TAEDEL404
Mentor in the workplace
Release 1

Learner guide

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TAEDEL404

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Learner guide

Aspire Version 1.1

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Start date: ....

Phone number: ....

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Address: ....

Postal address: ....

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Contents

Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *TAEDEL404 Mentor in the workplace*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which activities you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Overview	This section provides general information about the vocational education and training sector and its essential components (such as training packages), which will underpin your learning.
Introduction	The introduction covers the key concepts relevant to this particular unit of competency, including the terminology that will be used throughout this learner guide.
Learning content	Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Templates	Templates are referred to throughout the guide. These are samples of working documents similar to those found in a training organisation. Completed templates may be useful as evidence for portfolio assessments. Ask your trainer for sample templates provided with the *Trainer's and assessor's* guide for this unit.
Examples	Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. Examples highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Activities	Activities give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete.
Summary	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	▶ Sources and interprets texts relevant to mentoring context, including organisational policies and learner information
Writing	▶ Develops content and documents information relevant to mentoring plan
Oral communication	▶ Uses appropriate communication techniques to build rapport, trust, engagement and provide guidance and feedback
Navigate the world of work	▶ Follows legislative requirements, organisational protocols, policies and procedures in workplace mentoring
Interact with others	▶ Builds rapport using collaboration with others to achieve joint outcomes and effective interaction ▶ Provides mentoring and role modelling to achieve agreed outcomes ▶ Cooperates and consults with others to clarify understanding and seek feedback
Get the work done	▶ Plans, organises and completes work according to defined requirements taking responsibility for decisions and sequencing tasks to achieve efficient outcomes ▶ Identifies and responds to problems, considering options for different approaches

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Develop a mentoring plan	1.1 Identify scope and boundaries of the mentoring relationship according to organisational procedures	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	1.2 Document mentoring plan in accordance with organisational requirements	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	1.3 Establish ground rules and negotiate realistic expectations	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	1.4 Establish and maintain confidentiality of the relationship in accordance with legislation, policy and procedures	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
Topic 2: Facilitate mentoring relationship	2.1 Develop learner's confidence, self-esteem, respect and trust in the mentoring relationship	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	2.2 Share personal experiences and knowledge with the person being mentored according to agreed objectives	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	2.3 Support the person being mentored to develop and use skills in problem solving and decision making	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	2.4 Use personal and professional networks to assist the person being mentored	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	2.5 Provide information, and guidance to enhance engagement in the workplace	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	2.6 Use techniques for resolving differences without damaging the relationship, and obtain assistance according to organisational policy and procedures	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 3: Monitor mentoring relationship	3.1 Provide planning assistance and guidance as requested by the person being mentored in a form and style to suit their requirements	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	3.2 Provide feedback to the person being mentored on progress towards achieving the expectations and goals of the mentoring process	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	3.3 Recognise and discuss changes in the mentoring relationship with appropriate stakeholders	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	3.4 Negotiate and manage closure of the mentoring arrangement once objectives have been met	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
Topic 4: Evaluate effectiveness of mentoring	4.1 Establish and discuss benefits gained from the mentoring process	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	4.2 Reflect on and articulate the personal benefits gained from providing mentoring	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident
	4.3 Identify and report the outcomes of the mentoring arrangement and the benefits to the organisation according to organisational policy and procedures to improve the mentoring system or program	☐ Confident ☐ Basic understanding ☐ Not confident

Assessment

When you have completed your learning, you will be asked to complete an assessment. You need to understand what will be required of you regarding assessment as you work your way through this learner guide: your trainer/assessor will provide you with the relevant details. This learner guide does not include a final assessment. Your training organisation may be using Aspire's Assessment and RPL resource for this unit.

For this unit you will need to show evidence of the ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, including:

▶ preparing a mentoring plan between the mentor and mentee that sets out clear objectives for a mentoring relationship that will last at least one year

▶ facilitating at least three mentoring sessions

▶ documenting information on sessions, including comments and notes from both mentor and mentee.

For this unit you will need to show essential knowledge to effectively complete the task outlined in the elements and performance criteria of this unit. This includes knowledge of:

▶ relevant policy, legislation, codes of practice and national standards likely to impact on the provision of workplace mentoring, including training contracts and responsibilities of employer, registered training organisation (RTO) and funding body where they exist

▶ mentoring methodologies and strategies

▶ learning theories in relation to mentoring

▶ strategies for working with a mentee including encouraging self-reflection, confidence and the building of rapport

▶ acceptable behaviour in the mentoring relationship

▶ equal employment opportunity, equity and diversity principles

▶ how a mentor can support the mentee's employer to meet its WHS obligations for the mentee.

Always refer to your assessor for information about the number, type and detail required in the assessment materials you will be required to complete.

Developing an evidence portfolio

An evidence portfolio is a useful way to demonstrate to your assessor how you have developed the skills, knowledge, attitudes and abilities that contribute to competence. Samples of your work that are developed as a part of the activities can be used as evidence for assessment.

Your trainer/assessor may also ask you to provide samples of documents or completed templates to demonstrate your progress in this unit. Some of these could be submitted as part of an evidence portfolio. Always follow the specific directions and guidance of your trainer/assessor to determine what documents your portfolio should include and how they should be presented.

Here are some examples of what your portfolio might contain:

▶ Your responses to specific activities as indicated in each section of the learner guide

▶ Personal reflections on your progress via an ongoing learning journal

▶ Recorded comments from your supervisor, peers or clients about how you have applied skills and knowledge

▶ Documents or completed templates* you have developed such as assessment plans, assessment tools, training session plans or checklists

▶ Samples and an analysis of relevant forms, documents and other material used in a training and assessment environment

*Throughout this learner guide, reference is made to specific templates that you can use for activities or for your portfolio. Ask your trainer for template samples; Aspire has included relevant templates in its Trainer's and assessor's guide for this unit.

Overview
Understand vocational education and training

There is a great deal more to the VET system and the delivery of training and assessment than the information provided in this Overview. Each learner guide for the units offered in the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment provides activities and examples to demonstrate the application of your VET knowledge.

To work effectively in the vocational education and training (VET) system, you need to understand its essential components, particularly training packages and how to use them in a training delivery and assessment role.

VET develops skills and knowledge for work through a national training system that seeks to provide consistent training across Australia. The primary purpose of VET is to equip people with the skills, knowledge and attributes they require to be 'work ready' and to operate effectively in employment. The Australian VET system comprises two fundamental elements that help ensure quality and consistency in training: training packages and the VET Quality Framework (VQF), which includes the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Training packages

Training packages are the foundation of Australia's VET system. A training package is a set of nationally endorsed qualifications, units of competency and assessment requirements developed for a specific industry, sector or workplace. Copies of individual training packages can be viewed at: http://training.gov.au.

Training packages also provide the structure for competency-based training. A competency-based approach judges outcomes against specific standards established in the endorsed components of a training package. Endorsed components are the various units of competency, the qualifications within which they sit and assessment guidelines that describe the industry's desired approach to assessment and qualifications.

Training packages are developed by Service Skills Organisations (formerly by Industry Skills Councils) to meet the training needs of an industry or group of industries. Training packages are maintained in line with the National Skills Standards Council's Standards for Training Packages to ensure training packages are of high quality and meet the workforce development needs of industry, enterprises and individuals. These standards apply to the design and development of training packages for endorsement by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (formerly the role of the now dissolved National Skills Standards Council (NSSC)).

Units of competency

Units of competency are the nationally agreed statements of the skills and knowledge required for effective performance in a particular job or job function. In other words, a unit of competency is a set of skills and knowledge that form part of a person's job role, and represents a discrete workplace outcome.

Units of competency are packaged as groups into qualifications and qualification levels in each training package. Each qualification has a descriptor that provides guidelines on how the unit is practically applied, who would use it and the unit's relationship to any applicable licensing, legislative or certification requirements.

Training packages do not prescribe how training is to be delivered. They provide guidance on assessment and the methods of assessment that may be appropriate for each unit of competency. Registered training organisations (RTOs) are responsible for how training and assessment occur.

An RTO can also issue qualifications derived from training packages or accredited courses, or statements of attainment to recognise the completion of a unit of competency from a qualification or accredited course.

The VET Quality Framework

The VET Quality Framework (VQF) is a set of standards and conditions used by the Australian Skills Quality Authority to assess whether an RTO meets the requirements for registration. The *National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011* (Cth) established the National VET Regulator (NVR) and underpins the VQF.

The VQF comprises:

▶ the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
▶ the Australian Qualifications Framework
▶ the Fit and Proper Person Requirements
▶ the Financial Viability Risk Assessment Requirements
▶ the Data Provision Requirements.

Training that leads to the award of an accredited qualification must be delivered and assessed by an RTO that satisfies the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015. The Standards include the Essential Standards for Initial Registration and the Essential Standards for Continuing Registration. There are eight standards to which RTOs must comply.

You should familiarise yourself with the VQF and the compliance requirements it places on RTOs; this compliance directly affects the work you do as a trainer and an assessor.

Australian Skills Quality Authority

Course accreditation agencies such as the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) set regulations and standards for the VET sector to ensure course quality is maintained through the effective regulation of training providers and accredited courses. It does this mainly through the VQF. (Note: Victoria and Western Australia have not referred their powers of regulation to ASQA and continue to be subject to their respective state regulators if they operate solely within their state.)

ASQA works with other regulatory, funding and policy bodies to ensure the training provided is of high quality and meets the requirements of industry-developed training packages, so VET graduates have the required skills and competencies for employment.

Any RTO operating solely in Victoria and/or Western Australia is regulated by those states' regulators (not ASQA), and must comply with the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) Essential Conditions and Standards for Registration. The VQF Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations derive from the AQTF standards.

Throughout this learner guide, reference is made to both sets of Standards, presented as VQF/AQTF.

The Australian Qualifications Framework

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), a component of the VQF, is a policy framework that defines the standards for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It specifies the learning outcomes for 16 nationally recognised qualifications. The following diagram represents the 10 levels of the AQF.

Reproduced with permission of the AQF council, from AQF Second Edition, January 2013, p. 19.

An RTO must issue qualifications and statements of attainment that align to the AQF and meet the requirements of the AQF Qualifications Issuance Policy and the endorsed training packages within that RTO's scope of registration.

Training and assessment

The primary role of RTOs in the VET system is to deliver accredited training and assessment-based units of competency and qualifications. You may be employed by an RTO to facilitate classroom, online or blended learning; to deliver workplace-based training and assessment on-site to enterprise staff; or to coordinate and support enterprise trainers, coaches and mentors in their roles.

Alternatively, you may be an enterprise trainer whose role is to facilitate learning and carry out assessment in the workplace, perhaps based on national units of competency or internal enterprise standards. The work you do may or may not lead to a recognised qualification.

When working with training packages and before providing training or assessment services, there are two aspects of competency and units of competency that you need to understand:

▶ How to identify and 'unpack' the key features of a unit of competency
▶ The dimensions of competency and their role in ensuring that competency incorporates all aspects of work performance

Explore a unit of competency

You should unpack a unit of competency and consider each part of the unit to form a picture of what a competent person looks like, how assessment should occur and what evidence is required.

The following table summarises the components of a unit of competency, as defined in the TAE Training and Education Training Package Implementation Guide.

Component feature	What it relates to
Unit of competency	
Title	The title describes the unit outcome.
Unit application	This field describes how the unit is practically applied, who would typically use it and the unit of competency's relationship to licensing, legislative or certification requirements.
Prerequisite units	This is an optional field that specifies any unit/s in which the learner must already be competent prior to achieving competency in this unit.
Unit Sector	This field is used to categorise units of competency in relation to industry sectors or types of work.
Elements of competency	Elements of competency describe the outcomes of the significant functions and tasks that make up the competency. Elements describe actions or outcomes that are demonstrable and assessable.
Performance criteria	Performance criteria specify the required performance in relevant tasks, roles, skills (including foundation skills) and the applied knowledge that enables competent performance.
Foundation skills	This field describes the language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills that are essential to performance.
Range of conditions	This is an optional field that specifies different work environments and conditions that may affect performance. Range is restricted to essential operating conditions and any other variables essential to the work environment, so it is quite different from the previous range statement.
Unit mapping information	This field specifies the code and title of any equivalent unit of competency.
Links	This field provides a link to the Companion Volume Implementation Guide.
Assessment requirements	
Performance evidence	Performance evidence, as the name implies, specifies what individuals must do to show that they satisfy the performance standards in the unit of competency.

Component feature	What it relates to
Knowledge evidence	Knowledge evidence, as the name implies, specifies what individuals must know in order to carry out the work tasks described in the unit of competency safely and effectively.
Assessment conditions	This field describes mandatory conditions for assessment; for example, details of equipment and materials; contingencies; physical conditions; relationships with other people; and time frames. It also specifies assessor requirements.
Links	This field provides a link to the Companion Volume Implementation Guide.

Explore dimensions of competency

Reviewing the dimensions of competency is an important part of unpacking a unit of competency. The dimensions of competency relate to all aspects of work performance in both routine and non-routine work situations. A competent person can successfully apply their skills and knowledge to work activities in a range of contexts.

The following table explores the four dimensions of competency in more detail.

Dimensions of competency	Meaning
Task skills	The candidate must perform the individual skills required to complete a work activity to the required standard.
Task management skills	The candidate must manage a number of different tasks to complete a whole work activity, such as working to meet deadlines.
Contingency management skills	The candidate must use problem-solving skills to resolve issues that arise when performing a work activity.
Job/role environment skills	The candidate must perform effectively in the workplace when undertaking a work activity by working well with all stakeholders and following workplace policies and procedures.

Incorporate foundation skills

Foundation skills are the non-technical skills that support an individual's participation in the workplace, the community and in education and training. In training packages, the foundation skills can incorporate the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills described in the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF), and the employability skills described in the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework (CSfW).

Foundation skills underpin competent performance and are identified in each unit of competency in a foundation skills table. The foundation skills should be considered an integrated part of the unit for delivery and assessment purposes.

FSK Foundation Skills Training Package

The FSK Foundation Skills Training Package was developed to work in combination with other training packages to support the development of learners' core skills, so they can achieve their vocational training goals. Trainers have an opportunity to use material developed, such as those developed by Aspire Learning Resources, to deliver foundation skills to learners. RTOs have an opportunity to deliver training and qualifications in foundation skills units to support their students.

IBSA's Building Strong Foundations resource provides information about using the Foundation Skills Training Package. You can access Building Strong Foundations at this website:

▶ www.ibsa.org.au

The Foundation Skills Training Package Implementation Guide also contains an explanation of the use of this training package. You can access it at this website:

▶ https://vetnet.education.gov.au

Assessment methods

The competency-based assessment system relies on an assessor making a judgment about a person's competence against performance benchmarks in a unit of competency, using methods such as criterion-referenced assessment, standards-based assessment or evidence-based assessment. An assessment candidate should be judged as either competent or not yet competent according to whether they demonstrate that they can meet the specified standards.

The recognition process

The recognition process allows candidates to provide evidence that their previous training, work or life experience aligns to the skills and knowledge described in a qualification or unit of competency.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is one form of this process. Recognition can also include recognition of current competency and credit transfer.

Evidence of competency may include work samples, journals, certificates of achievement and third-party testimonials. In addition, candidates may be asked questions, observed undertaking set tasks or asked to demonstrate the authenticity of their work.

RTO staff must be able to provide clear, accurate information on assessment and recognition processes to candidates. Your obligations could therefore include:

▶ advising and assisting a candidate/learner to apply for recognition

▶ determining the type of recognition for which the candidate/learner should apply

▶ assisting the candidate/learner to complete relevant documents

▶ processing recognition applications in a timely manner.

Candidates may apply for recognition before the learning program commences. In other cases it may become apparent as a learner progresses through training delivery that they have the skills, knowledge and competence to satisfy the assessment requirements for a unit of competency or a cluster of units.

Introduction

Mentor in the workplace

In Greek mythology, Odysseus, King of Ithaca, asked his friend Mentor to help his son Telemachus to fulfil his birthright. From this ancient tale comes the modern term 'mentoring' – one person helping another to achieve their goals.

People learn skills, culture and values from people they admire or relate to by observing and adopting their behaviours. An effective mentor provides objective and reliable advice and support to a mentee (the person being mentored) in an unthreatening way. An effective mentor can help make the most of a mentee's learning opportunities by encouraging their efforts and increasing their self-confidence.

In a workplace context, new and existing employees can benefit from having a mentor. A mentor can guide a young apprentice or trainee, helping them to develop an awareness and understanding of the culture and norms of their workplace and to avoid making mistakes that may affect their careers. A mentor can help existing employees to plan and manage their career, or to build the skills and knowledge required for advancement in an organisation. As well as helping employees to achieve their goals, mentoring also has benefits for the mentor and the workplace.

Whether formal or informal, all mentoring relationships have common features. A mentoring plan or agreement is used to establish the basis of the relationship. However, the mentor must also have time management, organisational and communication skills in order to lead the mentoring relationship. Trust and confidentiality are essential foundations for the relationship; and a mentor must be prepared to share knowledge, skills and experiences that help the learner to achieve the goals they have established.

Mentoring is a process. An effective mentor must monitor the relationship and provide feedback in ways that enhance the mentee's learning and sustain a healthy working relationship. The mentor will also need to manage the closure of the mentoring relationship in a manner that acknowledges the benefits of the relationship to all stakeholders.

What this unit of competency covers

The unit of competency *TAEDEL404 Mentor in the workplace* describes the skills and knowledge required to establish and develop a professional mentoring relationship with a learner, in particular an apprentice or trainee employed by, or undertaking work placement in, a workplace.

The unit applies to workplace supervisors or other work colleagues with responsibility for mentoring in the workplace.

Your job role

This learner guide will help you to develop the competence required to establish and develop a professional mentoring relationship with a learner in the workplace.

▶ You may be a supervisor or experienced worker responsible for mentoring an apprentice or trainee in your workplace.

▶ You may be responsible for supervising and mentoring a learner undertaking a work placement in your workplace.

▶ You may be asked by an RTO to mentor learners in your workplace. The formal training and assessment may be the responsibility of the RTO and managed in consultation with the workplace.

▶ You may be a supervisor or manager asked to mentor an employee so they develop the skills and knowledge to enable them to make the transition into a role similar to yours.

What you will learn

In this learner guide you will learn how to:

▶ develop a mentoring plan

▶ facilitate the mentoring relationship

▶ monitor the mentoring relationship

▶ evaluate the effectiveness of mentoring.

Essential learning points

The information in this learner guide requires an understanding of the following concepts and issues.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a relationship focused on personal growth and learning in which an experienced person provides professional guidance and support for another, often assisting in the mentee's career development.

To be effective, a mentoring relationship must be planned and based on ground rules. It can, however, be formal or informal.

The focus is the interaction between the mentor and mentee, but a range of stakeholders can be involved.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders may include:

▶ a trainee or apprentice

▶ managers or supervisors

▶ the RTO and its staff

▶ learning support services or learning resource suppliers

▶ a funding organisation.

Ground rules

The ground rules of a mentoring relationship are established in a mentoring agreement and will almost certainly require the active involvement of both parties. Ground rules may also include an agreement about privacy and confidentiality; WHS and other legislation; and any standards or codes of practice that apply to the workplace and have a bearing on the mentoring arrangement.

Access and equity issues

Access and equity issues are important considerations in a learning situation. Learners must have access to an environment that does not discriminate on any basis or cause offence or disadvantage through cultural or language misunderstandings. You will need the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure that the learning process reflects the needs of particular groups, such as people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, and people who speak English as a second language.

You will need to develop a profile for each candidate and identify where they will need support.

This could include:

▶ making reasonable adjustments to assessment; for example, allowing for an oral assessment rather than a written assessment if there are language or cultural issues, as long as the integrity of the assessment is maintained

▶ taking into account a candidate's language and cultural background; for example:
  – not using colloquial Australian words or phrases that may cause confusion
  – contextualising learning to show there is cultural understanding
  – explaining why WHS rules sometimes need to take precedence over cultural practices, such as the requirement to wear personal protective clothing when operating machinery rather than a traditional scarf or skirt that could put the learner in danger

▶ recognising disability issues and making adjustments; for example, allocating extra time for a demonstration or using an interpreter.

Techniques for resolving differences

Mentoring is a relationship, and the parties involved will have disagreements and conflicting interests as in any other relationship. Techniques for resolving differences include discussion and negotiation to find a mutually agreeable solution, self-disclosure, clear explanations for action, and assistance or mediation from a third party.

Benefits

An effective mentoring relationship brings benefits to the organisation and to the individuals involved.

Benefits to the organisation include:

- improved productivity and quality
- new competencies in the person being mentored
- increased retention rates for apprentices
- enhanced motivation.

Benefits to mentor and mentee include:

- insights into organisational culture, attitudes and expected behaviours
- a supportive environment in which successes and failures can be evaluated
- networking opportunities
- development of workplace competence and self-confidence
- recognition and job satisfaction
- mutual respect.

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

1A Identify the scope and boundaries of the mentoring relationship

1B Document the mentoring plan

1C Establish ground rules and expectations

1D Establish and maintain confidentiality

Develop a mentoring plan

Mentoring means different things to different people; it can take different forms according to what people seek to gain from a mentoring relationship. To establish an effective mentoring relationship, a documented plan with identified goals and expectations and clear boundaries must be developed.

A documented plan allows all parties to reflect and agree on the objectives of the mentoring relationship and how these will be achieved. The mentoring plan becomes a roadmap to achieving outcomes. A mentoring relationship without a plan can quickly become little more than a series of 'coffee catch-ups' that offer no real value to either party.

1A Identify the scope and boundaries of the mentoring relationship

Mentoring by an experienced tradesperson has long been used to teach apprentices the 'tricks of the trade'. Many managers have also 'learnt the ropes' from a more experienced leader in their organisation. In recent decades mentoring has been used more and more as a holistic strategy to help learners and employees to integrate into a workplace and develop a broad range of skills.

It is now common for many workers, supervisors and managers to have a mentor to provide the support, encouragement and advice that helps people achieve success in a role. Mentoring can help a person put their learning into the broad perspective of the technical knowledge and human interaction skills that it takes to do a job or grow a career.

Mentoring takes many forms, so it is important that the scope and boundaries are well defined to ensure that all parties involved have the same understanding.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship, usually between two people. A mentor supports another person, helping them achieve their maximum potential. 'Mentor' is the term for the lead person in the relationship. The recipient of the guidance and support – the person being mentored – may be referred to as the 'mentee'. When discussing the benefits of mentoring, it is worth remembering that the mentor also benefits from the relationship.

Sometimes people have a mentor but don't always think of that person as a mentor in the formal sense. A mentor may be a friend, a colleague or a person from a sporting club who listens and provides advice or encouragement that is valued and respected. Your mentor may be the person you first think of and turn to when you're not sure what to do and need some guidance and wisdom to help you make the best decision.

Mentoring is flexible; it is about the learner, not about the mentor. A clear objective of a mentoring relationship should be to foster independence and encourage self-sufficiency in the learner.

Types of mentoring relationships

There are different strands to mentoring. Sometimes someone comes into our lives to help us through a difficult time and then leaves; or perhaps someone in a workplace helps a co-worker or junior staff member deal with relationships or to make a career-related decision.

