Commitment
- ♦ "We've had to change the venues and the dates a few times… its kind of in limbo."
                                                                                        Mr132.Impact Scale 7

The findings from the study's interviews relating to negative mentor behaviours (Figure 5.4) supported four of Eby et al's (2000) five negative mentoring themes with no evidence relevant to general dysfunctionality.

Hamlin and Sage (2011) similarly did not support the theme of general dysfunctionality, however, neither did it agree with Eby's et al's theme of manipulative behaviour which this study did. The interviews produced evidence of manipulative behaviours by mentors, such as the experience of interviewee Me8 whose mentor used the relationship by taking credit for their mentee's work. A further example was given by interviewee Me9 whose mentor discussed confidential matters from the mentoring relationship with his spouse, who was Me9's line manager. This information was then used by the line manager to manipulate Me9. The evidence from the study therefore augments Hamlin and Sage's research, broadening its behavioural criteria and strengthening the link to Eby et al's study.

Of the four themes featured in Figure 5.4, manipulation and breach of confidentiality scored high on the Impact Scale, as did disengagement. In contrast lack of skills in mentors portrayed a disparate impact, either scoring high (7 and 10) or low (1-3). However, all displayed strong resilience by attempting to resolve the toxicity or, as in the case of the two mentees who scored high impact, by using the experience as a learning opportunity. These testimonies could indicate that, for example, while a manipulative mentor is likely to cause severe damage the results may be alleviated through resilience.

Figure 5.4 Examples from interviews of toxic mentor behaviours

Breach of Confidentiality
- "…It was obvious that there were conversations that went on between them about me."
  Me49.Impact Scale 9

Manipulation
- "…I came out with a lot of work to do but not work that had anything to do with developing me…."
  Me8.Impact Scale 8

Lack of skills
- "I would question the skills that he had…effectively brought in his personality…   it more ticked the box of how he would feel".
  Me9.Impact Scale 10

- "… (she) had a particular way of viewing things and it was hard for me to present my experiences so I felt judged and criticized…"
  Me16.Impact Scale 3

Disengagement
- "…she wouldn't engage with me at all…I was kind of upset about it because I thought I must be a really difficult person to deal with if she can't bear to talk to me."
  Me63.Impact Scale 10

5.5 Impact of Toxicity

Determination of the level of impact endured is inevitably a subjective experience, so what may engender only slight suffering in one may be greater in another. Nevertheless, identification of these symptoms is an essential ingredient in the search for understanding. A comparison of studies may well reveal behavioural patterns or other similarities furthering understanding of the phenomenon (Hamlin and Sage, 2011).

Figure 5.2 displayed the correlation in this study between the symptoms of toxicity and their impact. Mentee disinterest was cited most frequently in the survey and generated the highest impact rating for participants:

> "It was just total disinterest, she wasn't open to it and wasn't willing to take on board anything". Mr133

The category of 'mentee disinterest' corresponds to Eby and McManus's (2004) theme; 'spoiling/ineffective relationship' in its description of lack of consideration and commitment and a negative approach to the process. This was explored by Hamlin and Sage (2011) who agreed with the example of critical incidents. Similarly the category 'lack of commitment' supports the 'spoiling' meta-theme. Although there are parallels, albeit with different terminology, the question of impact is not considered in these studies. Hamlin and Sage (2011) focused on the beginning and middle of the relationship, but not the outcome which they recognised as a limitation of the study.

Findings in this study suggest that impact may be significant. Higher impact appears to have links with chronic damage discussed in chapter 6. Mr60, for example, scored her experience a 10 on the Impact Scale:

> "It leaves you kind of flat and wondering. I don't like things not being resolved, it unsettled me." Mr60

The interviews therefore reflect the findings in Figure 5.2 and demonstrate the relationship of impact with examples of mentor negative behaviours and

misaligned expectations. Interviewees' descriptions of symptoms are captured below:

> "…I came out with my shoulders being lower than when I went in…the next session was where I was up to with a piece of work and that was where the trust issue came in because that was then taken away with no credit to me." Me8

Me8 was subjected to a manipulative mentor and scored 8 on the Impact scale. Unfortunately she assumed this negative experience was representative of all mentoring. This was only rectified through her participation in a mentoring research study where she encountered an entirely positive relationship, "I thought, ah, now I get it."

Me9 found poor mentoring skills and a complete breakdown of trust,

> "…it became apparent that I was sharing an office with his wife…and assumed that he would be professional but…it was obvious…from the things that she said that I had discussed in my mentoring session….the trust was broken." Me9

This held significant impact for Me9 particularly as the mentor belonged to her organisation she said, "I absolutely hated working there. It was quite damaging at the time."

The above incidents unsurprisingly scored high on the Impact scale. They both involved betrayal of trust. For Me8 that involved the mentor using the mentee's work and presenting it as their own, and for Me9, a breach of confidentiality.   While such extreme behaviours had a high impact they were in the minority, echoing Eby's Continuum of Relational Problems (2007:325) discussed earlier in this chapter which asserts that severe problems are relatively unusual.

More common issues include poor communication or disengagement.

"On several occasions…I arrived there and she wasn't there or she was late…we lost complete touch…towards the end instead of properly rounding it off it just fizzled out…" Me14

Me14's experience relates to a mentor who appeared disengaged with the process or possibly ill equipped to provide the appropriate support. The inadequate ending is mirrored in the following experience.

"…we arranged meetings and they cancelled…there would be lack of communication…we never set anything down…it just dwindled and now it's really quite awkward…" Me109

Ensher and Murphy (2011) found that there were significantly more challenges with regard to commitment and resilience in the dyad at the end of the relationship compared to the beginning.

Although Me14 and Me109 were both victims of similar poor communication and inadequate ending it had a high impact for Me14, while Me109 rated it low. As well as highlighting the difficulties of categorisation, this suggests the importance of resilience in mentees. Studies have shown that emotional intelligence increases resilience (Armstrong, Galligan and Critchley, 2011; Görgens-Ekermans and Brand, 2012) and this is discussed in chapter 6.

Misaligned expectations represented another common category of toxic incidents supposedly addressed by the DRM through initial and continuous contracting.

"…I went in with such a set idea that what I was met with wasn't quite what I'd married up" Me16

Similarly, Me49 had a clear understanding of what was expected from the relationship unlike her mentor.

"…I went into it with a series of objectives I wished to achieve, he didn't have any…we had a mismatch…" Me49

Me117's experience is less a mismatch and more an issue of mentor skills.

"I didn't know what I wanted to get from the relationship and I needed a bit of guidance. The person just didn't have what I needed, whether she didn't' have the skills I don't know, but it just didn't work out at all." Me117

Mr60 on the other hand describes mentee negative behaviours blocking progress.

"…didn't really know what they wanted or what it was really all about…everything you were talking about there was always a reason why it wouldn't work…it was quite negative…" Mr60

The quotations above describe mismatched, misaligned or unclear expectations. Mr60 describes her mentee's negative behaviours which contributed to the high impact rating. Other blocking behaviours also caused a high impact

"…the mentor was quite bullish…a lot of the advice she gave me was totally unhelpful." Me63

"…it was somebody I sought out as a mentor but then there was other things going on that coloured it…" Me138

Despite selecting a mentor from the NWMS the behaviours described are contrary to the DRM model, and the techniques promoted through training such as deep listening skills and powerful questioning. While guidance within the Mentor Workbook suggests that differing skills such as prescribing may be appropriate they are indicative of 'mentor centred' behaviour rather than the recommended 'mentee centred' approach.

The following examples describe mentee behaviours and the impact on their mentors;

 "(the mentee's) behaviours…made me feel that she'd been sent…that to me created…toxicity because it made me feel really guarded…" Mr133

"…was quite vulnerable…I think she has mental health issues but she's not ready to admit it…I'm wary of becoming a toxic mentor myself…" Mr138

The issues range from disinterest to motivation and the concerns of Mr138 for her vulnerable mentee, and all scored medium/high on the Impact Scale. Arguably, the experiences of interviewees outside the NWMS appear more severe in terms of manipulative behaviour, such as those endured by interviewee Me8. This toxic incident occurred in a formal internal scheme within the health service. The mentor regularly claimed credit for work completed by Me8.

Many of the examples of interviewee's experiences within the NWMS suggest that the dyad was not adhering to the DRM model. Below, the interviewee describes the mentor as 'bullish' with her advice and went on to say;

> "…she didn't really have an appreciation that not everybody has the same personality as her…she told me the answers…it was a projection of her opinion…" Me63

This approach is again at variance with the DRM model that recommends encouraging 'mentee centred' behaviour (see Appendix I: 11) and distances itself from a 'telling' culture. The presence of such shortcomings notwithstanding, built-in safeguards, such as issued guidelines and the provision of training, spotlights the reality of human frailties. As a voluntary activity within the NWMS, and the very nature of mentoring itself, accentuates problems for oversight and enforcement. The model offers little protection from manipulative motives suggesting that while motivation should be explored in the contracting stage it could benefit from greater attention and promotion by the NWMS. Adopting a more proactive stand in alerting members to the risk of toxicity may well reduce the level of incidents arising.

The findings support the notion that a lack of commitment and communication creates a high toxic impact. Some lack of awareness evidently exists in the NWMS in terms of process, i.e. seeking advice and assistance in matching, despite being actively promoted (see Appendix III). The highest and most frequent toxic impact is through mentee disinterest with several cases citing lack of mentoring skills as a causal factor. The issue of poor mentoring skills is explored in more depth in the next chapter.

The final 'Other' category of symptoms in the survey gave participants the opportunity to raise issues not corresponding to any other categories listed. Descriptions are included in Appendix VI along with Causal Factors identified by the participants and these are compared with documented areas of the DRM purported to prevent such instances.

According to the NWMS documentation toxicity identified in the study could have been addressed or prevented by adhering to the DRM model, specifically phases one, two, five and pre and post training and ongoing development. Pre-phase orientation and phase one contracting feature significantly, particularly with regard to clear expectations of the mentoring scheme as well as the dyad and the individual. Equally other preventions could include more thorough matching, as discussed in the literature review, or overt recognition of power dynamics. While a developmental mentoring model should place the dyad in a more equal position, literature discussed in the review identified a range of issues linked to power that can cause toxicity and can derive from either member of the dyad (Brockbank and McGill, 2006; Davenport and Early, 2010).The high impact toxic symptoms such as mentee disinterest, lack of commitment and communication could be tackled through orientation and contracting ensuring clear expectations by the dyad according to the NWMS. However, findings show that despite the emphasis on initial and continuous contracting in mentor training it is not always adopted, as in the case of Mr138, an experienced NWMS mentor who blamed:

"…lack of negotiation of differences and boundaries." Mr138

Some of the issues identified by respondents clearly referred to the NWMS. Mr135, for example, despite being an experienced scheme mentor of 4 years cited toxicity because the "mentee was a higher grade than mentor and in a differing field of work". This shows a lack of understanding of the DRM model and the regional aspect of the scheme. While isolated cases may be missed, for example, in the case of Me48 who found, "months of delay in finding a mentor as no one got back to me", findings indicate a lack of awareness of the operation of the scheme. Me66's dissatisfaction with the NWMS was due to

"no mentor appointed to me after three years". The mentee was unaware of the support available by the scheme in such matching issues.

