

Leadership and Management Development

Mentor's Handbook & Toolkit



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This handbook is for staff who mentor other staff at The University of Warwick. It aims to provide an easy-to-use reference guide that will support you at each stage of a mentoring relationship. It is recommended that you review this document and watch the [mentoring recording](#) prior to commencing a mentoring relationship.

1 Mentoring at Warwick

‘Mentoring is a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing and role modelling. The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.’ (EMCC, 2024).

Mentoring provides staff with the opportunity to receive focused developmental support outside of their normal line management relationship and is a two-way learning intervention that aims to support the goals and objectives of the mentee. These might be professional goals such as developing knowledge of a particular university function or developing a specific capability, or the goals could be more personal such as developing confidence. The mentor may also act as a sounding board and offer constructive feedback. A mentor usually has expertise in a similar role, career, profession or sector to the mentee.

As an approach, mentoring can be both directive and non-directive. When using a directive approach, the mentor may draw on their own experience and pass on their own expertise in order to provide information, advice, guidance and support for the mentee. More details can be found in the mentor’s toolkit section of this document.

Being a mentor does not mean you are a coach; the University has a different provision for coaching. Find out more about coaching [here](#).

Staff at the university may seek mentoring to help with any aspect of their development. Mentoring is often used to support:

- Talent development.
- Specific skill development.
- Career development.
- New to the University/HE sector.
- New to the role.
- Specialist / subject matter support.

1.1 Best practice in mentoring

- All mentors need to ensure that they are fully informed as to what mentoring is, its purpose, boundaries and key skills needed.
- Warwick is a member of the [European Mentoring and Coaching Council](#) and ascribes to

its [Global Code of Ethics](#).

- Mentors require the ability to be non-directive, to listen actively, to be non-judgmental, to ask powerful questions, to commit their time, to share their experience and wisdom, and to have a genuine interest in the mentee's learning and development.
- Mentors should be sensitive to the fact that all individuals may have different requirements. For example, how a neurotypical mentor might see a situation might not be how the mentee sees it. Something that would work for a neurotypical person might not be workable advice for someone neurodivergent. So, mentors should understand that and work with their mentee to get the best value for both parties.
- Mentors do not need to have the same cultural background as their mentees, but they should be sensitive to the differences. You are not expected to be an expert in intercultural communication, but an awareness of differences is essential. If you are mentoring someone from a different cultural background it may be helpful to have an open discussion about cultural differences as part of the mentoring process; a suggestion is to include this in the mentoring agreement conversation. Mentoring naturally lends itself to learning about others; use your listening and questioning skills to learn about your mentee's world and to understand the culturally different values that they bring.
- Mentors should consider how many mentees they can support at any one time.
- Either party has the right to end the mentoring relationship without blame or fault or detailed explanation.
- The initial meeting between mentor and mentee should be a 'no commitment' chemistry conversation, the purpose of which is for both parties to assess their compatibility and to establish a rapport.
- Mentors should hold a contracting conversation with the mentee before the mentoring begins. The purpose of this is to ensure a shared understanding.
- Mentoring meetings may take place in-person, online or on the phone. Mentoring meetings can take place in either a university meeting room or a public place, e.g. a café, provided that both parties agree.

1.2 Mentor's Responsibilities:

- To comply with the Code of Ethics (see section 1.4).
- To act with integrity regarding meetings with mentees, including arriving on time and being prepared.
- To ask for, receive and reflect on feedback from their mentee.
- To adhere to the [University's values](#) and [guiding principles](#)
- To give honest feedback to the mentee in a constructive and respectful way.

1.3 Mentees Responsibilities:

- To commit to actively engaging in the mentoring process, accepting personal responsibility for the outcomes.
- Act with integrity regarding meetings with mentors, including arriving on time and being prepared.
- To undertake any actions identified during a mentoring meeting by the agreed deadline.
- To be honest with the mentor about how the relationship is working.
- To provide feedback on your mentoring experience to the mentor, if requested.
- To respect the mentor's time, to not impose beyond what is reasonable and to not ask for excessive support from the mentor in between mentoring meetings.
- To respect the position of third parties (e.g. their line manager).
- To adhere to the [University's values](#) and [guiding principles](#).
- To arrange a suitable location for the mentoring meetings if they are taking place in person.

