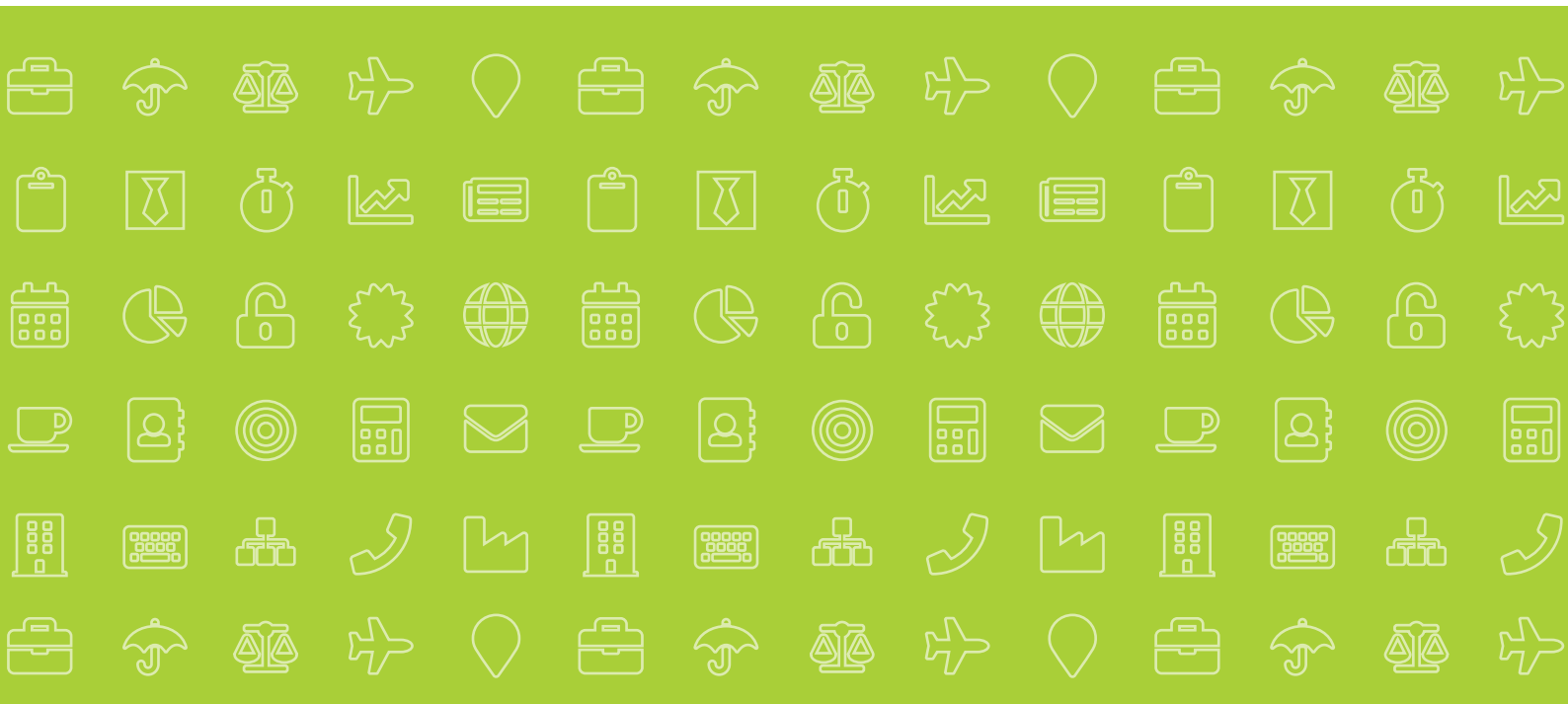


Mentoring an Apprentice



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Guide for Mentors

1. What is an Apprenticeship?

An apprenticeship is a real job with training, which meets an approved national standard. It is a way for individuals to earn while they learn, gaining valuable skills and knowledge in a specific job role. Apprentices gain the technical knowledge, practical experience and wider skills needed for their immediate job and future career.