A mentoring relationship may be one where a mentor helps another person with their personal growth and development; this may have a short or long-term focus. Have you ever met someone who supported and encouraged you when you most needed it, and then they moved away from your life for whatever reason? There may be someone in your life who has been supporting and encouraging you with your career aspirations; or perhaps someone whose advice and guidance prevented you from dropping out of school or making a poor life choice.

Some mentoring relationships are workplace focused and relate to career development or managing relationships. Mentors can provide guidance in career growth; for example, to a mature-aged worker who must retrain in new technology to secure a promotion or to a young person to help them identify their interests and aspirations and how their training and work placement align to these. Mentoring can also help someone improve a difficult relationship with a co-worker or manager.

Many organisations have formal mentoring programs in place; others have informal or ad hoc mentoring. Mentoring is common when workplaces employ apprentices or trainees on a regular basis. Large organisations with training programs for managers and supervisors often provide structured mentoring programs.

What does a mentor do?

Mentoring means different things to different people; some people have different mentors they turn to for different aspects of their life. Common to all mentors is the desire to support the learner to achieve their goals and aspirations. The most important aspect of a mentor's role is to listen and to encourage the learner to develop their own solutions.

The mentor is only successful while the learner continues to seek their support voluntarily.

Mentors should:

▶ be available to listen and provide guidance, advice and support

▶ encourage the learner to explore opportunities and meet challenges

▶ share relevant experience and knowledge

▶ be a role model

▶ remain independent, keeping a distance so as to not become personally or emotionally involved with the learner

▶ praise the learner when they have achieved a step towards their goals

▶ be the learner's champion

▶ foster independence and promote the learner's personal and career growth.

Coaching

Often there is confusion between coaching and mentoring. The goal of both is to help the learner; however, the nature of the help and support and the way it is provided have a different focus. Coaching has specific goals regarding helping a person learn something; for example, a person may be coached in how to perform a particular work task until the task is mastered and they can perform it without assistance.

Coaching focuses on skill development and performance improvement. Mentoring is more general: it is about helping a learner learn to solve personal challenges and is focused on personal and career growth with specific skill acquisition a secondary outcome.

Types of mentoring

There are broadly three types of mentoring programs. Which one is used will depend on the needs of the organisation and the participants. The three types are listed and explained here.

Formal

Formal mentoring is usually part of a structured learning program in which learners spend time working in an organisation, or part of an internal career development program. For apprentices and trainees there will most likely be a documented mentoring program explaining what the roles of all parties are, including a plan for the learner's development.

Formal mentoring has a set duration, whether it be a period of time or until the goals of the relationship are achieved. There are guidelines for setting up the relationship and an evaluation process to assess its effectiveness.

Informal

Informal mentoring can be unplanned – developing as an 'accidental' relationship – or it may be loosely structured around a series of broad aims.

Sometimes a learner finds that they get along with a person who helps them or makes them feel good about themselves and from there a mentor–mentee relationship develops. A learner may even actively seek out the support of someone they admire and respect. In this kind of relationship, interaction may occur only when the learner feels the need.

Alternatively someone in an organisation may take an interest in a learner, perhaps seeing potential in that person and wanting to help them succeed. The duration of the relationship is not set; it may last only as long as both parties are benefiting from the relationship.

Distance

Traditionally mentoring has been a face-to-face activity, but modern technology supports interaction across global organisations or dispersed workforces in regional or interstate worksites. A mentoring relationship could be maintained with little or no face-to-face interaction.

Voice and video technology, email, chatrooms and blogs are just a few examples of media that allow ready communication between individuals.

Mentoring skills

Many adults have the potential to be a mentor and possibly have been or will be at some stage in their working lives or community involvement.

There may be times when the personalities of the mentor and learner are not compatible, so a mentor also needs to know when and how to withdraw without negatively affecting the learner.

The key attribute of a successful mentorship is that both the mentor and learner benefit. In a formal and structured mentoring relationship, this will be easy to assess because the scope and boundaries of the mentoring relationship are identified at the beginning of the mentorship process.

The skills needed to be a mentor include those listed in the following table.

Skills needed to be a mentor	Example
Planning and time-management skills to mentor in a workplace	Managing your time so you are available to meet with your mentee on a regular basis as agreed in the mentoring plan
Ability to motivate and encourage learners	Being able to communicate with your mentee in a way that 'connects' with them; for example, speaking to a 16-year-old mentee is likely to require different communication skills than speaking to a 45-year-old mentee
Skills to provide guidance and feedback to individuals	Knowing how to provide positive and constructive feedback to individuals
Interpersonal skills to: ▶ engage in relationship building, including building trust and maintaining confidentiality ▶ respond to diversity, including gender, ethnicity and disability	Knowing how to build a rapport with a mentee so they feel comfortable sharing their concerns and needs with you Understanding a mentee's background and physical needs and taking these into consideration so you are better able to guide and support them
Communication skills such as listening, questioning and giving and receiving feedback	Knowing how to communicate appropriately in a given situation
Initiative and enterprise skills to apply procedures relating to WHS and environmental legislation in the context of workplace mentoring	Modelling safe work practices and instilling the same respect for safety procedures, duty of care and vigilance for hazards in the mentee

Define scope and boundaries

At the outset the scope and boundaries of a mentoring program should be clearly defined. In other words, what is the purpose of the program? Mentoring programs can vary, particularly in formal mentoring programs put in place to support organisational needs. These needs may translate to mentoring programs that achieve the outcomes shown here.

Help

▶ Help to socialise new employees into the company

Support

▶ Support a particular target group; for example, by advancing career opportunities for female employees

Contractual requirements

▶ Address contractual requirements; for example, those specified in a training contract between the employer, the RTO and the funding body for an apprenticeship/traineeship program

Legislative requirements

▶ Addresses a legislative need; for example, mentoring relating to WHS requirements

Additional support

▶ Provide support and encouragement to 'at risk' learners or employees to address retention concerns; for example, those with disability, personal problems affecting their work or behavioural issues

High achievers

▶ Provide those who have been identified as high achievers with guidance and support to rise through the ranks of the organisation

Succession planning

▶ Train people to take on key roles in the organisation when senior staff are promoted or retire

Organisational procedures and mentoring

The scope and boundary for a formal mentoring program must be well defined so all parties are clear about why they are in the program, what the goals and objectives are and what is expected of them. Some programs may have a defined beginning and end, whereas others will continue for as long as the mentor and mentee wish.

Organisational procedures may also give additional form and substance to a mentoring program.

Organisational procedures may define:

▶ who can be a mentor or a mentee and whether or not they will be supported and funded by the organisation
▶ the time allowance that the organisation will fund for meetings and other mentoring activities
▶ the required number and structure of meetings and other forms of communication
▶ the goals of the mentoring relationship
▶ the reports and feedback required on the progress of the mentoring relationship.

Agreement with all parties

The scope and boundaries of the mentoring relationship should also be discussed and agreed with the mentee. There must be clarity and agreement about the purpose of the relationship and expected behaviours to which mentor and mentee should agree.

Discussing and agreeing on the scope and boundaries of the relationship is the beginning of the development of an open, honest and trusting relationship where expectations are known and understood.

The scope and boundaries of mentoring relationships can also be affected by legislation, codes of practice and national standards. If the mentee is undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship, this will also provide constraints to the arrangement.

Expected behaviours in a mentoring relationship:

▶ Neither party will call the other outside of work hours unless it is an emergency.

▶ There will be no yelling, bad language or 'put downs'.

▶ The mentor should not do things for the mentee that the mentee can do for themselves.

Australian Apprenticeships

An Australian Apprenticeship is variously referred to as an apprenticeship or a traineeship. Australian Apprenticeships give eligible people the opportunity to combine training and employment leading to a nationally recognised qualification.

The apprentice or trainee and the employer sign a training contract that formalises an agreement with the government and enables the apprentice or trainee. This enables the employer to receive incentives that help cover the cost and resources of taking on the learner, providing contractual obligations are met. One of these obligations is that the apprentice or trainee must enrol with a training provider and complete a nominated qualification within an agreed time frame.

The roles and responsibilities of the parties to an Australian Apprenticeship are explained in the National Code of Good Practice for Australian Apprenticeships, which is available from the Australian Apprenticeships website: www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au.

Apprenticeship/traineeship contractual obligations

As part of their contractual obligations, the learner, employer and training provider must develop a suitable training plan. State or territory requirements can influence the form of training plans.

If you are mentoring an apprentice or trainee, you may need to refer to the training plan to monitor the person's progress towards completing the training in accordance with the agreed contractual time line. Depending on your role, you may also have to meet with a training provider representative to discuss the mentee's progress.

As a general rule a training plan should set out:

▶ the start and end date of the Australian Apprenticeship

▶ the qualification issued on completion of the training plan

▶ the skills required by the Australian Apprentice to perform the job competently

▶ the training to be delivered by the employer and the RTO

- ▶ the units of competency that the Australian Apprentice must achieve, along with expected completion dates
- ▶ relevant units of competency already achieved (if applicable)
- ▶ learning resources that will be provided to the Australian Apprentice
- ▶ additional support required if there are identified barriers to learning; for example, if the learner has poor literacy and numeracy skills
- ▶ RTO plans for monitoring, assessing and reporting apprentice/trainee progress.

Here is an example of how a prospective mentor responds to a request to mentor a learner who is undertaking a four-week placement at a childcare centre.

> **Example**
>
> ### Identify the scope and boundaries of the mentoring relationship
>
> Kaylee is completing a Certificate III in Child Care at a specialised training centre. The course requires learners to complete 100 hours of work experience in a childcare centre; Kaylee has organised to complete this in a local childcare centre during her school holidays.
>
> John, who works at the childcare centre, is asked to be Kaylee's mentor. The mentor is to encourage and provide support to Kaylee while she is completing the on-the-job component. The relationship is to be confined to Kaylee's day-to-day experiences in child care and will not cover personal matters or career advice. One-on-one time spent with the mentor will be approximately 12 hours in total, and there will also be time needed for completing documentation and writing an evaluation report.
>
> John decides that this mentoring plan is not achievable for him because he has young children and generally takes leave during school holidays.
>
> Instead, John nominates Tarni. She is more experienced, and has grown-up children and therefore no school holiday commitments.

Activity 1

1. Use your network of contacts to find two people who have been mentors. Interview these people to discuss their experiences, focusing on one particular formal mentoring relationship. Your interview should seek information about:

- ▶ how the relationship was established
- ▶ what the goals of the mentoring agreement were
- ▶ what the boundaries and scope of the mentoring relationship were
- ▶ how organisational policy and procedure shaped the boundaries and scope of the mentoring relationship.

Write up and supply notes of your interviews.

2. Download and print a copy of the National Code of Good Practice for Australian Apprenticeships.
    Discuss the Code with an experienced mentor in your workplace or with someone from your network of contacts. What effect does the code have on their mentor–mentee relationship with an apprentice or trainee?

3. Discuss with an experienced mentor in your workplace or with someone from your network of contacts their experience with training plans and their level of involvement. What responsibilities or obligations does a training plan place on the mentor of an Australian Apprentice?

<div style="background-color:orange; text-align:center; padding:10px;">Click to complete Activity 1</div>

1B Document the mentoring plan

It is a good idea to record the mentoring plan in some way. Most commonly, this will be in a document that sets out what the mentor and mentee have agreed to as a goal for the program. The plan should be drafted and then discussed and revised until both parties are happy with the content and (if relevant) it meets the needs of the organisation.

Mentoring plans should not be changed unless there is agreement between all parties about what should be changed and why. Once such amendments have been made, the new version becomes the standard for the program.

Having mentoring plans documented makes it easier to evaluate and comment on the success of the program. Given that some mentoring programs may last for many years, it may not always be feasible or practical to rely on personal memory to recall goals and agreed items.

Documenting formal programs

Formal mentoring programs for those in educational pathways may be developed in consultation with the training provider and documented in the organisation's mentoring policy and procedures. Organisations that routinely use mentoring as a way to assist their staff will have standard templates to use for developing and evaluating programs.

There is no one way of structuring formal mentoring programs because organisations have different reasons for offering mentoring and may approach the process differently.

Apprentices or trainees are more likely to have a formal mentoring program to support them through the requirements of their learning and employment contract.

Common components of mentoring programs
▶ Goals
▶ Development objectives aligned to business goals
▶ Costs and resources required
▶ How mentors/mentees will be selected
▶ Program duration
▶ Expected measurable outcomes
▶ An evaluation process

Documenting informal programs

With informal mentoring programs, there may be little or no documentation. For example, there may be only a verbal agreement and no specific alignment to the organisation's objectives or process. For example, a senior person in an organisation may see in a young person from a disadvantaged background the qualities of

resilience, loyalty and other characteristics that make for an employee with potential. The senior person may make a decision to foster this young person's development by mentoring them.

In the organisations that do not have formal mentoring programs, informal mentoring is likely to be found even though it may not be acknowledged by the organisation.

If you are working in an organisation that does not have formal mentoring processes, but you and a mentee wish to have a mentoring relationship, it may be a good idea for you and the mentee to make some notes in your diaries about your communications. This way, you will both have a frame of reference to know whether the relationship is meeting your expectations. You must always ensure that your documentation meets the requirements of your organisational policies and procedures. Check with your manager or supervisor before you start if you are unsure.

In the workplace, mentoring is often used when:

▶ a new or existing employee needs support

▶ an apprentice or trainee joins the organisation

▶ a learner is undertaking a work placement at the organisation as part of their course requirements.

Mentoring documents

You must be mindful of the fact that all documentation associated with the mentoring program is confidential. It should not be left where it can be read by anyone who is not authorised to do so. Organisational policies and procedures will specify the people who may get access to the contents and this confidentiality should be enforced. An organisation or RTO may require that the mentor report certain issues; if so, this should be made clear to all parties when the scope and boundaries of the relationship are discussed.

Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in a loss of confidence from the mentee and an extreme reluctance to participate further in the program.

Example

Document the mentoring plan

Celia has recently been employed at the Citizen Town Council's water operations unit and has already started work in her new role. She has asked her new supervisor, Karl, about whether there is a mentoring program at the council, because she has a friend who has become a mentee and is getting a lot out of his program.

Karl has told Celia that the council does not have a formal mentoring program, but he thinks it is a good idea. They decide to meet once a month and at their first meeting make a few decisions about how their relationship will be managed. They agree to each keep notes in their work diaries and to refer to these at each meeting. Celia will also make note of things she does not understand in the workplace or that she feels need to be clarified. Karl will make notes of things he feels could be useful to Celia and will raise these at their next meeting. They agree to keep their discussions confidential.

At their first meeting, they discuss the level of formality and professionalism that is to be used, write a few paragraphs about this and initial the entry in each other's diaries. They also agree to a mediation process if things do not work out as planned.

This informal mentoring program is very successful. Celia feels that she is learning a lot and is able to be confident about her work, knowing that she can check with Karl whenever she feels unsure about anything.

Activity 2

Imagine that you work for an organisation that does not have a formal mentoring program in place. A new employee has approached you and asked you to mentor them for a year. Your manager has given you permission to mentor them, but with the proviso that you document the program as you go. Describe how you would keep a documented record of the following:

- ▶ Goals
- ▶ Development objectives
- ▶ Behavioural rules
- ▶ Scope and closure of the relationship
- ▶ Costs and resources required
- ▶ Measurable outcomes
- ▶ Evaluation process

Click to complete Activity 2

1C Establish ground rules and expectations

The first meeting between mentor and the mentee is a time for clarifying ground rules and expectations, and for getting to know each other. The parties should discuss and agree on how the relationship will progress, what the ground rules are and what expectations each has of the other. This includes discussing and clarifying any organisational or legal requirements. Ideally, once agreed, this information should be documented in a mentoring agreement.

Legislation, policy and procedures can affect the relationship and should be discussed when establishing ground rules. For example, there may be WHS and risk-management considerations. These additional requirements may be spelled out in workplace policies and procedures relating to mentoring.

Establishing a clear set of ground rules and expectations is important because they set the foundation for a successful mentoring relationship. Effective mentoring requires that the mentor has the communication and interpersonal skills necessary to build an open and trusting relationship with the mentee.

Ground rules for the mentoring relationship

Ground rules are the agreed standards of behaviour for participants in the mentoring program. They provide rules for what is and what is not acceptable. Clear, agreed ground rules and expectations allow the relationship to progress positively through shared understanding.

The following shows example ground rules that you may want to discuss.

Goals

All goals should be SMART goals; that is:

- Specific: The goal is clear and to the point; it is obvious what the goal is. For example, 'I want to complete my traineeship in tourism' is a clearly stated goal.
- Measurable: How will you know if the goal has been achieved? Can you measure progress? For example, a goal of 'I want to be a good chef' is not measurable. The goal is so broad that it will be difficult to measure progress towards achieving the goal.
- Achievable: It must be a realistic goal. For example, the goal 'I want to complete my traineeship in tourism this year' may be achievable if the mentee starts the traineeship in February; however, if they commence in October, the goal is not achievable.
- Relevant: Is the goal relevant to the mentee? Is it relevant to their life choices or work role? If it isn't, the chances of the goal being achieved are diminished.
- Time bound: To be effective and achievable, each goal must have a start and end date.

Responsibilities

- What each party agrees to do in the relationship; for example, the responsibilities for meetings could include setting dates, booking the meeting room, preparing agendas and typing up notes

Timing of communications

- ▶ How and when meetings or other agreed forms of communications will take place

Confidentiality

- ▶ What aspects of the relationship will be confidential
- ▶ What information will need to be shared for assessment and evaluation purposes
- ▶ What types of information would have to be disclosed by law (e.g. mandatory reporting)

Disagreements and escape clauses

- ▶ How disagreement between the parties is to be managed
- ▶ 'Escape' clauses to allow the relationship to end at any time with no blame being attached to either party

Non-compliance

- ▶ How non-compliance with the scope and boundaries by either party will be addressed

Boundaries and duration of the relationship

- ▶ What topics or issues are outside the scope of the relationship
- ▶ When and how the relationship will end; it may be a given date or when a particular goal has been achieved

Negotiate the ground rules

If you are establishing the mentoring relationship, you will need to discuss each of the ground rules with the mentee so they understand and agree to them. Ask the mentee to think about any additional ground rules that they would like to be established.

Ground rules need to be negotiated to be effective. If rules are imposed on the parties – and particularly if the mentor imposes them on the mentee – a power imbalance may arise. Therefore, one of the key skills you need to establish the ground rules is negotiation skills.

To be effective, the ground rules must align with:

- ▶ the identified scope and boundaries of the mentoring relationship
- ▶ organisational policies and procedures
- ▶ legislation, codes of practice and national Standards.

Negotiation skills

Negotiation skills are those skills required for both parties to come to an agreement about something; for example, a mentee may wish to meet twice a month whereas the mentor may think that once per month is sufficient.

Take the lead in demonstrating win–win negotiation skills by listening actively, acknowledging needs and being prepared to find common ground. Some of the criteria that you and the mentee should be aware of when negotiating are shown below.

Negotiation criteria
▶ Be clear about your own needs
▶ Make sure that you understand each other's perspective; listen actively to what the other is saying and ask open questions to clarify needs or clear up uncertainties
▶ Be open and honest with each other
▶ Avoid entering negotiations with a fixed idea on what the outcome will be; instead, seek a win–win outcome for each party
▶ Communicate using appropriate verbal and nonverbal language
▶ Be sensitive to cultural, language and generational differences

Negotiation steps

Here is a simple five-step model that you may find useful when negotiating a mentoring agreement. If you are using a model such as this one, make sure you discuss it with the mentee so both of you understand each step.

Steps for negotiating a mentoring arrangement

1 **Personal goals**
Both parties put forward their needs/perspective

2 **Reasons**
Both parties give reasons for their needs/perspective

3 **Acknowledgment**
The parties acknowledge each other's needs/perspective

4 **Options**
The parties make a list of options that both find acceptable

5 **Agreement**
The parties agree on an option that provides the maximum benefit to both of them (win–win scenario)

Written agreement

Once ground rules have been discussed and clarified, they should be documented and signed by each party. Documenting the ground rules helps avoid future misunderstandings.

A mentoring agreement will include the:

▶ agreed ground rules

▶ goals of the mentoring relationship

▶ expectations of the mentor and mentee.

The format and content of the mentoring agreement will vary depending on your organisation and the ground rules agreed between yourself and the mentee. Check to see if your organisation has a template that you must use. Otherwise, ask your trainer for a 'Mentoring agreement' template. Aspire has included relevant templates in the *Trainer's and assessor's guide* for this unit.

Develop mentoring skills

To establish an effective, meaningful mentoring relationship, a mentor must have good communication and interpersonal skills. A mentoring role contributes to the personal and career growth and development of another person, so you will need to learn how to respond in a positive way to an individual's needs. Good mentors constantly reassess their own skills and effectiveness as a mentor.

Seek feedback from your mentee, work colleagues and your manager about your performance as a mentor. Recognise when you need skill development yourself and seek support from your manager or organisation to get the training you need.

In addition to generic skills, you may find that you need training or support in how to work with a particular mentee. For example, if you are working with a person with a disability who uses assistive technology, you could arrange for a session to learn how the technology works so that you can communicate effectively from your first meeting. Or if you are working with someone from a different cultural background to you, you could arrange to attend cultural awareness training.

If you know that you could benefit from training or upskilling, organise this as soon as possible before the mentoring relationship commences. This ensures that you are able to support the mentee in the best way possible.

Learning theory and the principles of adult learning

An understanding of the theory of how adults learn, together with an appreciation of the principles of adult learning, will help you to select appropriate teaching strategies and be able to effectively monitor your mentee's progress.

Theorist Malcolm Knowles proposed a model of adult learning; his thinking, sometimes referred to as 'andragogical theory' (as opposed to pedagogical theory), is based on five key assumptions about what drives adult learning. Researchers have proposed other theories of adult learning, but the Knowles model is one way of viewing and understanding adult learning.

Knowles's principles of adult learning and examples of their application are described in the following table.

Theoretical principle	Explanation and application
Adults are relevancy-oriented – the need to know	Adults need to see the reason why they need to learn something; that is, how they will be able to use the new skills/ knowledge. For example, an accounts clerk is unlikely to see the relevance of learning how strategic plans are prepared; however, she is likely to be very interested in understanding how to prepare business activity statements.
Adults are autonomous and self-directed – the learner self-concept	Adults need to be responsible for making their own decisions; they want to be treated as capable of self-direction. The mentor is really a facilitator supporting the mentee to learn. Forcing adults to participate in activities is unlikely to lead to a successful learning outcome, so be prepared to offer a variety of activities and to ask the mentee for their opinions and suggestions.
Adults bring life experiences and existing knowledge with them to new learning – the role of learner experience	Adult learners already have a range of life experiences that are a resource for learning. These experiences, however, can lead to biases and assumptions. Adults should be treated as equals and their existing experience, knowledge and skills should be respected. Mentees' life experience should be used to provide a connection to the new knowledge and skills being learnt. If mentors know about each learner's existing knowledge, skills and experience and why they are participating in the training, they can link the content to the learner, making it more real for them and also satisfying the adult need for recognition.
Adults are practical – the readiness to learn	Adults must see how the new knowledge and skills will help them. They are ready to learn the things they need to know to cope effectively with work and life situations. Work skill instruction has the benefit of being relevant and meaningful as it can be applied immediately to the mentee's work role.
Adults are goal-oriented – orientation to learning	Adults want to know how the training will help them achieve their goals. They are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive it will help them deal with tasks and decisions they confront in daily work and life. Mentors can facilitate this perception by reinforcing the relationship between the session and mentees' goals.

