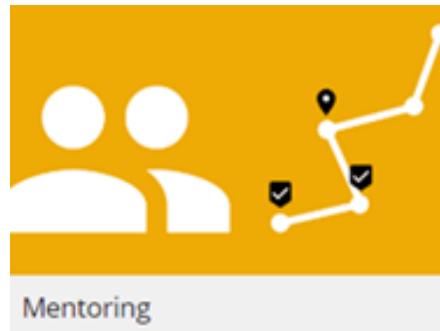


Mentoring Skills Pack for Mentors and Mentees

This 'how to' pack is suitable for mentors and mentees with varying experience



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Sources: Everyone needs a Mentor, David Clutterbuck, 2004, CIPD Effective Mentoring Course, 2009, SEE Mentoring Scheme Pack, 2008, Hampshire Learning Centre's Performance Coaching for Managers - Course Handbook, 2009. Best Practice in Performance Coaching, Carol Wilson, 2007, Eric Parsloe: www.reading.ac.uk/engageinmentoring/what-is-mentoring/eim-definitions.aspx, Original Material 2013.

Mentoring Skills Pack

What is mentoring?

The purpose of mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order to maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be". Eric Parsloe

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) define mentoring as a form of tailored development for the individual, that also brings benefits to the organisation.

The characteristics of mentoring are:

- It is a supportive form of development (it is not performance management).
- It focuses on helping an individual improve skills, knowledge and behaviours

What is a mentor?

Someone who supports the development of another, helping them develop their knowledge and skills and be more self-aware in their thinking and their behaviours.

- An experienced advisor and role model.
- More experienced or particularly skilled in a certain area.
- Not normally the line manager of the mentee (the person being mentored).
- Willing to share their knowledge, and experience.
- Focused on helping the mentee to make transitions in their knowledge, thinking, and performance.

Benefits of mentoring

Here are just some, because mentoring is personalised the benefits tend to be specific to the individual's needs at the right time. Mentoring is appropriate when training would be too broad as an approach.

For the mentee

The most widely reported are rapid learning and constructive challenge and feedback; availability of advice and a sounding board, practical advice, transfer of knowledge and judgement.

For the mentor

An opportunity to practise development and communication skills that are applicable in many situations, to reflect on own practice, to increase in-depth understanding of work in other departments. Many mentors report a sense of achievement.

For the organisation

Enhanced motivation, professional and personal skills, succession planning, retention and development of talent, self-sustaining form of development.

What do mentors do?

Key activities of a mentor:

- Advising/ guiding
- Giving feedback
- Coaching
- Listening
- Questioning
- Being a sounding board

An important aspect of the mentor's role is being able to draw on their own experience and knowledge to guide others.

Mentoring is not about making decisions for people.

Mentors should encourage the person being mentored to explore all possibilities and the consequences of alternative decisions.

Mentors reflect on their own experiences and feelings and use questioning to help others decide the right course for them.

They encourage the person to think; 'advising' all the time means that the mentor is doing all the thinking all the time!

How can mentors help?

- Acting as a 'critical friend', providing feedback.
- Acting as a role model and advisor.
- Sharing experience and specific knowledge.
- Helping the mentee to improve their thinking and learning skills and build confidence.
- Listening, being neutral and non-judgemental.
- Helping the mentee to work out clear goals and actions.
- Helping the mentee develop specific skills, knowledge and performance.
- Respecting the fact that the mentee is not them and will need to make their own decisions.
- Activities may involve; discussion, observation, shadowing, feedback, reviewing documents, advising, acting as a sounding board, challenging, sharing experience, coaching, mentoring.

How to be a great mentor

Good mentoring relationships can be richly rewarding, not only for the person being mentored, but for the mentor too.

Mentors can, among other things, provide exceptional learning experiences for their mentees and, in doing so, expand their mentees' awareness, insight and perspective.

Here are 8 things you can do to be a great mentor:

1. Be credible

The best mentors are people that have credibility in, and have personally achieved success in, the area where the mentee is looking for support. Being credible doesn't mean that you need to have all the answers. The best answers for your mentee will come from their own thinking, with the help of your wisdom to support them.

2. Be a positive role model

Good mentors are respected by their mentees. A mentee can learn a lot from their mentor simply by watching how their mentor behaves in any particular situation. Good mentors will also look out for experiences, or even create situations in which their mentees can become involved to learn new things, for example, providing a look behind the scenes or a glimpse at how other people live or do things.