1.4 Code of Ethics

The University recognises its responsibility in ensuring that all mentoring provided and received by staff is ethical. The University is a member of the [European Mentoring and Coaching Council \(EMCC\)](#) and ascribes to its [Global Code of Ethics](#).

Mentors are expected to adhere to the Code of Ethics listed below, which has been adapted from the EMCC Global Code of Ethics:

- Mentoring is a confidential activity in which both parties have a duty of care towards each other. The mentor will only disclose information when explicitly agreed with the mentee or when they believe there is a serious danger to the mentee, other people or the University, if the information is withheld.
- Mentors may keep notes about their mentoring meetings. All notes/records should be stored and disposed of in a manner that ensures confidentiality, security and privacy and complies with [GDPR and the University's Data Protection Policy](#).
- Participation of both parties is voluntary. Either party may break off the relationship if they feel it is not working. Both parties share responsibility for the smooth winding down and proper ending of the relationship. See further details of this later in this document.
- Both parties will be honest with each other about how the relationship is working. The mentor will not impose their own agenda on the mentee, nor will they intrude into areas that the mentee wishes to keep off-limits.
- Mentors will be aware of their own level of competence and ensure they operate within the limits of their competence. Mentors should be aware of, and should signpost the mentee to, other support services within the University, if appropriate.
- Mentors are responsible for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate, and culturally-sensitive boundaries with mentees.

- Mentors should be aware of the potential for unconscious bias and seek to ensure they take a respectful and inclusive approach.
- Mentors will be aware of any potential conflicts of interest arising through the mentoring relationship and address them quickly to ensure that there is no detriment to the mentee, themselves or to the University. If the conflict cannot be managed, the mentor will end the mentoring relationship.
- Both parties will respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring they do not impose beyond what is reasonable. Both parties will also respect the position of third parties (for example, the mentee's line manager).
- Mentors will raise any ethical dilemmas arising from their mentoring with the Leadership and Management Development team at imd@warwick.ac.uk
- Mentors will evaluate the quality of their mentoring through feedback from mentees. Mentors understand that their responsibilities continue beyond the end of the mentoring relationship in terms of confidentiality, secure storage and disposal of records, conflict of interest, and avoidance of any exploitation of the former mentoring relationship.

1.5 GDPR

Confidentiality is fundamental to a mentoring relationship. Mentors may find it helpful to keep a record of the mentee's goals, topics discussed and actions. If you take notes or keep a record of any aspect of your mentoring conversations, you should store them securely and in accordance with GDPR and the [University's data protection policy](#).

1.6 Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a mentor or mentee is in a position to gain unfair advantage / benefit from the mentoring relationship, or where there is a clash between their job role and their mentor or mentee role. An example is where a mentor is also a member of an interview panel, for a job for which the mentee is a candidate.

Consider the impact of a mentoring relationship on your other working practices, processes and relationships. If either party perceives an actual or potential conflict of interest, they should have an open and honest conversation about it. If a conflict of interest exists, you may need to set boundaries around what you can or cannot discuss. Don't take the mentoring forward if you feel that entering into a mentoring arrangement will compromise you or your mentee in any way.

1.7 Wellbeing and Signposting

As noted above, mentors need to be aware of their own level of competence and ensure they operate within the limits of their competence. Mentors should be aware of, and should signpost the mentee to, other support services within the University, if appropriate.

Although counselling, mentoring and coaching all share the same core skills they are very different interventions. Counselling is a talking therapy that involves a trained therapist who listens and helps individuals find a way to deal with emotional issues. Mentors and coaches should not provide counselling. Boundaries can be explored in the contracting conversation.