Apprenticeships can be for new or existing members of staff.

They gain the apprenticeship through a wide mix of learning in the workplace, formal off-the-job training and the opportunity to practise new skills in a real work environment.

The formal off-the-job training element of the apprenticeship is provided by an approved training provider and apprentices will typically spend 20% of their employed work hours conducting guided learning with the support of that training provider. The guided learning will vary, depending upon the apprenticeship, and may include: online learning; projects; and workplace learning.

Alongside their training, apprentices have the opportunity to achieve a qualification by completing different types of work, which will depend on the apprenticeship itself and the level of skill that it requires.

Apprenticeship standards or frameworks outline what an apprentice will be doing during the course, as well as the skills, knowledge and behaviours required of them by their job role. It is important that their job role gives them the right opportunities to meet the standard or framework.

Apprenticeships are for individuals aged 16 and above, who live in England and are not in full-time education. They can also be offered to new or existing members of staff.

Apprenticeship courses can last between one and four years depending on the level and complexity of the apprenticeship. The apprenticeship will always be of adequate length to ensure that workplace learning and job experience is sufficient, in order to prepare the apprentice for the role required of them.

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2. The Purpose of Mentoring

Mentoring is an important part of an apprenticeship because it can provide much needed additional support to an apprentice. For example, mentoring can help individuals to understand their role in the organisation; develop their career path; and provide a listening ear if they're facing any problems or challenges.

Mentoring helps people to learn and develop. It, therefore, has the potential to make a valuable contribution to apprentices in terms of their personal and professional development, as well as the overall development of the organisation.

Benefits for the apprentice can include:

- Increased confidence/self-esteem.
- Increased sense of value within the organisation.
- Additional help and support.
- A safe learning environment (where apprentices can be open about any vulnerabilities).
- Increased understanding of the organisation.
- Focus on specific skills through coaching from the mentor.
- Ideas about career opportunities.

However, the benefits of mentoring are not all one-sided. Mentors too can gain a sense of value within the organisation through the opportunity to train an apprentice. They can gain satisfaction from passing on their skills and wisdom to others; gain a greater understanding of the organisation and its issues and problems; as well as improve their own one-to-one communication skills, coaching skills and management skills.

3. Role of a Mentor

Mentoring is particularly important for apprentices as they are often young people who are entering the workplace for the first time. The mentor relationship provides additional support, guidance and pastoral care, which is outside the more formal line-management relationship.

Mentors can help a new apprentice orientate into the workplace; provide them with information, advice and guidance relating to the learning and training aspects of the apprenticeship; and work with the apprentice to ensure that problems are resolved quickly and do not threaten the completion of their apprenticeship course.

The mentor is not there to replace the apprentice's line manager but to be an additional source of support.

Mentors can...

1. Help the apprentice establish which solution(s) to their problems they should to take forward and help to determine next steps for development.
2. Help the apprentice explore current challenges & aspirations.
3. Talk through the apprentice's choices and options with them in order to address any challenges/aspirations/next steps.

4. Discuss what the possible outcomes of these options may be.
5. Repeat the process as required. Start again at point 1.

The role of the mentor can encompass any or all of the following, depending on the specific needs of the apprentice:

- Act as a sounding board.
- Listen and challenge.
- Question.
- Provide professional and personal support.
- Encourage independent thinking.
- Keep to professional boundaries and principles.
- Encourage the apprentice to come up with their own solutions to problems.
- Coach the apprentice to make the most of their talents.
- Build the apprentice's self-confidence.
- Act as a role model.
- Be someone to talk to outside the formal line-management structure.
- Offer insights into the culture and values of the organisation.
- Share their experience and expertise.
- Give feedback.
- Provide advice where possible.

4. Responsibilities of a Mentee

The apprentice also has an important role to play in the mentor relationship as the mentee.

