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Mentoring Guide

A resource for mentors and mentees

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Mentoring is an ongoing relationship of mutual trust specifically designed to build capability in a person with less experience, drawing on the experience of a mentor. A mentor takes a broad view of the person and can help a mentee to grow in their confidence, knowledge, skills or attitude. The mentor often helps them develop within their current role and prepare for future roles. The mentee sets the agenda, leads the relationship and defines what they need to get out of it. Mentoring is a relationship based on mutuality, with both parties benefiting from the relationship. The mentor is expected to share their journey, guide the mentee and give advice.

The following key skills apply to both mentors and mentees:

Creating rapport

Communicating clearly, succinctly and with specificity

Listening

Providing (and receiving) feedback

Questioning

The Mentoring Guide is designed to provide both mentors and mentees with useful information on the what, whys and hows of mentoring. This guide outlines critical information and processes to set up the mentoring relationship for success and sustain momentum. When you finish reading this guide, you should be clear on:

- The benefits of mentoring
- What is expected of you in a mentoring relationship
- What you need to do to prepare for mentoring meetings
- What you are agreeing to by entering into a mentoring relationship
- How to guide mentoring conversations
- Tools available to support the relationship for success

What are the benefits of mentoring?

A mentoring relationship has positive benefits for both the mentee and the mentor who can derive mutual professional development. Outcomes may include: enhanced knowledge; increased technical skills; behavioural improvements; better employee focus and engagement; quick adjustment to an agency's culture and way of working; and outcomes for the public sector more broadly.

The benefits for the agency and public sector arise from having enhanced capability development, high levels of cross-agency engagement, an increasingly collaborative culture and greater leadership effectiveness.

A key benefit for the mentee is they will have an opportunity to grow and develop professionally as a result of exposure to the mentor's expertise, experience and guidance.

Benefits for the mentee:

- Supported and encouraged to develop specific skills and capabilities
- Increased confidence and self-awareness which helps build performance and contribution
- Better management of career goals
- Develop wider network of influence
- Engage in career advancement discussions and activities

The mentor in turn, is provided with an opportunity to strategically reflect on their career and professional development journey. It is a chance to integrate their experience and observations with a broader view to guide the mentee.

Benefits for the mentor:

- Stimulation and insight that comes from a mentoring conversation
- Opportunity to fine tune interpersonal and coaching skills
- Learning that comes from the mentees gifts and talents
- A sense of enjoyment and personal reward from supporting another's growth

Art of Mentoring

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How does a mentoring relationship work?

An effective mentoring relationship is founded on mutual respect, transparency and trust. Both parties need to be authentic in sharing of themselves, so a willingness to be vulnerable and open is essential.

Time and commitment are key factors to a successful mentoring partnership. A mentoring agreement outlining what you are both agreeing to, is an important part of the process and setting clear expectations. A mentoring agreement is provided within this guide for both parties to discuss together and then sign after they have had time to reflect and think about what they can both realistically commit to.

What is expected of me in the relationship?

The mentoring partnership is to be mentee-driven and mentor guided. The mentee holds overall accountability for organising the logistics, preparing the agenda for each meeting, and following up with agreed actions. The mentor is responsible for making adequate time for their mentee and being fully present in their conversations. The mentor is accountable for following up and providing information when they undertake to do so. See the breakdown of responsibilities below.

Responsibilities of a Mentee

As the mentoring partnership is mentee-driven, it is important to understand what is expected of you in your role. Here are suggestions to help you get the most out of your mentorship:

- Take responsibility for your own growth and development
- Set, test and reiterate learning goals with your mentor to engage them in your ongoing development
- Seek feedback and advice from your mentor
- Meet with your mentor at agreed times
- Prepare your mentor for each meeting
- Speak up if your development needs are not being meet

Tips for Mentees

- Take responsibility for your own learning
- Be open about your needs and provide feedback to your mentor
- Set realistic expectations with your mentor
- Recognise your mentor's limitations (they are human) and learn from these
- Show appreciation and acknowledgment for the support your receive
- Be respectful of your mentor's time
- Come to each meeting prepared with an agenda and your progress against your goals
- Follow through on commitments
- Develop trust
- Be flexible, brainstorm on options, and keep an open mind

"Mentoring is a two-way street. You get out what you put in."

Steve Washimgton
COO & Co-Founder, Casentric

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Responsibilities of a Mentor

As the mentoring partnership is mentor-guided, it is important for you to understand what is expected of your role as a mentor and how to get the most out of the partnership by:

- Being invested in the growth and development of the mentee
- Clarifying and reiterating learning goals and changing development needs during your time together
- Uncover motivation factors for your mentee and recognise opportunities to leverage and build on their strengths
- Share experiences that can help them see, understand and make sense of their own situation in new ways
- Provide useful feedback that could make a difference to how they behave or think about a dilemma
- Provide opportunities for your mentee to interact with different areas within the organisation
- Discuss your mentee's questions or concerns regarding feelings of competence, commitment to advancement, partnerships with peers and managers or supervisors, and work/family conflicts
- Prioritise your commitment to always meet with your mentee at agreed upon times
- Make yourself available in times of crisis or conflict
- Clearly communicate your needs (i.e. what you require to be prepared for each meeting) and provide feedback if these are not being met
- Use meeting encounters as case-in-points (i.e. noticing how they do or do not show up with you)

Tips for Mentors

- Provide examples from your experiences
- Suggest developmental opportunities to your mentee
- Allow growth through actual experience
- Be open to learning
- Share your network
- Discuss the phases of your partnership and prepare for the mentoring journey ending
- Use your time wisely
- Monitor for changes in the mentoring partnership and continually evaluate the partnership

"The key to being a good mentor is to help people become more of who they already are - not to make them more like you."

Suze Orman

Mentoring Meetings

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First Meeting Guide

The first meeting is predominately about getting to know each other, developing rapport and setting out expectations for the mentoring partnership. Generally, in the first session the topics would cover:

- Informally getting to know each other
- Clarify the mentees development goals
- Discuss roles, responsibilities and expectations of both parties
- Agree on logistics for ongoing sessions such as duration, frequency and locations
- Discuss the mentoring agreement

☑ First Meeting Checklist

1. Get to know each other
   - Share your picture cards and why you chose it (from workshop)
   - What are your interests outside work?
   - What are your strengths?
   - What are you currently working on?
   - What are your personality/communication styles?

2. Mentees development goal
   - What does the mentee see as his/her development needs?
   - What are the mentee's goals?
   - What are his/her professional goals/ambitions?
   - What are his/her personal goals?

3. Clarify expectations
   - What are your expectations of the mentoring partnership?
   - What are the key factors that will make this partnership work?
   - Confidentiality is essential, how will this be maintained?
   - Agree between yourselves the boundaries of the relationship
   - Commitment of time: if things come up, what is acceptable?

4. Clarify roles and responsibilities
   - Go over the table of responsibilities and the differences between mentor and mentee

5. Logistics
   - Agree on session duration, frequency and locations
   - How will we connect? (In person? via phone? via Skype?)
   - Where are we going to meet?
   - How often will we connect, and for how long? (every two weeks? monthly? Is a certain day better for both of you?)
   - What will we do if we have to cancel the contact?
   - What are our guidelines for canceling within 24 hours?
   - Process for mentee designing and sharing the agenda
   - Will someone facilitate the sessions?