Wellbeing support for staff can be found on the 'Your health and wellbeing' section on [Insite](#) and also here:

[Staff Wellbeing Hub](#)

[Psychological and emotional wellbeing at the University of Warwick](#)

2 Your role as a mentor

This section explains the key stages during the mentoring relationship.

2.1 Chemistry conversation

A chemistry conversation is the first contact between the potential mentor and mentee. It is an informal, friendly discussion which enables both parties to get to know each other, build rapport and to assess whether they are a good match and can work together.

A chemistry conversation is a 'no- commitment' conversation. This means that either party can decide not to go ahead with the mentoring relationship, without blame. It simply means that they feel they are not the right match. This chemistry conversation can take place online, in a meeting room or, if both parties are comfortable, in a public place such as a café.

You should also explain that if the mentee decides to go ahead with you as their mentor, you will have a 'contracting conversation' with them before the mentoring begins and explain the purpose of this conversation.

During the chemistry conversation you should use your mentoring skills of active, empathic listening, skilled questioning, being non-directive and non-judgemental. This is a chance for your potential mentee to experience your mentoring style, which will help them to decide whether you are the right mentor for them. Some people find meeting new people challenging. You may need to have more than one informal 'chemistry conversation' before the mentee feels comfortable to begin the mentoring.

If meeting your mentee in person, be aware that their need for personal space may be different from yours. This may not be so much of an issue when meeting in a public place, like a café. You may wish to ask the mentee where they would prefer to sit if you are using a meeting room.

2.1.1 Topics you might want to discuss during the chemistry conversation:

- Find out about the mentee – ask them open questions about their career, role, interests.
- Find out what the mentee is looking for in a mentor.

- Why you have volunteered to be a mentor and what you hope to gain from it.
- Previous mentoring experience as a mentor or mentee and what you gained from this.
- Your career and professional experience.
- A little about you as a person, interests etc. – within the boundaries that you are comfortable to share.

2.2 Contracting conversation

The contracting conversation is an important and essential part of mentoring. It is a conversation between mentor and mentee which is led by the mentor. It takes place before the mentoring begins or at the beginning of the first mentoring meeting. The purpose of the contracting conversation is to ensure a shared understanding of:

- What mentoring is and isn't.
- The boundaries in which the mentoring relationship will operate.
- How the mentoring will work in practice.
- The roles and responsibilities of both parties.

The contracting conversation should not be framed as a 'chat'. It involves reaching an explicit agreement that provides structure, guidance and alignment for both the mentor and mentee. A lack of shared understanding could lead to assumptions or misunderstandings later on in the mentoring relationship.

2.2.1 Topics to cover during a contracting conversation:

- Confidentiality, including what situations you would need to disclose information.
- Role and responsibilities of both mentor and mentee.
- Boundaries.
- Conflict of interest.
- Duration of mentoring meetings.
- Frequency of meetings.
- Postponement or cancellation arrangements.
- Duration of mentoring relationship.
- Record keeping.
- Review arrangements.
- Mentee's goals.
- Mentor's goals (if appropriate).
- Feedback.
- Completion/ending the mentoring relationship.

2.3 Goal setting

Setting goals is an important part of mentoring. Goal setting is also powerful. It helps people to:

- Create a sense of purpose.
- Have a clear focus.

- Overcome procrastination.
- Foster better time management.
- Hold themselves accountable.
- Measure their progress.

The mentee should determine their own goals and what they want to achieve through the mentoring, although the mentor may help the mentee to shape and define the goals. Goals will be discussed during the contracting conversation, so that both parties know what they are working towards and what success looks like. As far as possible encourage the mentee to develop goals which are SMART.

2.3.1 SMART Goals

- **Specific** – is the goal clear?
- **Measurable** – how will you know when it has been achieved? Encourage the mentee to use an active verb or action word to help make the goal measurable; for example: complete, publish, plan, produce, develop, design, install, observe, identify, investigate, propose.
- **Achievable** – does the mentee have the resources and time to meet the goal? Is it realistic?
- **Relevant** – does the goal align with the mentee’s development needs and/or career?
- **Time-based** – does the goal have a deadline or series of milestones?