Mentee responsibilities include:

- Being the driving force of the relationship by scheduling time to meet with their mentor and maintaining an up-to-date record of their development plan and progress.
- Working proactively with the mentor to assess their areas of strength, development areas, career goals and personal objectives / expectations of the mentoring relationship.
- Taking ownership for their own development and committing to the exchange of information (including their ideas, development themes, actions, feedback).
- Following through on actions discussed with the mentor (including gathering feedback and sharing personal learning).
- Respecting the mentor's experience, ideas, guidance and time.
- Demonstrating interest in building skills, setting goals and having a keen willingness to step out of their own comfort zone.
- Showing commitment to the process and being willing to learn from all formal development activities.

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5. Who Would Make a Good Mentor?

A mentor should be someone from outside the apprentice's reporting hierarchy at work. It is essential that issues between the mentor and mentee are confidential. A mentor should, ideally, be an experienced member of staff who has the following mentoring skills:

- Active listening.
- Questioning.
- Ability to build rapport.
- Ability to offer constructive feedback.
- Setting targets.
- Offering support and guidance.
- Signposting.
- Acting as a role model.

Listening Actively

Active listening is an important skill for both mentors and mentees. Mentors can demonstrate their active listening by:

- Showing an interest by providing encouraging responses, such as "hmmm..." and "yes...", or by paraphrasing certain comments in their questions to show that they understand what the mentee has said.
- Using non-verbal signs of understanding, such as nodding their heads, leaning forward, and smiling.
- Avoiding the interruption of others when they are speaking.
- Showing interest and remembering comments made in previous meetings.
- Summarizing key elements of conversations as the meeting draws to a close.

Mentors should concentrate on two important aspects when promoting active listening:

1. **Being focused:** Keeping the mentee focused on a specific discussion topic and keeping the conversation confined around one area. This can often be difficult when working with mentees because, in the early stages of mentoring, they tend to have many questions and move from one to the other without linking or having a structured approach.
2. **Using verbal prompts:** Using sounds or key words to encourage the mentee to talk more, clarify a point or extend an idea. For example:
 - The use of expressions like: "I see" and "Go on...".
 - Using sounds like "Uh- huh" and "Ye-e-s".
 - Repetition of key words within a discussion e.g. If the mentee says "I am really concerned ...", a mentor may respond by repeating the word "Concerned?" and, thus, prompt the mentee to expand further. This shows that the mentor is interested in what the mentee has to say and is concentrating on the dialogue. Likewise, this can work vice versa.

However, there are certain barriers to active listening which anyone involved in mentoring needs to be aware of. Awareness of these barriers will allow the mentor to encourage, support and show interest and respect to the mentee. Barriers to listening include:

- **Tuning in and out** - On average we think approximately four times faster than we speak, which can cause listeners to tune out and use this space to address their own thoughts or concerns rather than staying tuned in to the listener.
- **The 'glazed look'** - Sometimes, for whatever reason, an individual may concentrate on the speaker (mentee) rather than on what is being said, which causes a glazed look on the face of those listening - a look which we all often recognise.
- **Mentee-centred** - If the issues discussed are not wholly relevant, or of particular significance to the mentee, they may lose interest or focus when listening. All mentor-mentee discussions should be based around the development of the mentee in order to maintain the individual's focus and concentration.
- **Becoming heated** - Certain phrases, words and views may cause mentors to feel as though they should continually 'dive in' with their own opinions during mentoring sessions, but this can result in the mentee becoming irritated, upset or switching-off from the discussion. Though it is acceptable for mentors to give their own views, they should remember that professional discussions are mainly for the benefit of the mentee. It is the mentee's time to talk, while the mentor's primary role is that of the facilitator and listener.
- **Giving space** - During discussions, the mentee may become silent or leave pauses in their speech, which will vary in length. Mentors should not rush in to try and fill these gaps in conversation, as we all have differing periods of reflection and thinking time. It is important to allow the mentee time to internalise their thoughts and decide what they want to say next, without too much prompting from the mentor.