3. Ask open questions

Asking your mentee open questions will help you as a mentor to identify their real needs, values and passions. It's also a great way to get your mentee to think through situations themselves and draw out the consequences of the various choices or courses of action they can take. During these conversations, you can share your wisdom, without making decisions for your mentee. That's their job.

4. Act as a sounding board

Mentees benefit greatly from the opportunity of having a good mentor listen to them. Allow them to explore their thoughts and ideas openly with you. This will often help them unravel their thinking and gain insights about a situation as they share their concerns with you.

5. Provide a fresh perspective

One of the benefits of working with a mentor is that a good mentor will often provide their mentee with a fresh perspective on an issue. A good mentor will often have the clarity of distance from an issue or problem that's needed to provide objective feedback to their mentee. They can also hold up a 'mirror' to the mentee to, for example, let the mentee see what their behaviour looks like to others.

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6. Provide helpful feedback

Not all feedback is helpful. A good mentor knows this and will deliver feedback in a way that will help their mentee gain insight to further develop specific qualities or skills. For example, a good mentor will always ask for permission to give feedback before doing so. Giving unwelcome feedback can be detrimental to any mentoring relationship. Instead, explain what you'd like to talk about first and highlight the benefits of doing this.

7. Acknowledge achievements

Highlight for your mentee any achievements they might have forgotten, to help build their confidence.

Remember to celebrate their successes on your mentoring journey too.

8. Offer your advice, but only if your mentee asks for it

It can be very tempting for a mentor to just jump in and offer advice before a mentee has actually asked for it, especially when you've dealt with a similar situation yourself. Being a sounding board for your mentee, allowing them to discuss the situation with you, then helping them to think through the situation by asking them questions to draw out the consequences of various actions, is always more empowering for a mentee than advising them what to do. It helps them work through the issue and come to their own conclusions. By doing so, you ultimately help them to learn to think through issues themselves and trust their own judgement, both valuable life skills.

Key Mentor Behaviours

1. Supportive and encouraging.
2. Listens well and demonstrates his/her listening by frequent summaries.
3. Non-judgmental.
4. Asks probing, challenging questions which get mentee thinking things through for themselves.
5. Good at seeing when the other person needs help; doesn't leave them to struggle inappropriately.
6. Adopts a positive, 'can-do' approach.
7. Works at helping mentee solve problems; doesn't try to take the problem over or dictate solutions.
8. Asks lots of open questions. E.g. 'What do you think about?', 'How do you see this?', 'What are your thoughts?', 'What would your recommendations be?'.
9. Is interested in developing their own effectiveness.
10. Is focused on outcomes, follows up by asking how actions are progressing.

How to be a great mentee

As a mentee, the success of the mentoring relationship depends on you.

You are the driver of your own development.

8 Tips for Mentees

1. Be prepared for your mentoring sessions. Model professionalism in your mentor meetings by being prompt, prepared, and maintaining a professional attitude. Preparation means coming to the conversation with a good idea of what you would like to focus on during the time together. Be punctual, well organized, and ready to give a brief update on recent progress and developments and to propose an agenda for the conversation today. You might even email the topics to the mentor ahead of time, if you think the mentor would appreciate it.

2. Establish a mutually agreeable plan for mentoring sessions, including how much time each of you need if a session has to be postponed. Schedule the sessions on your calendar immediately and build in enough time around the sessions to prepare. Your mentor is a volunteer whose extra time is scarce. By establishing a time commitment and ensuring that conversations start and end on time, you will demonstrate respect and responsibility to your mentor.

3. Ask direct questions about what you most want to know. Since the mentee is the one who establishes the agenda for the conversation, you are in a position to set up the conversation in a way that provides the most relevance and value for you. Let your mentor know what is most on your mind and what would be most helpful to you to talk about. If the conversation strays, just prompt the mentor to return to the original topic. You are responsible for ensuring that the conversation meets your needs.

4. Listen with an open mind. Often, we turn off our listening when we believe that the perspective being offered isn't pertinent or that the person speaking is "different" from us. However, your mentor's experience – however distant in time or industry-specific it may be – will carry a nugget of learning for you. Challenge yourself to find the connection, rather than rule out the advice or perspective that you are hearing. Be ready to learn something new as a result of the conversation.