If goals are SMART, it will be easier to review progress made towards achieving them.

2.4 Building rapport

Building rapport is an important aspect of mentoring and spending time working on this will enhance any mentoring relationship. ‘Rapport is the feeling of trust, connection, and mutual understanding that you establish with your mentee. It helps you create a safe and supportive environment where they can share their challenges, goals, and feedback.’ (LinkedIn, 2025)

There are a variety of ways you can start to build rapport with your mentee:

- Get to know your mentee during the chemistry and contracting and subsequent mentoring conversations. Cover topics such as their goals, aims, objectives, interests, areas for development and so on.
- Demonstrate active listening. (see section 3.4)
- Be authentic. ‘Be honest, humble, and respectful. Share your own experiences, challenges, and learnings, when appropriate. Be consistent and reliable. Rapport is built on trust, and trust is built on authenticity.’ (LinkedIn, 2025)
- Adapt your style to meet the needs of your mentee. This isn’t about becoming someone else but rather understanding what the mentee might need from you and flexing your approach accordingly. Things to consider might include:
 - Turn-taking rules during conversations may vary across cultures. If we’re not aware of this, we are unconscious of our own turn-taking rules and assume that people from other cultural backgrounds will behave in the same way. If they don’t, we generally

conclude that either they don't have anything to say (if they are not joining in) or that they are uninterested (if they interrupt constantly).

- Some people like to have long pauses before they speak so that they have time to think carefully about what the other person has said. Other people expect turn taking to be quick, so one person starts talking as soon as the other stops. Others expect an overlapping style, where they talk over each other, to show enthusiasm and interest. If you're used to a style that has pauses, the overlapping style can feel as if you are being interrupted and not listened to.
- The length of pauses and silences are tolerated differently according to cultural preferences. Silence is an important technique in mentoring as it allows the mentee to think and reflect. As you get to know your mentee you will be able to judge what is an appropriate length of silence.
- Intonation patterns carry a lot of meaning in English. Various other languages stress all syllables equally and the meaning carried by stress in English is not necessarily transparent to people who don't speak English as their first language. Bear this in mind when having conversations with your mentee and speak more slowly if appropriate. Also avoid using jargon, slang and colloquial phrases if English is not your mentee's first language.
- Using humour can be very effective in building rapport. It helps to create common ground, reduce tension and to relax people. However, humour is understood to be one of the last things that we acquire as we develop expertise in speaking new languages, and it has the potential to lead to cultural misinterpretation. If your mentee is not speaking English as their first language, bear in mind that use of humour may be interpreted differently to how you intend.
- People from different cultures may do more, or less, small talk before moving on to the business in hand. You may need to adjust the amount of rapport-building small talk you do in the chemistry conversation and at the beginning of your mentoring meetings. You may also need to think about what kind of topics are appropriate for small talk.
- Some people find eye contact challenging. In some cultures, extended eye contact can be taken as offensive or a challenge to authority. Avoiding eye contact is usually interpreted as being polite. However, in Western cultures avoiding eye contact is often interpreted as being rude or submissive. You aren't expected to radically alter your own eye contact, but simply to be aware that your mentee may prefer more or less eye contact, and that they are not necessarily being rude, aggressive or disinterested if their use of eye contact differs from yours.

2.5 Mentoring meetings

Having had a chemistry conversation and a contracting conversation, you should have been able to get to know your mentee and to build a rapport with them. You will have established

goals with your mentee during the contracting conversation and can move on to organising the first mentoring meeting.

At the first mentoring meeting it is recommended that you review the goals with your mentee, just to check they are still relevant. You can then move into your first mentoring conversation, using the skills highlighted in the mentoring toolkit, which is included later in this document.

Some people find unfamiliar environments difficult. Let the mentee choose the venue on campus or an online meeting, if that is preferable.