The study found that the chronic impact of toxic mentoring applied to both mentee and mentor, influencing future behaviours:

> "I think from the unresolved issue of the mentoring relationship, for quite a while I avoided that person and I particularly didn't want to be working with them or if I was put into a group I didn't want to be working with them, the trust had gone."   Me8

The chronic effects of toxicity can also precipitate feelings of inadequacy, an identified fear of mentors (Eby and Lockwood, 2004). Only 17% of those surveyed described their toxic experience as having a low impact. Exploring the toxic experience in more depth during the interviews revealed that 9 out of 13 interviewees described the impact as long-term or still viewed it as unresolved.

> "I think it was the experience at the time but it was the influence it had on me later on as well, and obviously it seeps through the relationship in lots of different ways."   Me9

Many of the interviewees demonstrated resilience through undertaking research to find a resolution for themselves.

> "… yes I realise those relationships were toxic, now I don't feel personally hurt by them, but at the time I felt really that hurt by the nature of the relationship and I guess I probably measure toxicity by the lasting effect it has. I think if I hadn't done all the work on personal development I had done I perhaps would still be carrying the feeling...the toxic element would stay."   Me63

Me63 completed a personal development course of study following her toxic experiences which allowed her to resolve the long-term effects. The following mentee was inspired by a colleague's article describing chronic embitterment.

> "I knew that I was in a position where I could not move on without resolving this in some way, I needed to have a closure meeting. I came across the writing... on the condition of chronic embitterment; about how you get stuck. He was talking about how difficult it is to

> resolve and how once he'd got stuck into that rut the situation was insoluble, and I thought that's the last thing I wanted to be and it helped me to understand my need to create a sense of resolution because if I didn't it would carry on."   Me49

While it is debatable whether chronic embitterment constitutes a disorder or an emotional state (Znoj, 2011), it is recognised as having the potential to be long-lasting. The word chronic denotes the seriousness and persistence of the condition, and the chronic effects of toxicity has been a recurring concern through this study.

Findings to some extent support the suggestion arising from the literature that recommended behaviours associated with toxic prevention are found in the DRM model. Many interviewees, for example, placed emphasis on the importance of discussing expectations and ground rules, as part of contracting, prior to the mentoring process.

> "There was no contracting and I don't think I understood what mentoring was and we definitely didn't discuss it."   Me9

Empathic skills were also considered significant and Appendix VI shows symptoms and causal factors identified which the DRM model may have addressed. Phase 1, Contracting and Phase 2, Understanding, feature heavily in this table intimating their importance in toxic prevention. There could be, however, alternative explanations for this finding, for example, previous training or experience of good or bad role models. Mentee disinterest may represent issues in hierarchical power relationships, and the relationship with the organisation (Brockbank and McGill, 2006) as explored in the literature review. Haggard et al (2011:292) describe the core attributes to a work-based mentoring relationship as being reciprocity, developmental benefits and regular consistent contact over time. The findings of the research support this view by revealing toxicity where these attributes are absent. The mentor in the following case clearly used the relationship for their own advancement:

> "I came out with a lot of work to do…that this person wanted to achieve"   Me8

The mentor in the following example failed to maintain contact:

> "I think we met twice and then I don't think she wanted to meet anymore, which would have been fine, but she never actually said that, she just ignored me" Me63

The DRM model, as used by the NWMS, largely aspires to operate best practice and therefore it may be surmised that when working effectively this approach may be significant in prevention of toxicity. However, it could also be argued that addressing power dynamics through training, or developing emotional intelligence, could equally encourage prevention.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has elicited the meaning and characteristics of toxicity in mentoring through examination of the symptoms identified by the survey. It further explored these features in the interviews with participants who had experienced toxicity through their personal reflections and descriptions. In the search for a definition of the word 'toxic', these descriptions shared similar themes such as barriers, prevention of growth and unhealthy or manipulative behaviours. Vivid descriptions included; "nuclear waste" that continues 'seeping' through to other relationships. There was also the suggestion that toxicity can be insidious with one respondent only recognising her negative experience after receipt of the questionnaire. Although the request for a definition was generic it was interesting to find respondents categorising from a particular point of view: the mentee's or the dyad. Although there were descriptions referring to the mentor, the perspective was from the mentee's outlook. This did not appear to be influenced by the experience, for example, although Mr133 experienced a toxic mentee her description referred to the dyad.

Toxicity has been shown to encompass a range of symptoms from lack of commitment to mentee disinterest which has proved challenging to the task of categorisation. The findings were contrasted against previous research in this field such as Eby's continuum of relational problems (Eby, 2007:325). The problems identified ranged from minor, low severity relational problems

such as superficial expectations, through the moderately severe such as negated growth, and to serious problems including disengagement. This was then compared to Hamlin and Sage's (2011) more recent study. The findings challenge Eby's identification, for example, that minor severity relational problems are the result of unmet expectations. In this study unmet expectations experienced, through lack of commitment and mentee disinterest caused medium to high impact of toxicity. This could highlight differences in an individual's perception of an event, or their level of resilience in responding to it. This study also records contradictory experiences on the Impact Scale, whereby, for example, Me49 rated unmet expectations as high toxic impact, which according to Eby (2007) is of low severity. The trust issue provides another example of the difficulty of categorisation, managing to score across the range of low, medium and high on the impact scale, although the high score was significant and strengthened by interviewee P9's experience. Unsatisfactory ending to a relationship was also identified as causing toxicity demonstrating that problems can occur at any stage.

The study largely supports Hamlin and Sage's (2011:770) lay model of negative formal mentoring and adds to their research by expanding our understanding of toxic behaviours and recognising Eby et al's (2000) categorisation of mentor manipulative behaviours. Hamlin and Sage's (2011) study described mentoring in the context of Kram's (1985) two function US model and Cull's (2006) study of 'pushing' and 'pulling' styles akin to traditional and developmental mentoring. These findings in a limited way enhance Hamlin and Sage's (2011) research by expressing the developmental mentoring view.

Finally, the potential of the restorative capabilities of the DRM model were explored using the toxic experiences identified in the survey. According to the NWMS the model can be utilised to address a range of issues. However, four out of five negative experiences categorised under 'Mentoring Scheme Issues' highlight a lack of understanding of how the NWMS operates, suggesting a need for clearer guidance.

Having completed the discussion on what 'toxicity' means and its impact on those afflicted by it, the next stage will probe deeper into the causes. This is addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter 6 - Causal Factors

The intention of the research question was to explore toxic experiences and their relationship to the DRM model. To expand understanding of the nature of toxicity, chapter 6 explores its causal factors in more depth, both through external influences that are beyond the individual's control, for example life or career changes, and through preventable features such as inadequate mentoring skills. It also considers the preventative potential of DRM. The chapter is divided into two main sections, the first examines factors that have been identified as causing toxicity, considering their impact on the individual, and contributory features such as motivation, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. These themes emerge directly from the research data. The second section discusses prevention by first considering each phase of the DRM model and its relationship to toxic prevention. It then goes on to present other aspects found to be significant in prevention such as distal mentoring or mentor self-care which enables the mentor to reflect on potential negative experiences.

The survey sought the opinion of respondents on the likely causal factors of their toxic experience offering a range of contributory factors such as conflicting roles and lack of skills as well as the opportunity to specify their own idea of causes. While conflicting roles and responsibilities scored highest for mentees, few single causal factors were considered to be the sole reason for toxicity. Respondents, for example, tended to blame a combination of conflicting roles and career change in tandem with a lack of mentor skills. Lack of communication and commitment also proved to be prominent symptoms. Although findings are inconclusive in identifying any dominant causal factors in toxicity it does affirm that the resultant list is broadly representative of the difficulties encountered.

6.1 Causal Impact

The table in Appendix VI includes descriptions of perceived causal factors identified by the participants. Cultural differences were only identified by 7% of respondents, but did generate medium to high impact. One mentor presented as an issue the mentee being in a more senior position in a

different field of work. The NWMS actually encourages mentees to seek a mentor outside their profession as the skills to successfully mentor do not require specialist knowledge of the mentee's field if following the DRM model. The practice of reverse mentoring; where a mentee is matched with a mentor junior to them, has gained acceptance over the last decade and works particularly well at board level (Harvey, McIntyre, Thompson Heames, and Moeller, 2009). An explanation of this approach should be provided at the pre-phase orientation stage following enlistment. Examples of its successful adoption in the NWMS are described by Me 117 below:

> "The mentor I've got now isn't a manager and is in fact a band lower than me which is very interesting, she treats me like a colleague. My manager said how much I had come on because of being mentored" Me117

22% of respondents considered chemistry or personality clash as the cause of medium to high toxic impact. NWMS membership documentation claims that the DRM model could guard against this through effective phase one contracting and phase two developing understanding. Pre and post phase training and development are claimed to instill techniques to develop empathy and enhance communication which potentially could address such clashes. Arguably, personality clashes are more challenging to tackle although findings indicate that clear contracting may have helped, for example, in the case of Me49 who attributed the toxicity to the fact that the "relationship was unclear".

The prominence of lack of chemistry or personality clash was followed by mentor lack of skills, while three of the mentees identified a combination of both issues causing high toxic impact. The experiences of these participants; Me8, Me9 and Me49 who were all mentees, reflect common features; a betrayal of trust by benefiting from the relationship to the cost of the mentee, manipulative behaviours, and in the case of Me49 the relationship was built on an existing toxic work situation where the mentor had been in dispute with the mentee.

> "I felt that since (he) had launched into me but didn't have any of the answers it would be sensible for (him) to be part of the solution rather

than part of the problem and become my mentor. That was the biggest, disastrous thing I could have ever considered doing and if I could wind that clock back I would have done it." Me49

The NWMS claim that the contracting element of phase one of the DRM model could have helped to form expectations that were more realistic and desirable to the dyad and possibly minimise damage created by poor chemistry or personality clash. Contracting is promoted as a key element in the DRM model and is designed to secure successful mentoring outcomes. The literature on toxicity, explored in chapter two, recommends the use of clear contracting to safeguard against toxicity. Formalising acceptable behaviours, ground rules, expectations, objectives and boundaries at the beginning of the relationship discourages deviation by either party in the dyad. Pre and post phase training together with ongoing development should encourage appropriate and ethical conduct (Martin and Sifers, 2012). On a practical level, this could have reduced the risk of toxicity in the cases outlined above. Equally toxicity may have been influenced by, for example, the level of emotional intelligence in the dyad or the resilience of the mentees (Tugade and Fredrickson, 2004).

Comparable with contracting, phase two of the DRM model, involves deep listening skills, designed to promote understanding and appreciation within the dyad. By refraining from giving advice or direction the mentor encourages the mentee to lead the process. Devoting time to this phase underpins the dyad to safeguard against conflict avoiding, for example, the following:

> "She told me the answers when really it was a projection of her opinion and if she had been more self-aware and aware of how we were different she may have realised the things she was saying were unhelpful." Me63

Webb and Shakespeare (2008) discussed the negative outcome described as 'personality clash' in their study of nurse mentors and found that successful mentoring was dependent upon the investment of emotional labour into the relationship by the student. Although mentoring in nursing is culturally different to broader professional development schemes, the responsibility of

the student or mentee and their contribution and commitment to the relationship is recognised in the DRM model. This collaboration within the dyad is emphasised throughout the model where mentees are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and cultivate their own development. A better understanding of roles and expectations may have prevented any personality clash. Deliberate mentor manipulation could be, however, far more challenging.