6. Questions
   - Mentee and mentor to ask any clarifying questions

7. Discuss mentoring agreement (see pages 17-18)
   - The mentoring agreement is a contract between the mentor and the mentee
   - It formalises how the mentoring partnership will function
   - The mentoring agreement helps to solidify expectations on both sides
   - It provides a clear roadmap of the expectations of the partnership
   - Agree to come prepared to sign the agreement after time to reflect on how the relationship will work

8. Finalise Meeting
   - What is the next step to take after the meeting
   - Set date for next meeting and agree on its contents
   - Discuss any other issues that might be relevant
   - Close the meeting

Ongoing meetings

The following is offered as a guide only. The mentor and mentee may use this as a starting point and then adapt it to suit the particular circumstances of the mentoring partnership.

Possible agenda

1. Commence your meeting by building rapport
   • Find things you have in common by exchanging information on your professional and personal background

2. Discuss expectations for the meeting
   • What is to be achieved from the meeting?
   • How much time is available for the meeting today?

3. Review last meeting and what was discussed
   • Provide update on events/actions since last meeting
   • Check on actions aligned to development goals

4. Debrief issues, both successes and challenges
   • Outline what happened
   • Why did it happen?
   • What were the lessons learnt?
   • What could be done differently next time?

5. Commit to actions
   • What is the next step to take after the meeting?
   • What timeframe will be applied?
   • Set date for next meeting

6. Finalise meeting
   • Discuss any other issues that might be relevant
   • Close the meeting

Ending a mentoring partnership

If the time has lapsed as stated in the Mentoring Agreement, both parties can determine the appropriate closure to the relationship.

If the parties are working to achieve a specific goal, they may choose to exit the relationship when it has been accomplished or they may re-contract for another goal/time period.

When exiting the mentoring relationship, both parties should be clear that the mentoring relationship has ceased, why this has occurred, and what the next steps are.

The final meeting in a mentoring partnership is also an acknowledgment of the time and effort that each has contributed to the development process. This should also be a time of celebration and thanks.

The following guidelines provide mentors and mentees with the opportunity to reflect on their partnership and what has been learned by both parties.

Possible agenda

1. Commence the meeting by discussing:
   • What has been happening in your world?
   • Things that you know about one another from your past meetings

2. Discuss expectations for the meeting
   • How do we close things off?
   • How much time is available for the meeting today?

3. Review last meeting and what was discussed
   • Provide update on events/actions since last meeting

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4. Debrief issues, both successes and challenges over the period of the partnership
   - Discuss progression towards stated objectives
   - Articulate performance outcomes
   - Outline the key areas of progression and the steps moving forward

5. Reflect on the mentoring partnership
   - What did we learn as partners?
   - How did we help each other achieve our stated goals?
   - What did we learn about ourselves as a result of the experience?
   - What will we do better next time around?

6. Finalise meeting
   - Discuss any other issues that might be relevant
   - Close the meeting in a way that is appropriate to finalise the mentoring commitment

What do I do if the mentoring relationship is not working?

There may be a number of reasons why a mentoring relationship is not working:

- A personality mismatch that may become evident after a few sessions
- A change of circumstances e.g., either the mentor or mentee takes on new role, have significant life circumstances change and is no longer able to commit the required time to the relationship
- Lack of commitment and engagement by one or both parties
- Poor communication that leads to mistrust or misunderstanding
- Inappropriate professional boundaries e.g. mentor stepping into the realm of work supervision or mentee requesting support with their day to day work

If you are experiencing any problems talk to the graduate program coordinators about options to assist that accommodate your circumstances.

Tips to build success

The following are provided as guidance only, based on mentoring research on what factors can support success:

- **Objectives**: mentor and mentee should share the same objectives and expectations from the program – identify these at the start of the relationship and continually re-assess as the relationship progresses
- **Feedback**: establish a culture of giving and receiving feedback early on in the relationship – effective mentors are able to be supportive, yet challenge their mentee
- **Change in circumstances**: if circumstances change for both parties and, for instance, time availability changes, an open discussion should be had as soon as possible to develop possible solutions
- **Professional boundaries**: if professional boundaries are overstepped either party should feel comfortable to approach and seek support from their agency coordinator
- '**No Blame' Attitude**: if either party feels that the partnership is no longer working, they should raise this with the mentor/mentee so that potential issues may be addressed early on. If problems and concerns are not resolved, the partnership should be terminated in a 'no blame' manner

This section summarises a range of tools that can be used throughout the mentoring relationship. Graduate mentees will also be provided with a monthly resource via Grad eXchange to help prepare for monthly mentoring sessions.

The tools included in the table below can assist you to make the most of your mentoring relationship. This is not meant as a comprehensive or prescriptive suite of tools; we encourage you to use tools and techniques that best suit you.

Table 1: Tools and potential application

Situation	Tools
Prepare for meetings by understanding different sorts of questions and how they can help surface information	• Types of questions • GROW coaching model • Circle of concern
Listen to understand a person's motivation and apply approaches that suit a specific task	• Autonomy, mastery and purpose • Skill/Will matrix
Face a challenging situation	• Growth Mindset
Explore our assumptions and how they affect our perspectives	• Ladder of Inference
Give effective feedback	• Situation, Behaviour, Impact Model • Steps for giving feedback
Conduct conversations that fall into the category of 'challenging'.	• Steps to having a challenging conversation • Crucial conversation model
Identify and establish development goals	• Johari Window • Competence Ladder • SWOT analysis • SMART objective-setting

*Refer to Appendix for a more comprehensive description of each mentoring tool

Mutual commitments

In entering the mentoring relationship, we the mentor and mentee agree to undertake the following genuine commitments:

• Specify goals for our relationship upon commencement
• Establish meeting frequency, duration and modality upon commencement, and respect these for the duration of the relationship, unless changes are agreed in a mentoring meeting
• Continually assess the mentoring relationship in alignment with the mentee's ongoing development needs
• Record meeting agendas, agreed actions and progress
• Hold a genuine growth mindset where difficulties are opportunities to learn
• Hold meaningful conversations through the following practices:
  - Rapport building
  - Active listening
  - Open questioning
  - Communicating clearly, succinctly and with specificity
  - Providing and receiving feedback

Session duration, frequency and location

1. The mentoring partnership will last for _____ months

2. We will evaluate the relationship every _____ months

3. We will meet _____ _____ (frequency and duration). Once agreed upon, meeting times will not be cancelled unless in unavoidable circumstances. We will agree on our next meeting date at the end of each meeting

4. Our selected meeting location is _____ _____ (taking into account a suitable venue for confidential discussions)

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The mentor's commitment

I will undertake to:

- Be willing to share professional expertise and experiences with the mentee
- Provide the mentee with objective guidance where necessary, whilst also encouraging an element of self-discovery and self-direction
- Identify development opportunities and actively nurture the mentee's development in alignment with their goals
- Challenge the mentee by offering alternative thinking
- Work with the mentee to develop strategies towards achieving goals
- Provide constructive feedback
- Be authentic, open and transparent in how I show up in our partnership
- Commit to the process and follow up on actions that I have undertaken to do

The mentee's commitment

I will undertake to:

- Take responsibility to organise the logistics associated with maintaining our mentoring partnership (meeting times, place, method)
- Prepare agenda(s) for our meeting and align them to my development goals
- Take responsibility and accountability for my professional development goals
- Be willing to share openly my experiences, goals and concerns
- Work with my mentor to develop and act upon strategies to achieving goals
- Be willing to accept and act upon constructive feedback
- Speak up and reach out when I am uncertain or concerned about something

We confirm that we have read, understood and completed the above agreement, and wish to voluntarily enter into this mentoring relationship based on these terms.