5. Take notes. It's difficult to remember key points and commitments after the meeting. Keep a notebook and jot down ideas and insights during the session, and in between sessions. Do capture the commitments that you and your mentor make to each other so that you are able to follow up appropriately.

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6. Provide context and brief updates to help your mentor to understand you. While the mentor doesn't need to know every single thing about you, it's helpful to both of you if you use the first session to get to know each other. At the beginning of each session, provide a brief update on progress since the last conversation.

7. Respect your mentor's boundaries. The mentor's role is to support your development through regular conversation. Outside of the session, most mentors have very limited time to engage with mentees. Communicate respectfully with the mentor. Be careful not to inundate the mentor with emails or phone calls outside of the session. Respect the time boundaries of the session and do all you can to end at the agreed upon time.

8. Follow up on agreements. If you've committed to take a step as a result of the mentoring session, make sure you do so. It is discouraging for the mentor if you have made commitments that you don't act upon. You can also help the mentor to keep his commitments by sending a brief thank you note after a session that also lists any agreed-upon actions from either of you.

Key Mentee Behaviours

1. Clear goals for mentoring.
2. Is prepared; brings questions, issues, examples to discuss.
3. Open to new or different ways of thinking.
4. Takes responsibility; is active not passive.
5. Open communicator, will raise issues.
6. Is focused on outcomes, will try something new and reflect on it.
7. is willing to act as a sounding board or advisor for the mentor if required.

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The initial meeting

- Introductions, backgrounds, key work areas.
- Establish rapport, e.g. share current challenges.
- Discuss Mentoring agreement together.
- What do we expect from each other?
- Goals for the mentoring.
 - Specific outcomes.
 - Topic areas.
 - How we might work together in practical terms, e.g. shadowing, going over documents, discussing examples.
- Any concerns? How will we manage these?
- Agree next meeting.

Mentee planning

One thing a mentor could really help me with is...

Something I would love to ask a mentor is...

One reason I am interested in mentoring is ...

One concern I have about mentoring is...

I will get past this concern by

I will know that mentoring has been successful when... (outcomes)

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Mentoring Agreement

It is recommended that you discuss this during the first meeting

GOALS

Agreed goals for the mentoring partnership (what we hope to achieve and specific skills to focus on)

Mentor

Mentee

Evidence of goals being achieved (how will we know when things have gone well?)

Mentor

Mentee

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Mentoring Agreement	
Agreed frequency and duration of meetings:	
Agreed venue for meetings:	
Extent of email/phone contact expected in between	
Extent of other activities (e.g. shadowing) expected	

Guidelines for mentors and mentees

- Both parties should take equal responsibility for progression of the mentoring partnership.
- Any matters discussed between mentor and mentee should be treated as confidential unless agreed otherwise – e.g. you may wish to share good practice discussed with others, but you should not disclose more personal content, e.g. that the mentor finds this topic difficult, or that the mentee lacks confidence in this area.
- The mentor and mentee should raise any issues about the mentoring relationship with each other in the first instance.
- The mentor and mentee should respect each other's time and other responsibilities, ensuring that they do not impose beyond what is reasonable.
- The frequency and length of meetings should be mutually agreed, along with the means of contact between meetings for minor issues.
- Both parties agree to keep to time for meetings. If either of us cannot make an appointment, we will give as much notice as we can and reschedule as soon as possible.
- The relationship should last for a mutually agreeable time period, whereupon it can be continued or terminated.
- The relationship with the line manager is never compromised by any advice and guidance offered by the mentor.
- Both mentor and mentee should share responsibility for the smooth winding down of the relationship once it has achieved its purpose.
- Either party may terminate the relationship after discussing the matter with one another first ensuring mutual understanding of the conclusion.
- The mentoring partnership is voluntary for both parties. If not, the relationship is unlikely to be sustained and will lack openness needed for learning to occur.
- Both parties agree to participate in processes of evaluation as part of the scheme.

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What happens during mentoring?

Here are some of the things that mentees and mentors can actively do. Which activities you carry out will depend on agreement, workloads, access, and the objectives of the mentoring. For example, if the mentee specifically wishes to develop influencing skills in meetings with partner organisations, it may be useful to shadow the mentor at a similar meeting.