Here are some things that will help the other person to know that you are listening properly:

- Make appropriate eye contact.
- Nod your head.
- Make encouraging noises. E.g. "mm".
- Help by making responses. E.g. "OK", "I see".
- Smile.
- Ask relevant questions.
- Check your understanding.
- Curb your interruptions.
- Avoid assumptions.
- Show a genuine interest.
- Put yourself in their shoes.
- Keep an open mind.
- Be patient.

People tend to listen at different levels. For example:

- The first level of listening is where we plainly ignore another person i.e. we are not listening at all.
- The next level is superficial listening, in which we may be displaying some of the attributes of active listening but, in actual fact, not a lot of listening is going on. If questioned, we probably would not be able to repeat back what we had just heard.

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- The next level is listening for content. At this level, we are actively taking on the facts that are being shared and could recall them if required.
- The last level is listening for meaning. At this level, we are gathering data about people's emotions, beliefs and values. For example, if an individual is asked how long they have worked in their current job role, and they respond by saying "Too long!", this gives us an insight into how that person feels about their job, as well as the fact that they have worked in that role for some time.

Listening effectively is one of the biggest compliments that you can give to a person. Think about a time when you have felt really listened to or not listened to at all. How did that make you feel? To be a great communicator, you first have to learn to listen.

6. The First Meeting

As well as agreeing the practical arrangements and identifying the objectives for the mentoring relationship, first meetings should typically allow the mentor and apprentice to get to know each other and attach a face to a name. So that the first meeting of the mentoring relationship is as productive as possible, it is useful for the mentor to be prepared.

Here are some questions that mentors may ask themselves in preparation for the first meeting:

- What are the most important lessons I have learned from my career experiences?
- How can I utilize this learning in my contribution to the mentoring relationship?
- What kinds of mentoring (or equivalent) experiences have been most helpful to me and why?
- What can I offer to the person I am mentoring?
- What are my major strengths, skills, knowledge and abilities?
- How much time, effort and enthusiasm can I realistically devote to working with my mentee?
- What do I think my mentee should contribute to the mentor-mentee relationship?

Getting To Know Each Other - There are many topics of conversation that can lead to a comfortable environment. Here are some key questions that a mentor may wish to consider when opening the conversation during the first meeting:

- What do you think your key strengths and skills are?
- What skills, knowledge and experience do you feel you would like/need to develop, and how do you see the mentoring relationship helping you to do that?
- What do you think might most hinder your success?
- What knowledge, skills and abilities do you feel that I possess that would most benefit you?
- What do you want/need from me?
- What information can you give me in regards to how I can best help you, or better understand, what you need?
- What do you think we need to do to make this mentorship work?
- What is the best way to give you feedback?

7. Models to Facilitate and Structure Mentoring Meetings

The following methods can help provide a 'journey map' when facilitating a structured mentoring session.

G.R.O.W. Coaching Model

Using a coaching approach can help the mentee to formulate their goals and objectives. One proven approach is the GROW model. GROW is an acronym standing for: **G**oal, **C**urrent **R**eality, **O**ptions (or Obstacles), **W**ill (or Way Forward).

The model is a simple yet powerful framework for structuring a mentoring or coaching session.

A good way of thinking about the GROW Model is to think about how you (as a mentor) would plan a journey. First, you decide where you are going (the goal), and establish where you currently are (your current reality). You then explore various routes (the options) to your destination. In the final step (establishing the will), you ensure that you're committed to making the journey, and are prepared for the obstacles that you could meet along the way.

The model is designed to help the mentee think things through for themselves and drive towards improved performance

Goal: What is the objective or desired outcome? It must be specific and measurable, think SMART. Ask the mentee, "How will you know when you have achieved that goal?"

Reality: What is the current situation? What is stopping the goal from being reached? Check any assumptions with the mentee, e.g. "Why do you think that might happen?"