Unfamiliar routines and structures can be challenging for some people and they may have set routines that they rely on and will struggle to work in any other way. You may think they are being inflexible but even seemingly minor changes to established routines at work can be distressing for them. Let the mentee suggest their own frequency and duration of mentoring meetings as far as possible. If you need to cancel or change a meeting, give them as much notice as you can.

2.6 Asking for feedback

It is good practice to ask your mentee for feedback regularly throughout the mentoring relationship. This will help you to adapt your approach to each mentee, and also to improve your mentoring skills. You are encouraged to build this into each mentoring conversation, and to reflect on any feedback you receive.

Review regularly; check in with the mentee about how they are finding the mentoring. Ask what you are doing that is helpful to them, and what you could do differently.

2.7 Reviewing progress

Reviewing the mentee's progress towards the goals that they identified is important as it:

- Is motivational for both parties.
- Provides an opportunity to acknowledge achievements and progress.
- Is helpful in evaluating the overall impact and value of your mentoring.

2.8 When a mentoring relationship doesn't work out

Hopefully you will find yourself in a productive mentoring relationship that is rewarding for both parties. Occasionally mentoring arrangements don't work out, despite everyone's best efforts. Sometimes there is a mismatch on an interpersonal level, or miscommunication between mentor and mentee. Not every pair is a good match, and that's okay.

2.8.1 Signs that a mentoring relationship may not be working:

- The mentee cancels appointments, fails to turn up or regularly rearranges at short notice.
- The mentee consistently fails to make progress on actions identified in meetings.
- The mentee appears distracted in sessions.

The first step is to raise your concerns with the mentee. Next time you meet, be honest and tell the mentee that you feel something isn't working; for example, "I'm sensing that you aren't sure about our next meeting...is that right?" Avoid blame and be clear and objective, for example "I would like to offer you some thoughts on how I feel the mentoring is going. It seems that when we meet you come across as distracted. Is that right?". "Is there anything I could do differently?"

Give factual examples such as dates of meetings that have been cancelled. Ask open questions to explore this and find out possible reasons. Jointly explore whether there are things you could both do to get the relationship working more effectively.

Don't feel guilty or a failure if the mentoring arrangement isn't working out. It is better to acknowledge this as soon as possible and explore why you're feeling this rather than carrying on regardless. You might find that this process is a valuable learning opportunity in itself.

2.9 Ending the mentoring relationship

Ideally the ending of a mentoring relationship is anticipated and will have been planned for by agreeing to the duration of the relationship during the contracting conversation. Arrange a date for the final meeting and remind your mentee of this in the penultimate meeting so that you can both prepare for it.

2.9.1 Tips to support the ending of a mentoring relationship:

- Reflect on the mentoring – what have you both learned?
- Celebrate your mentee's successes – review the goals they set at the beginning of the relationship and any subsequent goals identified. Discuss the progress they have made towards meeting these goals and how they feel about this.
- Support the mentee to continue their learning; open up a discussion with them about how they can continue their learning and development post-mentoring.
- When thinking about possible future contact, be realistic about the extent of your contact with each other. Although you will probably continue to have some form of interaction, it should be on a more informal basis where you consider each other as equals.
- Thank and acknowledge each other's contributions.
- End on a positive - share what you have learnt and enjoyed during the mentoring.
- If both parties would like to carry on with the mentoring beyond the term initially agreed, you should hold a new mentoring agreement conversation to ensure a shared understanding for the continuation of the relationship.

3 Mentors Toolkit

3.1 Introduction

This Toolkit is to refresh your knowledge of mentoring skills and techniques and to help you

prepare for mentoring conversations.

3.2 Coaching or Mentoring

It is important to distinguish mentoring from coaching. The two concepts are often used interchangeably when in fact they are different interventions. Coaching and mentoring are both powerful development interventions and have many similarities, however they are different and are appropriate in different contexts.

Mentoring is defined as:

‘Mentoring is a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing and role modelling. The relationship may cover a wide variety of contexts and is an inclusive two-way partnership for mutual learning that values differences.’ (EMCC, 2024).