Learning principles

A basic understanding of the principles of adult learning also contributes to effective work skill instruction and mentoring. Compare the principles outlined in the following table with Knowles's theory and you will see points of similarity (principles are presented along with an explanation).

Adults learn in different ways

▶ Effective mentors know that they need to have a flexible approach to delivering knowledge and skills training. They observe their mentees, they use a range of delivery techniques and they ask for feedback.

Adults need to know why they are learning

▶ Mentors need to explain the objectives of the training at the outset. This includes explaining to mentees why it is relevant to them. How will they benefit from participating in the training?

Learning and experience are connected

▶ Adults benefit when they can apply the instruction or demonstration to their life or work experience.

▶ Applying the information to a specific situation helps them to make sense of the learning.

Adults can self-evaluate

▶ Mentees can reflect on their own performance during and after training.

Learning styles

Some people like to learn in their own time, at their own pace and on their own. Learning in a group provides a more structured format with the opportunity to interact with others. Some people prefer action learning, which involves 'learning by doing'. Many people prefer a mix of delivery styles, depending on the type of information provided. For example, they may like to read by themselves, view some diagrams to assist their understanding, have someone who they can discuss the topic with and then put the learning into action.

While everyone has an individual style of learning, you may find a learning style is preferred more by certain people. For example, young workers and people born or educated in countries other than Australia may demonstrate a specific type of learning style preference.

Organisational constraints and production or safety requirements may mean that you cannot accommodate everyone's preferred learning style; however, before organising and conducting instruction and demonstration you should give careful thought to how you can use a range of instruction techniques to take into account different learning styles. Consider whether in some cases it may be appropriate to give the mentee options to allow them to choose how they complete learning activities.

Before organising instruction and demonstration you should try to identify learners' learning styles. There are three basic styles in which people learn or process information: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. These terms are described here.

Visual

Learners respond to visual information such as demonstrations, visual displays and books; they are unlikely to enjoy attending an instruction session unless the trainer includes audiovisual and other visual aids.

In addition to demonstration, consider using activity sheets, learner guides, books and standard operating procedures.

Auditory

Auditory learners prefer learning by hearing; for example, through verbal instruction or audio recordings. They are likely to prefer to hear verbal explanations rather than being asked to read learner notes. Question and answer sessions, coaching and recorded instruction sessions are appropriate.

Kinaesthetic

Kinaesthetic learners learn by doing. These learners respond best to being able to try things for themselves; for example, in an instruction session for creating a spreadsheet they will be the ones who are more likely to investigate software menus and press keys to see what happens.

Formative experiences

The experiences of a mentee in terms of their prior work, education and life in general will influence how the mentee participates in training and their attitude toward training and instruction. Another important factor is the skills and knowledge they already have that you can build on.

Gathering this kind of background information during the planning stage of training or instruction helps you address each mentee's individual needs. For example, mentees with a negative experience of education may resist training or be apprehensive about completing assignments. Note how the person performs in various learning situations so you can help them overcome their weaknesses and use their strengths.

Be mindful that employees may be reluctant to share this type of information with you for fear that it may have an adverse effect on their career or job security. Treat this type of information sensitively and consider using strategies such as explaining the differences between school and workplace training.

Work health and safety (WHS) legislation

As a mentor you need to understand and comply with the WHS obligations of your workplace, and if you are mentoring a mentee in another workplace, the obligations of that workplace too. All workplaces have policies and procedures that comply with national and state or territory WHS legislation. You need to be familiar with and follow these policies and procedures. In some instances you may be responsible for confirming safety requirements and undertaking hazard identification and risk management.

WHS legislation is premised on duty of care. Effectively this means a legal responsibility to ensure that nothing you do (or don't do) causes harm to any person. This may extend to the mentees for whom you are responsible, ensuring they don't do anything that creates a risk to the health and safety of themselves or others who are in the workplace or learning environment. For example, if you learn that the mentee is exceeding the maximum weekly working hours, you may be in breach of your duty of care if you do not act on that knowledge.

Identifying hazards

Sometimes mentoring sessions are conducted in settings outside your control; for example, in the mentee's workplace. In this case, you will also need to access and comply with that organisation's policies and procedures.

A hazard is anything that may harm or affect the safety of you or the mentee. There are many possible hazards that could arise in a learning program, from a physical hazard to a work practice or procedure. All learning programs should undergo a check to identify hazards that may affect anyone involved with the learning or who comes into contact with the learning environment.

You must follow organisational policy and procedure for identifying and dealing with real and potential hazards. Hazard identification can be more complicated if mentoring sessions are conducted on client sites or other external sites. In this situation, you will need to access your organisation's policies and procedures as well as the policies and procedures of the organisation where the learning program will be held.

Follow organisational policy and remember your duty of care. Visit the site and carry out your own hazard and risk assessment; also be prepared to meet with the client organisation's WHS officer to discuss potential hazards and how these can be dealt with.

Identify and act on all hazards even if the likelihood of an incident occurring is minimal.

Hazards could relate to:

▶ the physical environment
▶ tools or equipment you may use or access during a mentoring session
▶ learners, trainers, assessors, visitors or guests
▶ a lack of policies or procedures.

Assessing risks

Once hazards have been identified, a risk assessment may be required. A risk is the chance, high or low, that a hazard will cause harm, injury or ill health. As part of procedure you may be asked to carry out a formal risk assessment.

Once hazards have been identified and risks assessed, take steps to implement measures that will reduce or eliminate the risk associated with each hazard.

Follow organisational procedures for dealing with risks and hazards, including implementing a risk-control plan and ensure that you document your actions. If you are in any doubt about the safety of a learning facility or resource, consult with the relevant WHS officer or seek your manager's advice. You may also want to discuss WHS with your mentee at the first mentoring session and include reference to it in the mentoring agreement.

Risk assessment process
▶ Identify hazards.
▶ Work out the chance of injury or damage that the hazard could cause.
▶ Assess the likely degree of seriousness of the injury or damage.
▶ Find the most appropriate method for managing that risk.

Procedures for work tasks

If your role includes helping your mentee learn their work tasks, you will be involved in showing them how to perform the work tasks safely and in accordance with workplace procedures. In many organisations, there are documented procedures for work tasks. Ensure that the mentee knows where to access these procedures.

Examples of workplace procedures
▶ How to use a nail gun
▶ How to operate the organisation's switchboard
▶ How to mix hair dyes
▶ How to greet clients at reception
▶ How to slice bread using a slicing machine

Safe use and maintenance of equipment

Incorrectly used and maintained workplace equipment can lead to injury or death to either the operator or others. A mentor's role may include showing a mentee how to perform a task and use equipment safely. A mentor should also demonstrate the general principles of working safely and being aware of what is happening in the workplace environment.

There are potential hazards in all industries and organisations; however, risks and hazards can be minimised if employees follow work instructions carefully and report hazards or potential hazards before injury occurs.

Consider the following equipment and associated hazards.

Hand tools
▶ Extension cord not correctly secured (tripping hazard)
▶ Frayed electrical cable (electrocution and fire hazard)

Hair dyes
▶ Not wearing protective gloves (chemical burn hazard)

Machinery
▶ Noisy work environment (hearing hazard)
▶ Incorrectly fitted guard (operator hazard)

Emergency procedures

Understanding emergency procedures means more than simply completing your organisation's emergency evacuation orientation session. It means being aware of potential emergencies at all times and recognising that you need to be prepared for contingencies.

It is worthwhile having this discussion with your mentee every time you meet in a different site. Document in your mentoring agreement that you will both maintain current knowledge of emergency procedures, and state how you will do this.

Part of your induction process for a new mentee should be to discuss organisational emergency procedures.

Ensure that both you and your mentee are aware of the actions you must take in the event of an emergency. Explain the special roles that have been allocated in the workplace, such as evacuation warden or first-aid officer, and that employees should respond to fire or other emergency according to the training they have received.

Important organisational emergency knowledge
▶ Location of emergency exits
▶ Evacuation routes and assembly points
▶ Emergency alarm sound/s
▶ Contact points for first aid, WHS and fire wardens
▶ Types of fire extinguishers and how to use them

Sources of WHS information

All employees, mentors included, have WHS obligations that include knowing where to source WHS information in the organisation and, if you are mentoring a person at a different site, where WHS information is located in that organisation or site.

You will need to establish the various internal and external sources of WHS information, which may include those listed in the following table.

Internal sources of WHS information
▶ WHS officers/representatives
▶ Policies and procedures
▶ Material safety data sheets (MSDSs) and registers
▶ Manufacturers' manuals
▶ Risk assessments (past and present)
▶ Organisational WHS reports including workplace inspections, hazard and incident reports, technical reports, consultations and observations
▶ Safety handbooks
▶ Work instructions

External sources of WHS information

- ▶ WHS legislation and codes of practice
- ▶ Australian and industry standards
- ▶ State and territory safety authorities
- ▶ Technical information and data
- ▶ Manufacturers' manuals and specifications
- ▶ Unions and industry bodies
- ▶ Internet, journals, magazines

Example

Establish ground rules and expectations

Darren is partner in a legal firm. He is asked to mentor Mohammed, a learner studying a Certificate IV in Legal Services. He is enrolled at a learning centre called Ultimate Training. As part of the program, learners are required to complete an integrated work-learning placement.

The scope and boundaries of the mentoring program are defined by the sponsoring law firm as: 'To provide Mohammed with an induction into the workings of a legal office and to complete the work-integrated learning placement subject within the time frame specified by Ultimate Training'. The initial meeting with Mohammed goes well. The ground rules set out by the law firm and Ultimate Training are agreed to and documented in a learning plan.

When the discussion turns to establishing meeting times, Mohammed advises that the times of the meetings will need to be flexible due to his prayer times. It has already been agreed that Darren and Mohammed will meet weekly, and with Darren's workload it will be difficult to make ad hoc changes to meeting times.

Darren and Mohammed discuss alternatives and agree that the meeting time will be locked into their schedules, but if there is a clash with prayer time, Mohammad will give plenty of notice of the need to reschedule the meeting.

Activity 3

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

You have been asked to mentor a young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Tony, who is undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship which will give him AUR20311Certificate II in Bicycles.

Tony tells you his dream is to set up a bicycle-hire facility in a tourist centre where visitors to a national park could hire a bike to explore the park. You notice he has an excellent knowledge of the geography, wildlife and plants of the park.

Tony tells you that he wants to learn as much as he can, but he is shy and has trouble learning from textbooks. Later on, Tony's mother confides in you that he was diagnosed with dyslexia in primary school.

1. Taking into account your current workload, make a list of the ground rules that you would negotiate with Tony as your mentee.

2. What targeted support do you think Tony might need in order to learn successfully?

3. Assume that you have been asked to mentor the Tony in your workplace. Make a
    list of the internal and external sources of WHS information to which you will need
    to refer to ensure that you and Tony operate in a manner that is safe for yourself
    and others.

4. Review your organisation's WHS and environmental policies and procedures.
   a. List three hazards that you can identify in relation to a familiar role in the organisation.

   b. What is the organisation's policy in relation to reporting hazards and incidents?

   c. Assume that a fire has broken out. Identify the organisation's emergency procedure for this event.

   d. Briefly explain how employees are trained to safely use and maintain equipment.

e. Identify and summarise the organisation's environmental policies and procedures. Provide an example of how environmental policies may apply to a mentoring relationship.

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1D Establish and maintain confidentiality

A successful mentoring relationship is based on openness and mutual trust. In the course of the mentoring relationship mentor and the mentee may reveal private, personal or sensitive information. They need to be able to do this knowing that their privacy and confidentiality will be respected.

As a mentor, it is important that you clearly identify at the beginning of the relationship the ethical and legal responsibility both parties have to maintain privacy and confidentiality. You may also need to refer to equal opportunity requirements.

Organisational policy and procedure

In a structured mentoring program, organisational policies and procedures often provide guidance regarding the responsibilities and expectations of the key parties, as well as specifying the reporting or monitoring templates that must be used.

Policies and procedures can ensure that:

▶ the mentor and mentee understand how the program is administered in the organisation; for example, the procedure for either a mentor or mentee to withdraw from the relationship

▶ there is consistency across the mentoring program

▶ organisational norms are communicated; for example, the timing and conduct of meetings.

Policies and procedures will also identify specific legislation that needs to be adhered to in the mentoring relationship.

A mentoring program will be guided by:

▶ privacy legislation

▶ equal employment opportunity, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment legislation

▶ WHS legislation

▶ User Choice (training provider selection).

Privacy

In any mentoring relationship, privacy and confidentiality are significant concerns. The legal and ethical responsibilities of all parties can be specified and agreed to in the mentoring agreement; however, in a loosely structured or informal mentoring relationship the people involved may not have a written agreement.

Privacy and confidentiality are significant considerations because a mentor may be expected to keep records of discussions, personal information and other information related to the mentee. In turn, the mentee may have personal information relating to the mentor; for example, the mentor's phone number. Both parties need to be aware of privacy legislation and how it affects them. This information should be discussed and agreed to at the first meeting.

Privacy refers to a person's ability to control the access others have to information about themselves, their space and their possessions. Privacy also means how someone with access to sensitive information about others takes steps to avoid embarrassment and humiliation.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is about data or information, not people, and usually refers to managing access to private information. Confidentiality provisions restrict an individual or organisation from using or disclosing information about another person that is outside of the scope for which the information was collected. Confidentiality refers to written and verbal information, video footage and photographs.

Confidentiality considerations apply to how information is:

▶ collected and stored, and for how long it is kept

▶ destroyed when it is no longer needed

▶ accessed and released to other parties.

Privacy and confidentiality laws

Each state and territory has laws that govern privacy and confidentiality, although the guiding principles are similar. Mentors must be familiar with the main points of legislation that governs the state or territory in which they work. Most states and territories have laws designed to regulate how information is managed in systems such as education and community service. *The Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) protects all personal information handled by businesses. Most organisations have a privacy policy that is consistent with legislation.

There are 10 national privacy principles that apply to the private sector and are requirements when recording or reporting sensitive information under the Privacy Act. Further details about privacy can be found on the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) website at www.privacy.gov.au.

Key points to remember about privacy

▶ Whenever you collect or document information about or from your mentees, remember that they have the legal right to view all that has been written about them.

▶ Organisational policies and procedures will outline confidentiality requirements and the actions that should be taken within the organisation to protect data.

▶ You must not pass on any information about your mentee unless you have their express permission to do so or are required to do so by law.

▶ Your meetings with mentees should be conducted in a location that will allow for free and frank conversations that will not be overheard by others.

▶ Do not leave notes or records of your meetings with your mentee anywhere where they can be seen or accessed by others.

Equal employment opportunity, equity and diversity

Workplaces must promote equality for everyone, regardless of their age, gender, race, colour or ethnicity, disability or impairment, marital status, sexual preference, political or religious belief, physical features or personal association. These requirements apply equally to mentors in their relationship with mentees.

The mentees you are supporting must be given the opportunity to communicate, feel valued and be respected. They must have equal access to services; so you must not deny support to a potential mentee based on disability, ethnicity, sexuality, religious belief or other grounds that contravene equal employment opportunity, equity and diversity legislation or principles. Likewise, you must ensure that a mentee is not subjected to and does not engage in behaviour that contravenes equal employment opportunity or WHS legislation.

All organisations are required to have policies in place to minimise and deal with all types of harassment and bullying. Policies may include identifying and reporting harassment, training staff to observe and identify instances of harassment, and running training sessions to promote positive behaviour.

As a mentor, you need to set an example for respectful behaviour. Engaging in discriminatory, bullying or harassing behaviour (or failing to report such behaviour in others) may breach work health and safety and your duty of care. You must be alert to harassment and bullying and know how to deal with it.

Your organisation's policies and procedures will provide additional information on the relevant legislation and its application.

Key legislation
▶ *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth)
▶ *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
▶ *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* (Cth)
▶ *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
▶ *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)
▶ *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)
▶ *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth)

Mandatory reporting

Under certain circumstances, state or territory legislation prescribes mandatory reporting of child abuse. This means that adults are obliged by law to alert appropriate authorities if they have reason to believe a young person is being seriously mistreated or is in danger of future abuse.

If you are mentoring minors in a learning program, check whether you or other staff members have obligations under state or territory mandatory reporting legislation. If there is not a legal responsibility there may be an ethical obligation to consider.

The Australian Institute of Family Studies has a fact sheet outlining the laws on mandatory reporting in each state or territory. View the fact sheet at https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect

The next example shows how a mentor ensures that confidentiality of a mentee's records is maintained.

Example

Establish and maintain confidentiality

Andre has been living in Australia for two years and feels that his awareness of Australian culture, in particular office politics and corporate culture, is inadequate. He has recently started a new job, and asks Vince, a colleague with whom he has struck up a friendship, to help him understand the workplace culture. Vince has spent a year working in Japan, where he had similar problems, so he is happy to help.

Andre and Vince agree on the scope and boundaries of the mentoring relationship between themselves. (There is no formal mentoring policy in the organisation.) They agree to keep their discussions confidential, so that Andre can ask questions freely without feeling embarrassed.

Each week Vince and Andre meet to discuss situations that have occurred in Andre's department, how he has handled them and how he can deal with them better in future. Vince explains the colloquial language and humour used by Andre's workmates so that Andre knows when to laugh and not take some things so literally or get offended. They also discuss how Andre can prepare for events, such as a new Friday morning tea for which staff are rostered to bring food to share. Vince explains the concept of 'bringing a plate' and discusses with Andre the type and quantity of foods that would be suitable for him to bring.

Vince takes his role seriously. He records details of the discussions, and the actions that Andre decides to take. Vince reviews these notes in preparation for the next meeting as well as using them as an indication of Andre's progress.

The human resources officer has been told that Vince is mentoring Andre, who is up for promotion. She asks Vince whether there has been any information revealed in the mentoring sessions that may make Andre unsuitable for the position.

Vince states that he and Andre have a confidentiality agreement and he will need to ask Andre for his permission to discuss the mentoring arrangement. Vince is worried because the lack of a mentoring policy means there are no formal rules and guidelines about how to handle this situation.

Activity 4

Review your organisation's privacy policy or your state or territory privacy legislation and reflect on how this affects your relationship with a mentee. Document your thoughts.

Click to complete Activity 4

Summary

1. Mentoring is a relationship where one person helps another to achieve personal or work-related goals.

2. The mentor's role is to encourage, support, listen to and generally champion the mentee.

3. In a formal mentoring program, the scope and boundaries of the mentoring program and the mentoring relationship should be identified, agreed and documented.

4. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality is essential to an open, honest, trusting and strong relationship between mentor and mentee.

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

2A Develop learner attributes and trust in the mentoring relationship

2B Share personal experiences and knowledge

2C Support problem-solving and decision-making skill development

2D Use personal and professional networks for mentoring

2E Provide information and guidance

2F Resolve differences and obtain assistance

Facilitate the mentoring relationship

A mentoring relationship needs to be nurtured. It is a personal journey for both the mentor and the mentee that requires effort and commitment – and the journey will not always be smooth. There may be times when you need to use conflict resolution techniques to maintain a healthy relationship with your mentee. Be prepared to enlist the support of people around you who can help resolve differences.

Trust and respect are fundamental to a successful mentoring program. The mentee must have confidence in the relationship and a strong sense of self. One of your goals should be to support the mentee's problem-solving and decision-making skills. Helping your mentee develop and use problem-solving and decision-making skills will help them through the maze of workplace and personal challenges as they work towards achieving their goals. These are lifelong skills that will be used long after the mentoring relationship has ended.

You can lay the foundations for an effective relationship by sharing your knowledge and personal experiences in a forthright way without appearing condescending. Provide advice and constructive criticism that allows the mentee to interact in a healthy way in the workplace. Introduce the mentee to people in your own personal and professional networks, and treat them as your equal.

2A Develop learner attributes and trust in the mentoring relationship

As a mentor, your role is to support the mentee to achieve their goals within the boundaries agreed to in the mentoring agreement. The key to the relationship is to provide the support and encouragement needed to help the mentee achieve their own goals – you are not responsible for achieving the mentee's goals for them.

Neither of you can do this alone. But the mentee must have the respect and trust in your relationship with them for them to accept you as a mentor, and the confidence and self-esteem to achieve their goals as well as to be able accept the support provided.

Learn as much as you can about the mentee early in the relationship so you can recognise the signs of a lack of confidence or low self-esteem – you can then takes steps to build their respect for you and trust in the relationship.

Be very clear about the limits of your own skills and knowledge in dealing with human emotions. If you sense that a mentee is having serious psychological or mental health issues, or is at the risk of self-harm, seek professional advice and assistance immediately.

Build the mentee's confidence

If your mentee is confident that they can achieve something, they will be able to use or develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve their goals. A lack of confidence can be a major obstacle to goal achievement. There are many indications a mentee may have poor self-confidence.

Indicators of poor self-confidence include when a person:

▶ is constantly negative
▶ seeks reassurance frequently
▶ is afraid to try new things
▶ procrastinates
▶ doesn't take initiative
▶ doesn't socialise with others
▶ brushes off compliments
▶ uses defensive body language and/or speech
▶ rejects change.

Actions to build mentee confidence

Displaying a lack of confidence isn't necessarily a bad thing, but building self-confidence is something every person should work towards.

There are many strategies you can use to help build a mentee's confidence.

Acknowledgment

▶ Acknowledge the person's achievements and accomplishments, no matter how small

Role modelling

▶ Be a good role model by behaving and communicating sincerely and confidently with the mentee and people around you

Confidence

▶ Show confidence in the mentee and their ability to achieve goals; do this publicly in front of the mentee's peers, colleagues and managers

Safe environment

▶ Provide the mentee with a safe environment to practise skills and knowledge and provide them with constructive feedback on what they did well and what they can improve

Self-reflection

▶ Ask the mentee to keep a diary each day or week recording the things they did well, the 'lessons' they learnt and the things they would like to improve on; ask the learner to reflect positively on their diary entries

Build the mentee's self-esteem

A person with low self-esteem generally feels that they are less worthy than others and that they don't deserve to succeed. Often someone with low self-esteem does not value themselves or like themselves very much. In some cases a person can have a high level of self-confidence in their current capacity but low self-esteem, which makes it difficult for them to move on. For example, your mentee may be good at their job and be very comfortable with performing all their work duties, but believe they got there because of sheer luck rather than ability.

A lack of confidence can sometimes be related to a low self-esteem. Be alert to any signs of poor self-image, such as weight gain or weight loss, poor personal hygiene, dressing inappropriately and so on. If necessary, encourage the mentee to seek support from a qualified counsellor.