Activity	Purpose	Example
Discussion	Share experiences, expand knowledge	Discuss and compare team structures
Shadowing (More ad-hoc/ shorter time span than on the structured shadowing scheme)	See other person in work context. Helps to see behaviours that are hard to explain; is relevant experience because it is real	Mentee sits in on presentation/ meeting/ one to one run by mentor.
Observation	To give mentee neutral feedback	Mentor observes mentee giving briefing and feeds back on how clear the explanation was
Giving feedback	Raise awareness	Mentor notices that mentee seems negative, feeds this observation back to them
Listening, acting as a sounding board	Allows speaker to think issue through, picks up on key points, notices assumptions or contradictions in thinking	Mentor allows mentee to continue without interrupting
Reviewing documents, plans etc	Look at real work	Discuss project plan, mentor might question why each step planned, might notice risks not managed etc
Advising, sharing experience, explaining	Giving specific targeted advice based on experience or observation (remembering that mentee will need to adapt approach to suit their skills and the situation)	Mentor shares how they handled a conflict situation in the past
Preparing/ practising	Practising what will go away and do so you can plan your approach, try something out in 'safe' environment	Mentor asks mentee "how will you start this difficult meeting off? What will you say? And then what?"
Questioning and coaching	Helps mentee see different ways of thinking and acting- asks about what's really going on	Mentor asks "how do you know that 'they'll never approve it?"
'Give it a go'	Focus on actions- try something out, do something different	Agree new approach, mentee goes away and tries it out, discusses outcomes with mentor

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Avoiding potential issues in mentoring

Issues	How to avoid
Lack of time	Be realistic, be prepared, keep to time, book in advance.
Lack of trust/breaking confidentiality	The agreement and the discussions you have about how you want to work and what you expect from each other must be clear.
Mentor takes over	Mentees must think about what they want. Mentors must remind selves of benefits of developing mentee's ability to think for themselves and not become over reliant on you.
Mentor out of depth	Ask for help, don't try to fix things for the mentee, they must take responsibility. Talk about boundaries – mentoring is not counselling.
Conflict with mentee's line manager	The relationship should never undermine the mentee's relationship with their line manager. Mentees should keep line manager informed about mentoring (brief details).
Issues with relationship/ approach not dealt with	Be open, discuss how you will review how it's going and agree to be honest with each other.
Unrealistic expectations	Again, clear agreement at the start is very important.

Ending the relationship

- Appropriate when objectives have been achieved and/or the scheme comes to an end.
- Mentee should be able to 'mentor' themselves in the future.
- Review: how you worked together, how well objectives were met, what you have both learned, what's gone well, what you might do differently.
- What has been the impact on the mentor, and the mentee?
- Where do we go from here? End? Continue? Less often?, every now and then?

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Hints and tips for listening more effectively

Active listening is about communicating to the person that you are seeing the situation from his/her point of view.

- Uncross your arms and legs, lean slightly forward.
- Eliminate barriers (desks etc).
- Be prepared to sit out awkward silences.
- Give the person time to find the right words.
- Don't assume you know what they are going to say.
- Keep clarifying and summarising.
- Don't show boredom or irritation.
- Beware of only hearing the good and filtering the bad (or vice versa).
- Maintain your concentration.
- Paraphrase what the person has said, restate what you have heard in similar but fewer words.
- Clarify aspects you do not understand. Admit confusion and attempt to seek an illustration or example.
- Pull together principal themes and points in the form of summaries
- Also comment on where the session has reached.

What are your **BARRIERS** to listening?

I'm quite happy to listen to somebody when...

I tend to concentrate on what someone is saying if...

If I can't put my views into a conversation I feel...

When listening to someone speaking, I usually find myself spending most of the time...

Subjects that bore me include...

To become a better listener I ought to...

Use Silence!

4.5 seconds is the average time we can stand a radio station being silent before we have to turn over! – we need to fight our natural need to fill silence.