There are many definitions of coaching. Two definitions that are helpful here are:

1. “Unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them” (Whitmore 2003).
2. “Coaching is about developing a person’s skills and knowledge so that their job performance improves, hopefully leading to the achievement of organisational objectives. It targets high performance and improvement at work, although it may also have an impact on an individual’s private life. It usually lasts for a short period and focuses on specific skills and goals.” (CIPD 2009).

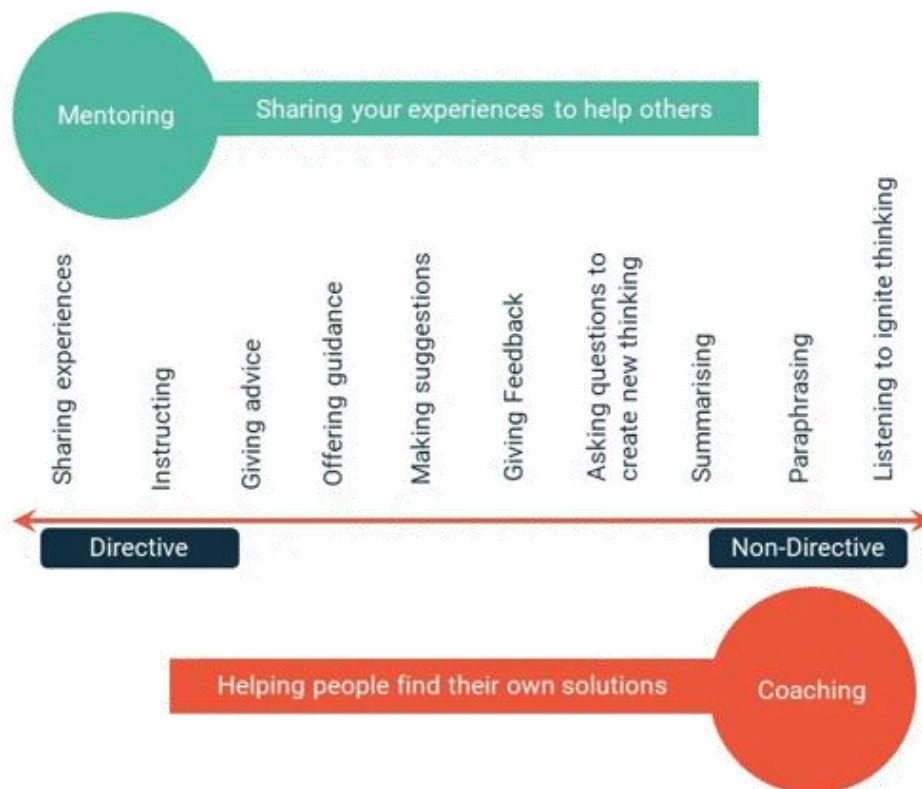


3.2.1 Important differences between coaching and mentoring

Features	Coaching	Mentoring
Focus	Specific and immediate performance and/or development areas.	Takes a broader view of a person's development; the focus is usually on career, personal and professional development.
Length of relationship	Usually shorter in duration – typically 6 months.	Ongoing and can last for a long time.
Structure	Typically more structured and meetings are scheduled on a regular basis, e.g. monthly.	Typically more informal, with guidance and support meetings set up as and when required by the mentee.
Agenda	Focussed on achieving specific, immediate goals identified by the coachee.	Focus can flex over time. It may involve a number of different development areas which are generally set by the mentee but which may play into wider organisational initiatives.
Directive or non directive (see below)	Non-directive; coach does not make suggestions, give ideas or share their own experiences	Both. Generally involves a more experienced person passing on advice and guidance, which is a directive approach. But a skilled mentor will also be non-directive when the need arises.
Specific knowledge and expertise	Coach does not need knowledge/expertise of coachee's role, profession/career/sector, etc	Mentor generally has experience in a similar role/profession/ career/ sector, etc
Qualifications	Within the University scheme coaches are required to hold a coaching qualification at ILM Level 5 or equivalent	Within the University mentors do not require a formal mentoring qualification but are expected to have read the mentor's handbook and toolkit and watched the mentoring recording.
Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements	A specific number of coaching hours and supervision sessions to be undertaken per year.	No minimum requirements but mentors are expected to ensure their own professional practice is up to date.