Chemistry or personality clash was identified in conjunction with associated causes such as mentor lack of skills or life and career changes. One mentor; interviewee Mr132, and one mentee; interviewee Me16, did identify conflicting roles and responsibilities as the sole cause of the toxicity. Mr132 considered that a significant increase in his mentee's job responsibility had adversely interrupted the mentoring process.

Conflicting roles or responsibilities were the most frequently named causal factor. 28% of respondents felt that this contributed to the toxic relationship with only 3% selecting a low impact; ten of these participants were mentees. Circumstances do however change and contracting should help negotiate a break or ensure an appropriate ending to the relationship in the event of unforeseen factors detracting from the mentoring process. Effective contracting should also help clarify expectations and responsibilities within the relationship and mentor training should guarantee that. Nevertheless, findings still identified this as an issue as experienced by Mr57, for example, who despite being a seasoned mentor with the scheme for 8 years describes the cause of toxicity as:

> "Lack of clarity in contracting..." Mr57

Me16 demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence in his response to toxicity. Although the relationship encountered difficulties from the outset due to conflicting roles, he was able to manage the toxicity to the extent that the relationship flourished and continues successfully. This was achieved by the

mentee adapting his response to the mentor and adjusting the way he communicated with her.

> "I guess it's about knowing, how to know my mentor better. I got the sense that the way she approached her day job was the way she approached the mentoring, using that kind of very direct approach. She responded to me the way she would a staff member, so maybe I have to respond to that." Me16

This proactive approach displays a developed emotional intelligence, a useful attribute in mentoring with a symbiotic relationship (Cherniss, 2007) and this element is discussed in more depth later in this chapter

Life or career changes scored medium to high on the impact scale, affecting 17% respondents. Such changes are often unexpected, unplanned and beyond the control of the individual. Examples included conflicting priorities and changes in role along with personal issues and commitments. The model recommends through periodical contracting and phase five review a plan to end the relationship, however, there is little guidance on how to approach the ending or negotiate a break. Findings demonstrate that relationship closure is clearly a cause of toxicity and the lack of attention to it in the DRM model, compared to Megginson et al (2006) who dedicate two phases to closure, may be a failing of the NWMS interpretation of the model. These life or career changes were considered to be only contributory factors in the cause of problems.

12% of mentees cited lack of mentor skills as the cause of their negative experience however 5% of mentors also recognised this as an issue. The impact varied but 60% of those who selected lack of mentor skills scored it as having a high toxic impact. Pre and post phase training aim to enhance skills and initial orientation, training and remedial measures through ongoing development should ensure prevention. Despite this, however, findings confirm there are still failings. Me117, as a mentee within the NWMS, attributed toxicity to "both not really knowing what to do", which suggests that the pre-phase orientation and training failed to adequately prepare the dyad. This is echoed by Me63, another NWMS mentee, who found that the mentor

"projected their personality to find solutions", which is opposed to the DRM model taught on mentor training.

Me8, Me9 and Me49 also identified lack of mentor skills as high impact.   Their experiences occurred outside the NWMS where initial and ongoing training and development may not have been available to provide an effective defence. There are further examples of 'lack of mentor skills' within the NWMS experienced by three of the interviewees, two of which scored high impact, however, in each case the guidelines in DRM model were not followed. Me117 considered that her mentor lacked the skills necessary to be effective despite undergoing initial training, however her mentor had not engaged in the ongoing developmental programme. Whilst this is not compulsory, such participation is nevertheless recommended, though it is impossible to predict whether this would have prevented toxicity. Me63 found her mentor neither followed the model nor employed the skills promoted within it, as was the case for Me14 who also perceived her mentor as lacking empathy.

> "I didn't feel particularly emotionally supported. It felt like she was a novice…she seemed overwhelmed." Me14

9% of respondents could not identify the cause of their toxicity. Conflicting roles or responsibilities were recorded as the most frequent toxic cause with 64% of those who selected it being mentees. Only one respondent identified this as of low toxic impact. Interviews with many of these respondents revealed shared common features, for example, manipulative mentors (Me8, Me9). Some experiences displayed less malicious intent, such as that experienced by Me26 whose mentor had; "a significant increase in responsibilities". A combination of different causal factors tended to be identified as responsible for toxicity. Only conflicting roles or responsibilities were identified as solely accountable by 50% of those who selected them, indicating that the source of toxicity is usually complex and dependent of a number of factors.   Along with the causal factors identified, other elements arose from the data possibly contributing to toxicity and this is explored in the next three sections.

6.2 Contributory Causal Factors – Motivation

While, according to the NWMS, training and development may shield against toxicity such as mentor lack of skills, mentor motivation; the reason why an individual wishes to mentor, is a vital component. Me14 doubted her mentor's reasons for wanting to be involved in mentoring, observing;

> "I didn't feel that she genuinely wanted to be a mentor, it felt like if she took 20 hours in her mentee relationship, she wanted to put 20 hours back as a mentor, it felt very calculated." Me14

Turban and Lee (2007) noted that those who become mentors, despite displaying essential mentoring personality characteristics such as empathy, are often ambitious, valuing the experience more in terms of career success. This was the case with Mr133, who suspected her mentee's attendance to be motivated by career aspirations rather than engagement with the mentoring process.

> "I still feel that it's been suggested to her that it would be good for her to be in the Scheme and she's come to show willing, if you like, and she does the minimum…I'm sure that's where her attitude comes from and the poison in the relationship comes from". Mr133

When asked for the cause of the toxicity enforced attendance was identified:

> "Being sent by the Manager" Mr85

> "People being made to attend" Mr133

Scandura's (1998:464) work on supervisor/protégé roles in mentoring found that relationships are susceptible to dysfunction in assigned relationships. It seems there is a case for voluntary schemes which avoid many of the pitfalls and dysfunctional elements evident in Scandura's study.

There is a scarcity of empirical research into mentor and mentee motivation and its association with toxicity, yet it emerges as a recurrent theme in this study as noted in the quote below defining the term 'toxic';

"I see somebody who could be described as a toxic mentor…almost used the relationship as a means to boost themselves or … gain from that experience". Coordinator

Research investigating the motivation for becoming a mentor, recognises not only the traditional reasons such as altruism but other motives, for example, the satisfaction of advising others (Liu, Macintyre and Ferguson, 2012), and former mentees wishing to give something back (Coates, 2012). The more self-serving stimuli for performing the mentor role such as career advancement have been explored too, Bozionelos et al (2011), in their study of general managers, discovered that career-related mentoring was clearly linked to career success unlike socio-emotional mentoring. The voluntary element of the NWMS may also influence its quality according to the following interviewee;

"Because of the motivation...because I think there's such commitment to it, I don't feel that people do it just because it looks good. On the learning events everybody that is there are: 'How can I improve this?' Often with internal schemes it would be people who would do it because it would look good, this is actual volunteering". Me8

Ragins (2009:243-247) claims that the key to motivation is identity theory; how we individuate ourselves, and that a positive self-representation can inspire and sustain such motivation in successful mentoring relationships. This relational identity is based on mentoring schemas or maps framed around previous experience of mentoring, the possible or future self theory; the mentor we aspire to be and the mentor we fear we will become. The findings from this study do lend support to the theory of multi-faceted self-concept, as described below in this initial experience of the model which failed to meet the mentor's self-schema,

"It challenged a lot of beliefs when I first joined because it was more like – you can't get involved, you can't give answers, and I was used to saying, well, what you need to do is, and what you should do is… what I struggled with was how was I going to get that across, and that makes you a better listener, you're expanding your skills." Mr42

Mr138 described how possible-self fear increases her determination,

> "I mentor a few people now and there is one person I mentor who is quite vulnerable…it's really hard to mentor for her…I'm wary of becoming a toxic mentor myself."

The concept of self-awareness and identity is supported through ongoing development by the NWMS. Its members are offered network events that encourage reflection and self-regulation. This also highlights the relevance of mentor supervision to 'help keep the coach and mentor honest and courageous' (Hawkins, 2010). Garvey (2010) warns that only mentoring that is accompanied by genuine and honest intent can be successful. Supervision for mentors has been identified as significant in resolving issues and acting as a quality assurance process (Megginson et al, 2006).

6.3 Contributory Causal Factors – Self-efficacy

The importance of self-efficacy is demonstrated in the experience of Me14 where the mentor appeared overwhelmed by the issues facing her mentee:

> "She was quite stand-offish … I just didn't feel that there was any empathy and am I just talking to a brick wall here. It was a bit too much for her, if you haven't got a lot of experience it might be a bit overwhelming to be bombarded with such issues". Me14

Perceived self-efficacy can influence how we behave in a situation and affects how we motivate ourselves (Bandura, 1994). Lankau and Scandura (2007) argue that motivation in successful developmental relationships includes willingness to learn and self-efficacy. Studies have found mentoring to be an important process in achieving self-efficacy in professional development (Varkey et al., 2012, Saffold, 2005) but self-efficacy is significant in mentoring itself. As Martin and Sifers (2012) found in their study of youth mentors, training and ongoing support for mentors in mentoring skills appreciably increases perceived confidence and positively benefits the mentoring relationship. Self-efficacious people are more resilient and open to change (Kauffman, Boniwell and Silberman, 2010). As Johnson and Ridley point out (2008), congruent mentors are comfortable in admitting that they do not know the answer, and this awareness of one's own limitations fits well with the DRM

model where the dyad should work as a team learning from and about each other.

> "I told her I didn't think I was getting enough from it and she just asked what do you want to get from it, but she never gave me the options. It was quite difficult because I didn't know what I wanted to get from the relationship and I needed guidance." Me117

Had Me117's mentor been more self-efficacious she could have employed the model's techniques to help the dyad identify goals together without the risk of losing her mentee's confidence.

Low self-efficacy can lead to a lack of confidence as demonstrated in the quotation below where the mentor's doubts in her own skills prevented her from productively closing a relationship with a disinterested mentee.

> "I could have been a little more assertive about finding out what was wrong, was it just that she genuinely didn't feel that anything could help her at that time or if it was just something about me she didn't get on with…I don't know what went wrong so that makes it toxic" Mr60

Both of these examples of toxic experiences could have been mitigated through use of the DRM model; in the case of Me117, her mentor could have adopted the skills, tools and techniques provided in initial and ongoing training and development programmes. While it could be argued that Me117 would have benefitted from a sponsorship scheme with a more directive approach, she was later matched in a successful developmental relationship. DRM approaches to Mr60's non-productive relationship should encourage reflection within the dyad to close the process in a mutually beneficial way, however, findings suggest that this does not happen evidenced by the number of toxic incidences occurring at this point in the relationship.