Options: What choices do they have? What different journeys can they choose from in order to reach their goal? This is also known as 'obstacle exploration.' Mentors should avoid making suggestions on the mentee's behalf.

Way Forward: What will they do next? This is also known as 'Will' or 'Wrap-Up'. Help the mentee gain commitment to an action and a follow-up that is required

For more information on using the GROW model view: <https://bit.ly/1QthXxR>

The Five Cs Model of Mentoring

This model is particularly helpful during a session where the mentor may need to help the mentee consider alternative ways of dealing with a challenging situation, or when tackling a situation which offers a number of various options and the mentor wants to help the mentee explore these options.

The model has a number of different stages that may be followed sequentially. Nevertheless, it is likely that the mentor will repeat these stages a number of times, or jump between these stages of the model, during a mentoring discussion. It is the role of the mentor to underpin the discussion with an appropriate degree of structure when using the Five Cs Model.

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Questions are answered at each stage of the process and each one, in turn, helps to move the mentee forward in resolving a particular issue or challenge.

Challenges	What are the challenges facing the mentee?
Choices	What possible options are available to overcome these challenges?
Consequences	The consequences of taking each of the choices identified are discussed by both parties.
Creative Solutions	This is an opportunity for the mentor to share their wisdom and experience and offer the mentee some further solutions.
Conclusions	The mentee decides what they will do next and makes a commitment to this action.

8. The Mentoring Contract

A mentoring contract is a simple, yet critical, means of stating the purpose and boundaries of a mentoring partnership. As part of a mentor's initial discussion regarding how they are going to work together with a mentee, they should both agree upon: the duration and frequency of meetings; any ground rules; their roles and responsibilities; mutual expectations; review points; the duration of the mentoring relationship itself and the importance of confidentiality. We would recommend that the mentee takes primary responsibility for documenting the output of this discussion, using the **Norton Webb Mentoring Agreement Form** as a template; however, it is important for the mentor to be aware of the key areas that are identified, in order to ensure that all areas are considered, discussed and agreed during the first few meetings.

9. Ending a Mentoring Agreement

If the agreed time period for the relationship has come to an end, or the mentor/mentee think that the time has come for the mentorship to end, the mentor/mentee should be informed. If unsure whether the mentorship should continue, the mentor and mentee should discuss the question. It is important to discuss from the beginning how both parties will inevitably end the relationship. There can be a variety of reasons for ending the mentoring relationship:

- The relationship has fulfilled its purpose. Most mentoring relationships are established in order to help the mentee achieve a particular goal. Once this goal has been achieved, another more appropriate mentor may then be assigned in order to help the mentee set a new goal and progress further.
- The mentor and mentee may not work well together e.g. due to a personality clash.

- There has been a change in priorities or commitments on either the part of the mentor or mentee.

To avoid awkwardness at the end of the agreement, mentors and mentees should discuss at the beginning of the mentor scheme how they will end the relationship, e.g. how they will let one another know that they think it is time to end the mentoring relationship. At the end of the mentoring partnership, both parties should look back over the time of the mentoring programme and discuss what went well and what they might do differently in the future. Both mentor and mentee should comment constructively on each other's handling of their role during their time being a mentor / mentee.

10. Addressing Difficulties

Although a lot of consideration will have been given to identifying a suitable match, if either the mentor or mentee feels that the relationship is not going to be as beneficial as either party would wish, please take the following steps:

1. Discuss it with the apprentice

Mentors should talk to the apprentice and discuss why they feel that the relationship may not be working. In some circumstances, simply discussing these concerns can easily resolve the situation. Mentors should also discuss and agree a way in which they can work better with the apprentice going forward.

2. Discuss it with the line manager

Mentors should talk to the apprentice's line manager about any concerns they are having and agree on a plan for moving the relationship forward.

3. Contact the training provider

If the mentor's concerns are still not resolved, they should agree with their apprentice that they will contact a representative from the training provider who may be able to offer additional support and advice.