Mentor (print name) _____ Date _____

Mentor Signature _____

Mentee (print name) _____ Date _____

Mentee Signature _____

"Mentoring is a helping relationship based on an exchange of knowledge, experience and good will. Mentors help someone less experienced in the organisation gain confidence, clearer purpose, insight and wisdom"

Professor David Clutterbuck

Notes

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1. Questioning Techniques

Description	The art of asking great questions is at the heart of many workplace conversations including (but not limited to): training, performance reviews, problem-solving, coaching and mentoring. Questions, rather than advice or jumping into solution mode, are used to help the other person or people explore their aspirations, situations, thoughts and feelings and generate their own potential solutions to issues that they are facing.
How it applies to mentoring	Within the mentoring role there will be opportunities to utilise good questioning techniques, especially when you want your mentee to: • Identify and describe problems, situations, events • Reflect on their feelings, assumptions and beliefs • Identify alternatives and options they may not have considered • Come to new understandings about themselves and the issues at hand While the mentor may provide advice and draw on their own experience to explain situations, a part of their role is to help the mentee consider things from different perspectives. A part of the planning is to prepare well-constructed questions to ask.

When thinking about questioning techniques it is important to consider the purpose of the questioning first and then shape your questions based on that purpose. The following tables indicate how questions might differ depending on your primary purpose and what you want your mentee to consider first and foremost.

Using open ended questions

Designed to elicit further information and insight. They cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no".

Table 2: Open-ended questions

Types of open ended questions	Example
Reflective	"You said … what leads you to think that?" "What did this experience remind you of?" "What have you learned about yourself and others so far?"
Probing	"Where do you think the issues lie?" "What are some issues you worry about and why?" "What makes X important?"
Clarifying	"Could you explain a bit more?" "Can you give an example of…?" "What does that look like in action?"
Feeling	"How do you feel about that?" "What is your level of comfort with ….?" "What surprised you?"
Analytical	"Who else could help?" "What are your observations?" "What alternatives are you thinking about for dealing with some of the ongoing challenges?"
Consequence	"What might be the consequences of doing that?" "What are the pros and cons of that approach?" "What is the impact of doing nothing?"
Assumptions surfacing	"What are the assumptions behind your thinking?" "What words or phrases stood out for you?" "Why do you think that?"

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Using closed questions

Designed to test for understanding, set the frame of a situation, elicit a decision or close a conversation.

Table 3: Closed questions

Types of open closed questions	Example
Test for Understanding	"So, if I get this qualification, I will be promoted?"
Frame Setting	"Are you happy with the service you've been receiving?"
Decision Making	"Now that we know all the facts, are we all agreed on the right course of action?"
Close a Conversation	"Does anyone have anything else to add?"

Using content questions and other effective tactics

Table 4: Content questions and prompts

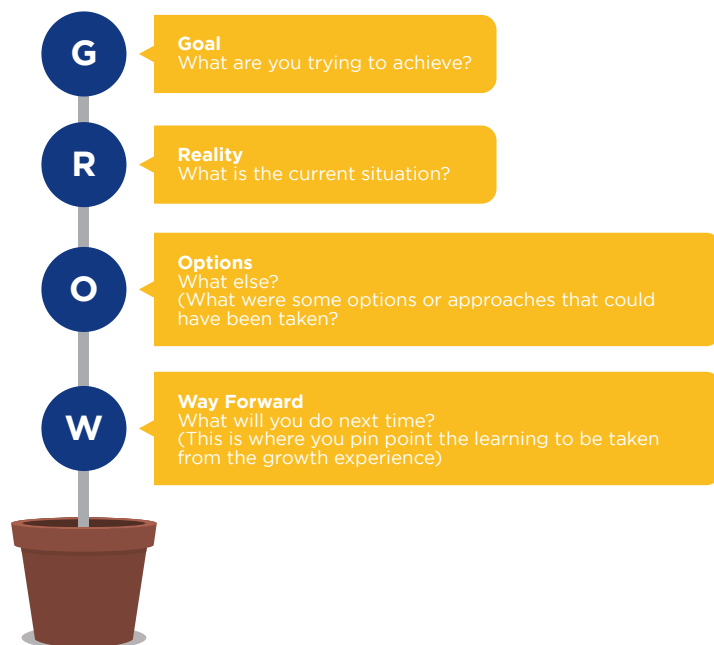| Types of open closed questions	Example
Clarifying	"You say you're concerned about your team. What are you concerned about?"
Probing (also an open question)	"What more can you tell me about why things are getting worse with the project?"
Funnelling	"Which of all those issues you've mentioned is most important right now and why?"
Silence	Sometimes a carefully placed pregnant pause puts pressure on the speaker to provide more information as they feel compelled to fill the empty space.

2. GROW Coaching model

Description	Coaching is the process of unlocking people's potential to maximise their own performance; helping people to learn rather than teaching them. To coach, you don't need to be an expert in the area under exploration, but you do need to be able to guide the other person through the process by asking questions that open up the other person's ability to think through what they want to achieve, their current reality, the possible options for moving forward and finally, the most suitable option to try.
How it applies to mentoring	While coaching rarely involves mentoring, most would agree that there are opportunities within the mentoring partnership for the mentor to provide coaching. Typically coaching can be used when the mentor strongly believes that the mentee is capable of coming to their own answer or solution to a perceived problem, issue or dilemma. A coaching conversation facilitates problem-solving rather than the mentor providing an answer. If the mentee is persistently reliant on the mentor 'having all the answers' they are not developing their own problem solving and decision-making capabilities. Coaching should only be introduced once the mentoring partnership has been established and to avoid mentee frustration, the mentor should be open about why they are using coaching instead of providing advice or solutions.

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There are some key skills that are required to be an effective coach:

- Always coaches with intent
- Releases their own views: is objective and doesn't judge
- Challenges assumptions and "raises the bar"
- Is curious and taps into their intuition
- Pays absolute attention (listens actively and watches)
- Asks great questions that clarify and/or challenge
- Establishes and retains rapport
- Provides honest and constructive feedback and playback
- Provides support and encouragement

The GROW model outlines a simple four step process for having a constructive coaching conversation. The acronym GROW stands for Goal, Reality, Options, Way forward. It can be used in a 5 minute or a 60 minute conversation. It is a versatile and essential tool in the mentor's toolkit.

G **Goal**
What are you trying to achieve?

R **Reality**
What is the current situation?

O **Options**
What else?
(What were some options or approaches that could have been taken?