Mr42 demonstrated a high level of self-efficacy and confidence yet still experienced toxicity. However, this relationship was not voluntary, and the mentee who was disgruntled with the organisation, resigned shortly afterwards. The DRM model may have avoided this situation as its success is partly due to its voluntary nature.

<u>6.4 Contributory Causal Factors – Emotional Intelligence</u>

Findings suggest that emotional intelligence is an important factor in the prevention and treatment of toxicity. For example, for Me16 the mature management of his mentor transformed a failing relationship into a highly successful one:

> "…she said…I've never developed somebody from outside the organisation…so maybe she was institutionalised, maybe that was the way she is because that's all she knows, that's the environment she knows.   As much as I was proud, she was proud too…and that brought it onto a new level". Me16

Me16 was not alone in displaying mature management of an emotionally charged situation which he scored highly on the Impact Scale. Me14 suffered from mentor neglect at a challenging time, leaving her in,

> "…a highly stressful situation at the time…and I was probably at the point where I actually, just before or not long before, went off sick with stress." Me14

Despite this adversity Me14 accessed the tools offered by the NWMS, and associated with the DRM model, such as the lifeline exercise which reviews career paths and decisions, to enable understanding and insight into the current situation.

> "…the pack gave me a lot more insight. I felt that it was the most powerful thing that I got from the Scheme." Me14

Self-mentoring is not a new notion (Moss, Debres, Cravey, Hyndman, Hirschboeck and Masucci, 1999) and has arguably always been part of mentoring in general (Tenner, 2004). The concept of mentee empowerment is promoted by the DRM model and the NWMS. Me14, however, survived her toxicity through her own resilience. It could be argued that the tools enabled that successful outcome, something her mentor failed to do. Emotional resilience is recognised as a measure of emotional intelligence (Slaski and Cartwright, 2003).

The following example shows how regardless of his mentee's non-responsiveness to his efforts to repair the damaged relationship his reaction demonstrates insight and understanding.

> "…when it went sour I examined my own approach and what I'd done, whether I had assumed too much…at the end of the day you have to recognise that things don't always work out and you need a way of drawing a conclusion." Mr132

Me63 demonstrates self-awareness in her reaction to a toxic mentor,

> "I had a lot of issues going on which would have meant that the mentoring would be quite difficult anyway and that was a factor that made the relationship a bit worse." Me63

Cherniss (2007:432) related emotional intelligence to mentoring arguing that it influences the quality of mentoring and is of significance to both mentor and mentee. He quotes Brechtel's study (2004) that identified key elements relating to quality in mentoring which included respect and being valued, both associated with emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). Furnham and Petrides (2003) listed the common characteristics associated with emotional intelligence such as: adaptability, assertiveness, the emotional management of others and emotional perception and regulation of oneself. Relationship skills, social competence, self-esteem and motivation were also significant. Goleman (1996) identified five domains of emotional intelligence: knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognising emotions in others and handling relationships, so it is unsurprising that it can be closely associated with mentoring. Cherniss (2007) argues that the relationship between emotional intelligence and mentoring is synergetic; that mentoring develops emotional competence and those who are emotionally intelligent influence the quality of the mentoring relationship.

The DRM model's emphasis on communication skills and empathic understanding relate strongly to the factors associated with emotional intelligence. Its training encourages the mentor to not only listen, but to do so non-judgementally and use empathy to aid understanding. Whilst

acknowledging that understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence and mentoring is limited (Hawkey, 2006) this study suggests that emotionally intelligent mentoring guards against toxicity and, as demonstrated in the findings, can also be an effective treatment for toxic relationships.

Parallels can be drawn between the approaches applied in developmental mentoring and transactional analysis. The intent of transactional analysis to relationship roles is to provide clients with appropriate tools to analyse themselves rather than using a therapist to act as the expert and 'conceptualize their lived experience' (Newton and Napper, 2010). This transfer of power is evident in DRM where the mentee assumes the lead in terms of content while the mentor guides the process. In contrast, relational transactional analysis gives prominence to the influence of the dyad (Hay, 2009).

Associations between the mentoring relationship and transactional analysis are perceptible in Me16's experience. His mentor may have assumed the ego state of Critical Parent (Berne, 1977) by being critical and judgmental, and initially, the mentee fell naturally into the Adapted Child ego state demonstrating the need to comply with the authority figure. He subsequently transformed, arguably, into the third aspect of the Child ego state, also known as 'Little Professor' (Adams, 2009) who becomes adept at connecting or reaching people. The Little Professor often triggers other ego states, in this case the Adult to Adult interaction, more appropriate for the professional mentoring relationship. Hay (2009) explores the ease with which the mentor and mentee can fall into these hierarchical modes where the mentor expects to instruct and the mentee expects to be told, denying them the opportunity to learn creative thought, self-reliance and take responsibility for their own development. Transactional analysis has been explored through learning events by the NWMS.

The diversity of factors contributing to toxicity can be broadly categorised in two ways. Firstly, those that can be avoided, for example mentor lack of skills, which can be addressed through training and ongoing development. The

second category is external factors, where the toxicity is outside the control of the individual, for example, when a mentor is promoted outside the region. External factors such as personality clashes can also be resolved through rapport building techniques and skills promoting empathy, explored in the NWMS's network learning events (see Appendix II). The DRM model can be utilised to address both categories, either through restoring the mentoring relationship or by terminating it in a positive way that satisfies both parties, as shown in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1 How the DRM model could prevent/restore external and preventable toxic causes
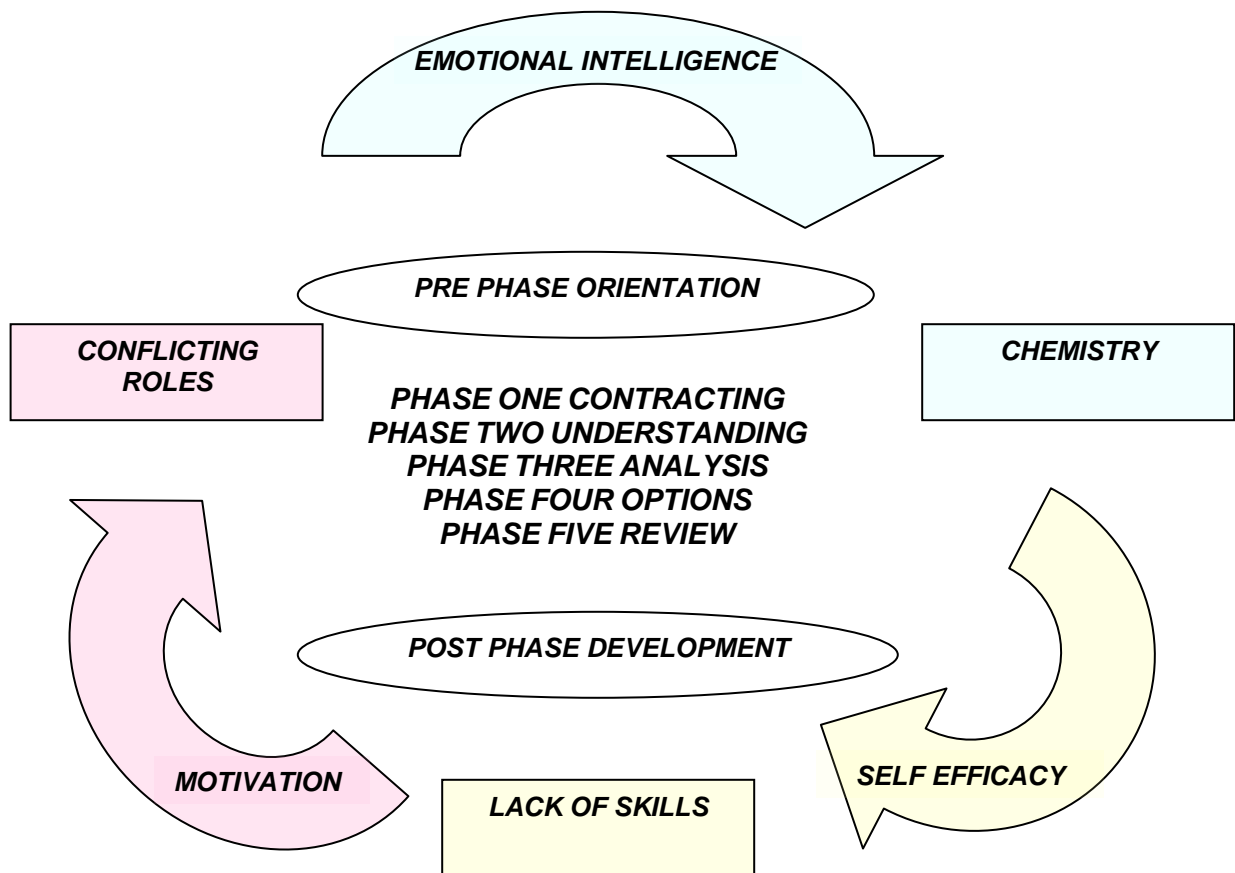
It is important to note that Figure 6.1 represents the DRM model in its specific NWMS environment, and that any notable features are observed in this context. External causes are represented by conflicting roles which, as previously discussed, may be alleviated through contracting and review,

ensuring a satisfactory conclusion or break. Lack of skills, chemistry and cultural elements are potentially preventable, according to the DRM model, through the understanding and analysis phases. Contributing factors, for example, self-efficacy is positioned in the diagram alongside lack of skills, identified as connected in this study. However, this factor is inextricably linked to motivation and emotional intelligence; and the three elements are displayed in the diagram as circling the phases of the DRM model to express their combined positive effect.

In contrast to Scandura's (1998) typology of dysfunctional categories, typified by good or bad intent, the current study has categorised toxicity according to whether causal factors are external and therefore beyond the control or influence of the individual or preventable, for example, by the use of the DRM model (shown in Figure 6.1). An unexpected career or life change constitutes neither good nor bad intent due to its external nature, but it can, nevertheless, be managed. While Scandura's classification was based on behaviours; spoiling, sabotage and difficulty, it excludes reactions to external phenomena that could provoke toxicity. Therefore, categorising toxicity according to whether it is preventable or external is more material to this study. It allows examination of the relationship between the DRM model and prevention of such toxicity in situations that can, despite best intent, arise. Furthermore, the findings suggest there may be a relationship between DRM and a restorative capacity following toxicity, a theme explored in more detail in the next section.

6.5 Prevention

The discussion on the causal factors of toxicity suggested that complex multiple elements can combine to cause toxicity and that additional features can be influential on the impact of that toxicity, such as the level of emotional intelligence possessed by the mentee and the level of self-efficacy of the mentor. This section will present findings reflecting on links to the DRM model and the prevention of toxicity, and will consider the role and significance of external mentors. Exploring this aspect directly addresses the research question in respect of the effectiveness of the model in terms of its influence on toxicity.