Signs of low self-esteem
▶ Poor self-confidence; hiding behind words or phrases such as 'should', 'maybe' or 'I think'
▶ Playing the victim; avoiding accepting responsibility for their actions
▶ Taking on work or accepting responsibility for actions that are well outside the boundaries of their role in order to please others
▶ Displaying overconfidence; for example, boasting, exaggerating or making out that they know more or are better than others
▶ Needing to always be right

Value judgements

Beware of making value judgments. Don't automatically assume that a person who shows low self-confidence or manifests theses signs suffers from low self-esteem. They may not. It is likely that you will really only learn about a person's self-esteem by getting to know them well.

A high level of self-esteem generally leads to high self-confidence, which is essential for a person to succeed.

You can help raise a person's self-esteem by:

▶ Increasing the mentee's self-confidence

▶ Reviewing the mentee's goals with them and discussing any obstacles to their achievement that may relate to how they feel about themselves

▶ Learning about the mentee's language/cultural background and drawing on this to increase their pride in being who they are

▶ Undertaking activities that build a bond with the person, such as a fundraising activity

▶ Completing free self-esteem activities or quizzes together

Develop trust in the mentoring relationship and respect for each other

Supporting a mentee demands trust and respect of each other. Without trust or respect for you, the mentee is unlikely to 'open up' to you and believe in you. Similarly, you need to trust and respect your mentee, not only so you can feel that your efforts and contributions are welcomed, but also so your communications with them are open and genuine rather than guarded. Trust and respect are not a given but must be earned and developed over time.

The following table lists some suggestions for developing trust and respect.

When developing trust and respect ...	Explanation
If you make a mistake or get something wrong, acknowledge responsibility and correct the problem or action	Being able to take ownership of a mistake and publicly acknowledge your responsibility demonstrates personal qualities others value. Establish yourself as a good role model by showing strength of character, honesty and integrity. If your mentee has self-confidence or self-esteem issues this can show them that it's okay to be wrong and to take responsibility for one's own actions.
Acknowledge diversity and accept the mentee as an equal	Your mentee may be older, younger, of different gender, different cultural background and so on. Accept that differences in ability, knowledge, skill and experiences do not make one person better, worse or more important than another.
Show respect for the mentee's thoughts, opinions and beliefs	Thoughts, opinions and beliefs are shaped by social and cultural factors and experience. It is quite likely that you will find yourself mentoring a person who views the world quite differently from you. Part of your role may evolve into helping the mentee on a journey where they eventually view things differently – or you will learn to view some things differently.
Keep confidences	A mentee may reveal confidences about their aspirations or personal or family situation. Boundaries for these revelations should be managed within the mentoring agreement. However, if the mentee reveals information with legal implications you may be required to report this to the authorities; for example, if a young mentee reveals that he has been physically abused by a family member. Balancing ethical obligations with legal requirements can be tricky. Have a discussion with the mentee about how these situations may be handled.
If you say you will do something, do it	Mentees look to a role model to demonstrate the behaviours that they themselves are expected to demonstrate. If you have agreed that you will take action on a matter, make sure you do this. Keep the mentee informed about the progress of a request and what the next steps will be.
Provide genuine feedback and encouragement	Although your role is to build a mentee's confidence and self-esteem there is no value to the mentee to be told they are achieving when they are not. Provide honest feedback and advice tactfully and without criticism or blame.

When developing trust and respect ...	Explanation
Get to know your mentee, including their strengths and weaknesses	You won't get to know the mentee overnight. Allow time to find out about the person behind the one you see at work.

Build the relationship incrementally by encouraging them to reveal their interests, their likes and dislikes and by sharing with them your own personal side. Show that you are interested in them as a person and not just 'doing your job'.

You need to know how they learn and communicate, too. Be aware of the differences between generations X and Y and how they respond to work and learning. |
| Be consistent in your behaviours and decision processes, but allow for flexibility to meet mentee needs | Approaching your interactions with others consistently allows them to know what is expected. This can include how you speak and act, as well as the standards you set. For example, if it is agreed that meetings should commence punctually, this applies to both parties. |
| Support the mentee, but don't take responsibility for their actions | The mentee is responsible for their actions and achieving their goals, not you; but you can help them develop the skills they need to reach their goals. For example, if an apprentice doesn't submit a workplace project on time, they are responsible for the consequences. However, this could be an opportunity for you to help the mentee work on their time-management skills. |

In the following example, a mentor works with a mentee to develop her confidence and self-esteem, and to build respect and trust in the relationship.

Example

Develop learner attributes and trust in the mentoring relationship

Jenny is a mentor for a young Torres Strait Islander trainee, Alkina, who is undertaking a hospitality traineeship. The two have a mentoring agreement and have already met twice.

Jenny is an experienced mentor who likes to spend the first 15 minutes or so of each meeting in relaxed general conversation; she feels this often reveals a lot about the person she is mentoring. Jenny notices that Alkina tends to describe her own ability negatively. She also mentions that people she knows who have attempted the traineeship found it difficult.

For Jenny, this is an opportunity to discuss Alkina's traineeship progress. Alkina is up to date with all on- and off-the-job learning activities so Jenny congratulates her on this. Jenny also discusses the learning activities that Alkina will be completing before her next mentoring session and asks Alkina if there is anything she feels she may have trouble with.

Alkina shrugs her shoulders, but Jenny persists and goes through each learning activity with Alkina. She notices that Alkina seems to shrink into herself when they start talking about an oral report that Alkina is to give. Jenny spends some time discussing her own feelings when giving oral reports and outlines the strategies she uses to overcome her nervousness.

Jenny suggests that they move their next meeting to a few days before Alkina is required to give the oral report. That way Alkina can practise presenting the report with Jenny, and Jenny can provide Alkina with feedback.

Alkina agrees to this and leaves the meeting more relaxed than at the start.

Activity 5

For the next few weeks, keep a diary in which you document the steps you have taken to develop a mentee's confidence, self-esteem, respect and trust in the mentoring relationship.

Click to complete Activity 5

2B Share personal experiences and knowledge

It is not easy to determine how much of your respective personal lives you and the mentee should share. The mentoring plan should establish the boundaries of the mentoring relationship including the kind of personal experiences and knowledge that can be shared.

For example, does the mentoring relationship include providing support in the event of the breakdown of a relationship between the mentee and his or her partner or only to how that breakdown affects the mentee's progress in achieving their goals?

These boundaries should be discussed and agreed; it will help you to understand how much of your own experiences and knowledge you may want to or should share.

Benefits of sharing knowledge and experiences

Your ability to share personal experiences and knowledge can have positive outcomes, particularly by fostering an open, honest relationship. Introducing a personal element can help humanise a work relationship. Sharing your experiences has a number of benefits as shown here.

Confirms your creditability

▶ Confirms your creditability, especially if the mentee is mature aged; this kind of sharing can reveal that you too have feelings of insecurity and fear of making mistakes, and how you overcome these feelings

Encourages the mentee

▶ Encourages the mentee to speak openly as they relate to the stories you have told them about your experiences

Provides food for thought

▶ Gives the mentee a base or alternative ways for thinking about or managing their own situation

Encourages progression

▶ Allows the mentee to progress, learn and achieve their goals faster than they may otherwise have as they are able to leverage off your experience

Helps avoid mistakes

▶ Can shield the mentee from inadvertently making the same mistakes that you did as a learner

Tacit and explicit knowledge

The knowledge you share can provide a mentee with valuable insights into the organisation, their place in it, their job role and expectations of them. Knowledge can be divided into tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge as shown below.

Tacit knowledge

Tacit knowledge is knowledge that is not documented anywhere, and is usually gained with time and experience. This may include:

▶ acronyms and jargon specific to the workplace

▶ the best way to approach different people and personalities

▶ important 'unofficial' things to know; such as aspects of the culture of the workplace, particular quirks or practices, social interactions and expectations

▶ who to talk to when particular information is required.

Explicit knowledge

Explicit knowledge is knowledge that is documented and can be sourced. This includes:

▶ the organisation's policies and procedures; for example, the procedure for reporting an incident or near miss

▶ the structure of the organisation; that is, the organisational chart and people's different roles and responsibilities

▶ instruction manuals and user guides.

Make sure the mentee is ready

Although you may have a great deal of knowledge and experience that you want to share, you need to ensure that the mentee is ready to receive what you wish to share, and that you have the oral communication and language skills to share your skills and knowledge in a way that will motivate the mentee.

Communicating with anyone can be a complex task, so be sure to do it in a way that resonates with the mentee. You will need to:

▶ communicate in a way that takes into consideration the mentee's learning needs and language abilities.

▶ communicate at a level appropriate with the mentee's background, experience and current knowledge.

▶ identify signs that the mentee has not understood what you have communicated and be able to address this situation.

Learning styles

Understanding the mentee's preferred learning style can help you ensure that you communicate and interact in a way most suited to their preferences. While theories abound that categorise how people learn and communicate, one of the most useful is VAK – the notion that learners have a learning preference that is predominately either:

▶ visual, preferring to learn by seeing, such as demonstrations, diagrams and illustrations

▶ auditory, preferring to learn by listening and interacting verbally

▶ kinaesthetic, preferring to learn by doing and interacting in an active way.

You can source many quizzes that help identify preferred learning styles. It may be useful for you and the mentee to take the same quiz, discuss the outcome and how this may relate to the way you communicate with each other.

The following table describes some examples of how you may use knowledge of a mentee's preferred learning style when sharing experiences and knowledge.

Knowledge/ experience you would like to discuss with the mentee	If the mentee has a preference for auditory learning	If the mentee has a preference for kinaesthetic learning	If the mentee has a preference for visual learning
How your own career path had its challenges	Tell your story and ask them to share theirs with you	Ask the mentee to summarise in point form (or perhaps a mind map) each different stage of your career path as you describe it, then swap roles	Draw a mind map of each stage of your career development and use it as you discuss your career path
How to fill in a leave form	Verbally explain how to fill in the form	Ask the mentee to read the instructions and complete the form	Give the mentee a completed form as an example of how to complete the form

Communicating with the mentee

To communicate effectively is the most fundamental and essential skill required in the workplace. It is the foundation of all effective activity. Equally, it is essential to a mentoring relationship.

Communication and language skills include verbal communications, body language and listening and questioning skills. It is these skills that you will use to motivate the mentee to achieve their work and personal goals in the face of the challenges that will arise in the workplace and in other areas of their life.

Verbal communication skills

Verbal communication is the basis of almost all human interaction. You will communicate regularly with the mentee and others involved in their work and learning. Depending on who you are interacting with, you may have to adjust the way you communicate.

People or organisations to be communicated with could include:

▶ The off-the-job training provider (RTO)

▶ The mentee's co-workers or workplace manager

▶ People providing learning support for the mentee; for example, an aid, interpreter, or organisation providing assistive technology

▶ Funding organisation that is supporting the mentee in their work placement

▶ Learning resources supplier

Effective communication

It is likely that much of the interaction will involve some form of oral communication; that is, listening and speaking either through face-to-face contact or by telephone. For verbal communication to be effective, ensure that the aspects shown below are considered.

Understanding

▶ The words you use are understood by your mentee or the other person; for example, you may first need to introduce any technical language in words that the mentee or other person can relate to.

Clarity

▶ You speak clearly, facing the person you are speaking to (or holding the telephone at a suitable distance from your mouth), and at a reasonable volume.

Eye contact

▶ You make eye contact with the listener when speaking to them in person, but be sensitive to cultural differences – prolonged eye contact may be regarded as impolite.

Relevancy

▶ You stick to the point and do not introduce irrelevant anecdotes or non-essential information that could confuse the listener or waste time.

Politeness

You are polite and tactful, particularly be aware of cultural differences; in some cultures:

▶ it is acceptable for someone to talk over you and not wait until you have finished talking

▶ talking fast or loud indicates anger

▶ talking slowly indicates disinterest

▶ it is important to spend time in 'small talk' before getting to the reason for the conversation

▶ people avoid saying 'no' as they will see you in a position of authority.

Pace of conversation

You adjust the pace of your conversation to suit the mentee and plan in advance how you will communicate; for example:

▶ talking too fast may cause the mentee or other person to misunderstand what you are trying to explain

▶ determine how much information to provide and at what pace

▶ if the mentee or other person has a hearing impairment, what steps you will take to facilitate communication

▶ how you will work with an interpreter if the person needs one.

Anecdotes

▶ If you find that you are having trouble explaining a concept, use metaphors or anecdotes to which the listener can relate.

Body language

When communicating with your mentee or other relevant person it is important to ensure that there is congruence between your body language and your words. This includes your posture, facial expressions and gestures. For example, greeting your mentee enthusiastically while not taking your eyes of your computer screen could give mixed messages. It is also important to recognise that body language may be interpreted differently by different people. Cultural differences have already been identified as important, but the same may be said of attitudinal differences between age groups; for example, Generation Y as opposed to Baby Boomers.

If a mentee has a disability, their nonverbal communication/gestures may be those that they have learnt to enable them to communicate. As a first step, get to know the mentee and establish what their needs are and how you can facilitate effective communication. You may also need to meet with the mentee and their advocate or a family member to plan a communication strategy.

The following summarises some differences that you may need to consider depending on your mentee.

Personal space

Think about how you feel one someone moves into what you consider to be your personal space. Personal comfort zones and what is acceptable personal space varies according to cultural considerations and environmental context. Country people often have a bigger personal zone than city people. In some countries, the acceptable personal space is much closer than in Australia, and by increasing the distance a person may think you are rude or not wanting to communicate with them.

Touching, shaking hands

While you may think it perfectly natural to shake hands or give someone a pat on the shoulder, in some cultures this may cause distress or offence, particularly where male–female contact is involved. Additionally, some people on the autism spectrum find touch intrusive or stressful. Follow your mentee's lead when it comes to personal contact – it is better to err on the side of caution.

Eye contact

You are likely to have been taught that eye contact is good because it shows the other person that you are listening; however, in other cultures eye contact can be seen as rude or disrespectful.

Gestures

Common gestures Anglo-Australians and other Westerners use on a daily basis can be offensive in other cultures. One example is the thumbs up gesture, which Anglo-Australians use to mean 'good' or 'well done'. In several cultures, the same gesture has a pejorative meaning and is used as an insult.

Nodding or shaking the head

In many cultures nodding means yes and shaking means no, but in some cultures the meanings are reversed. In South Asia, people often indicated agreement by a side-to-side movement.

Listening and questioning skills

Any sort of communication is a two-way process, in which a message is transmitted between sender and receiver. Feedback provides the opportunity to seek clarification and change the message.
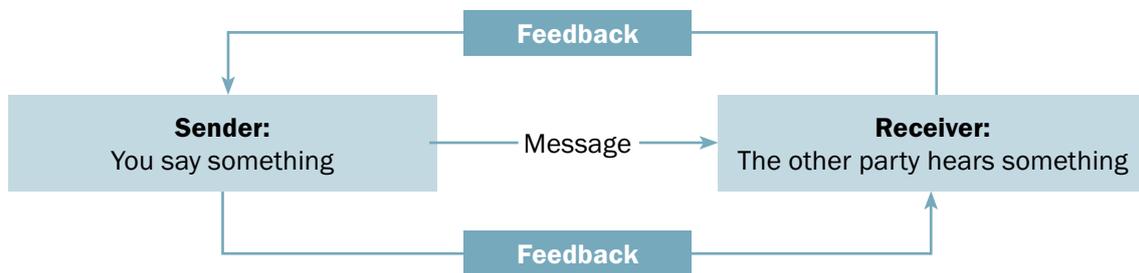
The communication cycle

What listeners hear

Sometimes what you say and what the other person hears is not the same. This happens because what the receiver hears is filtered by influences such as their culture, life experiences, language abilities, education level, and experiences in workplaces and training. Using active listening when giving and receiving feedback is an important part of the communication process as it allows the receiver and you, the sender, to clarify that each understands what the other says or hears.

When the mentee or another stakeholder is responding to you, practise active listening by using the techniques as follows:

▶ focusing on the person talking and really listening to what they say

▶ letting the other person know you are listening with verbal and visual indicators such as nodding your head or using phrases such as 'I see'

▶ observing their body language to identify congruence between words and actions

▶ being aware of your own feelings and reactions to what is being said and monitoring your own body language

▶ paraphrasing or 'mirroring' – once the speaker has stopped speaking, summarise and repeat to them what you think they have said

▶ asking questions to clarify or obtain further information.

Closed questions

Closed questions are used to help you elicit facts; often these require only a one or two-word answer (yes or no). For example, 'Have you finished working through Topic 3?'

Open questions

Open questions are used to elicit additional information or clarify statements; open questions tend to start with 'how', 'why', 'what' or other words that encourage an extended response. For example, 'How did you find Topic 3?'

Conversing with a mentee

Encourage the mentee to take the lead role in any conversation; a mentor should spend more time listening than talking. Avoid the trap of being a 'solution provider'. Instead, be a guide who opens up discussion of situations or challenges. Identify the assistance a person needs, and encourage them to reflect on how they can meet challenges. It is true that a mentor can have a great deal of knowledge and experience to offer but this does not mean they should overwhelm the mentee and take control of the communication.

Here are some strategies for taking a guiding or prompting role and in doing so helping the mentee take some ownership of the conversation.

Take turns to speak

▶ Remember that a conversation means taking turns – wait for the mentee to finish talking before you speak.

Be visibly attentive

▶ Face the attendee and give them your full attention. Use 'verbal nods' to let them know you are listening and encourage them to continue; for example, saying 'I see' or 'I understand' at appropriate points.

Be patient

▶ Ask the mentee questions and then be patient as they reflect on the question and provide their response.

Ask open questions

▶ Ask open questions to encourage the mentee to expand on their thoughts.

Suggest alternatives

▶ If the mentee is not engaging in the conversation, provide different options or ideas for strategies or solutions they may consider applying to their circumstances.

Provide space in the conversation

▶ When speaking, pause at appropriate intervals to give the mentee the opportunity to ask questions or run with an idea.

Avoid filling silences

▶ Avoid the impulse to fill silences; allow the other person time to do that first.
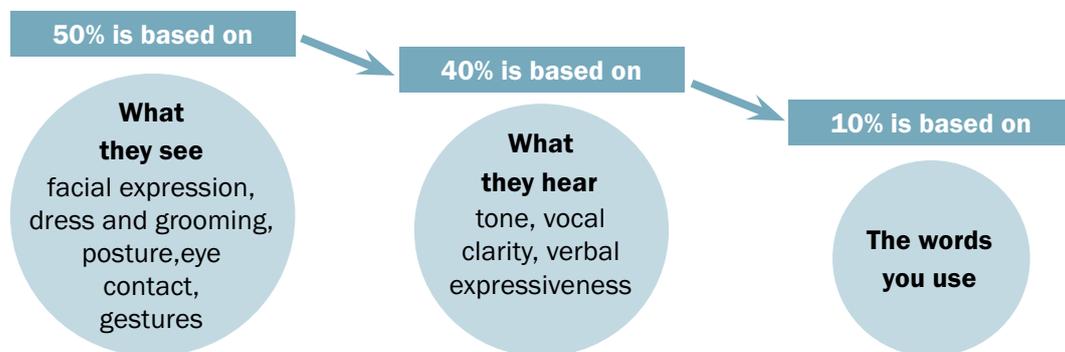
Communicating with the use of technology

Many mentor–mentee interactions are face to face. There may be times, however, when technology provides a viable and necessary alternative medium. Email, texting, chatrooms and blogs, telephone discussions, audio messages and videoconferencing are all part of the way we communicate.

While the basic rules for communicating when using technology may not change, they do become have their own protocols. When we communicate, the person we are communicating with analyses what they hear and see as well as the words we say. In fact, the words we say may be the least important part of the process.

Effective communication relies heavily on what a receiver perceives they are seeing (that is, nonverbal communication) in order to interpret what the sender is saying. If you are communicating via non-visual technology, you will need to adjust your communication to as far as possible replace the nonverbal cues commonly used in communication.

This diagram illustrates how the receiver of communication analyses communication.

50% is based on

What they see
facial expression, dress and grooming, posture, eye contact, gestures

40% is based on

What they hear
tone, vocal clarity, verbal expressiveness

10% is based on

The words you use

Written communication

Written communication can add another layer of complexity. The receiver cannot see your body language and cannot hear the tone of your voice. Instead they must rely only on words alone.

Communicate unfavourable messages in person, but if this is not possible, draft your message and then leave it for at least 24 hours so you have time to review it before sending it. This avoids a message being sent in the heat of the moment. Check for understanding and reactions. Perhaps ask, 'What do you think about that?' or 'Can you think of alternative ways of doing that?' Keep messages short to reduce the chance of misunderstanding and confusion. Use bullet points if possible.

Provide context before relaying new information; for example, 'At our last meeting we discussed the possibility of you attending the next networking meeting of ABC Group and you said you'd be interested in going. I'm just letting you know that I've contacted the ABC Group and they are happy for you to attend. I'll be there too of course.'

It is also important to discuss what types of communication you both have access to, and how you will use them.

The following list suggests more techniques you may be able to use to ensure distance communication between yourself and a mentee is as clear as possible.

Techniques for successful distance communication

▶ Choose your words carefully to minimise the chance of misinterpretation and check the tone of the words used. Focus on one topic per email or text.

▶ Understand the protocols of texting, chatrooms, and social network sites. For example, avoid texting or email in ALL CAPS as this is perceived as yelling.

▶ Maintain your professionalism; avoid smileys and emoticons unless this is a technique you are using to break down barriers with a mentee.

▶ Ensure your email address and message bank message reflect an appropriate level of professionalism.

▶ Remember who you are communicating with. Use language that the mentee understands and that takes their background into consideration.

▶ If you are sending a text message, avoid abbreviations that your mentee may not know. Also remember that some people may not be able to retrieve or respond to text messages.

▶ Avoid sending multiple emails, texts or messages – this causes confusion similar to when people are talking over each other.

In the next example, a mentor shares a personal experience that encourages a mentee to communicate his own situation.

Example

Share personal experiences and knowledge

Robert is mentoring Jason, a young horticulture apprentice. Jason is not long into the apprenticeship, so the two have not spent a great deal of time together. Jason has missed two mentoring sessions and is not responding to Robert's calls. Robert checks with Jason's supervisor who confirms that Jason's attendance at work over the last month has been sporadic; Jason has been away from work for the last two weeks.

Robert is concerned at Jason's lack of participation. He knows that Jason comes from a background of family upheaval: he's unsettled, apparently mixing with disaffected youth. Jason appears to be at high risk of not completing the apprenticeship. It is a familiar scenario to Robert, who did it tough himself, but overcame barriers to gain a qualification and secure a responsible position at a relatively young age.

Robert thinks about Jason and how he can get him to a mentor meeting. Jason has the latest smartphone; he and Robert have often compared technology. Robert sends a friendly text inviting Jason to lunch at a cafe popular with younger people – far enough from the workplace and the RTO so they are unlikely to run into people from either. Jason keeps the message light and brief and doesn't mention Jason's absences.

Robert is pleased when Jason accepts and turns up to the lunch meeting. However, Jason's body language is defensive and Robert's initial attempts at conversation are met with guarded one-syllable responses. Robert seeks common ground by asking about Jason's involvement in the local football team and learns that Jason is uncertain if he'll continue to play because of accommodation issues. Robert senses there is more to it.