W **Way Forward**
What will you do next time?
(This is where you pin point the learning to be taken from the growth experience)

GROW coaching questions by stage

The table below provides guidelines for mentors on the types of questions they can ask at each stage of the GROW coaching conversation.
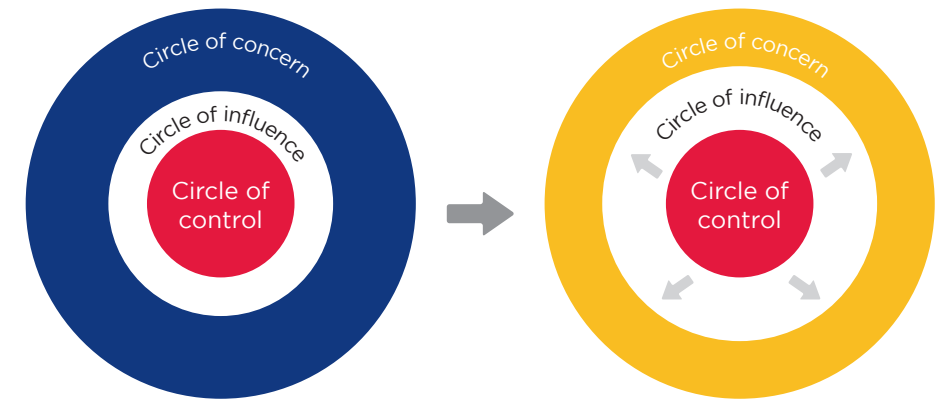
Table 5: GROW model questions by stage

Goal	Reality	Options	Way Forward
• Describe the perfect outcome • What outcome are you trying to achieve? • What does that look like specifically? (if too general) • When do you want to achieve this by? • Why is this goal important to you? • What will it make more possible for you? • What will you see and feel having achieved your goal? • How will you know you are successful?	• Where are you in relation to your goal? • What have you tried so far? • What is working well for you now? • What could be working better? • Why do you think you haven't achieved your goal yet? • What do you think is getting in the way? • What are the obstacles to resolving this issue? • What do you think are the key factors contributing to the situation? • How might you be contributing to the situation?	• What could you do to change the situation? • What else could you do? • What else? • If you were advising someone else on this situation what would you tell them to do? • What would you do differently if you could start again? • What would happen if you did nothing? • If you could guarantee a successful outcome, what would you do? • What's the best or worst thing that could happen? • If you go with that option, what do you think will happen? What else might happen?	• What options work best for you? • How committed are you to taking action? • How likely is this option to proceed? • What's the first thing you are going to do? • By when? • Who can help you? • How will you involve them? • How will you know if you've succeeded? • How excited (or confident) do you feel about achieving your goal? • How could you increase that excitement (or confidence)?

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3. Circle of Concern

Description	Stephen Covey published the 7 Habits of Highly Successful People over 20 years ago but it still has relevance today. He noted that although everyone has concerns, what successful people did about those concerns differed significantly.
	Sitting in the most inner circle of the circle of concern, is the sphere of direct control. These are the things we have direct control over (e.g. our language, behaviour, action, thoughts and feelings etc.). This is where we have the most power and control.
	The next circle out is the circle of influence. This is the sphere of indirect control and the things over which we have some sway or influence (e.g. other people, decisions, events).
How it applies to mentoring	As a mentor, you could use this as a way of guiding your mentee to think about:
	1. The control they can exert over their own reactions to events, their feelings and behaviours
	2. The levers of influence that they might consider in order to better manage relationships with others or get others to cooperate on projects etc

Once we start to redirect our energy into what we can do (rather than focusing on what is being done to us) we begin to increase the size of our spheres of control and our capacity to influence outcomes. The more we draw into our circles of control the more influence we have over other things that may have appeared outside our control.

Figure 1: Covey's Circle of Concern

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4. Motivation

Description	Often we are drawn into wondering if someone lacks the skill, motivation or confidence to move ahead, perform a task or take on extra responsibility. Each of us has 'personal' drivers at certain points in our lives but also some beliefs about ourselves that may accelerate or hinder our progression. Motivation is a shifting concept for most of us but also depends on things like: • Culture • Upbringing • Values • Age and stage (of life) • Lifestyle • Personal expectations
How it applies to mentoring	Whether you are managing or mentoring it is critical to match your style of interaction with the other person's readiness for a specific task or to reach a specific goal. The mentor can use the following to think about and plan for the needs of their mentee based on their current motivations and skill-set.

Autonomy, mastery and purpose

Most of us believe that the best way to motivate ourselves and others is with external rewards like money—the carrot-and-stick approach. That's a mistake, Daniel H. Pink[1] emphasises that the secret to high performance and satisfaction—at work, at school, and at home—is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world.

Drawing on four decades of scientific research on human motivation, Pink exposes the mismatch between what science knows and what business does—and how that affects every aspect of life. He demonstrates that while carrots and sticks worked successfully in the twentieth century, that's precisely the wrong way to motivate people for today's challenges. He examines the three elements of true motivation:

- **Need for Autonomy** refers to the need to actively participate in determining own behaviour. It includes the need to experience one's actions as a result of autonomous choice without external interference
- **Need for Competence (Mastery)**: refers to the need to experience oneself as capable and competent in controlling the environment and being able to reliably predict outcomes
- **Need for Relatedness (Purpose)**: refers to need to care for and be related to others and/or a connection with a sense of purpose. It includes the need to experience authentic relatedness from others and to experience satisfaction in participation and involvement with the social world as well as the creation of meaning

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[1] Daniel H. Pink , Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us

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Skill/Will Matrix

The Skill/Will matrix was introduced by Max Landsberg in his book, 'The Tao of Coaching[2]'. Since then it has been widely adopted and is a useful method of ensuring that a manager/mentor's interaction is matched to their staff/mentee's readiness for a particular task or role.

The framework is helpful to the mentoring relationship and to guide mentors with an approach that will provide the right level of support for mentees.

The Skill/Will matrix helps to plan for this.

1. First, diagnose the mentee's skill and will to accomplish a specific task
   - Skill depends on experience, training, understanding, role perception and transferable skills
   - Will depends on desire to achieve, incentive, security, confidence and motivation

2. Identify the appropriate style of interaction with your mentee to produce the best outcome

3. Finally, agree on your intended approach with your mentee

Figure 2: Skill/Will Matrix

[2] Landsberg, Max (1996), The Tao of Coaching. Published by Bookmarque Ltd

Different approaches using the Skill/Will matrix

Below provides an overview of the most suitable approach to adopt based on the person's level of skill and will for the task and the time. By adapting your approach to suit the person's point in time, will maximise the likelihood of positive outcomes for the individual.

The Skill/Will matrix was introduced by Max Landsberg in his book, 'The Tao of Coaching '. Since then it has been widely adopted and is a useful method of ensuring that a manager/mentor's interaction is matched to their staff/mentee's readiness for a particular task or role.

The framework is helpful to the mentoring relationship and to guide mentors with an approach that will provide the right level of support for mentees.

Table 6: Approaches using Skill/Will

Guide: (High Will but Low Skill)	Delegate: (High Will and Skill)
• Invest time early on • Coach and train • Answer questions/explain • Create a risk-free environment to allow early mistakes/learning • Relax control as progress is shown	• Provide freedom to do the job • Set objective, not method • Praise, don't ignore • Encourage mentee to take responsibility • Take appropriate risks: • Give more stretching tasks • Don't over-manage
Direct: (Low Skill and Low Will)	**Excite: (High Skill but Low Will)**
• Provide clear briefing • Identify motivations • Develop a vision of future performance • Structure tasks for quick wins • Coach and train • Provide frequent feedback • Praise and nurture • But: supervise closely with tight control and clear rules/deadlines	• Acknowledge expertise • Identify reasons for low will (e.g. task, management style, personal factors) • Work as equals and problem solve together • Look for opportunities to apply knowledge/skills in new ways • Monitor from some distance but still provide feedback

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5. Growth Mindset

Description	Over 30 years ago, Carol Dweck and her colleagues became interested in student's attitudes about failure. They noticed that some students rebounded while other students seemed devastated by even the smallest setbacks. Based on studying the behaviour of thousands of people who grappled with failure, Dr. Dweck coined the terms fixed mindset and growth mindset to describe the underlying beliefs people have about learning and intelligence. When people believe they can grow from their experiences, they understand that effort makes them stronger. Therefore, they put in extra time and effort, and that leads to higher achievement. For further information you can look at https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/
How it applies to mentoring	A growth mindset aligns with recent advances in neuroscience have shown us that the brain is far more malleable than we ever knew. These neuroscientific discoveries have shown us that we can increase our neural growth by the actions we take, such as using good strategies, asking questions, practicing, trying new experiences and challenging ourselves. The mentoring relationship can help people adopt a growth mindset by helping a mentee embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, see effort as the path to mastery, learn from criticism and find lessons and inspiration in the success of others (as outlined in the below diagram).