11. Support for Mentors

Internal sources of support could include: a supervisor, manager, fellow colleagues, people from another department, other trainees, or new recruits.

Internal support may be required for matters relating to the workplace, such as:

- The need for additional supervision in the workplace.
- Concerns about working practices.
- Working hours.
- Resources needed.

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External sources of support for the mentor could include:

- Training for the mentor at a local college or training organisation.
- ACAS or other professional bodies.

The type of situations that might need to be referred to alternative sources of support could include, but are not exclusive to, the following:

- A mentor might feel that they do not have sufficient knowledge of the mentoring process and would like support in their mentoring methods, in order to effectively mentor their mentee. This could be referred to a local college or training organisation.
- A mentor might feel out of their comfort zone if a mentee asks for advice about their employment rights or responsibilities. Therefore, might want to refer to ACAS for additional guidance or support for that mentee.

12. Storing Information

Mentoring documentation should be securely maintained in a locked filing cabinet. All due regard should be made to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018) which states that any confidential information relating to the mentee must stay confidential and should only be kept for the length of time required to support that mentee.

Questioning Techniques

Closed Questions

Closed questions invite a short-focused answer as they can often be (but are not always) 'right' or 'wrong'. Closed questions are usually easy to answer as the choice of answer is limited. They can be effectively used early on in conversations, in order to encourage participation, and can be very useful during fact-finding scenarios such as research.

Closed questions can simply require a 'Yes' or 'No' answer, for example:

- "Do you smoke?"
- "Did you feed the cat?"
- "Would you like a cup of tea?"

Closed questions can also require that a choice is made from a list of possible options, for example:

- "Would you like beef, chicken or the vegetarian option?"
- "Did you travel by train or car today?"

Closed questions can be asked to identify a certain piece of information, again with a limited set of answers, for example:

- "What is your name?"
- "What time does the supermarket open?"
- "Where did you go to university?"

Open Questions

By contrast, to closed questions, open questions allow for much longer responses and, therefore, potentially more creativity and information.

They usually begin with the following words:

- How
- Who
- When
- Where
- What
- Why

However, be careful when using the term 'why' as this can be perceived as quite challenging. For example, if you ask someone 'Why did you go there on holiday?', they may feel that they have to justify their choice. If you ask, 'How come you chose to go there?', you are more likely to get an insight into that person's likes and dislikes.

There are some other tools that you can use to get people to speak freely. Try using **TED** and **PIE**.

T	- tell me		P	- precisely
E	- explain	and	I	- in detail
D	- describe		E	- exactly

Silence is also very powerful at encouraging others to speak. It is particularly useful with people who are slower thinkers. However, keep an eye on any non-verbal communication signals, as they will show when people are starting to get uncomfortable and whether it is time for you to speak again.

There are lots of different types of open questions; including:

Leading Questions

A leading question, usually subtly, points the respondent's answer in a certain direction.

For example: by asking an employee, "How are you getting on with the new finance system?", this question prompts the person to question how they are managing with a new system at work. In a very subtle way, it raises the prospect that maybe they are not getting on well very with the new system at the moment.

"Tell me how you're getting on with the new finance system" is a less leading question as the question does not require any judgement to be made and, therefore, does not imply that there may be something wrong with the new system being deployed.

Recall and Process Questions

Questions can also be categorised by whether they are 'recall' (requiring something to be remembered or recalled), or 'process' (requiring some deeper thought and/or analysis).

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A simple recall question could be, 'What is your mother's maiden name?'. This requires the respondent to recall some information from memory - a fact. A school teacher may ask recall questions of their pupils, such as 'What is the highest mountain in England?'

Process questions require more thought and analysis and/or a sharing of opinion. Examples include, 'What skills can you bring to this organisation that the other applicants cannot?' or 'What are the advantages and disadvantages of asking leading questions to children?'

Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are often humorous and do not require an answer. For example: "If you set out to fail but then succeed, have you failed or succeeded?"

