

How to be a mentor in the workplace



This toolkit provides guidance on becoming an effective mentor in the workplace. It offers practical advice to help you support and inspire your mentee, and overall foster growth and positive change in your organisation.

What is mentoring?



Support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential and develop their skills, to improve their performance and become the person they want to be.

Eric Parsloe - The Oxford School of Coaching and Mentoring

What is, and isn't good mentoring?

- ✓ A safe environment to seek advice.
- ✓ A mutually beneficial relationship.
- ✓ A springboard.
- ✓ Extends beyond the session.

- ✗ A one-way street.
- ✗ A cosy chat.
- ✗ A place to have a good moan.
- ✗ Like seeing a therapist.

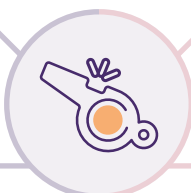
What role does a mentor play?

Advisor

Mentors should provide advice, guidance, and feedback. Sharing their experience and expertise with their mentee.

Champion and cheerleader

Mentors will offer encouragement and support to try new things. Helping their mentee move out of their comfort zone by celebrating their successes and support them when things don't go to plan.



Resource and recommendations

Mentors will identify resources that will help mentees with personal development and growth, such as books, workshops and people.

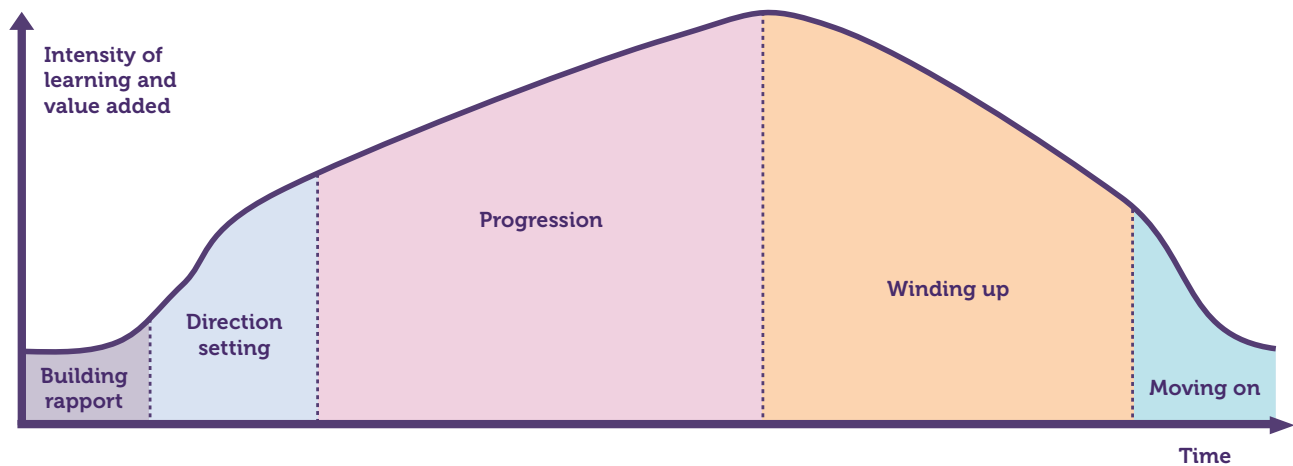
Honest and fair

Mentors **must** provide the tough feedback that mentees need to hear to move forwards. This feedback and advice, **must** always be fair and given honestly to be effective.

How long should a mentoring relationship last?

Put simply, it varies widely. A longer relationship does not necessarily translate into a more effective relationship.

Each mentoring relationship has a natural beginning, middle and end. This is what's called 'the mentoring lifecycle', which is broken down into five distinct stages.



Recommended number of sessions:

What each stage requires:

1-2

Building rapport

- Focus on breaking the ice.
- Review the mentor and mentee responsibilities.
- Agree how the sessions will be conducted.

1

Direction setting

- Explore the different learning needs.
- Commit to at least one goal or theme to work on.

3+

Progression

- Scheduled conversations that help the mentee work through the different challenges and opportunities that align to their goal(s).