Figure 3: Difference between a Fixed versus Growth mindset

Fixed Mindset

I'm either good at it, or I'm not. • When I'm frustrated, I give up. • I don't like to be challenged. • When I fail, I'm no good. • Tell me I'm smart. • If you succeed,I feel threatened. • My abilities determine everything

Growth Mindset

I can learn anything I want to. • When I'm frustrated, I persevere. • I want to challenge myself. • When I fail, I learn. • Tell me I try hard. • If you succeed, I'm inspired. • My attitude determines everything

Fixed Mindset		Growth Mindset
• Something you're born with • Fixed	**SKILLS**	• Come from hard work • Can always improve
• Something to avoid • Could reveal lack of skill • Tend to give up easily	**CHALLENGES**	• Should be embraced • An opportunity to grow • More persistent
• Unnecessary • Something you do when you are not good enough	**EFFORT**	• Essential • A path to mastery
• Get defensive • Take it personal	**FEEDBACK**	• Useful • Something to learn from • Identify areas to improve
• Blame others • Get discouraged	**SETBACKS**	• Use as a wake-up call to work harder next time

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6. Ladder of inference

Description	The ladder of inference describes the way in which we develop values and beliefs over time and how those beliefs can become ingrained and even unquestioned. The reflexive loop explains how our beliefs often dictate what we see in situations as we continue to 'look for' evidence that supports or upholds our beliefs rather than exploring alternative truths.
How it applies to mentoring	The ladder of inference is a useful tool for both mentors and mentees who are exploring the relationship between beliefs and perspective. Sometimes our habitual responses (actions) are based on out-dated or untested beliefs. The ladder can open up conversations that help the mentee to reframe their experience drawing on new data that may otherwise go undetected.

The Ladder of inference model[3] describes the thinking process that we go through, usually without realizing it, to get from a fact to a decision or action.

### Figure 4: The Ladder of Inference

For example:

I stop working as hard because my efforts won't be fairly recognised

The boss is unfair

Bob is mates with the boss which is affecting his leadership

The boss is letting Bob off lightly

Bob came in late this morning and the boss said "Late again?"

I take **action**

I draw **conclusions**

I make **assumptions**

I select **'data'** from what I observe

Observed 'data' and experiences

The reflexive loop (our conclusions affect what data we select next time)

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[3] Adapted from the work of Richard Ross, The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
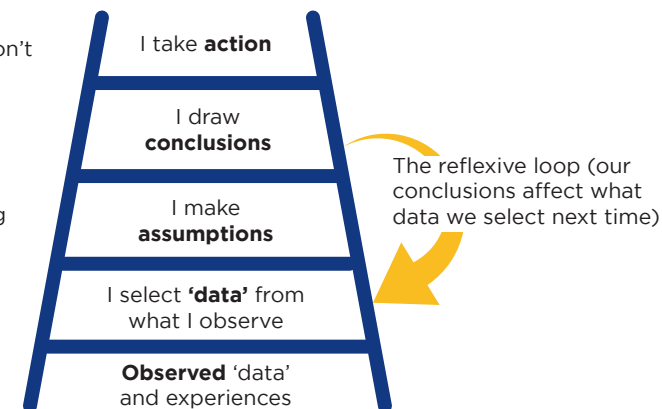
The example in the diagram above explains the process that we go through when we make assumptions:

- We start by observing or experiencing things. But we don't see things like a video recorder – we are selective in what we see. In the example above, when Bob comes in late and the boss says, 'late again?' what you might see is the boss letting Bob off lightly. That is your interpretation of what you saw
- Then we make assumptions. We assume that someone is right because they are a high performer. Or in the example above, we assume that Bob's friendship with the boss is affecting his leadership and that's why Bob is getting off lightly for turning up late
- We draw conclusions based on those assumptions. In this example, we might assume that the boss is unfair
- Then finally, we take actions based on those assumptions. In this example, we might stop giving discretionary effort because we think the boss is unfair and won't recognise our efforts fairly anyway
- The final thing to reflect on is the 'reflexive loop'. What we observe next time about the boss in this example will be coloured by what we have experienced before. The observer must already suspect from previous observations that the boss is unfair for them to draw such a strong conclusion
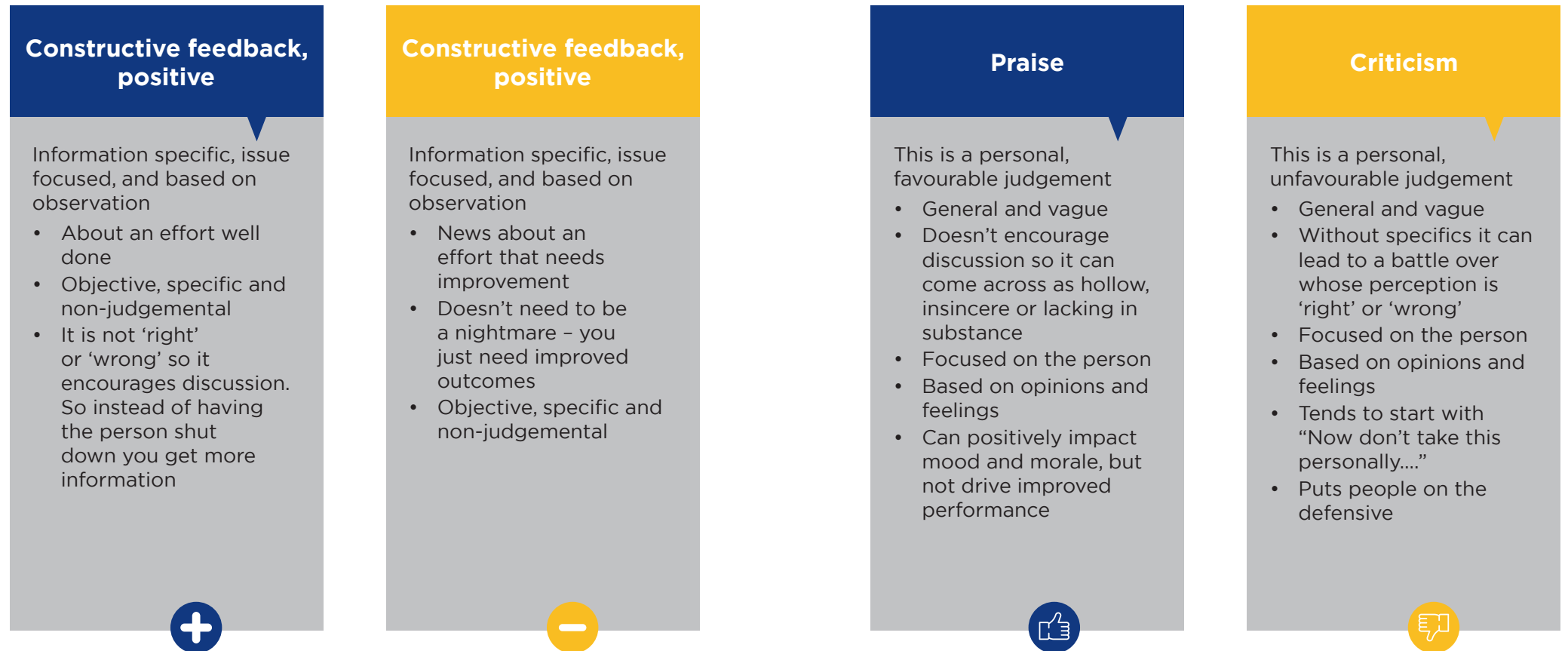
By using the Ladder of Inference, you can learn to get back to the facts and use your beliefs and experiences to positive effect, rather than allowing them to narrow your field of judgment. It helps you draw better conclusions, or challenge other people's conclusions based on true facts and reality. It can be used to help you analyse hard data, or to test assertions. You can also use it to help validate or challenge other people's conclusions.