Funnelling

Clever questioning can be used to funnel the respondent's answers by asking a series of questions that become more (or less) restrictive at each step, starting with open questions and ending with closed questions (or vice-versa).

For example:

- "Tell me about your most recent holiday."
- "What did you see while you were there?"
- "Were there any good restaurants?"
- "Did you try some local delicacies?"

Feedback Techniques

If we are to make changes in what we do, we need to know how well we are doing. Feedback is essential to the mentoring relationship, and performs a valuable role in:

- Improving self-awareness.
- Enhancing self-esteem.
- Raising morale.
- Encouraging people to want to learn.
- Offering reassurance.
- Motivation.
- Improving individual performance.

What is effective feedback?

- Focused on behaviour, not on perceived attitudes.
- Focused on behaviour which can be changed.
- Based on observation.

- Objective.
- Given in good time.
- About what the individual did well and what they could do better.
- Delivered in private.

Techniques for giving feedback

There are different techniques for giving feedback.

One technique is the 'Feedback Sandwich', where you start by making positive statements about someone's performance; then discuss any areas for improvement; before ending the discussion with further positive statements about that individual.

Another technique is 'Stop, Start, Continue'. This is where the mentor discusses with their mentee:

- What they feel they should stop doing.
- What they feel they should start doing.
- What they wish to continue doing.

A mentee may well wish to give their mentor some feedback too. Mentors should remember that, when receiving feedback, it will help if they:

- Are open to suggestions.
- Listen carefully.
- Ask questions about any comments made.
- Are prepared to contribute to the discussion.

Reflective Practice

Johns (2000) argues that reflection is more effective when learners work with an assigned mentor. Johns considered that, through sharing reflections on learning experiences, greater understanding of those experiences can be achieved than by reflection as a lone exercise. The support of a 'critical friend' (a colleague who is trustworthy, knowledgeable and skilled), is much needed. It is worthwhile for the mentee to reflect on their practices with their mentor, and for the mentor to reflect on their mentoring skills with another person.

Reflective practice is designed to help you improve what you do and to respond positively to change. Reflective practitioners regularly question both what they do and why, with the aim to learn from their experience. They evaluate their practice, draw out strengths and consider areas for development. Mentors may consider the following points:

1. **Description** - What happened?
2. **Feelings**- What did you feel and how did you react?
3. **Evaluation**- What worked/didn't work?
4. **Analysis**- What sense can you make of the situation?
5. **Conclusion**- What have you learned?
6. **Action plan**- What would you do differently next time?

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Developmental mentoring

Developmental mentoring is where the mentor helps the mentee to develop new skills and abilities, including skills in problem solving. The mentor is a guide and a resource for the mentee's growth, and will assist the mentee to resolve any problems they have.

The mentor will act as a sounding board and ask the mentee questions to cause further exploration of ideas, in order to challenge their thinking. They will provide guidance, not directions, and will not solve the mentee's problems but act as a collaborator in the problem solving process.

True role models are those who possess the qualities that we would like to have ourselves, and are those who have affected us in a way that makes us want to become better people. Role models should be an advocate for ourselves and our goals, and they should take leadership on issues that we believe in.

Action Plans and Feedback Forms

Having an action plan helps to translate goals into easily executable and attainable steps. The mentoring action plan will help mentors maximise their success during the mentoring process.

A goal is defined as an event, circumstance, or condition which a person strives to attain. Goal setting often increases an individual's chances for success because the goals will serve as self-motivators that help to focus people's efforts in a consistent direction. Remember, all action plans should include **SMART** targets:

Specific	Significant, stretching
Measurable	Meaningful, motivational
Agreed upon	Attainable, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented
Realistic	Relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented
Time-based	Timely, tangible, trackable

Feedback forms help both parties to keep a record of what has been discussed and any agreed actions. They help to formalise the process and ensure that both parties are clear about what has been discussed and agreed.