

NSW Government Graduate Program

# Mentoring Guide

Get started



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# NSW Government Graduate Program - Mentoring Guide



## Welcome Graduate and Mentors!

Congratulations on embarking on this exciting journey together as part of NSW Government Graduate Mentoring program! We are thrilled to see you take this significant step towards personal and professional growth.

Mentoring is a special relationship that holds immense value for both the mentor and the mentee. It is a dynamic partnership built on trust, respect, and mutual learning. For graduates, mentors serve as guides, offering invaluable insights, wisdom, and support derived from their own experiences. Mentors, on the other hand, have the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise, while also gaining fresh perspectives and new ideas from the mentees.

What makes mentoring relationships truly special is the unique bond that forms between mentors and mentees. It's not just about exchanging knowledge and skills; it's about fostering meaningful connections, understanding each other's strengths and opportunities for growth, and celebrating successes together.

As you embark on this 18-month journey, remember that it's not just about reaching the destination but also about embracing the journey itself. There will be challenges along the way, but with dedication, open communication, and a willingness to learn, you'll emerge stronger and more empowered than ever before.

This guidebook has been tailored to support both graduates and mentors in their journey through the mentoring program. It includes practical advice, insightful strategies and valuable tools to navigate the complexities of mentorship with confidence and clarity. From setting meaningful goals to fostering effective communication, from problem solving to celebrating success, this guidebook serves as a roadmap for building strong, mutually beneficial relationships.

To all our mentor-mentee pairs, we wish you the best of luck on this adventure. May your partnership be filled with inspiration, growth, and countless moments of shared success. Together, you have the power to achieve remarkable things.

Here's to an enriching and fulfilling mentoring experience ahead!



# Welcome to the 2024 Graduate Mentoring Program










## How to use this toolkit

Follow the prompts to navigate to the conversation pathway you require. Then review the information and complete the reflection questions provided to prepare for the conversation.

### Navigation tips:

You will be provided with links to relevant information along the way.

-  Navigate back
-  Navigate forward
-  Takes you to the homepage where you can choose your path
-  Indicates a clickable button that will take you to relevant information
-  Instruction
-  Thinking point
-  Tips