Although Robert is cautious about getting involved in Jason's personal issues, his role in the mentoring arrangement is to 'support Jason to complete the apprenticeship'. As they eat and chat, Robert thinks about how he can support Jason, who has not asked for help but obviously needs it to sort out his life.

Robert recounts parts of his own early years: of family violence and alcoholism; then shifting from the country to the city for an apprenticeship and technical training; of moving from one share house to another and sleeping rough occasionally; and how his own life almost spiralled out of control – including losing his apprenticeship and livelihood. Robert had been helped to find stability by an older worker who, like Robert, had done it hard.

A change in body language and demeanour tells Robert that Jason is responding to a story he identifies with. He asks, 'So, what's happening with you, Jason?

Activity 6

In the diary you started in the previous learning activity, record the personal experiences and knowledge you have shared with your mentee.

Click to complete Activity 6

TAEDEL404 MENTOR IN THE WORKPLACE

2C Support problem-solving and decision-making skill development

One of the objectives of a mentoring relationship is to equip the mentee with the skills and knowledge to resolve issues that arise in their own personal and working life. A mentor should not try to solve the mentee's problems, but rather assist the person to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Problems and issues that are work-related are often more clear-cut and easier to deal with than a mentee's personal problems; often the challenges are greater for a young person than for someone with more life and work experience.

Common issues confronting apprentices and trainees
▶ How to communicate with their workplace supervisor or others in the workplace
▶ How to source information regarding support services or their training
▶ How to manage personal problems associated with independent living; for example, financial problems
▶ What to do if they are having difficulty completing their apprenticeship/ traineeship
▶ What to do if they don't know or are not sure of how to complete a workplace task

A problem-solving model

Often a problem can seem difficult to resolve because a young person lacks the skills, knowledge and experience to identify the best options and make a decision based on a clear priority. Effective mentoring helps the mentee by providing a system or model that they can use to help them arrive at a reasoned decision. The following table offers one possible approach to problem-solving.

Step	Explanation
1. Acknowledge that there is a problem.	People will often try to pretend that there is no problem or that the problem is not theirs. For example, a female trainee who is being harassed by a male staff member may think, 'I only see him on two days a week, I can handle it and I can handle him'. Nevertheless, her enjoyment of the job and work performance is affected and she feels intimidated.
	Acknowledging the problem includes:
	▶ accepting that something isn't right and that it needs to be fixed
	▶ considering the consequences if the problem is not addressed.

Step	Explanation
2. Define the problem.	It is important to be able to specify exactly what the problem is. In the example of a female trainee being harassed, she would need to understand what harassment is and identify those aspects of the other staff member's behaviour that are causing her discomfort. The problem may be not just the fact of harassment, but how to deal with it, particularly if the offender is in a position of authority or doesn't realise they are over-stepping the mark.
3. Identify potential causes of the problem.	At this point the mentee must analyse the problem objectively, free of emotion.
4. Make a list of all possible solutions.	Brainstorm and document as many solutions as possible. In our example, the trainee could list options such as: - asking the staff member if they realise that what they are doing is offensive - confronting the staff member and telling them to stop the behaviour - documenting and detailing each occasion on which harassment occurs and filing a complaint - discussing the situation with a workplace WHS officer or equal opportunity officer - speaking to a colleague, supervisor or manager about the situation - asking to be moved to another area to avoid contact with the person.
5. Analyse possible solutions.	For each possible solution, develop a list of pros and cons. Refer to workplace policies and procedures and legislation where appropriate.
6. Make a decision.	Now that the problem has been defined and a list of potential solutions developed, it will be easier to unemotionally select the most appropriate or best option. As the mentor you may need to help the mentee arrive at a decision that is fair, feasible, logical and achievable by reviewing the options with them and asking open questions.
7. Action the selected decision.	At this point you as the mentor may need to support the mentee to action their decision. This may include developing a time line to ensure that actions progress.

Problem-solving techniques

There are other techniques that a mentee can use to resolve problems and arrive at a reasoned decision. Some work better than others, depending on the complexity of the problem. In addition to having a structured system or model that can be used to make decisions and resolve problems, you may need to introduce a mentee to different problem-solving techniques.

Problem-solving techniques you might like to try:

▶ Brainstorming

▶ Six Thinking Hats

▶ Five Ws

▶ Five Whys

▶ Pros and cons

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is useful when used in conjunction with Step 4 of the previous model.

Ask the mentee to write down the problem and then all the possible solutions they can think of without considering the relative worth of each option. Most people are familiar with brainstorming but some may need encouragement to be imaginative and think outside the box.

Do not judge any of the ideas presented in case you stifle the mentee's creativity.

Six Thinking Hats

The Six Thinking Hats strategy was devised by Edward de Bono and can be very useful in trying to decide which of several possible solutions should be implemented. The basis of the strategy is to ask the mentee to view a decision from different perspectives (that is, by wearing different hats).

Mentors can also use the Six Thinking Hats to demonstrate to the mentee that there are other ways of thinking. This is useful when a mentee has a habit of thinking in a particular way; for example, they are pessimistic or procrastinate excessively. In this case, a mentor could take them through a Six Hat activity to demonstrate alternative ways of thinking.

Colour hat	Perspective	Focus on
White	Facts and information	Who, what, when, where, why, how
Red	Feelings and emotions	How do I feel? What is my gut instinct? How are the people involved going to be affected? How might they feel?
Black	Being cautious	What don't you know? What could go wrong? What are the risks? Are there unforeseen consequences?
Yellow	Being positive and optimistic	How can you turn this experience into a positive one? What can you learn? What benefits will an action bring?
Green	New ideas, alternatives, solutions	Thinking outside the box; addressing points raised in the Black Hat
Blue	Big picture and planning	How can a resolution to this problem benefit all trainees and employees?

Five Ws

The Five Ws analysis focuses the attention on the questions who, what, when, where and why. For example, in trying to determine whether there is a problem, the mentee could ask:

▶ Who (is causing the problem / affected by the problem)

▶ What (are they doing to cause the problem)

▶ When (are they doing it)

▶ Where (are they causing the problem)?

▶ Why (do you think they are causing the problem)?

Five Whys

The Five Whys analysis allows the mentee to analyse the problem and try to determine what the cause of the problem is. Although this technique is called the Five Whys, you can continue to ask 'why' until the cause of the problem is identified – you don't have to limit yourself to five questions.

For example, assume your trainee comes to you saying they are contemplating not completing their traineeship. Asking them why will encourage them to reveal more about their thoughts as the questioning progresses. Once you know the root cause of the problem you can help your mentee embark on a process to resolve it.

Pros and cons

This strategy assesses which option to accept based on the relative weight of the pros (advantages) and cons (disadvantages). Most people tend to do a quick pros and cons analysis in their heads for many of the simple decisions they need to make; for a more complex problem it is better to document them, then make a decision on what would be the best action.

Problem-solving and decision-making skills are practical skills that the mentee can use throughout their training, their work and their personal lives. By helping a mentee develop these skills you are also helping them take control of their own life and motivating them to continue to achieve in all aspects of their life.

Example

Support problem-solving and decision-making skill development

Aisha wants to drop out of school because, in her words, 'It's just not working for me'. Her parents agree with the proviso that she first secures a meaningful job. Aisha secures an apprenticeship with an animal shelter and sanctuary where she will complete a Certificate II in Animal Studies. She hopes this will lead to veterinary nursing or perhaps a zookeeper position later on.

The school careers officer suggests that Aisha would benefit from having the recently retired local veterinary surgeon as a mentor to guide and support her. Trevor, who is a vet, and Aisha meet regularly in the early stages of her traineeship. Aisha explains that she has to select the elective units of competency for her certificate, but she is confused and doesn't know what to choose.

She is stressed because she has to make a selection quickly. Her supervisor has made some suggestions that suit the workplace, but wants Aisha to come up with her own list so they can choose something they are both happy with. Aisha doesn't like some of the supervisor's suggestions but at the same time wants to do the right thing by the workplace.

Aisha has to work this out for herself; Trevor knows that he can't take over for her. But he also realises that Aisha's problem is as much about the process of compromise to balance her own needs with those of the employer, as it is about deciding which electives she wants to do.

Trevor suggests that they make notes on the requirements of the ACM20110 Certificate II in Animal Studies qualification so they can see what the options are. They find the following requirements:

- ▶ Seven core units
- ▶ Three elective units from Group A
- ▶ Two elective units from Group A and/or B

Trevor writes out the core units so Aisha can understand that these are the compulsory units she must do. After discussing the core units with Aisha, Trevor then writes the elective units on another sheet of paper.

Once the electives are all listed, Trevor prompts Aisha as to what she thinks the next step should be. Aisha suggests that they could cross out those that she really doesn't want to do.

Even with that, Aisha still needs to eliminate more units, so Trevor asks Aisha to prioritise the units of competency in order of interest and importance to her. Aisha ends up with a list that she can compare with her supervisor's suggestions. If necessary, she can take her list to the supervisor and negotiate a compromise solution.

Activity 7

1. In the diary you started in Activity 5, record how you have helped your mentee develop and use skills in problem-solving and decision-making.

2. Reflect on your diary entries and the things you have done to facilitate the mentoring relationship. In your reflections consider:

- ▶ the action you have taken and the mentee's response to the action
- ▶ what you might do differently next time.

Click to complete Activity 7

2D Use personal and professional networks for mentoring

Your role as a mentor should be based not only on your willingness to help another person, but also on your experience, skills and knowledge. In addition, because of your life and workplace experience, you will know many people to whom you can turn for support or to whom you may refer someone else.

One of the benefits for the mentee is that you can use your personal and professional networks to help them achieve their goals or meet their needs. You can also help the mentee build their own network of contacts by introducing them to your contacts; not only do they learn and benefit from your experience but also from the combined experience and knowledge of broader networks.

Do not, however, jeopardise your network and people in it by referring a mentee that you cannot confidently vouch for. Make sure to set boundaries for support based on the mentee's strengths and weaknesses.

What is a personal and professional network?

In our lifetime we regularly come across many people who we know at different levels and keep in touch with for different reasons. These people form a network of contacts. Your network includes people who know you personally or professionally and know what you do; they may or may not have worked with you and have a regard for you as a person and for your skills and knowledge. The reverse is also true: that your network includes people for whom you have a similar regard. A supportive network is made up of members who respect and value each other for personal or professional reasons.

The value of a network lies in the capacity of people to support and assist each other. A common example of how effective networks operate is when a person is looking for a job and taps into their contact network to see if there are any opportunities that members know of.

It is likely that you already have a network of contacts and will be able to call on this network to support a mentee. If not, you can build a list of contacts from your family and friends; people you know through community, sport and recreation; and from people you know in, through or because of work.

Using your network to support the mentee

The key to good networking is to ensure that the relationship is mutual; that is, both parties should feel that there is a benefit to being in the relationship. A personal and professional contact network is a precious thing and relationships can easily be upset if perceptions and expectations do not meet.

Networks need to be nourished and sustained to be effective. Building and maintaining a contact network can take effort, so when you tap into people you know for the mentee's benefit, it needs to be with a clear purpose; it also works better if there is some kind of flow-on benefit (now or in the future) for the person in your network.

Clarify personal and professional objectives

Help your mentee to clarify their objectives so you can use your contacts to help the mentee achieve these objectives. Sometimes sharing your own objectives with the mentee can help them clarify goals.

One of the benefits of networking is that you have contact with a group of people who can help you achieve your goals. Your network should also include people who may not be able to assist directly with your career, but can help you in other ways.

Explain to the mentee how you have or can use your contacts to help them. Some ways that you can do this follow.

Ways you can use your contacts to help mentees

1

Personal issues
If your mentee is having problems with something specific to their training or personal life, you may be able to introduce them to someone with expertise in that field who is willing to guide them or advocate on their behalf.

2

Network with others
Introduce a mentee to people in work teams outside their immediate work area to help them to:

▶ learn the big picture of how the business operates
▶ develop their own contacts and relationships
▶ open up the opportunity to move to a different work area.

3

Introduce to past mentees
Introduce a mentee to others you have mentored so they can pass on the benefit of their own experience.

4

Employment opportunities
Open up future employment opportunities by introducing the mentee to people you know in another organisation, professional association or industry sector.

Share your networking practices with the mentee

Discuss with the mentee the benefits of expanding their own contacts and developing a network that can help them progress their career or personal life.

Be a good role model to help your mentee understand the benefits of active networking.

Good networking practices
▶ Diarise a reminder to make regular contact with people in your network in some form; personal contact is always the best option.
▶ Try to let the interaction be about your contacts first, not you.
▶ Share what's happening with you; by exchanging this information the door remains open for one of you to state a need or open up an opportunity.
▶ Pass on information others may be interested in and return favours.
▶ Introduce contacts to contacts for the benefit of others.
▶ Send Christmas cards if that's an appropriate way of recognising people in your network.

Join associations and other bodies

Discuss with your mentee the benefits of being involved in a trade or professional association or of joining a community, sporting or recreational organisation. Membership can open up wide networks of diverse people with common interests.

Manage the risks to your network

When calling on your personal or professional network to help a mentee, set clear boundaries and expectations so that all involved understand what is required and why. You must have a very clear idea about what you want your contact to do for the mentee and why, and be able to explain and justify the request. Similarly, you and the mentee must be very clear about what is expected of them; make sure the mentee understands the ramifications for all involved of them not meeting expectations.

There is a certain amount of risk to both you and your contact if the mentee fails to meet expectations. Unreliable behaviour by the mentee can easily jeopardise your standing in the network and even worse damage someone else's reputation.

By using your professional networks you can help a mentee learn or get ahead quicker than they usually would. But you both need to be clear about what you want from the network and how any favours can be returned at a later date. Remember that the mentee may, in all likelihood, become part of your network, too.

Use personal and professional networks for mentoring

Josie is just starting her career in hospitality and wants to specialise in pastries and desserts. She works casually in a well-known restaurant in a popular eating strip and hopes to gain an apprenticeship that will eventually allow her to specialise in patisserie. There are a couple of restaurants at which she would really like to work; but to get there she may first need to enrol in a certificate in hospitality.

Josie knows that having experience and good references will help her application. She talks about her aspirations with Giordan, one of the owners of the restaurant who has become her mentor. Giordan has seen Josie at work and knows she has the commitment and potential to realise her ambition. He reflects on how he may be able to help. He is a member of a food and wine club and through this, the business and his involvement in hospitality generally, and with his connections in horse racing, he has a wide network of contacts.

Giordan asks Josie if she would like him to make some inquiries to find out what's available that may suit her. Soon after and true to his word, Giordan tells Josie that one of his contacts, the head chef at a highly regarded restaurant, would like to interview her and possibly give her a try-out with a view to taking her on as an apprentice.

Giordan spends some time with Josie planning how she'll handle the interview and then he arranges for Josie to do a practice try-out with the owner/chef of a nearby restaurant.

Activity 8

1. Make a list of key people in your personal and professional network.
    Where are these people from and how did you establish a connection with them?

2. Explain how networks can offer the following advantages to its members.
    For each person, explain, with examples, how they help you and how you help them.

3. What sustains the network and keeps it alive and functioning? How are
relationships sustained?

4. Does the network have any unwritten rules or standards? What are they?

Click to complete Activity 8

2E Provide information and guidance

Mentoring is first and foremost about you being able to give another person the benefit of your skills, knowledge and experience. One of the most challenging aspects of mentoring is knowing when and how to provide information and guidance, particularly if it involves a critique or an element of critical evaluation.

There are a number of factors that can come into play; among these might be the mentee's characteristics, their personal background, their experience in the industry and their goals. Being able to use your 'emotional intelligence' is important in ensuring that you provide timely information, guidance and feedback in a way that is acceptable to the mentee. Being mindful of where and how you give advice and feedback is important, as is why you are giving that advice and feedback.

Knowing your mentee

Mentors are often generous people who want to share their knowledge and experience; but you do need to know the mentee – which approach works best for them and how they respond to advice and feedback. As noted earlier, factors such as religion, culture, age, gender, educational background and life experiences can all be important.

It is important to realise that how you work with each mentee should take into consideration their needs and characteristics. Guiding the mentee is about helping them to find answers, solve problems and manage relationships. You can only provide effective guidance if you know the mentee well and understand 'what makes them tick'. For example, if you are working with an Indigenous trainee you may find it useful to know about the place of family and older people in their life to help manage their interaction with you. Likewise, a 45-year-old woman returning to the workforce because she needs to support herself after a marriage breakdown may need help to build her confidence and manage childcare scheduling.

Consider the following examples of mentees from diverse backgrounds.

Financial issues

A youth who has been unemployed since leaving school at 15 and had been living on the streets for three years decides to take on an apprenticeship in carpentry. He has no family contact, is living with a friend, is on Centrelink payments and is used to fending for himself. He demonstrates great potential, but financially he is struggling and this, together with his lifestyle, may affect his ability to complete the traineeship.

Confidence issues

A 45-year-old woman is returning to the workforce because she needs to support herself after a marriage breakdown. After she finished compulsory schooling she worked in retail for a year before she married her husband and then left work to have a family. She hasn't worked since and is struggling emotionally. She lacks the confidence to complete her formal training as well as completing her workplace duties and is constantly asking people for confirmation that she's 'doing it right'.

Family issues

A man from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background is constantly taking time off for family reasons. Consequently he is behind in formal training requirements and has missed a lot of workdays and on-the-job training. You receive an email from his workplace supervisor suggesting that the mentee's training contract be cancelled.

Isolation issues

A young woman who arrived in Australia as a refugee from a Middle-Eastern country is having problems: firstly because her poor language, literacy and numeracy affects her ability to complete her training; and secondly because she is the only woman to wear a burqa in the company and feels as if she has no friends at work. She also finds it hard to speak to male supervisors and co-workers.

Delivering information and guidance

Once you know the characteristics and ability of the mentee and how they are likely to respond to information and advice, you are in a position to determine the type of information or guidance they need.

The type of information and guidance you are expected to give should be identified in the mentoring agreement. It should be clear whether the information can include personal advice or whether it is limited to the mentee's workplace duties and relationships. You may also consider the appropriateness of information and guidance relating to the mentee's formal training if they are completing a qualification.

If you offer information and advice directly, ensure that it is warranted and relevant. Any feedback you give should take the form of praise or constructive criticism (explaining how someone can improve).

Be sure to act within the parameters of your job description and the mentoring agreement. Providing good guidance can also include helping the mentee recognise when they should consult an appropriately qualified person to deal with personal situations that are outside your domain.

The following table provides examples of some of the information and guidance given to mentees in different scenarios.

Situation	Find out first	Information/advice
The mentee's supervisor has told you that the person is regularly late and sometimes doesn't come in at all	▶ Is the mentee happy with their training, job role or workplace relationships? For example, is there a clash with the supervisor? Evidence of bullying? Are they having trouble doing the work and not getting the assistance they need? ▶ Is there a reason why they can't get there on time? ▶ Is it an attitudinal problem?	▶ Use a problem-solving approach to identify any issue/s and then develop solutions ▶ Provide activities that develop skills in managing workplace relations ▶ Provide activities that help develop time-management skills

Situation	Find out first	Information/advice
A mentee is falling behind due to literacy problems	▶ If they are receiving support for this with a training provider with whom they may be completing a qualification ▶ If your organisation has support available ▶ If there are other organisations/services that could be approached	▶ Support them to approach the RTO for assistance or additional assistance ▶ Explain any internal/ external support that you have sourced ▶ Identify other sources and help the mentee make an approach
A mentee has sent an inappropriate email to others in his work team	▶ If they know what the organisation's email policy is ▶ Whether they know what 'inappropriate' email is ▶ Whether they understand the effect inappropriate behaviour can have	▶ Print off and discuss the organisation's email policy or ask the mentee to locate the policy ▶ Identify and discuss the consequences of noncompliance
A mentee is worried about a presentation they have been asked to give at the next staff meeting	▶ Whether they have the underpinning knowledge (e.g. how to use presentation software to develop the presentation) ▶ Whether they know about the company procedures for giving a presentation	▶ Print off the task procedures and give this to the mentee (if there are no documented procedures, ask someone in the organisation to create guidelines for the mentee to refer to) ▶ Demonstrate the task, then watch as they perform the task and give them feedback; alternatively, organise a staff member who gives lots of presentation to do this

Communicating information and guidance

The characteristics of the mentee help determine the method required to give information and guidance. Consider what it takes to build and maintain a trusting relationship with the mentee and use this as a guide for how you provide information and guidance.

Mentees can be provided information in different ways:

▶ by you telling them things

▶ through training and learning activities or experiences

▶ from observation and feedback

▶ through self-directed research.

Establish whether the mentee responds best to lots of direction, whether they need support to get them started or follow through, or whether they are ready to be empowered to explore autonomously. The objective of providing guidance and information is to develop a capable and productive member of the workplace.

The following strategies are likely to alienate the mentee resulting in a lack of progress in their learning and/or the breakdown in your relationship.

Providing information and giving guidance does not mean:

▶ telling your mentee what to do

▶ lecturing them

▶ offering them unsolicited advice

▶ getting upset if they don't follow your advice.

Communication strategies

You will need to be honest but still sensitive to the mentee's characteristics and preferred communication style. You should endeavour to have the mentee evaluate themselves, including what they have done well and where they could improve.

A good approach is to get together and regularly review agreed time lines for achievement of goals and discuss their progress.

Always be constructive in your comments; for example, saying 'I think you need to work harder to develop a better relationship with your workplace supervisor' does not provide a mentee with sufficient background information or advice as to how to address the situation. A better approach makes practical suggestions to start the problem-solving process. 'You've made a number of comments about having difficulties with your workplace supervisor. Having good relationships with the people you work with can sometimes be difficult but it is essential to getting our jobs done. What if we brainstormed a few strategies you could try to improve things?'

Offering constructive guidance

There may be times when you realise your mentee is not fulfilling their agreement with you, perhaps not completing their workplace duties as expected or heading down a path that will cause them grief in the future. Although it can be difficult to raise these issues, your role requires you to help the mentee achieve their goals and to do this you can need to provide some information or guidance that at times can be difficult for you to deliver and for your mentee to receive.

Your role as a mentor is to share your knowledge, skills and experience so that your mentee will benefit from the relationship. The mentee is also trusting that you will be honest with them and provide them with the information and guidance they need.

Constructive guidance is about giving your mentee information that they need so they can improve. By providing your mentee with information about their current level of skills and knowledge, their strengths and weaknesses, you can then help them determine what the next step is so they have a plan for improvement.

<table>
<tr><td>**Example**</td><td>

Provide information and guidance

Isabella is completing a Certificate II in Hairdressing. She attends her training organisation two days per week and works in a hairdressing salon the other three days per week. Andrew has worked at the salon for some time and is Isabella's informal mentor. He senses that Isabella is not happy, so he spends some time finding out what the problem may be.

Isabella finally tells Andrew that she feels that Deanna, one of the senior hairdressers, is deliberately giving her menial tasks to do. As they talk, it emerges that Isabella has had several disagreements with Deanna and that Isabella has spoken rudely to her in front of clients. They agree that this interpersonal problem is now affecting her work. It needs to be resolved so that Isabella's work situation improves and so it doesn't affect her chances of employment elsewhere.

Andrew empathises with Isabella – he remembers what is was like to be the most junior worker in a busy salon – but he also asks Isabella to put herself in Deanna's shoes. He starts talking about the right and wrong ways to deal with conflict, but sees that Isabella is beginning to switch off.