To fully explore any preventative potential of the DRM model, each of its five phases (explained in Appendix I: 8) and their associated skills will now be reviewed in terms of prevention/restoration using data garnered from the survey and interviews. The DRM model consists of five phases each using a range of techniques and skills. Phase one explores the relationship, phase two develops understanding of the mentee by focusing on their current situation. Phase three involves the dyad working together to analyse the position and consider new perspectives. Phase four identifies options and formulates an action plan, culminating in phase five where that plan is implemented and evaluated. Skills such as rapport building and deep listening are utilised throughout the phases and significantly impact the quality and success of the relationship. The DRM model however lacks a preparation stage where potential toxicity, such as mismatched expectations, could be avoided. Findings have shown that pre-phase preparation for both parties is important in the prevention of toxicity by clarifying expectations and increasing trust. Lack of appropriate information and understanding can lead to unwelcome consequences with potential members like Me66 having "not much confidence in the scheme".

a) Phase One – Contracting

In terms of prevention, contracting is a key element of phase one of the DRM model but prior to that rapport building is needed to engage the mentoring relationship. The dyad can then jointly formulate a contract to establish the nature of the collaboration, setting ground rules such as the purpose of the relationship, confidentiality and how to resolve difficulties. It also serves to clarify aims for the inexperienced mentee.   The following comments highlight the NWMS Coordinator's views of the significance of contracting:

> "…the main focus for me around toxicity and preventing it and preventing any kind of negative experience for the mentee, is how clear the message is in the training, on the mentor development day, how clear we are on the contracting phase, and it's the contracting phase and being honest about whether you are the right kind of mentor for an individual and having that level of social awareness…"
> Coordinator

Other interviewees supported this view of the significance of contracting in prevention;

> "I think both parties need to know what developmental mentoring is but also what I expect from you, what you expect from me and what you want to get out of it, even if it means we're not really the right people for each other. I think the ground rules in the beginning…exploring all the factors at the beginning of the relationship... that's why it's beneficial." Me9

> "What I found really good about the training was it makes you think, mentoring is sometimes an add-on, you don't really get the time to think about how its set up, and I think the Scheme helps you to think about what it looks like and to remind you about the boundaries and issues…what are we looking for…I think it encourages you." Mr138

A number of the toxic experiences documented in this study could, arguably, have been avoided had clear contracting taken place. The difficulties faced by Me117 may not have occurred if, for example, the aims of the process had been established and aligned to her expectations. This supports existing literature claiming that contracting can prevent negative mentoring (Huskins, Silet, Weber-Main, Begg, Fowler, Hamilton and Fleming 2011; Maloney, 2012).

b) Phase Two – Understanding of the Mentee

The data suggests that feeling understood is significant in the prevention of toxicity and displaying non-judgmental behaviour is key. Mr42 describes how she mentors:

> "My style is supportive, I always build up rapport, I find you don't have them as your best mates as it's a fine boundary because judgements can come in. It doesn't matter what your judgements are, it's the person's session. To prevent toxicity don't let judgements in". Mr42

Phase two is aimed at aiding mentors to reinforce understanding of their mentee through deep listening and empathy skills as well as continuing to clarify the relationship:-

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> "It may not be in the first meeting but certainly in the second one when you've established some rapport...the extent of the relationship has to be explored early on. There is the assumption that it will work to the benefit of both parties, by the second one there has to be an understanding of where the boundaries are, there has to be some guidelines." Mr132

> "Another thing is 'knowing' your mentee, I always do a series of tests, I tell them about it on the first meeting, so I do a Belbin's role test, see what sort of role they have, I do the Honey and Mumford learning cycle, try and find out a little about them psychologically. I can adapt to them and that's the only reason I do that. If I know they're more an activist rather than a reflector then they need more action learning, where a reflector would need to think more about things. I find that helps me and the more you know about your mentee, if you understand how they think, you might not think like them... it's like a radio frequency; where you can really tune into someone and other times it's like we're on the wrong frequency here, which is why it's good to be prepared, it only takes 10 minutes to read up so you can go in prepared." Mr42

Both mentors in the examples above demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the importance attached to gaining an insight into the mentee. Mr42 utilises tools such as learning styles questionnaires to achieve this. While learning styles have their critics (Coffield, Moseley, Hall, and Eccleston, 2004) they offer the basis for reflection of communicating with others, promoting self-awareness and enhancing emotional intelligence for both mentee and mentor.

c) Phase Three – Analysis
The intention of phase three of the DRM model is to deliberate on all relevant issues to achieve greater understanding, particularly through listening, questioning and reflection which are designed to encourage frankness, openness and honesty.   Avoiding toxicity nevertheless still requires the skills advanced in phase one and two. The collaborative approach in this third phase cultivates transference of power in the direction of the mentee, thereby facilitating self-actualisation. The skills of the mentor at this point are vital, using techniques such as powerful questioning to challenge, motivate and inspire creative thought reframing problems into solutions (Cavanagh and Grant, 2010). The NWMS encourage use of a range of tools to facilitate this stage. Me8, below, reflects on the benefits of these.

"The quality assurance that you wouldn't necessarily have on an internal one (scheme)...the paperwork, different tools, exercises...because I've drawn a lot from those… helping their skills and it's great to have those tools to draw from." P8

"The good point about the Scheme was that it gave me lots of handholds in terms of thinking about my life and how my character and everything impacted on other people and vice versa. So I got to understand myself." Me14

Me14's experience with her toxic mentor was rectified through applying 'handholds' such as the 'lifeline', a reflective exercise used by the NWMS to help the mentee review their current position based on the past. This approach can identify patterns and provide greater insight to the reasoning behind decisions and choices made. Accessing these tools allowed Me14 to achieve greater self-awareness,

"So I got to understand myself, being a perfectionist and quite demanding and not sort of forgiving. There was lots of self-help and I learnt basically through the tools." Me14

This suggests that mentees with the appropriate level of emotional intelligence are able to utilise the DRM model to achieve self-mentoring.

d) Phase Four – Action Planning

Creative ideas, solutions and action plans are formulated during this phase with the emphasis on stimulating the mentee to lead the process, particularly in the identification and selection of options. Interviewee Me49 made the following remarks;

"I think it did open my eyes, I'm particularly thinking about my trainees or people thinking of coming into microbiology. It certainly made me think about how you need to keep your mouth shut to find the resonance for the other side. It's very easy to do all the talking or create your own solutions. I think you gave me an understanding of how difficult it is to mentor and mentor well." Me49

Findings indicate fewer incidents of toxicity in the latter two stages compared to earlier. Those that do are confined to the ending of the relationship.

e) Phase Five – Implementation and Review

According to the NWMS the final phase encompasses the true intent of developmental mentoring; the empowerment of the mentee to assume full responsibility for their own development. The facilitative style required to inspire the mentee necessitates shrewd judgment on the part of the mentor. Mutual feedback, while encouraged throughout the relationship is particularly essential at this stage. As Askew and Lodge (2000) argue, the process of feedback is complex. Their co-constructive model of teaching mirrors the DRM approach to feedback through a reciprocal desire to learn. The following interviewee described it as follows:

> "I think there's … partnership approach to it...the review opportunity for the mentee to feedback how they feel and that they feel they can say- you've started to take over the session- that opportunity." Me8

The final phase may require a fundamental change in direction for the dyad or signal the end of the partnership. The DRM model encourages the dyad to recognise, review and celebrate the relationship before moving on. Unresolved endings have been recognised in this study as a potential cause of toxicity, as explored in Chapter 4. Discussion on how to end the relationship should be undertaken by the dyad at the contracting stage to reduce the risk of toxicity (Grant and Cavanagh, 2010).

> "… I do think it's important to have a degree of formality from the outset so that you've got an agreed set of expectations… even though it is a formal relationship in the sense that somebody is providing expertise for the other person, it almost feels like breaking a friendship doesn't it, over time, and that's really awkward… whereas if you can go back to the formal bit you can break that contract in a more formal way so it doesn't feel so horrid." Me14

Successful endings therefore link to the initial contracting phase and the cyclical nature of DRM should facilitate the ending of the relationship or guide a shift in focus for the dyad's continuation.

6.6 Self-care in Prevention

A recurring theme in the findings is of care and concern for the mentee. In the previous chapter toxicity, as identified by participants, was focussed on damage to the mentee,

> "It puts a hold on the mentee's development and has a negative effect on their emotional wellbeing." Me14

One of the contributing factors associated with toxic causes, identified earlier in this chapter, is lack of motivation which in turn links to emotional intelligence. Ragins (2009:243-247) related motivation to positive self-representation which she argued created positive relationships. There are components of self-structures in mentoring, and positive self-structures have a role in prevention of toxicity. The first component; relational identity, describes the regard individuals attach to themselves in the mentoring relationship. Whether the identity is deemed positive or negative will have an ongoing effect on behaviours. The second component relates to mentoring schemas; maps based on past experiences, which may influence current decisions or actions. The final component consists of possible selves; either positive or negative, reflecting the desired self or the feared self, which again, can influence behaviour (Ragins, 2010).

Ragins (2009:243-247) links this self-representation to strategic emotional management using frameworks such as mindfulness and emotional intelligence and skills such as self-narration and emotion regulation. Studies suggest a connection exists between positive emotions and resilience, Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) predicted in three studies that resilient individuals used positive emotions in response to stressful situations or discerned positive meaning from negative situations. Several of the interviewees (Me14, Me109, Me16, and Me9) either found positive meaning or used the experience of toxicity to learn and develop themselves.

> "It stayed with me in terms of how I like to behave with people. I've learned more and it's turned really positive, I think it's stayed with me, learning what not to do." Me9

For Me14 using the tools and techniques of the DRM for self-help increased her resilience at a time of crisis;

> "I used that (the tools) as a way of reflecting on my life and the things that happened. It was tremendously good to be able to reflect on things and I built up a plan on how to get myself out of it. To be honest if it wasn't for myself I probably would have been off sick for much longer" Me14

Access to a range of self-help tools is available to all NWMS members although this proved deficient on the issue of self-care, particularly in relation to mentors, as expressed below:

> "It's about getting messages about mentors looking after themselves as well. I've always thought that you are there for the benefit of the mentee and if its working for them that's fine, and if they're getting out of it what they need to get out of it then should it really matter, but obviously it does. I don't think the Scheme does enough from that point of view, but there probably isn't enough in any mentoring literature about self-care. I can't remember anyone ever saying to me, look after yourself. It has always been the mentee, the mentee, the mentee." Mr133

This interview held particular resonance for me as a mentor. It was an aspect completely unconsidered by the scheme in its training and development, or myself as a trainer for the scheme. I experienced a tension between the roles of researcher, mentor and trainer not previously encountered in the study. It needed a conscious effort to refocus into the role of researcher. This clearly illustrated to me the risks for the insider researcher and demonstrated that the relationship of researcher and researched is not a static one and must be effectively managed (Mercer, 2007).

Johnson and Ridley (2008:107) suggest enduring mentors 'consistently practise self-care', protecting their physical and emotional well-being. They advise honouring personal commitments as well as commitments to protégés, the lack of which was identified as a symptom of toxicity (chapter 5). There is little research on mentor self-care per se although it has been a by-product of other research such as the effect of mentors as role models on their protégés work-life balance (Greenhaus and Singh, 2007), and self-care for

psychologists who mentor (Johnson, 2002). Keep (2011) in her study of self-care in coaching, found that few coaches consider their own well-being in their professional practice.

The findings suggest that mentor self-care enables the mentor to manage the effects of toxicity.