**NSW Government Graduate Program**

# Mentor Program

Explore

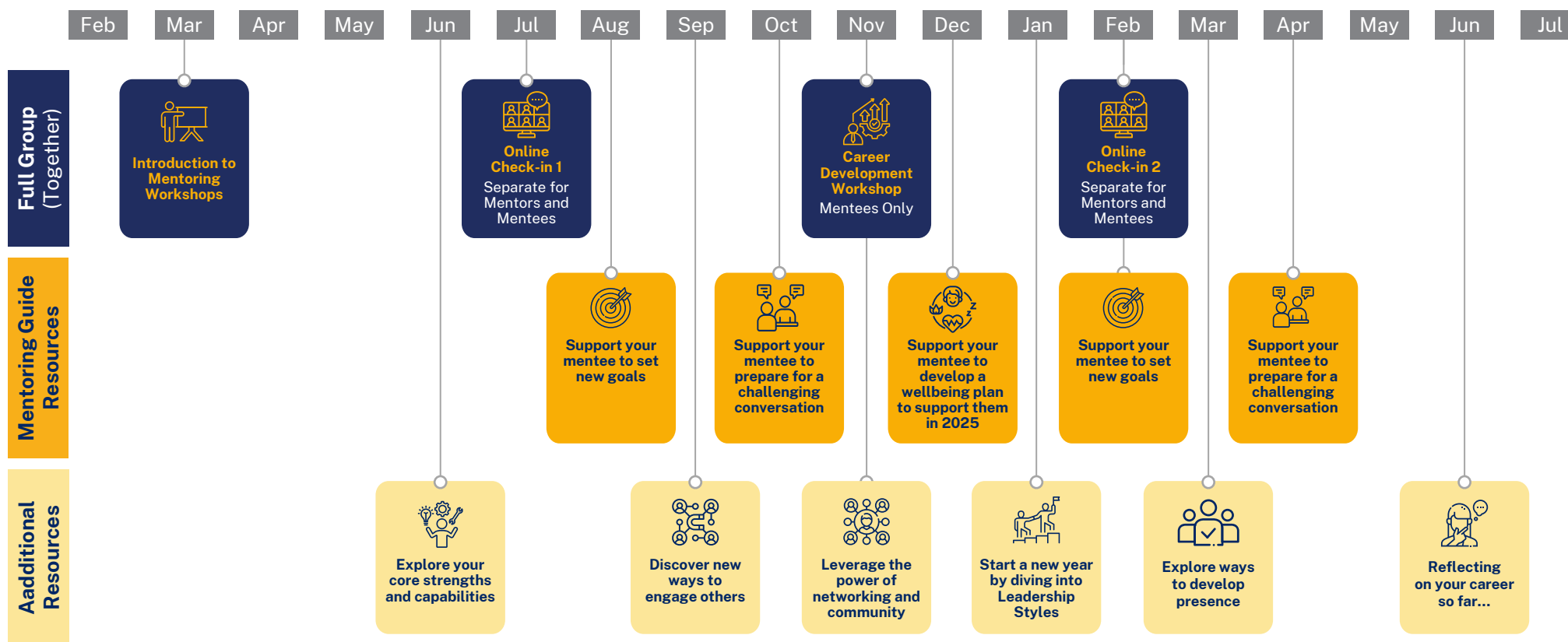


# Mentoring Program Overview



Below is an overview of your journey through our 18-month Graduate Mentoring Program. You'll find a detailed timeline highlighting the mentee group sessions and various milestones throughout the program. This will help you keep track of key dates and events where you'll join forces with other mentors and see what mentees have on the horizon.

To enhance your experience and success, we've also curated a selection of valuable resources. You can easily access the mentoring guide resources by clicking on the corresponding icons provided. Additionally, we will send all other essential resources directly to your email to ensure you have everything you need at your fingertips.



## Successful Mentoring Relationships

### Mentoring Meetings

- 1 First Meeting
- 2 Ongoing Meetings
- 3 Final Meeting

## Challenges in the Mentoring Relationship

### Tools

- 1 Setting Clear Goals
- 2 Engaging in Challenging Conversations
- 3 Powerful and Curious Questions
- 4 Supporting Your Wellbeing



Click on the buttons above to go to the relevant sections

# Successful Mentoring Relationships

## Successful Tips for Mentoring



- 1 Establish a genuine connection
- 2 Be open and honest
- 3 Set realistic expectations
- 4 Show appreciation and acknowledgement
- 5 Give constructive feedback
- 6 Take responsibility of your growth journey
- 7 Share your networks
- 8 Be proactive and follow through on commitments

# Mentoring Meetings

## First Meeting Checklist

### The first mentoring meeting serves as a pivotal moment:

- **Kick-off is key:**  
The first meeting sets the stage for a strong mentorship journey.
- **Trust and teamwork:**  
This is where trust, understanding, and teamwork begin, guiding all future interactions.
- **Expectations and respect:**  
It's the time to set clear expectations, open up the dialogue, and build mutual respect.
- **Foundation for success:**  
Invest in this initial meeting to foster a productive partnership and drive growth.

### An agenda – Your initial meeting

1

#### Engage in mutual discovery

Get to know each other as you embark on a journey of mutual discovery, sharing insights into individual strengths and areas for growth, laying the foundation for collaborative goal-setting.



2

#### Establish clear expectations

Navigate the landscape of expectations, delineating roles and responsibilities to ensure alignment and accountability within the mentoring relationship.



3

#### Tackle logistics

Address logistical considerations, such as meeting frequency, preferred communication channels, and any logistical details crucial for seamless collaboration.



4

#### Foster feedback and reflection

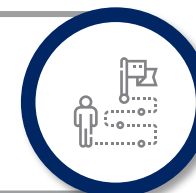
Create a space for open dialogue, where feedback is exchanged, and reflections on past experiences inform future interactions and growth.



5

#### Chart the path forward

Chart a course for the future, outlining actionable next steps and commitments, solidifying intentions, and reinforcing the shared commitment to the mentoring journey.





# Mentoring Meetings



## Ongoing Meetings

An ongoing meeting agenda for graduates and mentors should aim to provide structure, focus, and opportunities for meaningful interaction.

Below is a suggested agenda you might like to try.