1-3

Winding up

- Recognise the relationship has taken them as far as it can towards the agreed goals.
- The mentee becomes more self-reliant and requires less support from the mentor.

1+

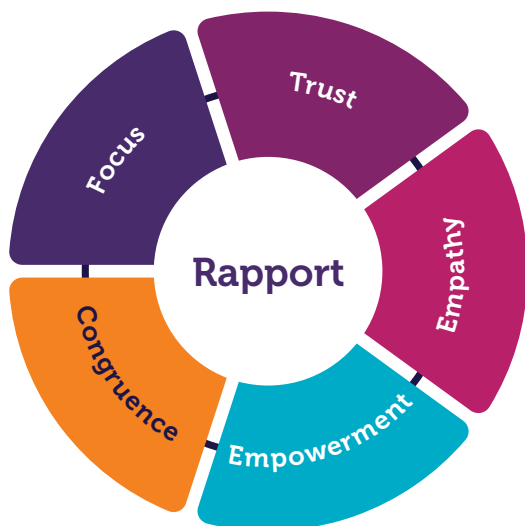
Moving on

- There is mutual agreement to close the mentoring relationship.
- Celebrate its success and reflect on the learning both the mentor and mentee will each take away from their time together.

How do you build rapport with your mentee?

For an effective mentoring relationship to be established, the mentor and mentee need to build a good rapport. As shown in the mentoring lifecycle, building rapport should be the first stage of your relationship.

Understanding how you build rapport is important, as it can feel awkward or slightly forced to start with for both the mentor and mentee. To help you, we've broken down the five key elements that go into building rapport with other people.



1. Trust

Confidence that the other person is reliable, respects the boundaries set out and will maintain confidentiality.

2. Empathy

Understand and value the other person's point of view.

3. Empowerment

Help the mentee become independent by developing their skills and building confidence.

4. Congruence

Pulling in the same direction, with the mentor acknowledging the validity of the mentee's goal(s).

5. Focus

Give your full attention, concentrate on what's being said and listen without judgment.

How do you effectively set the direction?

By your second or third meeting you should have established a strong enough level of rapport to start setting objectives for your conversations.

A good way to structure these objectives is by using the **SMART framework**, which works as follows:

S	Specific		The narrower and more specific a goal is, the clearer the steps to achieving it will be.
M	Measurable		Goals need to be quantifiable; this will make it easier to track the mentees progress.
A	Achievable		Ensure the goals are realistic and reachable.
R	Relevant		The objectives need to be supportive of the mentees career development aspirations.
T	Time-based		Set the goals to be reached within both a reasonable and achievable time frame.

How can you structure the mentoring conversation?

The progression stage of the mentoring lifecycle is where the bulk of the time will be spent with your mentee. Structuring these conversations is essential to make the relationship a successful one, one way to do this is by following the **GUIDE Model**.

This model will make sure the mentee has a chance to raise and discuss their priority topics, whilst providing you as the mentor the opportunity to offer effective advice and action orientated outcomes. Here is how it works:



GOAL

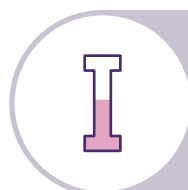
What does your mentee want to focus on?

This could be for this one session, the next couple of sessions or across the whole relationship. Structure each session around the goal(s) you've agreed, this will help to keep you on target.



UNDERSTANDING

Present and discuss one another's views on the goal or topic you've identified. The aims here is to reach a mutual level of understanding. As the mentor, you need to understand what the challenges or blockers are that are preventing the mentee from reaching them.



IDEAS

Once you have got a strong foundation of understanding, it is time to start exploring and sharing possible solutions. These can range from simple and quick solutions, to more long-term and complex ways of obtaining the goal.



DECIDE

Here you want to weigh up the ideas and actions required. Your aim is to agree upon the best course of action, considering the possible challenges, then drawing up a plan using the **SMART framework** we've covered previously.



ENCOURAGE

Finally, you want to provide your mentee with the encouragement they will need to continue their journey outside of the mentoring sessions. Be sure to end each session by either highlighting the progression they've made or the ideas they've had so far.

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