> "It is about knowing when you need help and recognising when you need filling back up emotionally." Mr133

This level of self-awareness links back to the additional factors, identified in this chapter, as significant in prevention such as emotional intelligence and resilience but is usually scrutinised through the lens of the mentee or the dyad.   While supervision in mentoring exists to support mentors through development and trouble-shooting (Megginson et al, 2006), the focus remains on their practice and indirectly the mentee as a consequence, rather than on self-care. However, some professions, such as coaching, do recognise to some extent that a lack of self-care will affect the relationship (Hawkins, 2010).

Keep's (2011) study of developing self-care in coaches, recognises that to provide a strong coaching service, the coach must firstly care for themselves. She found a dearth of research on the well-being of the coach, and similarly, the same lack of interest exists in mentoring.

While only one interviewee in the current study discussed self-care in terms of toxicity, this view is significant in the questions it raises. For instance, if the mentor neglects their own well-being, can this lead to toxicity, and what are the links between mentor self-care and resilience? If the mentor does not practise self-care how can they ensure a consistent service and not risk transference?

The study explored contributory features such as emotional intelligence and self-awareness which has been linked to emotional well-being (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley and Hollander, 2002). It considered Ragins

(2009) theory of self-representation and the use of frameworks such as mindfulness and emotion regulation. Mirroring the lack of research, mentor self-care does not appear in any of the documentation or training in the NWMS, nor is it considered in the DRM model.

6.7 Distal Mentoring

As noted in chapter 1, to avoid confusion with mentoring at a geographical distance as opposed to a professional or organisational distance, distance mentoring in this study is referred to as distal mentoring. The term has been referred to in previous mentoring literature concerning distal benefits and outcomes (Eby et al, 2006, Karcher et al, 2006), but not in respect of professional or organisational distance. It therefore represents a unique feature of this study. The interviews explored the impact and significance of the introduction of an external mentor; a mentor outside the mentee's organisation or profession or both, with regard to the prevention of toxicity. The benefits of accessing a mentor external to an organisation were discussed in the literature review and the findings lend support to the premise that this distance improves confidentiality and trust thereby enhancing the mentoring relationship.

> "…not working in the same organisation or indeed the same department as the person you are mentoring is far healthier and far less likely to have any overlaps or be aware of any situation your mentee is involved in, or have that personal attachment to it, that could have already led you to form your opinions, developed a belief about an individual." Coordinator

The Coordinator highlights the symmetry between distal mentoring and the DRM model, specifically not forming or expressing opinions, thereby allowing the mentee to lead the discussion.

> "I think that working on the regional approach and the model that we use that's cut out of it, because you are not, as a mentor, living and breathing the organisation's issues, history, acting out the behaviours of that organisation. I'm not saying that will draw a line under it and stop it (toxicity) from happening because I'm not sure you can really truly prevent an individual performing poorly or mentoring in a negative way but certainly having that distance from an individual makes a huge

difference and reduces or removes any toxicity because of the professional distance…. certainly I think that plays a big part in preventing that." Coordinator

The notion of mentoring benefits through professional distance is also recognised below.

"I think that all mentoring relationships should be outside of your comfort zone, so I don't want to mentor nurses because it's what I do…and I'm not as good, and the reason I'm not as good as a mentor is that I bring all my assumptions…and it's not a good place to be… the foundation of your experience is already there so you've already got your reaction before you start off."   Mr133

While DRM encourages the mentor not to be judgmental or make assumptions because that may discourage the mentee from creative thought, disconnection from the profession or organisation guarantees an open mind.

"When you mentor somebody in a profession that you know nothing or little about, you've got to ask clarifying questions and that stops you making assumptions. Even if you think of the nursing hierarchy, ok, the bands may be the same but the personalities in those bands across organisations are not the same, so therefore the sisters I've worked with in the past are not going to be the same, so that all adds to toxicity doesn't it? At the end of the day you've got all that transference going on as well, whereas I prefer a) outside your organisation if possible and b) outside your professional scope as well" Mr133

Distal mentoring was identified as reassuring mentees of complete confidentiality where the issue of trust is removed:

"I think having someone outside your organisation means you're free to talk about whatever you want. Because I know that she doesn't know her (the manager) and doesn't know anyone who does, so I feel quite happy to know it's all in confidence anyway, but I know she wouldn't be able to tell anyone. Whereas I think if it was in my organisation there's always a chance, I don't know if they know them, and try as much as you can to not say their name, even if they know which department you're in they're going to know who your manager is. Having people outside my organisation is really important." Me117

Similar observations are found throughout the study:

"I think it is a trust issue, certainly in my organisation we don't change staff a lot, and so it's quite an incestuous organisation. So it's about who you want to be mentored by...is that mentoring being performance monitored...all the issues around that, have trust.   The fact that you can see someone who doesn't know your organisation… one of the mentors I've had came from a completely different directorate and work that I did and that was a breath of fresh air". Me8

Me8's observation that her experience with an external mentor was 'a breath of fresh air' strengthens the DRM model's ideal of not forming opinions to allow the mentee to discover a new perspective or view of their situation.

While external mentoring was recognised as safeguarding trust and confidentiality within the relationship it was also considered to affect the nature and focus of the session:

"I don't think it's appropriate that a line manager or someone close in the organisation should be doing this kind of scheme with someone that they know quite well, because that just muddies the waters." Mr42

For Mr42 a distal mentor offered clarity and focus to the relationship unfettered by the struggle to put aside their own views, opinions or agendas.

"I had a mentor in a completely different discipline and she was really supportive, but it was really helpful to have someone who was not involved with the stuff I was going through. At the time we were going through a lot of change...... distance is a good thing because you can't get involved with people's issues in the same way. It's so easy to slip into a moaning session for an hour and not achieving anything at all. I don't think it's conducive to a big, open mentoring relationship, I think it just gets everyone down. People do it and its psychologically soothing at times, but then you can get into this spiraling downwards, and you've got no one saying positive messages, people become very insular. So that's why I think it's better in a different organisation. Mr42

Many mentoring schemes have recognised the benefits of external mentoring to foster an 'independent learning dialogue' (WUMS, 2011) and avoid the mentor being labelled as 'an organisational agent' (Haggard, 2012), representing a potential risk to the confidentiality of the relationship. Threats to confidentiality could lead to toxicity as trust is compromised.

6.8 Summary

The chapter introduced the causal factors identified by survey respondents, quoting from interview data to illuminate these findings. It examined toxic causes and their impact on individuals and frequently found more than one suspected source with a combination of external and preventable elements contributing to the toxicity; mainly the result of life changes and lack of commitment causing unmet expectations. It then explored the value of the DRM model in prevention finding some evidence that the relationship, even where toxicity was due to external factors, could be, if not fully restored, then alleviated or the dyad allowed to end undamaged. Contributory features like, motivation, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, were found to be significant. Lack of motivation or misaligned motives could potentially inflict a negative influence on the process. Self-efficacy and emotional intelligence were identified as important elements as was positive self-representation.

The chapter then reflected upon the DRM and its relationship to the prevention of toxicity through the examination of each of its five phases. This illuminated the particular importance of contracting in the prevention of toxicity, along with skills associated with the second and third phases; deep listening, empathy and powerful questioning. . However, unresolved endings in the DRM mentoring relationship were found to cause toxicity suggesting that the model lacks sufficient guidance on this aspect. The debate on the contribution and influence of motivation was elaborated on once the significance of such elements as positive self-representation and the under-researched field of mentor self-care were identified as meaningful in toxic prevention in the study. Finally, through the use of direct data quotations, it emphasised the role of external mentors and the influences they exert as well as the benefits derived from operating a regional pool of mentors.

The study culminates in the next chapter with a synthesis of the key findings from the preceding chapters with comment on their implications for both the theoretical knowledge of toxicity and professional understanding in the field of mentoring. It formulates conclusions and recommendations on the basis of

the findings and, in addressing unresolved issues or identifying matters of consequential interest arising from the study, it points to opportunities for future research.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

Baxter and Jack (2008:547) asserted that there is no one correct way to report a case study, alerting researchers to the distractions confronting them as a result of the "mounds of interesting data" that emanates from it. The resonance of these words were vividly apparent throughout this study, requiring vigilance to stay purposeful and preserve the focus and direction of the investigation towards resolving its main question:

> 'How does a developmental relationship mentoring (DRM) model affect toxicity experienced in mentoring relationships?'

This final chapter reflects upon the complexities of the main findings of this study; the definitions, perspectives and contributing factors to toxicity; its chronic effects; the DRM model's strengths and deficiencies and finally the value of distal mentoring. The chapter also introduces a modified version of the DRM mentoring model shaped by these findings.

Justification for this research is twofold;
1. it expresses the need to better understand toxicity and how features of the DRM model have been independently identified by other researchers as good practice in prevention,
2. while there is an abundance of literature on the positive elements of mentoring, more recent research has raised awareness of negative mentoring behaviours, calling for further study to develop both insight into and remedies for the problem.

The study's introduction provides an outline, setting out its aims and exploring a variety of definitions of toxicity, the DRM model and the case study's context. The literature review ascertained the current level of understanding of toxicity and analysed the DRM model itself, drawing comparisons with other mentoring models and associated approaches such as coaching. It also appraised existing guidance on the prevention of toxicity as well as the potentially significant regional aspect of the case study. The body of the study explained the methodology used and its philosophical framework, followed by an explanation of the DRM model as redefined by the case study; the NWMS.

The study's findings were presented in broadly organised themes of understanding, causal factors and prevention.

The objectives of this study were to:

a) Critically review the literature on toxicity in mentoring and DRM together with related concepts such as dysfunction. This was achieved in the literature review.

b) Review and evaluate documentary evidence produced by one specific mentoring scheme relating to its development and operation, undertaken in chapter 5.

c) Using a case study approach explore toxic experiences together with the use of a DRM model from a range of perspectives discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

d) Generate findings to clarify whether DRM is effective in prevention of toxic mentoring, making an original contribution to theoretical knowledge of toxicity and professional understanding in the field of mentoring. The results of the findings discussed in the preceding chapters are reflected upon here culminating in an adapted mentoring model designed to prevent toxicity.

The study exposed several significant and unexpected findings to supplement results that support and strengthen existing research theories raising implications for mentoring practice and presenting opportunities for future research. These are elucidated more fully later in this chapter.

7.1 Toxicity

Probing the meaning of toxicity from the personal accounts of the research participants (explored in Chapter 5) was intended to formulate a deeper understanding of the concept. The task was approached from three distinct viewpoints; those of the mentee, the mentor and the dyad. Rather than discerning a concise definition, it was found that toxicity embodied a range of meanings from basic ineffective behaviours to acute dysfunction within the relationship.

Mentoring that is not working has been labelled in many ways by researchers; Scandura (1998) described it as 'dysfunctional', Feldman (1999) called it 'toxic', and Eby et al (2000) 'negative'. However, the most resonant definition was one described in the study by participants; Mr42, Me109 and Me14, as 'poisonous'. Like poison, the impact increases in line with the toxic dosage or the vulnerability of the recipient. Antidotes exist provided the problem is diagnosed and treated promptly. The hesitance of researchers to assign unpalatable emotionally-charged descriptions is unsurprising but more insipid expressions only serve to disguise the potential harm that such failings inflict on outcomes, not only for individual participants and their mentoring relationship but to their organisation as well.