1

### Check in

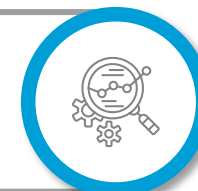
Check in with each other to gauge how you are both feeling coming into the meeting and address any immediate concerns or updates.



2

### Review goals and progress

Reflect on your current goals and discuss the progress made towards achieving them. Identify any successes, challenges, or barriers encountered since the last meeting.



3

### Focused discussion topic and action planning

Spend time focused on a specific topic or area of interest relevant to your personal and professional development. You might like to leverage monthly resources or tools within this guidebook. Work together to identify actionable steps to address and challenges, capitalise on opportunities, or achieve discussed goals.



4

### Feedback and reflection

Provide feedback to each other on the mentoring process. What is working well and what could be improved in your relationship. Reflect together on key learnings and insights gained.



5

### Next steps and close

Summarise key action items from the meeting and responsibilities moving forward. Set a date for the next meeting. Express appreciation for the dedication and progress made during the session.



# Final Mentoring Meetings



## Ending a formal mentoring partnership

**Congratulations! Ending a mentoring relationship is a key milestone. Take time to reflect, respect the shared journey, and express gratitude for the invaluable support and guidance exchanged.**

Mentors, you might like to consider these and share with your mentee



- The biggest insight/lesson I have taken from my graduate is...
- The biggest growth I have seen my graduate make is...
- My graduate has helped me to grow by...

Consider these points in your final 'formal' meeting:

1

Review and celebrate achievements



2

Provide each other with feedback on the mentoring experience



3

Discuss future goals and aspirations



4

Share gratitude – for the time, efforts and insights you have both shared



5

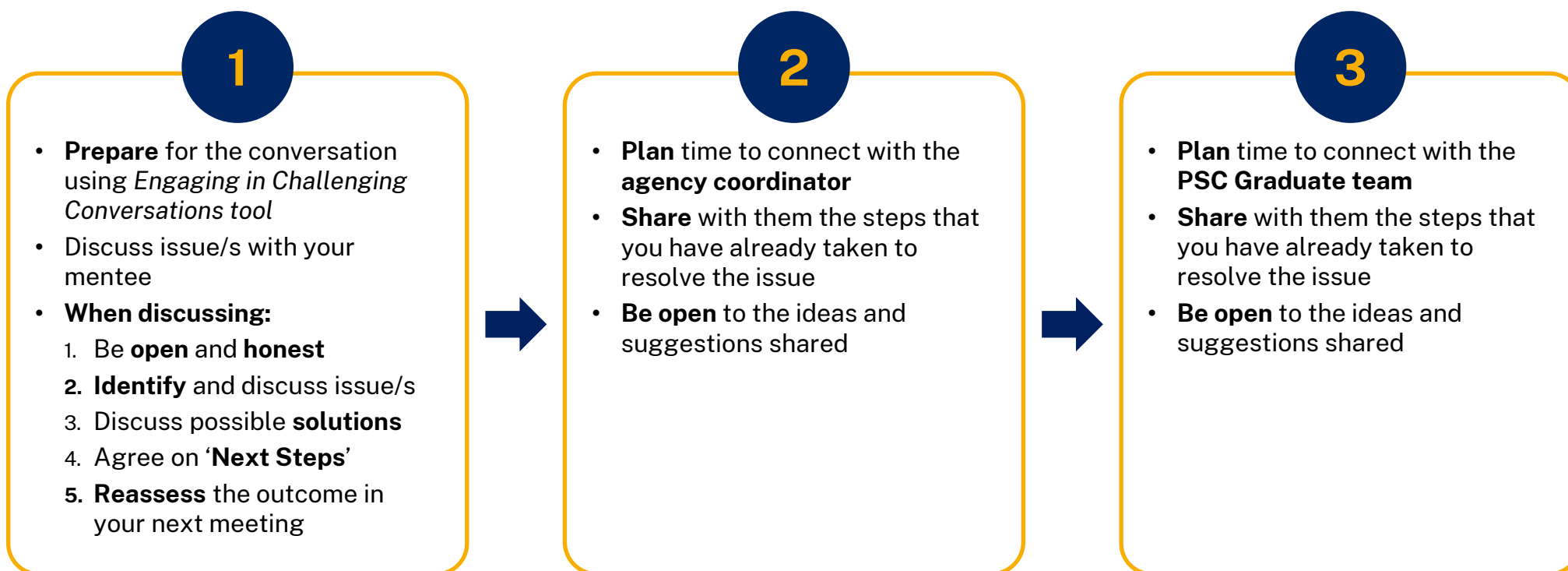
Consider how you might continue to communicate, leaving the door open for future interactions or collaborations