It is important that Isabella comes to terms with her actions and resolves the problem herself, so Andrew suggests he and Isabella role-play how she may approach Deanna with a solution.

Although Isabella is a little embarrassed that they'll be working on the situation together, she leaves feeling that there's action that she can take to improve the situation. Later, she realises that if she can deal with this situation, she will have strategies for ensuring that something similar doesn't happen again.

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Activity 9

1. Document the last time you provide someone with information, guidance or advice.
    ▶ Did the other person ask for the advice?
    ▶ Did they take the advice? Explain.
    ▶ Did the way you framed the information, guidance or advice determine whether or not they were inclined to take it?

2. Document the last time you were given information, guidance or advice that you did not ask for.

    ▶ How did you feel about being given this advice?

    ▶ Did you take the advice? Why or why not?

    ▶ How did you react to the person giving you this advice?

3. Reflect on your responses to these activities. What learning is there that you can apply to a mentoring relationship?

Click to complete Activity 9

2F Resolve differences and obtain assistance

The relationship between a mentee and a mentor reflects the complexity of any interpersonal relationship. Misunderstandings, personal differences, different views of the world, different expectations and any number of factors can lead to problems that can affect the ultimate goals of the mentoring relationship. It is important to accept that these problems are likely to occur and plan ahead to have strategies available to resolve them.

In certain circumstances you may need to call on specialist assistance or the support of other people in the organisation to help resolve problems and issues that are beyond your role description or ability. It is important to follow proper procedure for dealing with problems that are outside your field of experience or job role.

Acknowledging a problem

Interpersonal problems that are not dealt with don't go away. Instead, they fester and hinder open, effective and genuine communication. A mentoring relationship can only be effective where there is open communication. When differences arise you must acknowledge that there is a problem and act to resolve it immediately to maintain the relationship.

It is important that you address any potential problems as soon as you start to think that there is something wrong – ignoring the situation will only lead to bigger problems, not only in your relationship with the mentee, but in their achieving their goals.

The clues that something is wrong can be many and varied; if you are alert to human nature, you will recognise them early and be able to act quickly and decisively.

Indications of mentoring relationship problems
▶ The mentee arrives at meetings late, frequently wants to reschedule or simply doesn't attend.
▶ Despite your efforts to engage them, the mentee responds to questions and suggestions using one-syllable words or shrugs their shoulders.
▶ The mentee appears uninterested in your discussions and unwilling to contribute ideas.
▶ The mentee seems to be deliberately argumentative.
▶ The mentee's usual body language or demeanour changes.
▶ The mentee doesn't complete pre-work tasks that were agreed to in previous meetings.
▶ The mentee tells you they 'need' to leave a meeting early.

Positive techniques for resolving differences

There are many techniques for resolving differences; some are positive and will work well, but there are also some that may aggravate the problem. Choosing the right technique for resolving a problem relies on your knowledge of the mentee and their needs and characteristics, identifying what the problem is and working with the mentee to apply a suitable technique.

Always take a positive approach to dealing with interpersonal relationship difficulties and differences and look for options that allow each person the opportunity to discuss their perspective and their needs. Create the opportunity for self-disclosure, discussion and explanation.

It is also possible to identify some general strategies that may not work. Instead, look for ways of resolving differences that may have a higher probability of success.

Things to avoid when differences arise
▶ Pretending nothing is wrong
▶ Assuming that you know what the problem is and what the solution is
▶ Assuming that you know all there is to know about a mentee
▶ Applying a 'one solution fits all' approach
▶ Not including your mentee in the resolution process
▶ Ignoring organisational policy, procedures and protocols

Finding a mutually beneficial solution

A mutually beneficial solution is one where:

▶ both you and the mentee are happy with the solution and don't feel as if your integrity has been damaged

▶ it is a win–win situation providing each of you with long-term benefits

▶ the solution meets legal obligations and complies with organisational policies and procedures.

Self-disclosure

Self-disclosure relies on sharing information about yourself that the other person may not know but that is relevant to your mutual relationship. This is information that perhaps you may not normally discuss and it helps open up communication channels by encouraging a mentee to reciprocate.

Reciprocal self-disclosure means you both know a little more about each other – understand each other, learn how each other thinks and feels. By knowing each other better, a relationship is strengthened.

Johari Window

A useful strategy to explain this to your mentee is to discuss the Johari Window. The aim is to work with the mentee to build a relationship where Quadrant 1 in the diagram below becomes more open. You may wish to discuss the Johari Window with your mentee and go through each quadrant with the aim being of opening up more of each.

Over the course of your relationship the size of Quadrant 1 should grow; that is, you should learn more and reveal more about yourself; your mentee should likewise know more about themselves and you them, as the expanded windows in the following diagram show.

While self-disclosure is a useful strategy to build trust and to help in resolving differences, it can also be risky in that too much self-disclosure can result in your mentee gaining power in the relationship because of what you have revealed. For example, mentioning to the mentee that you intend to seek alternative employment at the end of the year may not be wise.

	Known to self	Unknown to self
Known to others	**1** Open spot	**2** Blind spot
Unknown to others	**3** Hidden spot	**4** Unknown spot
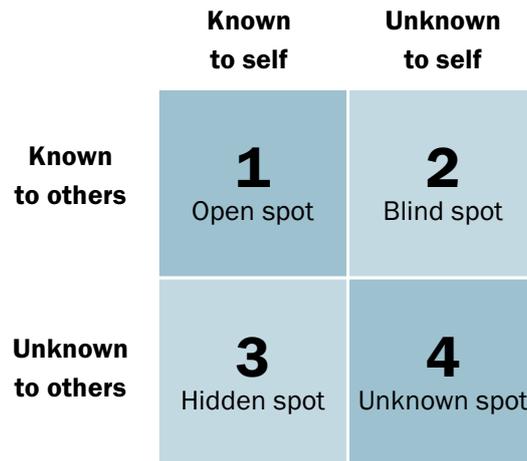
An explanation of each quadrant is given in the following table.

The Johari Window: what the quadrants mean	
Quadrant 1	This quadrant holds information that both you and your mentee know about you: simple information such as your name and occupation. Slowly the content of that quadrant will expand as the mentee learns more about you; for example, your football team and whether you have children – information that you may share during mentoring meetings.
Quadrant 2	This quadrant holds information that a mentee knows about you that you don't know about yourself; for example, that you frequently say 'okay' at the end of statements or that no-one thinks your jokes are funny.
Quadrant 3	This quadrant holds information that you know about yourself that your mentee does not know; for example, that you had to apply for five jobs before you were successful in getting your current job.
Quadrant 4	This quadrant holds information about you that neither you nor your mentee know; for example, that you would make a great photographer if you ever took up this hobby.

Inviting discussion

Interactions with a mentee, particularly when you are attempting to resolve differences with them, should encourage the person to identify that a difference exists and then invite candid discussion of it. Unless you talk about your mutual differences, satisfactory and genuine resolution may not be found. However, such an approach requires trust and a good understanding of the person you are dealing with and a willingness and ability to control the amount of emotion in the discussion.

As the mentor, take the initiative; for example, 'Alex, I can see that we disagree on this. But it's important to get this issue out in the open, work through it and get agreement so that we can continue to work together. We need to talk about it so that we can learn how each of us thinks and come up with a resolution we both agree to.'

Keys to a productive discussion
▶ Choose an appropriate location – somewhere private and neutral where the mentee can feel that that they are in an equal position.
▶ Allow the mentee to explain their viewpoint first, without interrupting or protesting.
▶ Acknowledge and accept the mentee's viewpoint even if you disagree with it.

Providing explanations

A mentoring relationship is not a power relationship but one built on shared involvement. If either you or the mentee is upset about the other's behaviour or decision, explain why. A mentor's role is about 'selling' rather than just 'telling', so the preferred approach to an action is to explain your reasoning. If you are giving the mentee an explanation, ensure that it is provided in a way that the mentee understands and can relate to.

An explanation gives a rationale for your actions or decisions that can contribute to a mentee acknowledging that while they may not like the action or decision, they understand why it was taken. Once understanding is achieved there is a basis of agreement for managing future situations.

Back up your explanations with the specific knowledge or experience you've drawn on. Refer to specific organisational policies, procedures or legal requirements as you explain your perspective. Try to link your points to the discussion to the mentoring agreement wherever possible.

Accessing assistance

There may be times when you feel that you are unable to resolve a difference between yourself and a mentee. If the difference is one that affects the relationship and your ability to support the mentee to achieve their goals, seek assistance.

In the first instance, this may involve referring to the mentoring agreement to identify an agreed procedure for seeking assistance. In addition, if yours is an organisation with a formal mentoring program, there are likely to be policies and procedures to guide you. This may include referral to a person with overall responsibility for the mentoring program, perhaps a human resources manager or other person with assigned responsibility.

Depending on the mentee, their characteristics and needs and any underlying issues, you may wish to seek assistance or advice from other specialist sources.

Specialist sources that may be able to assist
▶ Language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) specialists or interpreter services
▶ A disability support officer, migrant support services and the like
▶ Indigenous support services
▶ Your own mentor or manager
▶ State training services such as NSW Training Services in the Department of Industry.

Help from training providers

If a mentee is undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship, you will find that the training provider can provide advice regarding the requirements of the qualification that the mentee is undertaking. An Australian Apprenticeship Centre (AAC) representative can provide clarification of the requirements relating to the person's training contract.

It is important to take action and seek assistance in order to address a problem so that communication channels remain open and the relationship can move forward. As the mentor, you must take the initiative in resolving differences between yourself and the mentee.

Example

Resolve differences and obtain assistance

A large organisation employs numerous apprentices in a variety of trade areas. Apprentices are supported by a structured mentoring program with three experienced employees appointed as mentors. Angelina is one of these mentors. There is also a lead mentor, Richard, the human resources manager. He established the mentoring program and now supports the mentors. Mentees are randomly allocated to mentors to ensure each mentor has an equal workload.

Two mentees have asked to transfer from Angelina to another mentor. Angelina is concerned and a little upset, so she speaks to the lead mentor. Richard reminds Angelina that most relationships have their difficulties sooner or later and that a mentor–mentee relationship is no different. Angelina explains that she's tried several techniques to resolve differences between her and the mentees and is disappointed that her efforts seem to have been unsuccessful.

One of the mentees is almost the same age as Angelina and from an eastern European background. Angelina sensed tension from their first meeting. She tried to find common ground and use self-disclosure to support trust building and open communication but the mentee simply won't open up and talk about the problem. Richard suggests that Angelina discusses the situation with the diversity officer to find out if there are any cultural, age or gender barriers and to explore ways of moving forward. Richard and Angelina agree that if any of these factors is a barrier, it's probably in everyone's best interests to find another mentor.

The other mentee is upset because Angelina has mentioned to the training officer that he needs a refresher in PPE and safety precautions for lathe use. The apprentice has been observed using unsafe work practices that represent a risk to personal safety and may cause equipment damage. Richard's response is that Angelina has followed organisational policy and the terms of the mentoring agreement. He suggests that Angelina meet with the mentee, ask him how he feels the situation should have been managed and then explain what she did and why. In this case, it's likely that the relationship can be rebuilt.

Activity 10

1. Explain the Johari Window to a mentee or someone you can work closely with.

   ▶ Draw a Johari Window with the quadrants based on how well you know this person and they know you. Add two items to the 'known to self' quadrants. Ask the person you are completing this activity with to add two items to the other two quadrants. Redraw the Johari Window based on the fact that you and this person now know more about you.

   ▶ How do you think this activity may help you build a more open relationship with a mentee?

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2. Reflect on one or two interpersonal problems or issues that you have had recently.

    ▶   What technique/s did you use to resolve these problems?

    ▶   How did you involve the other person?

    ▶   With hindsight, explain what you would do differently.

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3. Think about one or two important decisions you have had to make. How did you reach a decision? Explain how you would do things differently.

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Click to complete Activity 10

Summary

1. A successful mentoring relationship is built on mutual trust and respect.

2. Trust can be developed by sharing personal experiences and knowledge.

3. A mentor must help a mentee develop independence and self-reliance, such as the problem-solving and decision-making skills that will help them achieve their goals.

4. Introducing a mentee to members of a network of contacts can enhance their access to a range of knowledge or opportunities.

5. Information, guidance and fair and constructive criticism can help a mentee develop better workplace relationships and behaviours.

6. Mentors must use appropriate techniques to resolve interpersonal differences and sustain a healthy relationship.

7. Mentors must take the initiative in resolving problems and seeking assistance to keep the mentee on track to achieve their goals.
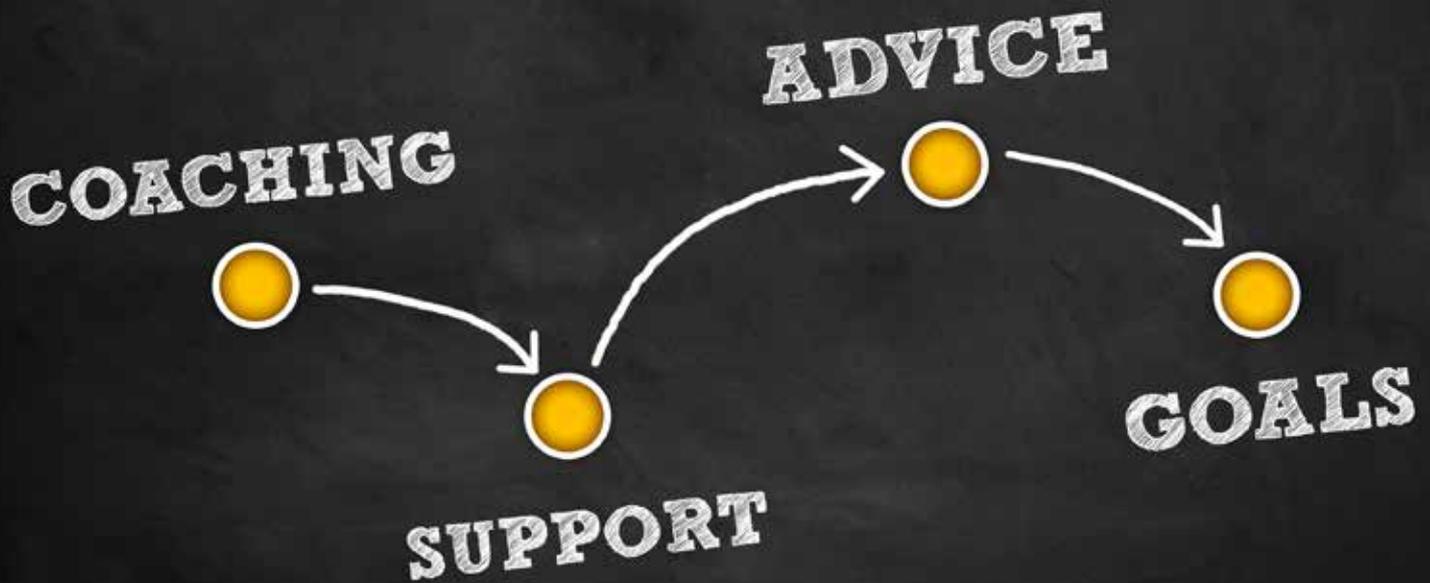
Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

3A Provide planning assistance and guidance to the mentee

3B Provide feedback to the mentee

3C Recognise and discuss changes in the mentoring relationship

3D Negotiate and manage closure of the mentoring arrangement

Monitor the mentoring relationship

A mentoring relationship may be for a specified period of time, such as the duration of an apprenticeship or traineeship; it may be an ongoing feature of an employee development program; or it may be part of a long-term, informal workplace relationship. Regardless, a mentor will be an active part of the relationship, providing the leadership to help plan and steer the relationship as it evolves and changes direction, or as it nears an end.

Goals will have been established with time lines attached to their achievement. A mentee needs support to plan how to achieve these goals and to ensure steady progress is being made. Providing constructive feedback helps a mentee develop the skills and knowledge they seek. Sometimes plans need to be revised as the mentoring relationship changes and goals are modified; you will help identify these changes and discuss them with the mentee. Likewise, once a relationship nears closure, you will plan for its closure and guide the mentee's understanding of the process.

3A Provide planning assistance and guidance to the mentee

Establishing a sound working relationship with the mentee is essential to being able to gain the mentee's trust in your guidance. The mentee's goals and the goals of the mentoring relationship should be clearly documented in a mentoring agreement. Establishing goals is the first step towards achieving them, but a mentee may need support to plan how to achieve those goals in a way that meets their individual requirements. The mentoring plan needs to be monitored to see how it is progressing.

Helping your mentee plan

It is a well-worn saying, but 'if you fail to plan, you plan to fail'. Although planning doesn't come easily to everyone, and sticking to a plan can be challenging, it is even harder to achieve or implement goals without some sort of plan to guide you.

A mentee may need to plan how to implement the goals agreed to in the mentoring agreement and carry out the responsibilities described in the training contract/s. They may need assistance and advice planning other activities that form part of their daily work and learning routine, or perhaps some other aspect of their daily life.

There are different tools and techniques that can be used to plan effectively.

Tools and techniques that are ultimately chosen will depend on:

▶ the mentee's preferences and experience
▶ the nature of the goals
▶ the specific aspect of their work or personal life.

Training contracts and the responsibilities of employer, RTO and funding body

Understanding the mentee's role in your workplace and the responsibilities you and the workplace have to him or her are prerequisites to effective planning. Likewise, understanding the details of an apprenticeship agreement, training plan or other contractual arrangement will also help you guide the mentee through any uncertainties relating to these or to the mentoring agreement.

The mentee may be a trainee recently placed in a training position who is still learning their role. The term 'trainee' has a formal application in the VET system and is used alongside 'apprentice' to mean someone who enters into a training contract with the federal government and an employer to undertake training that leads to a formal qualification.

Parties to the training contract

There are three parties to a training contract and each party has certain responsibilities, as described in the following table.

(Please note that this is a general outline and there may be state or territory differences.)

Parties to the training agreement	Explanation	Example responsibilities
The federal government	▶ The federal government agrees to provide the employer with any incentives they may be entitled to for employing the learner. ▶ The federal government is represented by Australian Apprenticeship Centres (AAC), which provide services on its behalf.	▶ Ensure that all parties understand their rights and responsibilities (as outlined in the National Code of Good Practice for Australian Apprenticeships; refer to this link: www. australianapprenticeships. gov.au/publications/ national-code-good-practice-australian-apprenticeships.) ▶ Ensure that the qualification the trainee is to complete is appropriate for them and the employer. ▶ Provide information as required.
The learner	▶ The learner agrees to complete a qualification. A learner completing a vocational qualification (such as office administration, information technology or hospitality) is generally referred to as a trainee. A learner completing a trade qualification (such as electrical, plumbing and cabinet-making) is generally referred to as an apprentice. ▶ If the learner is still at secondary school they can register for a school-based apprenticeship. The school is also a party to the training agreement. ▶ If a learner is under 18, a parent or guardian must also sign the training agreement.	Learners must: ▶ sign the training contract ▶ fulfil training and work responsibilities.

Parties to the training agreement	Explanation	Example responsibilities
The employer	▶ The employer agrees to help the learner develop the skills and knowledge (that is, the competency) to perform the tasks described in the unit/s of competency. ▶ Sometimes the formal employer is a group training company that finds a 'host employer' to hire the employee. The host employer is not a direct party to the training contract.	▶ Ensure a training contract is signed by the end of the probationary period. ▶ Select an RTO in consultation with the learner. ▶ Provide paperwork to the AAC as required. ▶ Notify the AAC of any changes to the training contract or difficulties with the arrangement; for example, cancellation of the contract or that the learner is not progressing.

Enrolling with an RTO

Part of the employer's side of the agreement is that the learner enrols with an RTO (Registered Training Organisation) as part of the formal training requirements. There are various scenarios in which the formal training may take place; this may determine how often you communicate with a mentee and the method used. For example:

▶ the apprentice or trainee is at the workplace full time and the training provider attends at regular intervals to deliver training and conduct assessment on site

▶ the trainee is studying full time and attends the workplace at specified times; such as a certain number of days per week or in placement blocks of several weeks per semester.

Understanding the VET system

Take the time to understand the VET qualification your mentee is undertaking – he or she may want to discuss its relevance to them or their job role, or they may ask for your support in choosing elective units. The mentee may also ask you to help them plan their progress through the qualification. The AAC representative and the training provider representative can help you with background information to support planning.

Develop a basic understanding of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) and the VET Quality Framework (VQF)/Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) as that will help you understand the formal structure of the mentee's training. The training provider may require you and your mentee to sign various forms or for the units of competency to be completed in a particular order that may relate to VQF/AQTF requirements; for example, some units of competency have prerequisites.

For further information about Australian Apprenticeships, visit: www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au.

Financial support information

You may also be asked about the financial support available to an apprentice or trainee. Some support is administered by the AAC and some by Centrelink; the requirements can be complex, so it is best to rely on the AAC, the training provider and Centrelink as sources of up-to-date information.

Although the training provider is not part of the formal training contract, RTOs play a significant part in the training and assessment of mentees and must meet legislative and quality obligations through the VQF/AQTF.

Among the stipulations are requirements that relate to:

▶ the number and duration of training contacts with apprentices or trainees; for example, if the mentee is an apprentice or trainee fully on the job, the training provider may be required to visit four or more times per year

▶ regular meetings with the employer representative (which may be you) to get an update of the apprentice or trainee's progress and to discuss concerns and how these may be addressed.

Non-apprenticeship mentoring relationships

Not all mentoring relationships involve Australian Apprenticeships. There are formal programs initiated by organisations, and informal relationships in which one person has asked another to be their mentor to provide advice and support to help them to achieve a particular goal or to contribute to their career development.

Formal mentoring programs should have a mentoring plan that is agreed to by the mentee and the mentor and which is in line with organisational requirements. Informal mentoring relationships can also benefit from a discussion of scope, goals and confidentiality.

Planning tools and techniques

Planning tools and techniques can help your mentee stay on track so they progress and achieve their goals. If a mentee is overwhelmed by their workload or are by nature not organised, you can discuss tools and techniques that can help them.

A mentee may have a preferred way of managing their time and commitments, so it is important to have this discussion so they can take ownership of the problem and develop a strategy. Remember that your role is to support the mentee and provide guidance rather than solve the problem for them.

Your mentee may need help to:

▶ plan a study schedule

▶ set up and maintain a budget
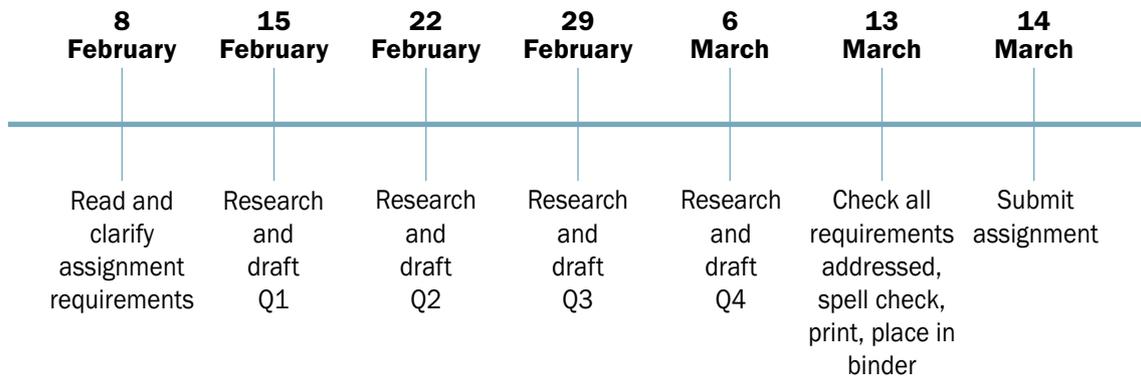
▶ plan travel to work.