Exploring the symptoms of toxicity and linking them to effects on the individual using the study's Impact Scale generally supported existing research (Hamlin and Sage, 2011, Eby and McManus, 2004, Eby et al, 2000) conforming to many of the identified negative behaviours such as unresponsiveness in mentees and lack of expertise in mentors. Some discord was evident however, with findings supporting only two of the four negative mentee behaviours identified by Eby and McManus (2004). This may reflect the contrast in mentoring function studied, Eby and McManus's and Hamlin and Sage investigated a sponsorship mentoring model, focusing on career development, rather than a developmental mentoring model, which focuses on personal development. This was acknowledged by Hamlin and Sage (2011), as a limitation of their work. Findings therefore enhance existing research by presenting the developmental mentoring model perspective. Further research is, however, needed to strengthen and expand the link between developmental mentoring and toxic prevention. This link has implications for a range of stakeholders contemplating which mentoring model to embrace.

Findings support four out of Eby et al's (2000) five designated negative mentor themes, in contrast to Hamlin and Sage's (2011) which matched only three. The study exposed evidence of manipulative behaviours by mentors, for example where a mentor took credit for a mentee's work. It therefore enhances existing knowledge by broadening the behavioural criteria formed

by previous researchers, raising implications for the theoretical understanding of toxicity. This study presents a psycho-social perspective, with participants drawn from a developmental mentoring scheme, a feature missing from previous research. This omission represents a significant deficit in current research, particularly as developmental mentoring is growing in popularity and use.

Attempts to link toxic symptoms to their impact were as challenging as defining toxicity itself and proved similarly inconsistent. While many of these symptoms yielded comparable affects, other evidence also emerged not entirely supporting the findings of existing research such as Eby's continuum of relational problems (Eby, 2007:325). This model links minor, moderate and serious problems to specific symptoms. 'Unmet expectations' was designated a minor severity in Eby's study, yet mismatched or misaligned expectations were considered as having a high toxic impact by case study participants. As individual perceptions of an experience vary greatly, it is therefore evident that any attempt to categorise these incidents should include a caveat to that effect.

Respondents were invited to offer an opinion on the cause of their toxic experience and the predominant factor identified was 'conflicting roles/responsibilities'. This was linked to associated contributory factors such as motivation of the mentor along with self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. In chapter 6 the study discussed the finding that less than altruistic reasons for undertaking mentoring may contribute to toxicity in socio-emotional mentoring, while career advancement motivation in career-related mentoring was less negatively perceived (Bozionelos et al., 2011). This generates implications for scheme managers and policy makers in the formulation of mentoring frameworks to secure the right motivational fit for mentors. For example, a career-related scheme may be more suited to a sponsorship model and should be marketed as such to attract a dyad motivated to that end. A useful future research enquiry would investigate motivational constructs within traditional and developmental mentoring to establish any link to toxicity in a motivation mismatch. Mentor and mentee motivation is presented as a

recurrent theme in the study and the lack of empirical research into the relationship between motivation and toxicity suggests that it would be an area worthy of further research. Where lack of motivation leads to toxicity, exploration of the reason for degenerated motivation would aid preventative measures.

7.2 Chronic Effects

An unexpected finding brought to light by the study relates to the chronic i.e. long term impact of toxic mentoring on the mentee and mentor, a phenomenon only peripherally or indirectly mentioned in literature (Feldman, 1999; Allen, 2007). Toxic incidents described by interviewees ranged in severity but those who expressed their experience in terms of chronic effects all rated it as 'high impact'. The study outlines several examples of unresolved toxicity that adversely influenced subsequent behaviour and attitudes, such as avoidance of the individual or an unwillingness to continue mentoring. Such issues represent notable features worthy of deeper analysis.

Where negative experiences persist long after the event, for example through a reluctance to mentor, the possible implications for stakeholders can be significant, potentially creating a detrimental impact on the success of a scheme. Wider implications may also threaten the effectiveness of the organisation where such experiences go on to infect other professional relationships or the individual's resilience, a connection discussed in chapter 6. Individuals with positive self-structures possess a strong mentoring identity, clearly defined mentoring schema or map, and an optimistic self-vision. However, positive self-structures that unexpectedly result in negative impacts can influence future behaviours, as discussed by Ragins (2010).

The chronic effects of toxicity, an unmeasured and under researched issue could have extensive implications for both the individual and the organisation. Unresolved toxicity post relationship breakdown again highlights the need to adequately address the initial preparation and contracting, and, in particular, the closure phases of the mentoring cycle. It is a recommendation of this work that further study is undertaken into this insidious element.

A further chronic issue arising from the findings was that of mentor self-care. Although usually neglected in research this concern was raised during the study and, when considered in terms of chronic effects and reluctance to continue to mentor, findings intimate that such self-care could prove a significant aid in enabling the mentor to deal with toxicity. The focus of care in the mentoring relationship, both empirically and professionally, is usually directed at the more vulnerable mentee (Feldman, 1999). While supervision does exist to support the mentor, it is designed to address their practice and indirectly supports the mentee. The DRM model, as operated by the NWMS, similarly fails to address self-care despite the provision of continuous development and networking opportunities for mentors.

The findings intimate a potential risk, therefore, that the neglect of mentor self-care could have implications for the profession in terms of the decision to continue mentoring. Chronic negative effects may discourage future participation, particularly significant for voluntary schemes. Toxicity could also adversely influence an individual's self-esteem causing on-going damage in other areas (Eby and Allen, 2002). Consequently it is recommended that the area of mentor self-care would be a worthy subject for research.

7.3 The DRM Model as utilised by the NWMS

The original proposition of this study, based on literature, was that there may be a link between the DRM model and prevention, if not to fully restore the relationship then at least to alleviate symptoms or ensure that the dyad is brought to an end without damage to its participants. The findings suggested that specific phases in the DRM model, such as 'Contracting' may be significant in limiting toxicity in areas such as mismatched expectations, as a result of clearly outlining and agreeing responsibilities and goals. However, a clear link cannot be established, for example, the perception of toxicity is subjective and the experience cannot be confirmed or denied by the other member of the dyad involved.

The DRM model has been explored in detail and while it was never designed specifically to address toxicity, findings suggest that it may offer protection. However, the study did reveal deficiencies in the model's design as used in the context of the NWMS. One area of weakness noted was ending the relationship in an appropriate and helpful way that protects both mentor and mentee, ensuring any unresolved issues are dealt with. This was identified by survey respondents as a cause of toxicity. The DRM model clearly departed from Megginson et al's (2006:20) original intent for a 'good ending' where separate phases are devoted to 'Winding Up' and 'Moving On', replaced in the DRM model with Phase Five which encompasses both 'Implementation' and 'Review'. Findings suggest that the original approach with its greater emphasis may provide a more robust defence against toxicity. Megginson et al (2006:253) also note that our understanding of mentoring becomes 'increasingly contextual' and the influence of the mentoring environment can be paramount.

The defining feature of the NWMS approach to developmental mentoring is its regional structure, and this distal aspect is also a prominent finding of this study. These two elements; the DRM model and distal mentoring and their connection to the prevention of toxicity have practical implications for both the augmentation of theoretical knowledge of toxicity and professional understanding in the field of mentoring. There are implications for those participating in the delivery of training to ensure awareness of toxicity, as well as for mentors and mentees to directly address it in the course of contracting. The implications for policy makers arise in the design of mentoring frameworks including consideration of applying a distal environment through links with other organisations. The study also contributes to addressing the gap identified in the initial conceptual framework (Figure 2.3) of the relationship between distal mentoring and prevention of toxicity.

The findings indicated a lack of understanding of how the NWMS operates with 4 out of 5 survey respondents citing mentoring scheme issues as the reason for their toxic experience. Mr135, for example, complained that the mentee was in a differing field of work, ignoring the NWMS promotion and the

DRM model's facilitation of cross-professional mentoring. This suggests a need for clearer guidance of the processes involved, and the support available for mentors and mentees. The implications for other mentoring schemes suggest clarification through awareness and training sessions.

Many of the behavioural criteria found in Hamlin and Sage's 'lay model of positive formal mentoring effectiveness' (2011:768) conformed to Megginson et al's (2006) developmental mentoring model, suggesting a link between the model and effective mentoring. Of the behaviours identified with positive mentoring effectiveness, those associated with clear contracting and understanding the mentee through empathy, rapport building, deep listening and powerful questioning skills have been highlighted in the study as potentially alleviating toxicity. Findings of this study were compared to Hamlin and Sage's (2011) negative mentor and mentee behaviours. While empirically supporting many of their findings it also contributes the perspective of developmental mentoring, an acknowledged limitation of their study.

Initial interview analysis found instances of similar negative experiences causing contrasting levels of impact, highlighting the significance of perception and subjectivity in toxic experiences.   This incongruity in responses to similar experiences may be explained by individual resilience but also alludes to the issues of adequate mentee preparation. Some individuals were able to transform a negative experience into a development opportunity, or in the case of Me16, re-shape a toxic relationship into a successful one, rather than abandoning it. Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) explore the use of positive emotions to manufacture a positive outcome from a negative situation. The relationship between emotional intelligence and mentoring is under researched (Hawkey, 2010) yet the extent to which it influences the effectiveness of mentoring is significant. The study demonstrates this, for example, in the case of Me9, who utilised her negative encounter as a learning experience when she became a mentor.

It is a recommendation of this work that further research opportunities are pursued to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and its role in toxic prevention and repair. Scandura (1998:464) identified the need for mentor training to deal with relational difficulties and many of the problems raised in this study could be avoided through the development of emotional intelligence. While the NWMS has explored emotional intelligence at development events it is not included within the initial training, nor is the subject of toxicity and how to prevent it.

By adopting a combination of these effective DRM phases and the concept of distal mentoring it has proved possible to pioneer a new model of mentoring that incorporates greater safeguards for the user against toxicity (see Figure 7.1)

7.4 Prevention of Toxicity through Distal Mentoring
Developmental mentoring implies a relationship transformation over a period of time but it also alludes to the co-participatory nature of DRM, using skills such as powerful questioning to elicit mentee contribution and ensuring a team association with an equal division of power. DRM also places the onus of listening on the mentor rather than providing instant advice to their mentee while the mentee is encouraged to explore and create solutions. Consequently the mentor has no need of specialised knowledge in the mentee's field or profession. This approach provides the opportunity for evolving mentoring as a field. The similarities of DRM to coaching are striking; the focus, for example, on the mentee's ideas and contribution to the process, along with the avoidance of advice-giving. Much of the literature links coaching and mentoring, with little differentiation between the two (Garvey, 2004: Clutterbuck, 2008). This study has contributed to the definition debate. The DRM model also lends itself to external or distal mentoring as no specialist knowledge of the profession or organisation of the mentee is required.   The significance of the regional network emerged more as interviews progressed, demonstrating a meaningful contribution to the model's success.