# Challenges in the Mentoring Relationship

**In any mentoring journey, challenges in compatibility and goals are common and part of the journey. Tackling these together, with open minds and patience, is key!**

If you find that your mentoring relationship is experiencing difficulties, there are constructive steps you can take to address the situation and foster a more positive and productive dynamic. The following three steps are designed to provide a clear and actionable process to help guide you back on track.



For tips on preparing for the conversation go to [Engaging in Challenging Conversations tool](#).

# Tools



This section links to a range of core tools that can be used to support your mentoring relationship journey. You will also be provided with additional resources and nudges via email to help prepare for your mentoring sessions. The tools included below can assist you in making the most of your mentoring relationship and graduate experience.

Each tool sits across two pages; the first provides an overview and the second page provides the opportunity for practical application.

 Click on the buttons below to go to the relevant sections

## 1 Setting Clear Goals

Goal setting provides clarity, direction, and guidance towards meaningful achievements.

## 3 Powerful and Curious Questions

Asking powerful and curious questions can enhance your mentoring experience.

## 2 Engaging in Challenging Conversations

Challenging conversations are difficult but necessary. They foster growth and understanding, and aid resolution.

## 4 Supporting Your Wellbeing

Focus on wellbeing is essential to ensure sustained success and performance.

# Setting Clear Goals

## Setting clear goals is crucial

Setting clear goals is crucial in any endeavor as it provides direction, motivation, and a sense of purpose. In the context of a mentoring relationship, clear goals serve as guiding beacons, helping both mentors and mentees navigate their journey effectively.

By defining specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals, mentors and mentees can establish a roadmap for success and track progress along the way. Clear goals also facilitate alignment of expectations, enhance communication, and foster accountability within the mentoring relationship

### Tips



- Ask your mentee questions about their goals to help them to clarify their goals and objectives.
- Support them to break down larger goals into smaller actionable steps.
- Regularly review your mentees goals during your meetings. Remind them that goals aren't just set and forget.

Ultimately, setting clear goals empowers mentors and mentees to work collaboratively towards shared objectives, driving growth, development, and success in the mentoring journey.

**S**

### Specific

What is it that you actually want to achieve? Are there any milestones along the way to achieving this?

**M**

### Measurable

What will success look/feel like?  
How will you know when you have reached the goal?

**A**

### Achievable

Be realistic. What can be accomplished by you, within the given timeframe?

**R**

### Relevant

How is your goal relevant to your development, context and role?

**T**

### Time bound

How long are you going to give yourself for this goal?

**i**

The next page provides an overview of the mentee activity and tips for you to support mentees to setting their own goals.

# Supporting your Mentee to Set Clear Goals

The mentee section of this guide encourages mentees to prepare for a meeting with you by completing a goal setting activity.

Mentees are encouraged to think about a current aspiration, what are they hoping to achieve and why is it important for them right now.

The template they are provided helps them to get clear about what it is they want to achieve, why it is important and what is the SMART goal that can support them.

1

New rotations are a great time to consider setting new goals.

2

Dedicate time during each of your mentoring sessions to review goals.

3

Remember that growth and comfort do not coexist. Keep stretching your mentee.

## Goal setting questions you might like to ask



- What are your long-term aspirations or vision for your career?
- Can you describe a specific area or skill you'd like to develop further?
- What specific outcomes would you like to achieve during your current rotation?
- How do you define success for yourself in your professional endeavors?
- What are the key challenges or obstacles you anticipate in reaching your goals?
- How might you break down your overarching goals into smaller, more manageable steps?
- How will you measure progress towards your goals? What indicators will you use to track your success?
- Who are the key stakeholders or collaborators you could engage with to achieve your goals?
- How will you manage setbacks?
- How can I support you in setting and achieving your SMART goals?



Setting goals can be just as helpful for Mentors. If you would like to leverage the goal setting template activity for yourself, [click here](#).