3.3 Directive and Non-directive spectrum

Mentoring uses both directive and non-directive approaches. It can be helpful to see this as a spectrum:



Taken from <https://www.thinkwithjude.com/coaching-mentoring-therapy-difference/>

A mentor will use the whole range of this spectrum. A good rule of thumb is to initially take a non-directive approach, but if the mentee is struggling to come up with their own ideas or solutions, or they simply do not have enough knowledge or experience, then a directive approach may be appropriate.

3.4 Active Listening

The ability to listen to the mentee is a very important skill in mentoring and requires the mentor to give their full attention to the mentee for long periods of time. It is fully concentrating on what is being said as opposed to passively hearing a message, or hearing what you want to hear. It involves listening with all the senses and giving the mentee a 'safe space' to talk without interruption or judgement.

Steven Covey identifies these five levels of listening in 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People':

Empathic	You are listening to what the mentee means, as well as to their words. You are giving your time and full attention. Instead of projecting your own views, beliefs, ideas and interpretations, you have access to the other person's reality: their 'view of the world'.	Listening takes place within the other person's frame of reference.
Attentive	You are giving your time and attention to the other person but still hearing from within your own reality or 'view of the world'.	Listening takes place within your own frame of reference
Selective	You probably only want to hear part of the message. You may be quick to interrupt or finish what the other person is saying.	
Pretend	You give the impression that you are hearing what the other person is saying, but really you are thinking about or doing something else.	
Ignore	You are not paying attention to what the other person is saying.	

As mentors, we need to develop the ability of active listening. Julie Starr (2016), notes that this is about acknowledging what is being said, restating messages and checking understanding. An active listener is gathering facts, filling in gaps and working hard to get a fuller picture.

Julie Starr (2016) adds that when we are listening like this we usually:

- Have the intention of remaining focused on what other person is saying in order to fully understand
- Put more effort into listening and processing the information that we hear, rather than speaking
- Mentally register information so we can refer back to this later
- Regularly confirm we are listening through non-verbal cues such as appropriate sounds, gestures or expressions
- Demonstrate how we are actively seeking to understand through the use of clarifying questions, repeating or summarising information back and offering observations / conclusions

3.4.1 Tips to become an active listener

- Stay focused – use natural eye contact, don't judge, be patient.
- Really listen – don't think about your own similar experiences or jump in straight away with ideas.
- Silence your own internal train of thought. If your mind wanders, recognise this and pull it

back into the conversation.

- Don't be afraid of silence – some people need silence to reflect and gather their thoughts; wait until the mentee speaks again.
- Repeat or paraphrase the mentee's words back to them – this shows you are really listening and encourages them to open up.
- Understand the emotions behind the words – when you paraphrase, express the mentee's emotions back to them.
- Be prepared for longer conversations – active listening takes more time and energy.

3.5 Questioning

'Good questions are keys that open doors' (Starr, 2016:92). Asking really great questions is part of the role of a mentor and will help the mentee think more deeply about a topic or look at it from a different perspective. The most powerful questions are those which raise awareness, insights and learning, are open and non-directive. Open questions help us to gather a lot of information and begin with:

- How
- What
- When
- Where
- Who

We suggest avoiding the use of 'Why' as this can be perceived as judgmental, even if you don't intend to be.

Other types of questions which may be helpful within a mentoring conversation include:

- **Clarifying questions** – asking this type of question ensures that you are clear about what your mentee has said. 'So, what I think you are saying is that you find communication with that person difficult. Have I got that right?'
- **Probing questions** – the TED model below illustrates this. Asking probing questions helps us to gather more information and encourages the speaker to expand more on what they have just said.
- **Closed questions** – these usually come after the open questions have been asked and answered. These help us to check our understanding and move from discussion to decision making.