7. Giving Effective Feedback

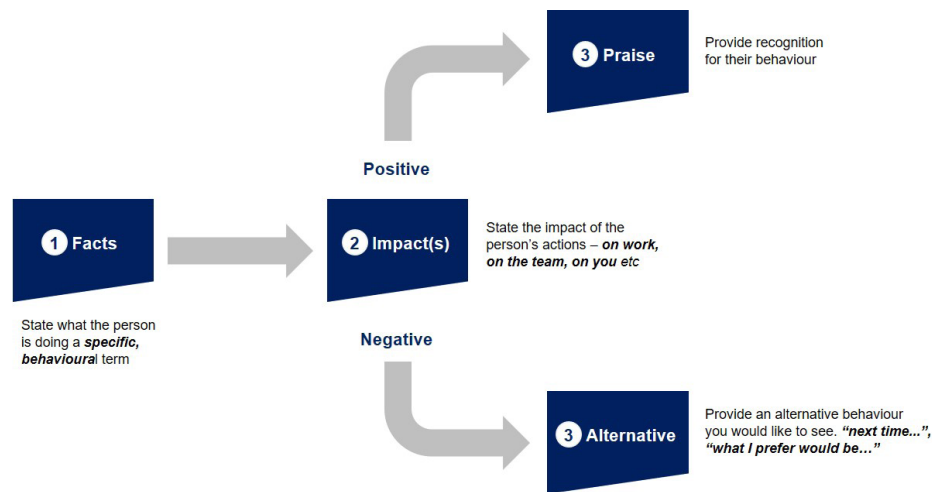| Description	The Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) research states that providing fair and accurate informal feedback is the most effective driver of performance available to an organisation. With feedback, it's not our intentions that are visible, but our words, actions and behaviours. Therefore, the way in which we give and receive feedback is crucial.
How it applies to mentoring	As the mentoring partnership strengthens, it becomes more critical that the mentor is able to provide constructive feedback (both positive and negative). "Blind spots" (as illustrated in the Johari Window), are often the result of a lack of adequate feedback. Feedback is, therefore, very relevant in a successful mentoring partnership and may help the mentee understand critical information impacting on their overall performance.

There are four common types of feedback (summarised below). Constructive feedback (both positive and negative) provides the greatest opportunity for growth and development.

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Figure 5: Types of feedback

Constructive feedback, positive

Information specific, issue focused, and based on observation

- About an effort well done
- Objective, specific and non-judgemental
- It is not 'right' or 'wrong' so it encourages discussion. So instead of having the person shut down you get more information

Constructive feedback, positive

Information specific, issue focused, and based on observation

- News about an effort that needs improvement
- Doesn't need to be a nightmare – you just need improved outcomes
- Objective, specific and non-judgemental

Praise

This is a personal, favourable judgement

- General and vague
- Doesn't encourage discussion so it can come across as hollow, insincere or lacking in substance
- Focused on the person
- Based on opinions and feelings
- Can positively impact mood and morale, but not drive improved performance

Criticism

This is a personal, unfavourable judgement

- General and vague
- Without specifics it can lead to a battle over whose perception is 'right' or 'wrong'
- Focused on the person
- Based on opinions and feelings
- Tends to start with "Now don't take this personally...."
- Puts people on the defensive

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Taking the time to prepare for the feedback you want to give is important. The steps below provide a framework for how to effectively deliver feedback.

Figure 6: A model for giving feedback

8. Challenging Conversations

Description	In any relationship – work-based or otherwise – there are times when one or both parties need to be straight-forward or broach a subject that may be sensitive or potentially conflictive. If these conversations are avoided or put on hold, the quality of the relationship can be compromised. Challenging conversations are those that – when handled well – can lead to break-through moments of discovery, test deeply held assumptions about self and others, and deepen trust and understanding between those involved. So mastering the 'challenging conversation' is a powerful way of developing others and building and maintaining effective relationships.
How it applies to mentoring	Once a mentoring partnership has been established and there is some degree of trust that has developed through shared experience and confidentiality it may be that the mentor realises the need to have a more robust conversation with the mentee about an issue impacting on their performance or the quality of the mentoring partnership. Examples of this include conversations about: • Unfulfilled application to agreed goals • Running late for catch-ups • A breach of the development contract or mentoring agreement • A general disagreement that has not been resolved but is impacting on the quality of the partnership

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What is a challenging conversation?

Kerry Patterson[4] describes a challenging (or in her terms 'crucial') conversation as one that meets the following criteria:

- **Stakes are high** – you are dealing with really important issues for your stakeholders – things that could impact on costs, efficiencies, outcomes for their own areas of influence or their success
- **Emotions are strong** – someone in the conversation is angry, disappointed, upset etc
- **Opinions vary** – the two parties to the conversation might have very different opinions on the situation or the right outcome

Steps to a successful challenging conversation

1. Prepare: understand yourself, the other's perspective and why you need to have it

2. Develop an "opening statement"

3. Deliver the statement, leading in to …

4. … discussion moving to a mutual outcome

Preparation is key

It is important to take some time before a challenging conversation to think about the conversation and the outcome you want to achieve.

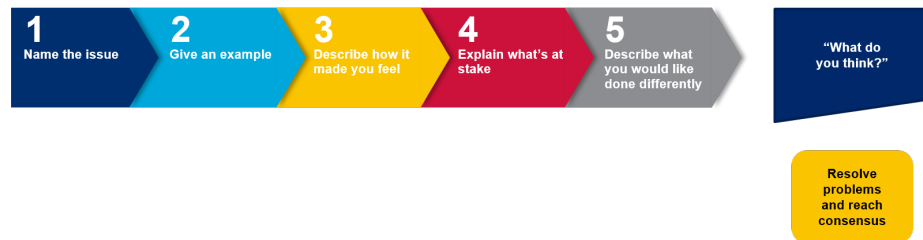### Before entering the conversation, ask yourself some great questions

☐ What assumptions do I have about this person?

☐ Has anything happened between me and this individual that could be clouding my perspective?

☐ What might be their perspective on the matter?

☐ What am I feeling? How are my emotions impacting me?

☐ Am I more upset than is warranted?

☐ What is my intent?

☐ How did I contribute to the issue?

☐ What outcome do I want out of this conversation?

☐ Am I avoiding ineffective communication such as 'padding' or the 'compliment sandwich'?