# Engaging in Challenging Conversations

## Setting clear goals is crucial

In both personal and professional spheres, the necessity of engaging in challenging conversations cannot be overstated. These are the conversations that demand courage, vulnerability, and a willingness to confront discomfort head-on.

While they may be difficult, it is through these courageous conversations that true growth, understanding, and progress are achieved. By leaning into these conversations, we create opportunities for profound connection, clarity, and resolution.

Embracing the discomfort in these conversations is not only a testament to our bravery but also a pathway to profound personal and professional development.

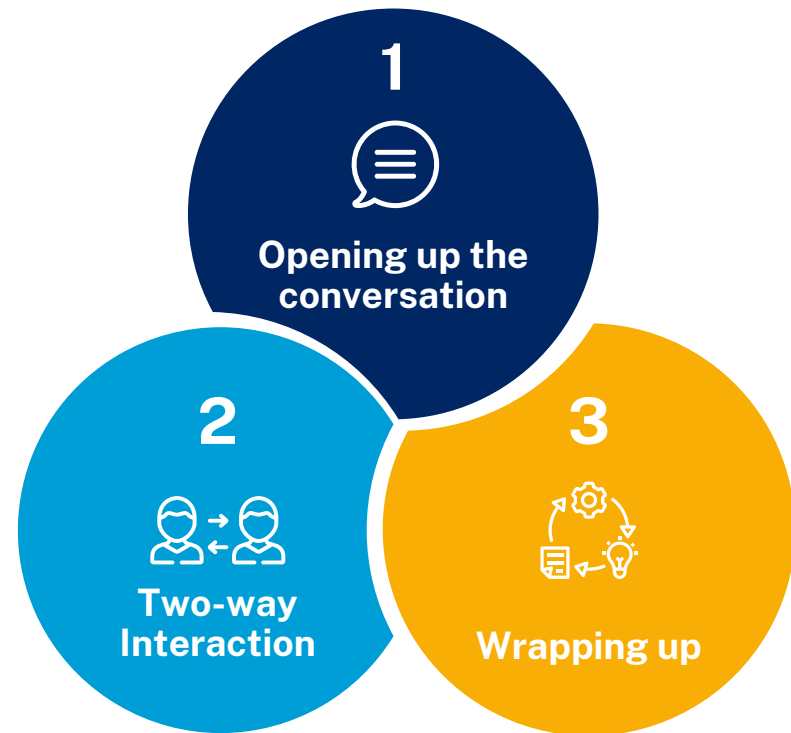
### Tips



- **Be courageous:** feel comfortable engaging and leaning into challenging conversations
- **Be authentic:** bring your full self and make the conversation real
- **Be present:** fully engage and be present in the conversation

## Planning for challenging conversations

Planning for three stages of the challenging conversation can support you to deliver with courage, compassion and skill.



The next page provides a template to help mentees **navigate challenging conversations**.

# Supporting your Mentee to Engage in Challenging Conversations

The mentee section of this guide encourages mentees to prepare for a challenging or courageous conversations they need to have:

Mentees are encouraged to think about a challenging or courageous conversation they need to have, and plan for it using the template provided

The template helps them prepare for this type of conversation by considering three parts of the conversation; the opening, the two-way conversation and the wrap up.

## Remember...



Courage over comfort



Candour: direct is faster



Clarity is kindness

## Questions you might like to ask your mentee



- **Understanding the Context:** What is the main issue that needs to be addressed in this conversation?
- **Clarifying Objectives:** What are your specific goals for the conversation? What would a successful outcome look like for you?
- **Anticipating Reactions:** How do you think the other person will react to what you have to say?
- **Strategising Responses:** How can you address these concerns or objections calmly and effectively?
- **Emotional Preparation:** What emotions do you feel going into this conversation? How can you manage them effectively during the discussion?
- **Communication Techniques:** What key points do you need to communicate clearly?
- **Role Play:** Would you like to role play the conversation to practice your approach?
- **Plan B:** If the conversations starts to go off track, what strategies can you use to get it back on track?
- **Support System:** Who else can support you before and after this conversation? How can they help?



Preparing for these types of conversations can be just as helpful for Mentors. If you would like to leverage the preparation template for yourself, [click here](#).