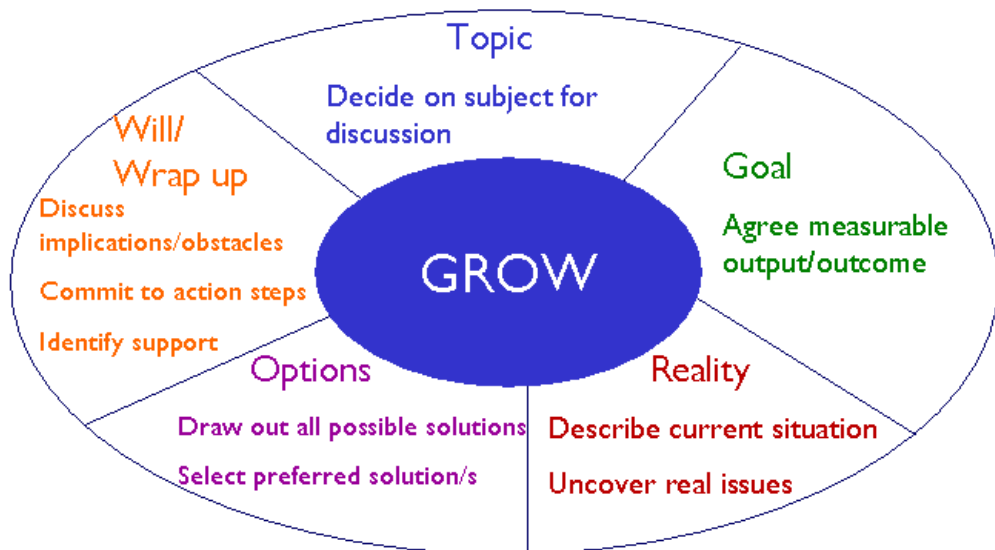
Observe the mentee and use your experience to work out when silence is better than asking yet another question – just because the mentee has stopped talking, doesn't mean they've stopped thinking.

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Coaching

A technique that mentors use. Involves, listening, reading non-verbal signals, asking key questions, spotting where the mentee is making assumptions or generalisations, and challenging these by asking questions or giving feedback.

Key coaching model gives a framework: GROW



Goal	A clear statement of what the mentee wants to achieve (or what needs to be achieved)
Reality	The current state
Options	Exploration of the various options available (and potential impact of each)
Will	Which option provides the most appropriate and likely chance of achieving the goal

Do not fall into the trap of:

- Moving the person onto the next stage in the learning cycle before they are ready.
- Jumping to solutions (you or them).
- Not using the full range of questions in the GROW model, but bearing in mind the question you use must help build upon and 'connect' with the mentee's understanding of the situation.

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GROW – Example Questions

GOAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What specifically do you want? 2. How will you measure it? 3. How will you know when you have achieved it? 4. When do you want to achieve it by? 5. What is your intermediate goal/what will be your first step? 6. Is this enough of a stretch?
REALITY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the situation right now? 2. What have you done about it so far? 3. How do you compare with others on that point? (benchmark) 4. When did you notice things were not going so well? 5. What happened to cause the situation? 6. How do you feel about your challenge right now? (1-10)
OPTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What could you do about the challenge? 2. What have you seen other people do in similar situations? 3. How have you solved similar challenges in the past? 4. How would you tackle the challenge if you were your role model? 5. What if you had more time/money/confidence etc?
WILL/WRAP UP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are you going to do about it? 2. When are you going to start? 3. Will this action meet your goal? 4. What obstacles might you meet? 5. What support do you need and how will you get it? 6. What else might affect your decision? 7. On a scale of 1-10 how committed are you to taking this action?

Questioning

Types of Questions

Open questions

Tend to start with who, what, (why) and when. Encourage the mentee to talk.

Hypothetical questions

To paint a hypothetical picture- *what would you do if you were the member of the public?*

Useful where a situation is new to a mentee, where mentee is mentally blocking (*I can't*)

Probing questions

Where more detail is sought

Tell me more, and what else, what next?

Useful for exploring particular events/possibilities

Logical questions

Logical chain of questions to draw out a conclusion and to challenge assumptions. Questions about questions – *why do you think I asked that question? If you get that outcome, is it what you really want? What do we already know about? What are you basing that on? And what will that get you?, and then what?*

Useful for getting mentee to identify own issues/possibilities. Purpose not to get 'the answer' but to develop critical thinking.

Reflective questions

So you think? 5 projects?

Useful for presenting back their own thoughts, checking/demonstrating you've heard. Useful when all a mentee needs is for you to be a sounding board- which is more often than you would think.