Developing a schedule

Time-management skills are essential to being able to meet commitments such as meetings, training sessions and assessment activities.

To help your mentee manage their time so they are more likely to meet these commitments, you may need to help them set up a schedule. The advantage of a written schedule is that it can be referred to regularly and represents a commitment by the mentee.

Establishing a schedule depends on the complexity of the task and the person's needs. You could recommend something as simple as an online calendar or a smartphone scheduling application.

Using a Gantt chart

A Gantt chart or time line is a good way to plan an approach to completing an activity. It can be done simply or at a very detailed level. For example, the following time line shows how a mentee could plan to ensure that an assignment is completed on time:

8 **February**	**15** **February**	**22** **February**	**29** **February**	**6** **March**	**13** **March**	**14** **March**
Read and clarify assignment requirements	Research and draft Q1	Research and draft Q2	Research and draft Q3	Research and draft Q4	Check all requirements addressed, spell check, print, place in binder	Submit assignment

The format of the time line does not matter as long as it shows the progression from one activity to the next based on time.

The next example shows a more detailed version of this time line.

8 **February**	**9** **February**	**10** **February**	**11** **February**	**12** **February**	**13** **February**	**14** **February**
Read assignment and write a list of questions needing clarification	Meet with mentor to clarify questions	Research and draft part A, write down any queries	Meet with mentor to review part A and to clarify questions	Finalise part A	Weekend	
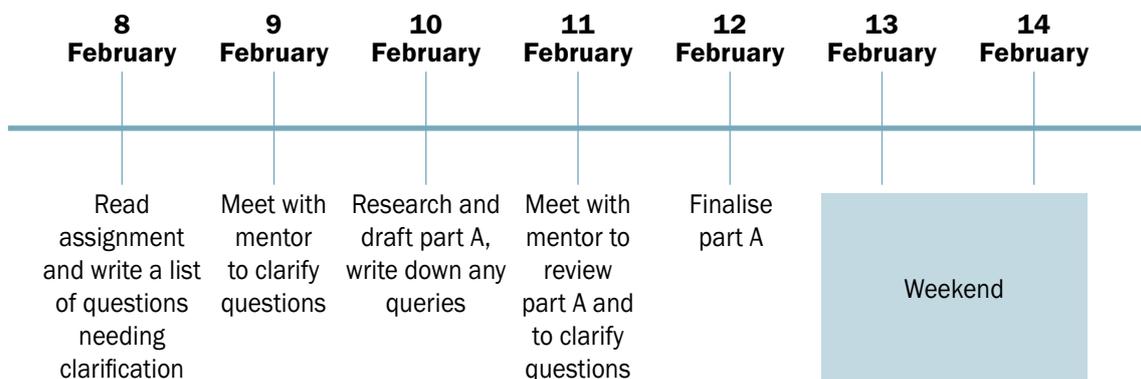
Checklists

A 'to do' list is a simple example of a checklist. This is a useful motivational and organisational tool that can be used to help your mentee prioritise what needs to be done each day and check each item off on completion.

A checklist is also a useful strategy for focusing on key activities. This is done by prioritising the importance of each task; for example:

▶ tasks that must be done that day

▶ tasks that should be done that day if possible

▶ other tasks that can be done whenever time allows

You can number or colour code the items according to priority.

Providing planning assistance and guidance

There may be times when a mentee asks you directly for planning assistance and guidance. At other times, you may see signs that a mentee needs planning assistance and guidance; for example:

▶ you have received feedback from their work placement supervisor or training provider that indicates they need help

▶ you note that they are not reaching their goals as planned.

When a mentee asks for advice and guidance they are giving you permission to provide it. However, if you perceive that they need advice and assistance, be careful to seek their agreement before taking it upon yourself to give the advice or assistance.

When providing planning assistance and guidance, remember that the mentor's role is not to provide the answers, but to encourage the mentee to develop the skills they need for self-sufficiency. Your role is to give them structures to work within, and guide them as needed through the planning process.

Decide the level of assistance needed

When responding to a person's request for planning advice, offer what the person needs in a way that is appropriate to their particular requirements. The following steps are a guide that could be useful as you approach the task.

1

Establish the need for assistance or advice

Establish why they need the planning assistance or advice. Clarify with them what they already know and can do. Listen carefully and observe their body language. Identify whether it is planning assistance they need or some other form of assistance. Ask questions about the mentee's perspective; for example, ask about the strategies they use to stay on track with their work placement tasks.

2

Canvass options with the mentee

Canvass various options with the mentee and involve them in deciding what is most appropriate to their needs. As you do this remember that, for cultural reasons, some people will often say yes or agree to your suggestions for fear of offending or because they perceive you hold some kind of authority. If this is the case, you may need to ask them to make a choice before you give your opinion.

3 **Give your advice and guidance**

Give your advice and guidance, accepting that the mentee may choose to use it selectively or elect not to accept it. This could be due to the mentee viewing your circumstances and theirs as different – 'That worked for you, but my situation is different'.

4 **Allow the mentee time to reflect**

Allow the mentee time to reflect on the options. You may need to raise the subject again at the next meeting; for example, 'At our last meeting we had a chat about different ways you can plan. Which of those strategies would you like to implement?'

When assistance is not sought

Some mentees will not ask for planning assistance and guidance. Depending on their culture, age and other characteristics, they may feel uncomfortable, inadequate or vulnerable about asking for advice and assistance. Alternatively, they may not see the need for planning assistance and guidance. Effective communication and appropriate feedback are required to overcome this barrier.

Common fears about asking for help
▶ Being seen as unintelligent
▶ That you (the mentor) may tell others
▶ That their work placement may be at risk
▶ Being seen as weak or rude
▶ That they are letting you down

Example

Provide planning assistance and guidance to the mentee

Giselle is mentoring Chiara, a mature-aged woman who is completing a six-month English language course. The course is a prerequisite for entering a traineeship. Chiara studies part time at night and works full time during the day.

It is now two months into the course and Chiara is already behind. Chiara comes to Giselle for advice. She explains she has accepted additional work that is important to help meet her expenses, but also that completing the course is very important to her. She is not sure how to manage work and study commitments so she can complete the course.

Giselle suggests that they work together to develop a plan so that Chiara can pace her studies over the time she has left rather than leaving it all to the end and then not having enough time to complete it all.

Chiara and Giselle agree to prepare a schedule that lists Chiara's work, study and family commitments. Using Giselle's whiteboard to rough out the details, they realise that if Chiara can do two learner guide topics each week, she can complete all her assignments on time and her workload will be staggered across the time available.

Here is the schedule for the first week:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8–9 am		Mentor meeting					
9 am–12 noon	Work						
12 noon–1 pm	Lunch 30 mins / Read Topic 3	Lunch 30 mins / Review Topic 3	Lunch 30 mins / Read Topic 4	Lunch 30 mins / Review Topic 4	Lunch	Free time	Free time
1–5 pm	Work						Review chapters 3 & 4
5–6.30 pm	Dinner, get ready for tomorrow (make lunch, organise clothes etc.)						
6.30–9 pm	Finish reading Topic 3 / Topic 3 homework	Attend class	Finish reading Topic 4 / Topic 4 homework	Attend class	Free time	Free time	Free time

Giselle and Chiara agree that Chiara will follow the schedule for the coming week and test it to see if it is achievable. They will discuss her progress again at another meeting and adjust the schedule as needed.

Activity 11

1. Develop a high-level or detailed schedule that demonstrates your ability to plan to accomplish your work and personal and study obligations.

2. Develop a checklist that you could use to ensure you get through one day's tasks and activities.

Click to complete Activity 11

3B Provide feedback to the mentee

Effective mentoring includes providing the mentee with feedback about their progress, and giving suggestions for how the person can move forwards in a more efficient or effective way.

Positive feedback helps a mentee see their achievements, their progress and the positives of their actions and behaviours. Effective feedback also offers suggestions for strategies and techniques to improve their progress towards achieving the goals and expectations of the mentoring agreement.

Feedback is most effective when it is positive and actively sought, so you may need to refer to the mentoring agreement, seek the mentee's permission to provide feedback or include it as a part of regular meetings.

Feedback needs to be provided in a way that is easily understood by a mentee, taking into consideration factors such as disability, cultural background and language ability.

What is feedback?

Feedback is information given to a person that helps them understand the difference between goals and expectations: where they are and what is expected of them by themselves or others.

A mentor's role is to support a mentee's efforts to achieve their personal goals and the goals of the mentoring process. By providing your mentee with regular feedback you can motivate them by acknowledging what they have achieved or are doing well and also providing them with direction on how they can improve.

Provide mentees with regular feedback on:

▶ how they are progressing along the continuum to achieving their goals

▶ aspects of their performance/attitude that are supporting their goal achievement

▶ aspects of their performance/attitude that are hindering their goal achievement.

Preparing a mentee to receive feedback

When establishing roles, responsibilities and ground rules early in the mentoring relationship, it may be useful for you to discuss your role in giving feedback before any feedback is required. This makes it a safe time to discuss:

▶ the purpose of feedback

▶ types of feedback

▶ how the mentee feels about receiving feedback.

Ask your mentee to give you some examples of how they have been given feedback in the past, its effectiveness and the outcome. Did they feel encouraged to do better, or embarrassed that they were being 'told off'? Talk about the positive role feedback can play in your mentoring relationship, and how it might help the mentee achieve their goals.

Sharing your own experiences in receiving feedback will also assist in building a trusting relationship.

Feedback sessions as a part of every meeting

Another thing to be discussed is whether to include a feedback component as a regular part of every meeting. This can help to remove the anxiety of not knowing when feedback will be provided. If agreed, the feedback session could include feedback about how the mentee is progressing against their goals. The other aspect that could be discussed is how the mentee is performing in the workplace, including acknowledgment of progress and areas for improvement. Feedback on areas for improvement should be re-visited at the next meeting to determine whether the mentee needs additional support.

A meeting is not required to give someone positive feedback or, indeed, constructive feedback that helps them improve. Give feedback as soon as possible, or when the appropriate circumstances arise as well as in structured meetings.

Note that feedback may not be necessary if the right level of support is provided. If the mentee is able to reflect on their own behaviour or achievements, or acknowledge a need for improvement or assistance, you may see them addressing problems and issues with no prompting from you.

Discussion starters can be useful in helping a mentee undertake reflection and self-assessment.

Suggested discussion starters
▶ It's been three weeks since we last met. How have you moved closer to achieving the goals that you want to achieve?
▶ What has been the most difficult challenge for you?
▶ What have you learnt from this experience?
▶ What do you need to change or do so that you can successfully complete that task?
▶ On a scale of one to ten, how happy are you with your achievements this month?
▶ What could you do so that next time we meet and I ask you that question, you'll give a higher rating?

How to give feedback

Once you have listened to and clarified the mentee's responses, you may then need to provide positive or corrective feedback.

Feedback, whether positive or negative, can be difficult to give and receive. Providing feedback in a way that is sensitive to the needs and characteristics of the mentee, is supportive and non-threatening, is a skill to be practised and refined. You must know the mentee and constantly assess their responses. Positive feedback is sometimes called 'supportive feedback'; negative feedback may be referred to as 'corrective feedback' since it is not intended to put down or criticise, but rather to correct something unsatisfactory.

Inappropriate, misdirected or poorly given feedback can negatively affect your relationship with the mentee. A few poorly chosen or insensitive words can have a lasting impact on a relationship that is built on trust and respect. Understanding how to communicate with mentees with particular needs, such as people from a different cultural or linguistic background to you or those with a disability, is essential.

General feedback considerations

Whether the feedback is supportive or corrective, there are general guidelines to apply in each feedback session, as shown here.

Start positively

Always preface a feedback session with positive comment and positive reinforcement. Likewise, corrective feedback must highlight the positives.

Avoid giving advice

Avoid offering advice when giving feedback. Give the mentee time to reflect on the feedback and then ask if they would like you to help them work out a strategy to move forward.

Prioritise feedback

If you need to provide feedback on several points, prioritise and work with the most important issue first. Giving someone a long list of areas for improvement is likely to demoralise rather than motivate them to action.

Body language

Be aware of body language – your own and the mentee's. For example, try to compose yourself and avoid body language that shows frustration; a change in body language from the mentee should alert you to re-think how you provide the feedback.

Personal contact

Feedback should be provided in person if possible. However, in a distance mentoring relationship where feedback is sought or given via electronic communication, take extra care with the words used to convey your message.

Offering positive feedback

Even when giving positive, supportive feedback, there are some general considerations to follow to ensure the feedback you give is effective.

Respond promptly with feedback

▶ Give a mentee positive feedback as soon as you're aware that they have done something well or have achieved something; even if it's not directly related to the goals you are supporting them to achieve, it will help to solidify your relationship.

Be generous with positive feedback

▶ Be generous with positive feedback; if appropriate and with the mentee's permission you can publicise achievement; for example, a mentee undertaking an apprenticeship in cabinet-making makes a number children's tables and chairs and has successfully sold these at the local craft market. With their permission you could include this story in the organisation's weekly newsletter. Remember to be culturally aware: people from some cultures do not like being singled out – even for praise.

Providing corrective feedback

When you need to give corrective feedback, consider where, when and how to provide the feedback.

All feedback should be given as soon as possible, but consider the timing from your mentee's perspective. Corrective feedback has the potential to be damaging and is easily perceived as criticism. Corrective feedback should always be offered in private and, if possible, as part of routine meetings.

Often corrective feedback is required to deal with a behavioural issue or safety concern and as a result it is often given soon after the event. Even so, corrective feedback should have a positive slant and offer encouragement. Be mindful of events and occurrences in the mentee's personal life that may overlap with the feedback; also, choose the right time to give it in terms of their work or study schedule. For example, it is not advisable to give constructive feedback at 5 pm on a Friday as there's no opportunity to clarify or support the person to come to terms with the feedback.

As you will now be aware, providing effective feedback relies on having good communication skills. Endeavour to constantly refine and improve the way you interact with people so that your dealings with a mentee always lead to a positive outcome.

Be specific with feedback

Be specific with your feedback: 'You're doing well' or 'Your work isn't up to scratch' are too vague to be helpful. The mentee needs to know specifically what is good or what needs improvement about their work. For example, if the mentee asks you to provide feedback on a presentation, your response could address:

▶ whether they understood the needs of the audience

▶ whether they included all the information they were asked to include

▶ the use of the standard organisational template and formatting

▶ the clarity and ease of understanding of their speech and language

▶ whether the presentation was logical and easy to follow

▶ whether the presentation was delivered in the time allotted.

Example

Provide feedback to the mentee

According to the schedule Giselle and Chiara put together, this week Chiara is to have completed two topics from her language learner guide. At their mentoring meeting, Giselle asks whether the schedule has helped Chiara to meet her learning and work commitments. Chiara says that she has been offered some evening work two nights per week and has accepted.

Giselle's immediate feeling is of concern and disappointment – she had hoped the schedule they worked out would put Chiara back on track to complete her course – but she quickly refocuses on Chiara and how she can support her now.

Chiara says that she has made sure that she will still be able to attend her night course, but it will make it difficult to do her reading and homework according to the schedule.

Giselle understands that Chiara needs the extra money, but she has a specific role to play in helping Chiara achieve her goal of completing the English language course this year to be able to take up a traineeship next year. Giselle reminds Chiara of her long-term goal and then uses a whiteboard to show Chiara where she is in her schedule and where she needs to be. Giselle explains that there are 16 weeks remaining to complete 30 assignments – roughly two assignments each week.

Giselle is concerned that Chiara has lost sight of her long-term goals. She initiates a discussion revisiting Chiara's proposed career path, weighing up her goals against short- and long-term financial needs and benefits.

Chiara promises to think about what she has to gain in the long term from making a financial sacrifice now. She also undertakes to talk to the trainer and the LLN specialist she sees to find out if there are any alternatives for her.

Activity 12

Complete either question 1 or question 2.

1. Review a situation when you provided someone with work- or training-related feedback.
    ▶ Identify whether it was positive or corrective feedback and outline the circumstances surrounding why the feedback was provided.
    ▶ Analyse your performance in giving the feedback. What did you do well and what would you improve with hindsight? How was the feedback accepted? How did you ensure that the feedback was appropriate to the person receiving the feedback?

OR

2. Use your network of contacts to locate someone who is an experienced mentor. Discuss with them the following points and record their responses.
    ▶ How do they ensure that the feedback is appropriate to the mentee?
    ▶ What approach do they use to provide:
        – corrective feedback
        – positive and supportive feedback
    ▶ What process do they follow to review and reflect on the effectiveness of the feedback?

Click to complete Activity 12

3C Recognise and discuss changes in the mentoring relationship

The goals documented in a mentoring agreement are established at a given point and may change over time. The original goals may become irrelevant, inapplicable or unattainable.

Monitoring and reflecting on the mentoring relationship allows a mentor to identify changes to the relationship, initiate a discussion of developments with the relevant people and review and update the mentoring agreement.

While minor changes could be easily accommodated, significant change may necessitate a whole new agreement. It is important that everyone understands the goals of the relationship and the obligations, role and responsibilities of each party.

Changes that may occur in a mentoring relationship

Relationships change and evolve over time. Both the mentor and the mentee will experience changes in their personal and professional needs and life situations. Consequently, the mentoring relationship should be regularly assessed to confirm that both parties understand the relationship and remain committed to it.

Change is normal, and it is important to ensure that all stakeholders are advised of changes that may affect the mentoring relationship.

Changes in a mentoring relationship

▶ The relationship has developed problems that cannot be resolved by discussion or mediation.

▶ The mentor has an increased workload that means they can no longer devote the time required to the relationship.

▶ One party is moving to a location that makes contact difficult, or has had a change in personal circumstances that affect the relationship.

▶ The expectations of the agreement no longer align with the mentee's needs or abilities.

▶ The mentee has progressed to the point that they could benefit from a new mentor.

▶ The mentor or mentee is going on leave for an extended period, which will affect the achievement of the mentee's goals.

▶ The end date for the mentoring relationship has arrived but both parties would like to extend it.

Stakeholders in a mentoring relationship

Stakeholders in a mentoring relationship vary from situation to situation. Depending on the mentoring relationship the stakeholders may change, as shown in the following table. Each of these stakeholders will need to be kept up to date with possible changes to the mentoring arrangement.

Type of mentoring relationship	Possible stakeholders
Informal workplace development program	▶ Mentee ▶ Mentor ▶ Management
Formal mentoring arrangement associated with a contracted apprenticeship or traineeship and involving a formal training plan	▶ Mentee ▶ Mentee's parents or guardians if they are a minor ▶ Mentor ▶ Manager or supervisor ▶ RTO ▶ Learning support services (e.g. assistive technology, diagnostic testing) ▶ Funding organisation ▶ Learning resources supplier

Stakeholders

It is important that you have identified all stakeholders and that you keep them informed according to arrangements made at the beginning of the mentoring relationship. For example, it may have been agreed that a monthly report is required, but that any changes that affect the mentoring relationship should be provided immediately.

Each of the mentoring relationship stakeholders is defined and explained here.

Mentee

The priority in any mentoring relationship is the mentee. If you become aware of changing circumstances that may affect the mentoring relationship, discuss as soon as possible the likely course of action to be taken.

It is important that you communicate the circumstances and future direction/s in a way that:

▶ is very clear about the likely change/s

▶ explains how any changes will affect the mentoring relationship

▶ is not critical of the mentee and does not leave them feeling as if they are at fault

▶ where possible, stresses the positive aspects of any change as they relate to the mentee.

Manager or supervisor

The mentee's manager or supervisor, as well as anyone you report to in relation to a mentoring agreement, should also be informed.

The mentee's supervisor or a lead mentor may want to know:

▶ what the changes are and when they are likely to take effect

▶ the likely effect on the mentee and their performance in the workplace

▶ recommendations for minimising any negative consequences.

Your own manager or the person with overall responsibility for mentoring must be informed so they can provide the appropriate response, particularly if changing circumstances have contractual implications. They may need to appoint an alternative mentor. You will need to follow your organisation's policies and procedures regarding briefing the mentor lead and 'handing over' to the new mentor.

RTO

A mentee registered in an apprenticeship or traineeship also has obligations to their RTO learning program.

If changes to the mentoring relationship will affect the mentee's learning program, you will need to contact the RTO and negotiate a suitable outcome with the training provider.

Learning support services

If your mentee is using internal or external learning support services you may need to keep these services informed about the changes, when they are likely to take effect and any implications for the service provider. For example, an interpreter or aid must be informed if a meeting program is rescheduled or cancelled.

If assistive technology or diagnostic testing is used and there is a change in mentoring arrangements – perhaps a mentee withdraws – it may be your responsibility to inform whoever is responsible for the technology or testing.

Funding organisation

A funding organisation such as a federal or state government body or other organisation that provides either the mentee's workplace or the mentee themselves with funding to support training or the time dedicated to mentoring may need to be advised of changes.

This is important so that contractual requirements are met and funds are not incorrectly allocated.

Learning resources supplier

The learning resources supplier who supports you or the mentee may need to be contacted to inform them of any changes that affect delivery dates or resource requirements.

Example

Recognise and discuss changes in the mentoring relationship

Charmaine informally mentors Alyssa; they know each other through their involvement in a netball club where Alyssa is a player in a team coached by Charmaine. Alyssa is undertaking a traineeship in childcare. She sought out Charmaine as her mentor because Charmaine started out as a childcare worker and now owns a childcare centre.

Alyssa is studying at a private childcare training academy and generally meets Charmaine every two or three weeks for a coffee at a cafe near Charmaine's centre. However, Alyssa has cancelled the last two meetings. After the second cancellation, Charmaine recalls that Alyssa has recently been a little quiet and not as enthusiastic as she usually is. Prior to the next meeting Charmaine rings Alyssa to confirm she is able to attend the meeting and suggests that maybe there are some things they need to discuss.

At the meeting it is clear Alyssa is not comfortable. Charmaine is up front and asks: 'Alyssa, I can't help but feel that although you've come today, it seems like you don't want to be here. Is there something I can help you with?'

A relieved Alyssa says that her life has become complicated in the last month. Her partner has accepted a job interstate for six months so she has no back-up for looking after their two children. His absence has also put a strain on their relationship.

Alyssa says that she really appreciates Charmaine sharing her knowledge and expertise and feels bad about backing out, but until her partner returns she won't be able to attend meetings. Charmaine reassures her, and suggests they explore alternative solutions. They brainstorm for a while and agree that while Alyssa's partner is away they could meet during Alyssa's lunch break at the training academy as she already has child care booked for those days.