# Asking Powerful and Curious Questions

## What makes a good question?

Asking questions is an important part of communication – it’s how we sense-make, gather information, and show care or interest in others. However, sometimes asking questions can be difficult. Powerful, curious questions are those that come from a place of seeking to learn and understand.

### Characteristic of powerful questions



- **Open (can't be answered with a yes/no):** Powerful questions should be open ended, so they encourage thought and require more than a one-word response.
- **Clear and Simple:** Powerful questions are clear and to-the-point. They do not need to be complex or long to be powerful.
- **Purposeful:** Powerful questions include a key purpose. For example, are you trying to further unpack the other person’s viewpoint? Are you encouraging a new perspective?
- **Thought-provoking:** Powerful questions should seek to trigger new, creative or deep thinking.

The GROW model is a simple but powerful framework that can be leveraged to guide effective conversations with your mentee. This framework can be used to guide how you ask question.

**G**

### Goal

What does a good ‘G’ question look like? What are the types of questions that help identify the goals?

**R**

### Reality

What will success look/feel like?  
How will you know when you have reached the goal?

**O**

### Options

Be realistic. What can be accomplished by you, within the given timeframe?

**W**

### Way Forward

How is your goal relevant to your development, context and role?

**i**

See the next page for a template to help you prepare for your next mentoring session.

# Asking Powerful and Curious Questions



## Planning your questions

Using the template below, brainstorm 3-5 questions for each section that could be asked in your next mentoring session. Consider the following points:

- Are the questions open-ended to encourage meaningful discussion?
- Are they clear and easy to understand?
- What is the intended purpose of each question?
- Do the questions provoke thought and promote insights?

### Example questions:

<p><b>G</b></p> <p><b>Goal</b> What does a good 'G' question look like? What are the types of questions that help identify the goals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What challenge/issue do you want to discuss/focus on today?</li><li>• Why is this one most important to you and on your mind at the moment?</li><li>• On a scale of 1-10, how important is this issue to you?</li></ul>	
<p><b>R</b></p> <p><b>Reality</b> What will success look/feel like? How will you know when you have reached the goal?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where are things at right now?</li><li>• How are you feeling?</li><li>• What are you telling yourself?</li><li>• What are others saying?</li><li>• What are your strengths?</li></ul>	
<p><b>O</b></p> <p><b>Options</b> Be realistic. What can be accomplished by you, within the given timeframe?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are your options?</li><li>• What action could you take?</li><li>• What else?</li><li>• What have you seen others do when they've been in a similar situation?</li></ul>	
<p><b>W</b></p> <p><b>Way Forward</b> How is your goal relevant to your development, context and role?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the first step you'll take after this conversation?</li><li>• What might help you to do this?</li><li>• What might get in your way, and how might you overcome this?</li></ul>	



# Supporting your Mentees Wellbeing

## Thriving throughout the graduate program

Wellbeing is the cornerstone of success, encompassing mental, physical, emotional, and economic health. Prioritising your wellbeing isn't just about feeling good; it's about ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience.

As you continue to support your mentee on their journey, navigating challenges and pushing boundaries, remember that their wellbeing is non-negotiable. It equips them with the tools to tackle setbacks, overcome obstacles, and perform at their peak.

The NSW Government graduate program is designed to stretch graduates, but amidst the hustle, they must not forget to prioritise self-care. It's not a luxury; it's a necessity for unleashing their the potential and thriving in every aspect of their journey.

## Benefits of prioritising wellbeing

- **Ensuring long-term success and sustainability:** Prioritising their wellbeing throughout the graduate program and beyond is key to achieving sustained success. A focus on wellbeing helps mentees to maintain a healthy balance between their responsibilities, leading to greater resilience and adaptability.
- **Navigating job-related challenges:** A focus on wellbeing allows mentees to develop the resilience and emotional intelligence necessary to navigate challenges effectively. This will help them to manage stress, overcome setbacks, navigate complex problems and enhance their overall performance and growth.
- **Optimal performance:** Wellbeing is closely linked to performance and positive work-related outcomes. By taking care of their wellbeing, they allow themselves to consistently perform at their best.

## A note for Mentors



It's important to acknowledge that graduates can often struggle to manage their own wellbeing during the initial years of their transition into new work environments.

The shift from academia to professional life can bring about a myriad of challenges, from navigating new responsibilities and expectations to adjusting to workplace demands.

