

STRUCTURING THE MENTORING CONVERSATION AND GOAL SETTING

Whatever role you have in the mentoring relationship, you will likely desire the conversations to be purposeful and productive. Additionally, you will also wish them to be supportive and exploratory. Striking the best balance between these two dimensions is not easy, but this quick guide aims to help you.

STRUCTURING THE MENTORING CONVERSATION:

Providing a supportive space for people to explore their ideas whilst progressing their development is not straightforward. The GROW model developed by Sir John Whitmore in 'Coaching for Performance' is a helpful way to create a structure for people to move forward in their thinking and ultimately their performance. Sir John suggests moving through questions that start with Goal, through Reality, Options and ending with Will or Way Forward.

GOAL

What do you need to achieve?
What do you want?
How will you know when you get it?

REALITY

What is happening now?
What seems to be getting in the way?
What actions have you taken so far?

OPTIONS

What could you do to overcome the barriers?
What else could you do?
If you had more time/power/money what would you do?
Would you like another suggestion?

WILL

What will you do?
What first steps will you take when you leave this meeting?
What support will you need from whom?
How committed are you to this action plan?

Whilst the GROW model may sometimes offer a clear route through the conversation, it is worth remembering that these conversations are rarely undeviating or uncomplicated. However, this GROW structure can offer a useful 'guide rope' for the mentor which can allow you to get back on track or reconnect with the goal/objective.

STRUCTURE SUMMARY

- What is the purpose of you having a mentor?
- What are you looking for in a mentor?
- What is important to you about the mentoring relationship?

STRUCTURING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [The GROW Model](#)
- [The OSCAR Model](#)

GOAL SETTING

One of the most important tasks for the mentor and mentee at the beginning of the relationship is to define and refine the purpose for the mentoring. This may seem fairly obvious, but it is surprisingly tricky to do this well. Most of us in professional settings have to set ourselves or others' goals and we are likely to be reviewed against them yearly. However, mentoring goals are different because they are often very personally motivating, individually career orientated and can change radically over the course of mentoring. Additionally, working with a mentor who is not closely connected to us professionally means we can have more objective discussions.

Open and exploratory questions are the best way to reveal the purpose, even if the mentee appears to have a very clear and specific goal at the outset. It is also useful for the mentor to notice how the goals fits into and is connected to the following goal categories.



It is most common for people to present their goal as Technical or Career orientated at first, but don't be surprised if the Performance element emerges as an additional aspect of the goal. Allowing the mentee to shape and synthesise their goal with an honest and emerging understanding of their development is crucial.

SUMMARY

1. Defining the goal can take time
2. Refining the goal is essential
3. Reviewing the goal regularly is helpful

GOAL SETTING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [Mentee Goal setting](#)
- [Goal Setting principles](#)

If you would like further support, please contact the [ACCELERATE programme manager](#).

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