Either/or questions

Simple alternatives posed for selection, when multiple confusing issues going on

Useful for gaining commitment or getting a decision

Not useful when they haven't had time to think it through or aren't ready to commit.

Leading questions

Don't you think you should?. Not recommended.

Better to make clear suggestions instead "*you might want to think about...*" "*can I make a suggestion?*"

Multiple questions

What was your best ever role and when was that and how did you get it and what skills did you develop? Not recommended

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Good Questions for mentors to use

Note some of these are quite challenging and you should use your judgement about when they are appropriate.

- I don't know what to do about it – what do you think?
- Is there another way of doing this?
- What are you basing that on? Have you checked? How do you know?
- If our roles were reversed, what would you be advising me right now?
- Could you treat this as an experiment and see what happens between now and our next meeting?
- So you dread your conversation with X? What's causing that feeling?
- How committed are you to achieving this?
- How could you have done that better?
- How genuinely committed are you to this goal?
- How much could you have contributed to this problem?
- How will you feel about your decision if you look back on it in 2 year's time?
- If this is really what you want to do, why haven't you started?
- What could you stop doing that would help your situation?
- What have you tried so far?
- What else could you do?
- What is your gut instinct about this?
- What 2 or 3 things would make a difference to how you feel, if you focussed on doing them and ignored everything else?
- What messages might you be sending in this situation?
- What would you have liked to have said? Why didn't you?
- What would you have liked the other person to have said? Why didn't they?
- What would your 'best self' say or do here?

Catch up questions

- What has frustrated or pleased you since we met?
- What tasks did you complete? What did you leave incomplete? What did you avoid completely?
- What did you see differently or learn about yourself?
- Who did you add to your network?
- What skills or processes did you learn?
- Have you consciously changed the way you behave in some way? What was the result?
- What have you done to take yourself towards your long-term goals?
- What difficult decisions have you made? How do you feel about them?
- What or who did you challenge?

(adapt to suit personalised goals)

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“Real Conversations” - Giving feedback and challenging

- Talk about what you as the mentor have noticed.
- Focus feedback on behaviour rather than the person.
- Focus feedback on behaviour related to a specific situation.
- Be very specific with your feedback – its not a guessing game!
- Focus on behaviour which the receiver can do something about.
- Focus feedback on the amount of information that the person receiving it can use, rather than on the amount that you have that you might like to give.
- Check that the communication has been clear.
- Mentoring is a two-way process so you should be prepared to receive as well as give feedback.

How to challenge

Challenge is an extension of feedback. It is much more positive than it sounds, as it is a very important skill for enabling learning, change and innovation.

Challenging has been described as “An invitation to consider another perspective”.

- 1) Listen and notice when to challenge.
- 2) Ask questions to understand the mentee’s point of view (‘what makes you say that?’).
- 3) Ask questions to clarify why they think/ do that (‘what makes you think that?’)
- 4) Make observations (these might be in the form of statements or questions that summarise what they have said objectively (‘so you say no one in your team supports you on this, but you haven’t asked them?’), ‘so you’ll carry on dictating to your team, because you don’t want to be a doormat? What about the middle ground?’).
- 5) Offer alternatives to invite them to consider another point of view (‘have you considered another explanation?’), have you considered how that will feel for...?’, what effect do you think that will have on...?).

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When to challenge

You will need to use your judgement as you develop your ability to challenge, however you can start by looking for:

- A difference between what is said and what is done.
- An unwillingness to accept or respond to feedback.
- An unwillingness to take the initiative in conflict situations (e.g. 'it's the other person's fault').
- An unwillingness to learn if it means modifying behaviour.
- Overly negative, irrational or exaggerated talk (e.g. 'it's all hopeless', 'I just can't do this', 'I've never been so insulted').

Examples of feedback/ challenge

I don't know if you're aware, but.../I've noticed that...

Feedback is based on observation

e.g. I've noticed that when you talk about your team, you frown. Can you tell me more about that?

What part are you playing in this situation?

Particularly useful in conflict situations

It seems like you only have one way of responding in this situation – is there something else you could do?

Gives feedback about the limited response of mentee and challenges them to come up with alternatives

You say you want to implement the learning, yet you always have reasons why you haven't done it. What do you think about what I've just said?

Shows what is really going on. Points out difference in what's being said and actions. Challenges the mentee.