With so much to learn and adapt to, it's not uncommon for graduates to feel overwhelmed and find it difficult to prioritise their own wellbeing amidst the hustle and bustle of their new roles.

Recognising these challenges is the first step in addressing them, and providing support and resources to help graduates navigate this transition can make a significant difference in their overall wellbeing and success.



The next page provides an overview of the mentee activity and tips for you to support mentees in setting their wellbeing plan.

# Support your Mentees Wellbeing



## Wellbeing Development

In the mentee section of this guide, mentees are guided through an activity to support them to develop a wellbeing plan.

They are asked to assess their current state of workplace wellbeing and are invited to reflect on how they are doing – are things going smoothly, or are there challenges they're facing?

Understanding their current situation is crucial for developing a clear strategy to enhance their wellbeing. The template provided to them can be used as a guide, taking them through five elements that have been shown to improve wellbeing in the workplace.

The questions they are guided through are included below:

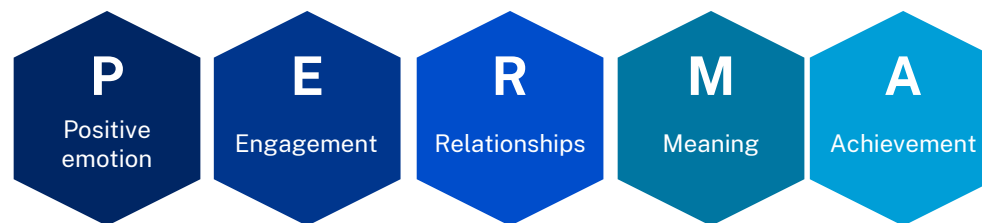
1. **Positive emotions.** To what degree are you able to access positive emotions as you undertake your work? How could you increase this?

2. **Engagement.** To what degree are you feeling engaged in your work? Anything impacting on this?

3. **Relationships.** To what degree are you experiencing positive relationships at work? How could you nurture this?

4. **Meaning.** To what degree do you have a sense of meaning through your work? What would increase meaning?

5. **Achievement.** How are your work demands impacting on your wellbeing? How can you increase a sense of achievement and balance your wellbeing?



## Next time you meet, you might like to ask...



- How are you feeling about your workload and the demands of your role?
- How do you feel about your current level of social connectedness and support network?
- Are there any specific areas where you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed?
- What strategies are you using to take care of your physical health?
- What resources or support systems might you seek out to better manage your wellbeing?
- How can I best support you in prioritising your wellbeing during this time in your graduate program?



Your own wellbeing as a mentor is just as critical. If you would like to develop your own wellbeing plan, please [click here](#) to complete the activity for yourself.

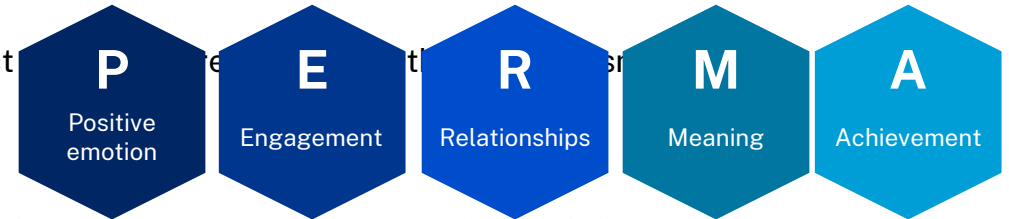
# Support Your Wellbeing



## Wellbeing Development

Start by assessing your current state of workplace wellbeing. Reflect on your current situation or are there challenges you're facing?

Understanding your current situation is crucial for developing a clear strategy to enhance your wellbeing. The template can be used as a guide, taking you through five elements that have been shown to improve wellbeing in the workplace.



**1. Positive emotions.** To what degree are you able to access positive emotions as you undertake your work? How could you increase this?

**2. Engagement.** To what degree are you feeling engaged in your work? Anything impacting on this?

**3. Relationships.** To what degree are you experiencing positive relationships at work? How could you nurture this?

**4. Meaning.** To what degree do you have a sense of meaning through your work? What would increase meaning?

**5. Achievement.** How are your work demands impacting on your wellbeing? How can you increase a sense of achievement and balance your wellbeing?

Thank you