Activity 13

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

You have been mentoring Alexi, who is working towards a qualification in cabinet making with two years to go. The course is being completed as part of an Australian Apprenticeship – Alexi attends a local training academy one day per week and works for a local carpenter the other four days where she can develop practical skills.

Alexi has missed the last two mentoring meetings with you and you have been unable to make contact with her. When finally she contacts you she tells you that she needs to find a way of deferring her training if possible as she is currently homeless and her apprenticeship wage is not sufficient to pay for accommodation and other living expenses.

Alexi confirms that she is safe and has been able to sleep on friends' couches but says that situation cannot continue for much longer.

1. Make a list of the stakeholders that you would contact to determine what assistance is available to help Alexi continue with her training.

2. Research different options and suggest two that you could discuss with Alexi that will help her with her current personal needs and allow her to complete her training.

Click to complete Activity 13

3D Negotiate and manage closure of the mentoring arrangement

Some mentoring relationships, particularly informal relationships, continue for many years; some reach a natural end when the goals of the relationship have been achieved, the agreed objectives met or when either of the parties wishes to terminate the relationship; and others exist for a defined period related to a person's employment and training or as part of a contractual arrangement.

Whatever the reason for the relationship coming to an end, it should be terminated in a staged manner that allows it to end in a positive way.

When does a mentoring relationship end?

The closure of a mentoring arrangement can be part of a formal agreement or a natural outcome of the evolution of the relationship.

A formal mentoring relationship often specifies a closure date that coincides with the end of a contractual arrangement, such as an apprenticeship or traineeship. Closure may also occur when all stakeholders are satisfied that the goals or objectives of the mentoring relationship have been met.

Sometimes changes lead to a restructuring of the relationship; for example, changed work or personal circumstances may lead to a termination of the mentoring relationship.

Regularly assessing the value of the relationship will help to determine whether objectives have been met and whether the relationship should continue. One or both parties may feel they are no longer benefitting from the relationship.

Review of the relationship and the mentoring outcomes can be undertaken at particular points in the mentoring cycle to determine whether the relationship continues to meet both parties' needs.

Involve the mentee

As the mentor, you should take the initiative to recognise when a relationship should end and manage closure to ensure the relationship ends positively. If necessary, discuss with the mentee to reach agreement on whether or not the relationship should end.

Once it is established that the relationship should end, discuss with the mentee the process to be followed. As far as possible the decision should be mutually acknowledged and communication lines remain open so that all stakeholders can agree on the formal process for ending the relationship.

Ending a mentoring relationship

The process for ending a mentoring relationship is determined by whether the arrangement is formal or informal.

In an informal mentoring relationship, the mentor and the mentee may need to meet to negotiate and discuss how, when and where the relationship is to end and what needs to be done to finalise it.

By contrast, a formal mentoring relationship is likely to have a process documented in the mentoring agreement. The agreement should tell all stakeholders what their role and responsibilities are; the mentor's role may also include managing the closure process and finalising documentation. Many mentoring agreements have a 'no fault' clause allowing either party to end the relationship but do not necessarily provide a process or strategy to follow. Once again, the onus is on the mentor to ensure that closure is correctly managed and sensitive to the needs of all parties.

Regardless of the exact nature of the mentoring agreement, there should be a final session or meeting that gives both parties an opportunity to acknowledge the ending of the relationship.

The location of the closure meeting should be appropriate to the occasion. A formal process may require an office or meeting room location to ensure discussions cover all requirements; in some cases the mentoring agreement may prescribe the location. An informal mentoring relationship may allow for a less formal location that can be negotiated between the parties.

There may be an organisational or contractual requirement to provide a written report on the relationship, confirming that objectives have been met and the relationship has come to a close.

The final session or meeting should enable both parties to:

▶ reflect on the mentee's goals and whether they have been achieved

▶ identify and report on difficulties in the relationship and how these were handled

▶ discuss achievements

▶ identify what was gained from the mentoring relationship

▶ look towards the future.

Example

Negotiate and manage closure of the mentoring arrangement

As part of his employment contract, Dajuma participates in a mentoring program for new employees called the 'Year One Program'. The company uses the program to support the integration and training of new employees and to reduce staff turnover.

Hasani, a fellow African-Australian, is Dajuma's mentor and they meet once a month. There are also monthly group meetings with other new employees and their mentors so that new employees develop a network of contacts across the organisation.

Hasani is required to complete a report documenting how the mentoring arrangement has contributed to Dajuma's integration into his job role at the end of the year.

In the tenth month of the program, Hasani reminds Dajuma that the Year One Program will soon conclude and asks him to start thinking about what they've achieved through the year. David seems concerned that the program is ending and asks if there is a way that they could continue to meet. Hasani senses that Dajuma is not confident about his achievements, so he tells him that at their last meeting they'll go through the mentoring agreement and discuss how well Dajuma has done on each goal.

Rather than meet in a formal way in the workplace, the two agree to share a lunch on the weekend. In looking back over the course of the year at the achievements and the challenges, they agree that Dajuma has come a long way since first joining the company.

Activity 14

1. Reflect on a situation where you may need to terminate a mentoring relationship due to a personality clash between you, the mentor, and the mentee.
    How will you manage this while ensuring that you and the mentee are not embarrassed, do not feel inclined to blame the other and do not feel guilty about the situation?

2. Assume you have been mentoring a mature-aged apprentice who has completed their apprenticeship.
    The mentee has asked if you will continue the relationship informally, but you believe this will not be good for her as you are worried that she is developing a dependence on you. You will also be expected to take on a new mentee once this trainee has completed their apprenticeship. How will you manage the closure of this mentoring relationship? What notes will you keep of this process?

Click to complete Activity 14

Summary

1. Establishing goals is the first step towards achieving them, but a mentee may need support to plan how to achieve those goals in a way that meets their individual requirements.

2. Planning tools and techniques can help your mentee stay on track so that they progress and achieve their goals. Helping a mentee learn how to plan effectively gives them a key skill to use in work and life generally.

3. Feedback must be provided in a way that is sensitive to the needs and characteristics of the mentee.

4. Effective feedback is supportive and non-threatening and is a skill to be practised and refined.

5. Inappropriate, misdirected or poorly given feedback can negatively affect your relationship with the mentee.

6. Feedback can be supportive or corrective. All feedback should be given as soon as possible, but consider the timing from your mentee's perspective.

7. Monitoring and reflecting on the mentoring relationship allows a mentor to identify changes to the relationship, initiate a discussion of developments with the relevant people, and review the mentoring agreement.

8. If there are changes in the mentoring arrangements, all relevant stakeholders should be informed according to agreed processes.

9. The closure of a mentoring arrangement can be part of a formal agreement or a natural outcome of the evolution of the relationship. There should be a final session or meeting that gives both parties an opportunity to acknowledge the ending of the relationship.

10. The mentor is likely to be responsible for ensuring that closure is correctly managed and sensitive to the needs of all parties.

Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

4A Discuss the benefits gained from the mentoring process

4B Reflect on the personal benefits gained from providing mentoring

4C Report on the outcomes of the mentoring arrangement

Evaluate the effectiveness of mentoring

All workplace endeavours should be evaluated for the effectiveness of their outcomes, and a mentoring relationship should be evaluated to see whether it has achieved its goals. This evaluation will occur at the end of an individual relationship to review its effectiveness. A review can also be used to determine whether the mentoring program should continue in its current form or whether it should be terminated.

Any evaluation should consider the benefits of the mentoring program. In preparing your evaluation, reflect on the benefits to the mentee, to yourself and to the organisation. In a formal mentoring process the organisation will want to know that there is a satisfactory return on investment in a program and see an analysis of where improvements can be made.

4A Discuss the benefits gained from the mentoring process

One of the key aims of a workplace mentoring program is to support the mentee, so it is important that the program is evaluated from their perspective. The benefits to the mentee must be articulated and discussed so they are recognised and a judgment can be made about the value of the program.

Discussing the outcomes and value of the program with the mentee can help them identify and acknowledge how they have benefited from the relationship and validate the experience for them. The mentee's appraisal of the program provides the mentor with valuable feedback about their personal effectiveness in the role and is a basis for self-evaluation and reflection.

If the value of the mentoring relationship for the mentee is not articulated and reported or quantified, the organisation may decide to not continue with the mentoring program.

Although it is useful to evaluate a mentoring relationship throughout the relationship to ensure that progress against goals is being made, it is equally important to undertake a final evaluation at the end of the program.

Benefits of mentoring

Mentoring agreements often have specific goals, so it is useful to articulate the benefits that are achieved from a mentoring relationship, align them to the established goals and evaluate the outcomes. For example, a specific goal may be to support the mentee to complete an Australian Apprenticeship in accordance with the time line established by the training contract with the employer and the government. Assessing whether this goal has been achieved contributes to improving future mentoring relationships as well as acknowledging how you have supported a mentee during the existing relationship.

Planned and unplanned benefits

There are many benefits that derive from an effective mentoring relationship, though these will vary according to the people involved, their circumstances and the goals of the arrangement. When discussing the benefits achieved, it is worth acknowledging that there are often unexpected benefits and these should be discussed and reported on as additional supporting reasons for continuing a mentoring program.

For example, a mentoring program implemented to support the induction of new employees into an organisation may have the unplanned benefit of identifying the LLN needs of new employees.

In the following table are some examples of possible benefits.

Benefit	Example
Insights into organisational culture, attitudes and expected behaviours	Role-modelling organisational dress code and language standards so that the mentee 'fits in'
A supportive environment in which successes and failures can be evaluated	Providing a safe place for a mentee to discuss feedback they have received about their performance; this allows them to resolve issues and move on from mistakes or misunderstandings with a positive attitude
Networking opportunities	Encouraging the mentee to see the value of networking; introducing the mentee to people who may give them access to additional opportunities
Development of workplace competence and self-confidence	Encouraging the mentee to leave their comfort zone and try things they may not usually have done
Recognition and job satisfaction	Giving your mentee wider organisational acknowledgment of their achievements
Mutual respect	Helping your mentee to treat all relationships with respect and understanding that people can learn from each other regardless of age or experience

Collect information

The method used to collect information for reviewing and evaluating the program is often determined in advance by organisational policy and procedure. Questionnaires, surveys and personal interviews with the mentee are commonly used.

Other factors that determine the method include:

▶ what the results will be used for

▶ the cost of collecting the data

▶ how efficiently that data can be collected.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires may appear to be a simple way of gathering data; however, you will need to structure your questions carefully so that the mentee understands the questions and the questions gather the information you are seeking.

If the questionnaire or survey is emailed or made available online, the mentee will have time to reflect on the questions; if in hard copy, you may need to allow the mentee time to complete and return the document. You may consider allowing time for the mentee to complete the questionnaire in the last meeting; you are then available to clarify questions.

Anonymity has the advantage that the mentee feels they can be honest in their responses.

Questions can either be quantitative or qualitative as shown here.

Quantitative question
Circle a number in relation to the following statement where 1 = not at all effective and 10 = extremely effective.
The mentoring program was effective in helping me achieve my goals.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Qualitative question
How do you think the mentoring program can be improved?

Interviews

Conducting an interview with a mentee, perhaps at the last meeting, is one way to ensure that the evaluation is carried out but it also puts a mentee 'in the hot seat'. Even in a strong mentor–mentee relationship the person may not be totally honest in their responses for fear of offending you.

There are two main types of interviews: structured and unstructured. In a structured interview, you have specific questions to ask and you simply record the responses. An unstructured interview allows for loose discussion that flows in various directions. This type of interview can reveal a lot of information but it is difficult to collate and report on. You could use structured and unstructured elements to facilitate a comprehensive evaluation.

Discussing benefits

It is important to discuss the results of your data collection with the mentee to confirm, clarify or validate their perceptions about the value of the mentoring program. Their opinions can be used to:

▶ provide input into future programs; for example, a mentee may recommend that mentors are rotated so that mentees can benefit from different mentor experiences

▶ assist continuous improvement; for example, a mentee may feel that a one-hour meeting once a month is insufficient.

Be mindful that the mentee is the beneficiary of an effective mentoring arrangement, so you have an obligation to gather their perceptions of the success or otherwise of the relationship.

In the following example, Rosa demonstrates how she establishes and discusses the benefits of her mentoring relationship with Jamal.

Example

Discuss the benefits gained from the mentoring process

Rosa, an insurance executive, is nearing the end of a 12-month mentoring relationship with Jamal, who is completing a traineeship in finance. The insurance company has a structured mentoring program in place and employs many trainees, all of whom are allocated a mentor.

There are challenges to Rosa's relationship with Jamal; he finds it difficult to accept advice from a woman. Also, Rosa's increased workload in the final months of the mentorship has resulted in several meetings being rescheduled, which Jamal was not happy about.

At the second-last meeting, Rosa discusses the ending of the mentoring relationship with Jamal. She outlines the benefits of reviewing the relationship and program from Jamal's perspective, explaining how that will help future programs. She tells him that as the traineeship comes to a close, there is one final meeting scheduled to do this.

Jamal is aware that there is an online questionnaire to complete; Rosa gives him a copy of the questionnaire in advance so he can think about the questions and seek clarification if there's something he's not sure of. Later she emails him the link to the questionnaire.

Three days before the next meeting, Rosa checks and sees that Jamal hasn't filled in the online questionnaire, so she sends an email with a carefully worded reminder that he has agreed to complete all requirements of the mentoring program.

On the day before the next meeting Rosa downloads and analyses Jamal's responses. While there is some positive feedback and suggestions for improvement, Jamal responds to many of the questions with a non-committal answer – neither good nor bad.

Rosa wants Jamal to come away from the experience with a positive view of the achievements and benefits of the mentoring. At their last meeting she thanks Jamal for completing the evaluation. Then, with his consent, they talk about his feedback. Rosa goes through the questions where she senses Jamal has negative feelings and encourages him to elaborate. However, she also stresses the benefits that the program has delivered by reflecting on Jamal's journey through the traineeship.

Jamal seems to enjoy this retrospective of the mentoring relationship, so Rosa asks him if she has left anything out. Jamal reminds her how she also helped him understand some of his traineeship assignments. Rosa documents her discussions with Jamal.

Activity 15

Identify a person in your network who has been a mentor. Ask them the following questions:

1. How do you establish and discuss the benefits gained by a mentee from the mentoring program and relationship?

2. How do you evaluate the program from the mentee's perspective?

3. What three tips could you share about establishing and discussing benefits gained by a mentee?

Document your discussion.

Click to complete Activity 15

4B Reflect on the personal benefits gained from providing mentoring

The mentoring relationship is a mutually beneficial relationship between a mentor and mentee. Taking the time to reflect on what you hoped to gain from the relationship and whether you achieved your objectives is important so that you can get a sense of the value of your input.

The benefits you may derive from being a mentor depend on your mentee, whether the relationship is a formal or informal mentoring relationship, the length of the relationship, and why you entered into the relationship in the first place.

Benefits gained from providing mentoring

The following table highlights some examples of benefits that you may achieve, noting that the benefits you derive are related to the effort that you put into the relationship.

Possible benefit	Example
Improving listening and questioning skills and being a role model; learning about a different culture or needs of individuals	The mentee is from a different cultural background and this gives you the opportunity to expand your personal horizons.
Sharing knowledge and expertise	You enjoy 'giving back' by participating in a mentoring program to help others just as you were helped when you started with the organisation.
Increasing network	Your network increases to include others in the organisation who are involved in setting up the program, other mentees and mentors, and external contacts from RTOs and funding bodies.
Becoming familiar with different roles in the organisation	The mentee is undertaking a role that you have previously not had contact with, thus expanding your knowledge of organisational operations.
Developing a reputation for being involved; that is, recognition for your effort	You are recognised as someone who puts in that little extra, which leads to your name being mentioned when opportunities arise.

Reflect on personal benefits

In a formal mentoring program, the organisation will have an evaluation process requiring you to reflect on and document the benefits you have gained from the relationship. In an informal mentoring program, you will need to take the time to think about the benefits you have gained from being a mentor.

The aims of reflecting on the personal benefits you have gained from providing mentoring are many.

Some aims of reflecting on the personal benefits
▶ Acknowledging that the relationship has been a mutual one whereby you have both benefited
▶ Being able to articulate exactly what those benefits are to you
▶ Being able to assess whether you will continue to participate in the mentoring program
▶ Providing evidence of your own personal and professional development relevant to your training and work performance assessment

The following example shows how reflecting on the benefits gained from a mentoring relationship helps to Rosa to be more positive about mentoring.

Example

Reflect on the personal benefits gained from providing mentoring

Rosa is pleased that Jamal has acknowledged some of the benefits of the mentoring relationship for him as the mentee. She feels it has been a challenging relationship and isn't sure whether she will accept a mentoring role next year. She has recently received a promotion, meaning that her workload has increased, and feels that she needs to focus on her new role for a while.

As part of the organisation's process for ending a mentoring relationship, Rosa is required to reflect on the relationship and complete the following form.

Benefit of mentoring relationship	Example
Would you be interested in being involved in the mentoring program again? Why or why not?	
What have you learnt during this mentoring relationship?	

Rosa spends some time reflecting on her relationship with Jamal and realises that despite its challenges she has learnt a great deal about cultural differences and communication styles.

She also realises that her new role is quite likely a direct result of her involvement in the mentoring program, as it gave her the opportunity to get to know the senior manager in that department. Based on the benefits she has identified through reflection, Rosa decides that she would like to be involved in the next mentoring program.

Activity 16

Use your network of contacts to find someone who has been a mentor on more than one occasion. Interview this mentor and make a list of five challenges that they faced in a mentoring relationship. For each challenge, document a benefit that may be gained.

Click to complete Activity 16

4C Report on the outcomes of the mentoring arrangement

In a formal mentoring relationship promoted by the organisation and subject to a reporting process, you may be required to evaluate and report on the benefits to the organisation. In these circumstances there are likely to be policy and procedural guidelines for you to follow; there may also be a reporting template that provides for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program and asks you to comment on any areas for improvement.

Benefits of mentoring relationship for the organisation

Organisations with formal mentoring programs are likely to have policies and procedures that provide the framework for evaluating each relationship.

A review and analysis of the mentoring relationship should consider the extent to which the relationship has achieved its goals and how the relationship has contributed to achieving overall organisational goals. In effect, there should be an evaluation of the return of the organisation's investment in a mentoring program.

A formal evaluation of organisational mentoring arrangements can provide valuable feedback into workplace reviews and continuous improvement processes. This can particularly apply to how apprentices and trainees are managed to maximise benefits to the person and the organisation.

The next table illustrates some possible organisational mentoring program goals or benefits with examples of how mentoring can contribute to meeting these objectives.

Possible goals or benefit	Example
Reduction in staff turnover, increase in morale and motivation; improved productivity and quality	An organisation with a high staff turnover has implemented a mentoring program to provide new and existing employees one-on-one support. This also provides morale and motivational benefits because employees feel that the organisation is helping them with their personal or professional growth.
Developing leaders, career development	A mentoring program established to support employees with career advancement helps develop a skill and knowledge base in the organisation. People are equipped to progress to the next level and mentors can improve their leadership skills.
Addressing equity issues	The organisation uses a mentoring program to achieve gender equality at senior management level by encouraging women to aim for promotion and career development.

Possible goals or benefit	Example
Supporting work placements for apprentices or trainees	The mentoring program has been implemented to help apprentices or trainees undertaking work placements to integrate into the organisation and support them throughout the program to increase completion rates.

Reviewing and reporting on outcomes

When identifying, reviewing and reporting on the outcomes of the mentoring arrangement, you should follow organisational policy and procedure to ensure that your reporting provides information in the required format and with an appropriate level of detail. Organisational needs evolve and change, and a mentoring program needs to be reviewed to keep up with these changes.

In identifying and reporting on the outcomes of the mentoring program you may be required to collate responses from the mentee/s you work with, as well as supplying your own review of the effectiveness of the relationship.

For example, a workplace supervisor may give feedback to an RTO about the process for monitoring and supporting apprentices. This is important because the supervisor did not have much input from the RTO at the start of the program. Now they can explain when they felt they didn't know what was expected of them. This feedback can also be communicated to a third party such as human resources or RTO personnel in a formal meeting.

Evaluation of mentoring program outcomes may consider:

▶ whether the policies and procedures are effective and understood

▶ the effectiveness of the process of matching mentors and mentees

▶ the additional workload imposed on mentors

▶ the appropriateness of the time frame

▶ how well goals of the relationship are achieved

▶ the adequacy of mentoring training

▶ whether the program should be continued.

Reporting requirements

Your report should be as fair and impartial as possible. Avoid making personal criticisms of the people you deal with and focus on facts.

Confirm with your supervisor or the person leading the mentoring program any specific evaluation and reporting requirements.

Evaluation and reporting requirements
▶ Forms or other documents to be used to gather information
▶ Reporting pro formas or templates
▶ Your responsibilities for collating or reporting on outcomes
▶ Any obligations you may have to formally present findings
▶ Privacy and confidentiality considerations

Report outcomes

Once the evaluation has been completed, the results will be communicated to stakeholders so that the organisation can identify and implement improvements to the mentoring program. Your comments and observations need to be clear, concise and accurate so that stakeholders can make informed decisions.

Remember that what you say and how you say it may well have a bearing on:

▶ decisions that are made regarding the continuation, expansion or cessation of the mentoring program

▶ the content of other reports across the organisation; for example, management, human resources or annual general meeting reports

▶ reports to external stakeholders or funding bodies as part of contractual arrangements.

You can see in the following example how Rosa follows her organisation's procedures to identify and report the outcomes and benefits of the mentoring arrangement she has with Jamal.

Example

Report on the outcomes of the mentoring arrangement

Rosa's mentoring relationship with Jamal comes to a close. She and Jamal complete separate evaluations of the outcomes of the relationship. Rosa also discusses the outcomes of these with Jamal.

Rosa is required to prepare a short report that:

▶ assesses the mentoring relationship

▶ measures the success of the arrangement in meeting the mentee's goals

▶ summarises the outcomes achieved against the organisational goals of the program

▶ identifies any areas for how the program can be improved.

Rosa will analyse the mentee's response and her own thoughts and align these to organisational goals.

There is a standard matrix that Rosa needs to complete.

Organisational goal	Measure the success	Provide an example or comment
	1 5 10 Low..................High	
	1 5 10 Low..................High	
Mentee goal	**Measure the success**	**Provide an example or comment**
	1 5 10 Low..................High	
	1 5 10 Low..................High	
Suggest areas for improvement		

Rosa completes the matrix, attaches the completed mentor and mentee evaluation forms to the matrix and gives all documents to the human resources officer responsible for mentoring. Responses from all mentors will be collated and will be used to give senior staff an overview of the mentoring program.

Activity 17

Discuss evaluation reporting with a mentor and ask them how the information collected is used by their organisation. Document their responses.

Summary

1. Formal mentoring programs should be evaluated to ensure they meet the ongoing needs of the mentee, mentor and organisation.

2. There are various types of evaluation methods, including questionnaire and interview, which can be used to gather information about perceived benefits of the mentoring process.

3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of a mentoring program should include identifying the personal benefits derived from the program and well as benefits to the organisation.

4. Organisations with formal mentoring programs will have policies and procedures that provide the guidelines for evaluating and reporting on mentoring programs.

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Click to complete Activity 17

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