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[4] Patterson,K., Grenny,J., McMillan,R., & Switzler,A. (2012 edition) Crucial Conversations. Tools For Talking When Stakes Are High. Published by McGraw Hill

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The steps to conducting a challenging conversation

The following process outlines how to conduct an effective conversation.

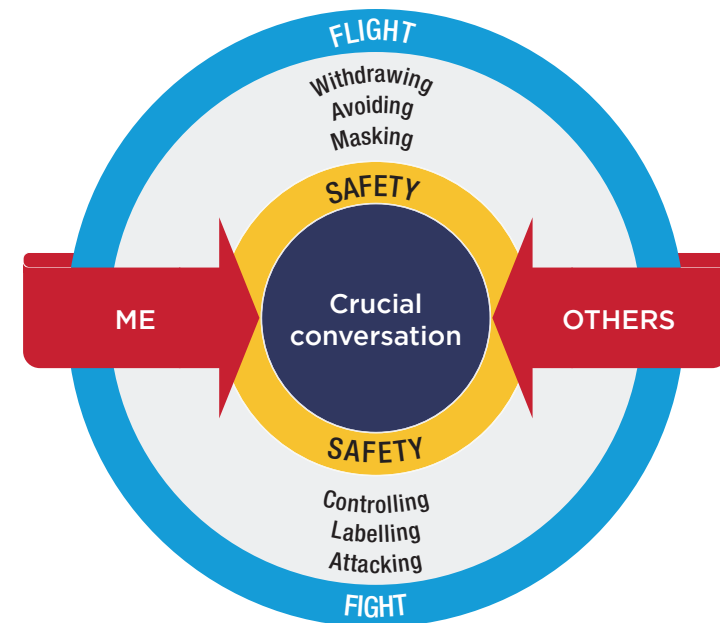**Figure 7: Steps to conducting a challenging conversation**

| **1** Name the issue | **2** Give an example | **3** Describe how it made you feel | **4** Explain what's at stake | **5** Describe what you would like done differently |

"What do you think?"

Resolve problems and reach consensus

The Crucial Conversation model

The Crucial Conversation model developed by Kerry Patterson provides mentors with some ideas about how to approach sensitive issues with their mentee. It may also be used to guide mentees in how to have a challenging conversation back in the workplace. Patterson's model is not a solution to the actual problem being discussed, but it does provide a useful framework for thinking about how to avoid individuals seeking security in fight or flight. Once people go into either position, it is difficult to resolve any issue or move forward in a productive, solution-focused way.

Figure 8: Crucial Conversations' model

FLIGHT
Withdrawing
Avoiding
Masking
SAFETY
ME — Crucial conversation — OTHERS
SAFETY
Controlling
Labelling
Attacking
FIGHT

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Point 1: Making it "safe enough"

To get to an outcome in a crucial conversation, the most important thing is that the other person thinks/believes/feels the conversation is safe. Patterson says there are two things that are fundamental to helping people feel "safe enough" in a conversation:

1. Mutual purpose: where both parties believe they are working towards a common goal in the conversation, and that both parties care about the goals, interests and values of the other.

2. Mutual respect: Where both parties respect each other. Where mutual respect exists, we tend to actively listen to each other and acknowledge feelings, perspectives and differences without judgment.

Point 2: When it's not safe humans go into 'fight' or 'flight'

When a conversation is difficult or a person feels threatened by the situation then there is a risk that they will revert to the most basic instinct of 'fight' or 'flight'.

Indicators of a flight response are when a person is:

- Withdrawing (going silent, providing one-word answers, 'shutting down')
- Avoiding (changing the subject, avoiding answers, avoiding you physically by not showing up)
- Masking (responding with humour, sarcasm, minimising the problem by repeatedly denying anything is wrong)

Indicators of a fight response are when a person is:

- Controlling (steering the conversation, cutting you off, interrupting, talking loudly)
- Labelling (putting you or others in a box, making broad statements/generalising e.g. "they are always like that")
- Attacking (making it personal, emotional outbursts, threats)

Point 3: There are things we can do to reduce the fight or flight response and create safety in the conversation

Some techniques to get people back into the safety zone that come from Kerry Patterson are:

1. Apologise when appropriate
   - When you or others have clearly violated respect (e.g. I'm sorry if my behaviour led you to think that I don't care about our partnership)
   - When you're demonstrating empathy (e.g. I'm sorry that you have been put in that situation)

2. Contrasting - Use don't/do statements to address misunderstandings:
   - Address the other's concerns that you don't respect them or that you had ill intent (the 'don't' part)
   - Confirm your respect or clarify the goal (the 'do' part)
   - Example: "What I don't want to do is leave you wondering how to solve this problem on your own. What I do want is establish what we can do together to remedy this situation"

3. Ask what is going on
   - We demonstrate respect for the other person when we acknowledge that we may not understand the full complexity of their situation. By asking we acknowledge this
   - Example: "I'd really like to understand what is important to you and what has led us to this conversation"

4. Paraphrase to acknowledge their story
   - This tactic helps the other person to see that you are listening and also to clarify your understanding of the situation. It is important not to overlay your own interpretation when paraphrasing. Use their words first and then seek clarification
   - Example: "OK, so what I understand from what you have said is that you are angry with X because of Y. Is that a fair description of the situation?"

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5. Mirror to confirm feelings
   • People often say one thing but mean another, indicating they are not in the safe zone. Their body language is the thing that normally gives them away
   • Mirroring is the process by which we highlight what we see not what we hear
   • Example: "You say that you are OK but your body language tells me you are quite angry. Am I right?" or "You seem to be still quite unhappy. What else can you tell me to help in this situation?"

### Point 4: It's not just about 'them', it's also about me

Keep in mind that a conversation involves more than one person. It may be that you – as a mentor – are just as susceptible to going into 'fight or flight' mode. What are your triggers or 'hot buttons'? How will you manage yourself in a difficult conversation?

9. Johari Window[5]

Description	The Johari Window, named after the first names of its inventors, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, is one of the most useful models describing the process of human interaction and self-discovery. A four paned "window," as illustrated below, divides personal awareness into four different types, as represented by its four quadrants: open, hidden, blind, and unknown.
How it applies to mentoring	Mentors can use the Johari Window as a way of exploring what might be holding their mentee back in certain areas of endeavour. It is a safe way to discuss issues to do with a lack of self-awareness, a lack of ability to confide or reveal much of oneself or a tendency to 'play things safe' and not take risks.

The Johari Window provides a framework to explore our strengths, development areas and blindspots.

Figure 9: Johari Window
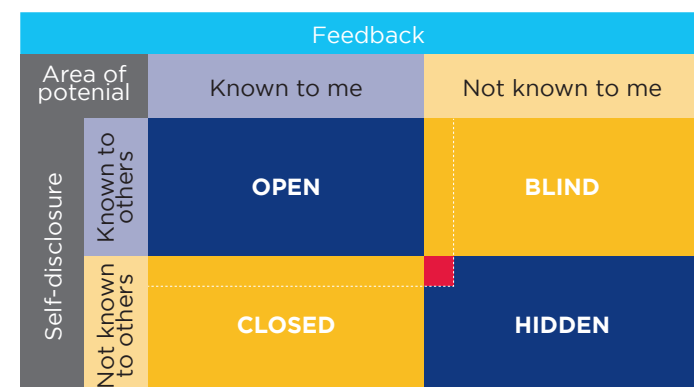
5 Luft, J.; Ingham, H. (1950). "The Johari window, a graphic model of interpersonal awareness". Proceedings of the western training laboratory in group development (Los Angeles: UCLA).