3.5.1 The TED Model

The TED model (tell, explain, describe) supports a non-directive, non-judgmental approach and can be used in conjunction with the GROW model (see section 3.7) or any other questioning models you wish to use. They are great phrases to use to encourage the mentee to open up and tell you more:

- Tell me..

- Tell me more...
- Explain a little bit more about that...
- Describe to me..

3.6 SMART goals

As previously mentioned, it is important to help your mentee to identify SMART goals. As a reminder these are:

- **Specific** – is the goal clear?
- **Measurable** – how will you know when it has been achieved?
- **Achievable** – does the mentee have the resources and time to meet the goal? Is it realistic?
- **Relevant** – does the goal align with the mentee’s development needs and/or career?
- **Time-based** – does the goal have a deadline or series of milestones?

Encourage the mentee to use an active verb or action word to help make the goal specific and measurable, for example: complete, publish, plan, produce, develop, design, install, observe, identify, investigate, propose. If a goal is SMART it will be easier to measure progress made towards achieving them.

3.7 The GROW Model.

The GROW model is a simple 4-step process for structuring a conversation. It is used in coaching conversations but can also be a helpful model to use in mentoring conversations. It enables the mentee to identify their goals, ways in which they can achieve those goals and to take responsibility for their own learning and development.

The GROW model does not have to be used in a linear format; you can move between the different stages of the model during a conversation in any order that is helpful. Also, you may not be able to work through the whole of the GROW model in one conversation; it may take more conversations and that is fine. Similarly, you may work through the GROW model more than once during a conversation in relation to different goals.

This table highlights some possible questions at each stage and was adapted from ‘Coaching for Performance by Sir John Whitmore (1992).

<p>Goal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you want to achieve? • What do you want the outcome to be? • What is your goal? • How important is it on a scale of one to ten? • If you could wave a magic wand, what would you like to happen? • Imagine the problem / issue has been solved, what would you see, hear and feel? • Imagine it is three years from now. What are you doing? 	<p>Reality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the situation • What is happening right now? • What is your concern about this? • How much control do you have? • What action have you taken so far? • What has stopped you? • What obstacles have you encountered? • What resources do you need? • What else do you need? • Where can you get it from?
<p>Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are all the different ways in which you could approach this? • What if 'X' was not a factor? • What if you had the opportunity to..? • Make a list of alternatives. • What else could you do? • What would you do if you had more time / a larger budget / if you were the manager? • Which of these options appeals most to you, or feels best to you? • Which would give you the most satisfaction? 	<p>Will or what next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which option or options do you choose? • What are your measures of success? • What is the next/first step? • When are you going to start/finish each action? • What personal resistance, if any, do you have? • Who needs to know what your plans are? • What support do you need and from whom? • What could I do to support you? • How committed are you to this, on a scale of one to ten? • What prevents it from being a ten? • What could you do to raise your commitment closer to a ten?

The important thing to remember is that the GROW model is designed to help you, not to constrain your mentoring conversations. There are other models and if you are familiar with a different model, it is fine to use it.

4 Resources to support your mentoring journey

[Active listening | LinkedIn Learning](#)

[The Art of Active Listening | The Harvard Business Review Guide \(youtube.com\)](#)

[Autistic UK](#)

[Business Disability Forum](#)

[The Basics of Neurodiversity \(warwick.ac.uk\)](#)

[About Neurodiversity | Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre \(ed.ac.uk\)](#)

[Staff Wellbeing Hub](#)

[Psychological and emotional wellbeing at the University of Warwick](#)

This [mentoring recording](#) will expand on some of the skills needed, highlight the difference between coaching, mentoring and counselling and outline the contracting and chemistry conversation.

LinkedIn Learning has a range of learning material on mentoring and the skills needed. [Access your account](#) and search for mentoring, or any of the associated skills, to start exploring.