As a feature of the NWMS, distal mentoring was found to advance a formidable defence against toxicity with 10 out of 13 interviewees citing an external mentor as important, guarding against, for example, breaches of confidentiality. This supports the existing theory of off-line mentoring (Clutterbuck, 1995) and, due to the nature of the DRM model, and the regional aspect of the NWMS offering a wider pool of members, extends it to cross-professional as well as cross-organisational boundaries. This is entirely appropriate for socio-emotional mentoring rather than career orientated mentoring where the mentor provides specialist guidance to the mentee.

The implications for the profession are potentially significant by extending access to mentoring by increasing the pool of mentors. The absence of the need for specialist knowledge creates a non-judgemental mentoring experience, offering opportunities for cross mentoring. This bridges the professions, organisations, public and private sector, injecting differing perspectives to enrich the process.   Opportunities for further research are plentiful, in particular replication and extension of this study to explore the relationship between distal mentoring and toxic prevention in a wider range of contexts.

7.5 Distal DRM Model

While evidence presented in this study suggests that the DRM model as used by the NWMS may guard against toxicity, some flaws were nevertheless identified, for example unresolved endings in the relationship.   By addressing these inadequacies and drawing on the findings from this study an adapted model is presented below in Figure 7.1. This revised model, it could be argued, according to our empirical understanding of the phenomenon of toxicity in mentoring, may offer a measure of protection against it. The model presented in Figure 7.1 incorporates the original DRM model as used by the NWMS with enhancements drawn from the study's findings. The Distal DRM model extends the existing five phases to include a final sixth phase dedicated solely to a satisfactory conclusion. The original review phase is adapted to purely embrace feedback within the dyad on the relationship and is more

closely associated with the model devised by Megginson et al (2006). It allows phase six to redefine the relationship ensuring that both parties may move on with no unresolved issues. This phase would be dedicated to addressing any toxicity, negativity or misunderstanding that had occurred during the relationship, but its success is dependent upon scheme coordinators requiring the dyad to conclude the phase as part of the initial contract. This would necessitate some form of reporting back to confirm that all phases had been undertaken. The NWMS does not require any signing off process by their members and the risk of the dyad drifting is therefore greater.

The new model outlines the requirements for a distal mentor. The word 'distal' symbolises not spatial distance but detachment from specialist knowledge of the mentee's field and organisation, conveniently accommodated by the NWMS regional structure. The model also includes the self-care requirements for the mentor, through training, development and supervision. This balances care provision within the dyad, compensating for the sustained focus on mentee care in each phase of the model. This study argues, supported by its findings, that the Distal DRM model could alleviate the incidence of toxicity in the mentoring relationship, avoiding the negative chronic repercussions of toxicity such as reluctance to continue mentoring. This approach could improve mentoring scheme success; develop staff more effectively and ultimately protect the organisation's investment.

Figure 7.1 Distal Developmental Relationship Mentoring Model
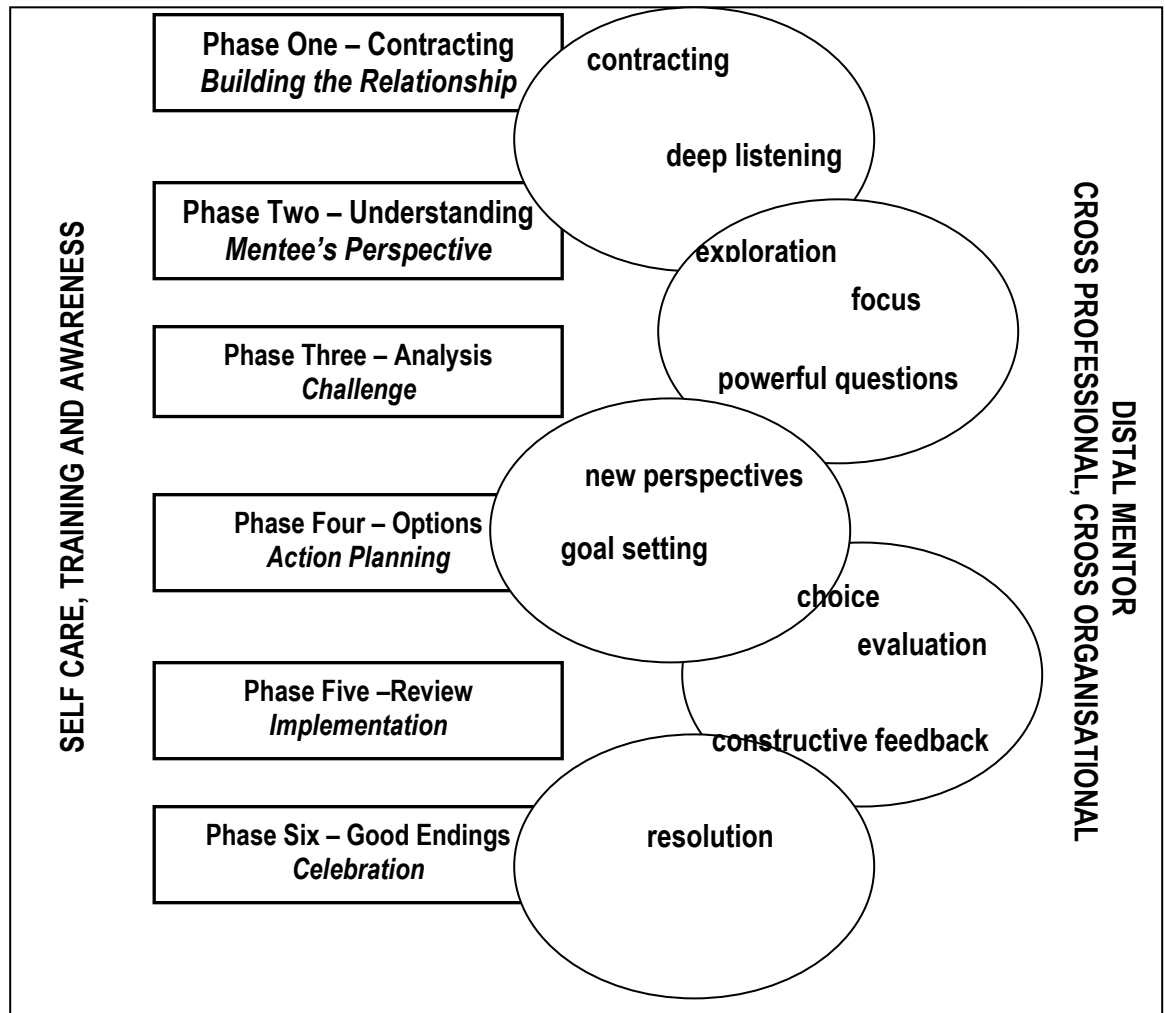
7.6 Summary

This final section summarises recommendations observed from the findings of the study. It acknowledges the unresolved issues and matters of consequential interest expressed in this chapter, which provide opportunities for future research.

Some limitations in methodology are acknowledged. As this was a single case study of an adapted mentoring model in a specific context, care needs to be taken in generalising its results. Its unique features need also to be noted,

such as the use of distal mentors and the more practical adaptation of an existing mentoring model.

As all of the participants were allied to one sector; members of public services, a potential bias in the research existed and this could be regarded as a narrow viewpoint. It is also apparent that demographic survey data was not comprehensive, for example, no data was obtained on gender, except from the interviewees. No conclusions can be drawn therefore regarding the influence of gender on toxicity. It is a recommendation therefore that replication of this study is required to widen demographic data such as gender to explore any links with the DRM model's prevention of toxicity.

Although there are common themes in the incidence of toxicity it has been found that different mentoring models present their own unique toxic threats. It is recommended that mentoring schemes should develop appropriate defence mechanisms based on an initial risk analysis in their programme design and adapt an 'accident book' approach providing useful statistics for scheme review, participant training and comparison between models.

Data gathered and analysed included details of toxic experiences within both the specific context studied as well as other schemes operating traditional models. However, it should be noted that the toxic experiences within the NWMS were not necessarily incurred while following the DRM model, as established during the interviews.   Further studies using multiple methodologies comparing the toxic outcomes of traditional and developmental mentoring would reinforce this research to acknowledge that its findings are not method bound.

Research is also recommended into the chronic effects of toxicity in mentoring, particularly in its influence on attitudes and future willingness to mentor or be mentored. Exploration of the relationship between emotional intelligence and mentoring together with its role in toxic prevention and repair should also be examined. Acknowledging this area would augment existing

studies (Bennetts, 2002; Cherniss, 2007) broadening the link between emotional intelligence and mentoring from the toxic perspective.

It is also proposed that mentor self-care, particularly in relation to the prevention of toxicity, would be worthy of future research. Although only directly raised by one participant the issue was inferred by several mentors while discussing the chronic effects of their toxic experience that had been left unresolved. Care of the mentor has been a largely ignored element of mentoring as the focus lies almost entirely with the mentee. Yet, failure by mentors to protect themselves or develop resilience in their practice could escalate into chronic toxicity carried forward into future relationships. Safeguards should be employed; supervision, self-applied resilience techniques, or greater awareness as precautionary measures against toxicity.

This study contributes to existing research by extending understanding of ineffective behaviours and recognising manipulative conduct. A successful mentoring relationship is as dependent upon the mentee's behaviour as it is on the mentor's competence. Hamlin and Sage (2011) identified the need for orientation and training sessions to clearly establish expectations, roles and ongoing development to support behavioural competence. This study highlights DRM as an effective approach in meeting their recommendations.

Findings have contributed to the formulation of an adapted model of mentoring: Distal Mentoring, which encompasses and extends the DRM model with an additional phase. The study suggests however that the model itself is insufficient security against toxicity. Other considerations such as mentor self-care, the distal element; cross professional and cross organisational structures are essential adjuncts for inhibiting toxicity.

Although the literature review had evidenced the presence of toxicity in research on mentoring there remained uncertainty at the outset of this research that its investigations would reveal any incidents of toxicity within the DRM which formed the focus of the study. Toxicity was indeed found to exist within the DRM in several guises varying considerably in terms of cause,

effect and severity. It proved difficult to establish any firm consensus on what constituted toxicity and, in the absence of any firm definition, the expression itself could prove misleading. The blanket term does however still represent a broad understanding and the word 'toxic' should therefore be regarded as a generic expression reflecting any damage caused to the mentoring process.

The confusions over terminology arising from this study draw me to conclude that the field of mentoring would benefit from a recognised classification system for toxic occurrences. This 'differentiation' should clarify the type of toxicity, the victim, its impact, cause and consequence perhaps expanding on the impact study in this research as a basis. Such differentiation would allow common problems to be identified, training adjusted or remedial action to be taken.

It is tempting to simply pronounce that some relationships inevitability fail, and accept that such collateral damage is bearable for the greater good. As with medicine, mentoring is an intervention intended to make things better or at the very least make them no worse. What promises so much should not, however, be tarnished even by occasional failure, rather efforts should be directed at eliminating toxicity through focussed training, good practice, greater awareness and resolve. Instructing participants in coping mechanisms would also alleviate any symptoms of issues arising. Having established that toxicity does exist and that it can cause long term effects, it is clearly desirable to eradicate it or at least minimise its consequences, both for individual well-being, organisational effectiveness and the reputation of mentoring itself.

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