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Shared and open space – this is the area of free activity or public area. It refers to behaviour and motivation that is known to self and known to others. This is what we reveal of ourselves to others and at the beginning of a relationship this box will be quite small.

This space is expanded by minimising the other panes. The role of the mentor may be to help the mentee understand the importance of expanding this pane.

Hidden – the hidden areas represent things we know but do not reveal to others. This could be something sinister such as a hidden agenda but is more likely just those things about us that someone has yet to find out through our own decision to disclose.

Selective disclosure and candour are ways of reducing the size of the 'hidden' pane.

The blind spot – this is where others can see things in us, but of which we are unaware. This might be for example in the manner you greet someone on the phone. You might think you are being efficient but it might come across as being officious.

Actively seeking feedback is one of the most effective ways of reducing the size of the 'blind spots' pane. This requires some personal strength and a preparedness to act.

The unknown – in this pane are the things that neither the individual nor others are yet aware. For example, this could be the behaviour that you demonstrate in a crisis that you have not had to demonstrate before or a hidden ability that has not had a chance to be put into action.
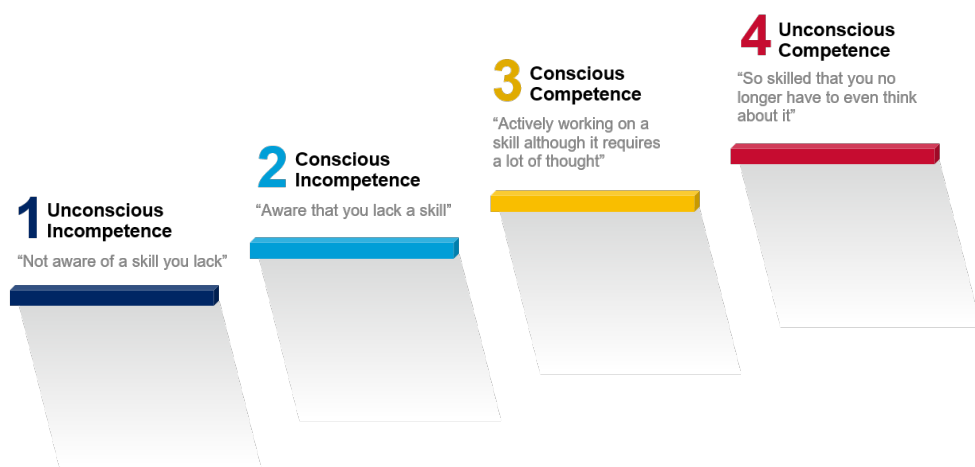
Minimising this pane comes through setting oneself challenges and being prepared to try new things. It involves some level of risk and the mentor may need to wisely advise the mentee on challenges if they are potentially too big a stretch for the mentee's current level of capability.

10. The Competence Ladder

Description	The Competence Ladder articulates the stages of learning that an individual can move through in relation to a particular task or skill.
How it applies to mentoring	It is useful for a mentor to consider where their mentee might be on the 'ladder' in relation to particular tasks or skills that they are developing. This will then guide the sort of support required to shift the mentee to the next level. It may also assist in conversations about 'blind spots' as described in the **Johari Window.** It is the mentor's role to support the mentee through these learning stages and it is important to be aware that there is the possibility a learner may slip back a step if they fail to progress to the unconscious competence stage. This results in a need for regular assessment and ongoing encouragement and targeted support.

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The Competence Ladder articulates how an individual develops over time.

Figure 10: Competence Ladder

Unconscious Incompetence

This stage in the cycle can be quite difficult for a person to move on from as often the learner is not even aware of what it is they don't know ('blind spot') so it is quite a comfortable position for them. As a mentor, you may need to make the mentee aware of how much they need to learn. You'll also need to explain why they need to learn those new skills.

Role of the mentor: Be sensitive at this stage and give plenty of constructive positive feedback to keep the mentee motivated.

Conscious Incompetence

This stage can be confrontational to the learner as it is at this point that they begin to realise how much that they don't know or how big the actual task is ahead of them.

Role of the mentor: During this stage provide plenty of encouragement and support, and explain the idea behind the competence ladder so that people understand feelings of frustration or discouragement that they may be experiencing. Building confidence is key here.

Conscious Competence

During this stage, the learning process begins to build confidence as the learner begins to understand and perform the basics but it is all still at a very conscious level so can be quite an exhausting phase.

Role of the mentor: At this stage keep the mentee focused on the skills that they need to hone through practice. Suggest opportunities for further application beyond the mentoring session and follow-up with them next time you meet to see how they are progressing.

Unconscious Competence

This is where the learner has mastered 'it'. They no longer have to be consciously aware of the action but instead perform effortlessly.

Role of the mentor: At this stage you need to make sure that your mentee avoids complacency and recognises that ongoing use of a skill is required to stay unconsciously competent. Remind them of how much effort was required to reach this stage and get them to reflect on the application of the four stages to other challenges they face.

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11. SWOT analysis

Description	A SWOT analysis is instrumental in strategy formulation at the organisational, team and individual level. It is used across all domains to inform strategy and goal setting.
How it applies to mentoring	The SWOT analysis provides information that is helpful in matching a mentee's resources and capabilities to the outcomes he or she is trying to achieve.
	Mentors could use a SWOT analysis to help a mentee more fully understand the key areas of development that will make the biggest difference to their performance and/or career progression.

The SWOT analysis provides structure to explore a situation in more depth that helps to identify the way forward.

Figure 11: SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	**Threats**

12. SMART objective-setting

Description	Setting realistic and measurable goals is a standard practice for employees, however it is not a natural occupation for us all. To be focused on achieving personal and professional goals it is important that we understand the basics of setting achievable goals.
How it applies to mentoring	Most mentees have at least a vague idea of what they would like to achieve, not only through the mentoring partnership, but into the future in terms of their career. The difficulty is in planning the short term goals to achieve the longer-term aspiration.
	To ensure that mentees construct development goals that are well considered, it is useful to have them articulate their goals in a structured way. SMART objective-setting helps achieve this by mapping: the specific nature of the goal, the measures they will use to determine whether or not they are performing well against their goal/s, the concrete steps required to successfully achieve, how it is relevant to improving/enhancing performance, and the timing of key milestones.
	As a mentor, you can help guide your mentee through the process by asking them good questions at each stage:
	• Specific: What is your mentee aiming to achieve? Can they describe it in specific terms?
	• Measurable: What are the measures you/we will use to measure your success?
	• Achievable: Are you striving for a realistic goal?
	• Relevant: How would you explain this goal to your immediate manager?
	• Time bound: From now until eternity, when do you anticipate that you will reach this goal?

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SMART objectives set out what a business, a team or an individual is hoping to achieve. It is important to get the process of setting objectives right, as inadequately formulated objectives could guide an individual, a team or an organisation in the wrong direction.

Specific and measurable objectives provide a definition of the success of a role, a project or initiative, or business as a whole. Achievable and realistic objectives engage and motivate individuals. Time-bound objectives ensure that all stakeholders agree when it is to be achieved.

As part of the performance management process, in the planning phase, each individual in the organisation with the help of their Manager is to set objectives for the year. These objectives need to be SMART objectives and need to align to the overall business objectives.

Figure 12: SMART objectives

Template for setting SMART objectives

The template below is for mentors and their mentees to set goals that meet the criteria described above.

Figure 13: SMART objectives

"A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you, than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you."

Bob Proctor