

# Mentoring Conversation Framework

A Structured Approach for Practising Interview Techniques and Sharing Experiences

## Introduction

Mentoring sessions can be most effective when guided by a clear and adaptable framework. Whether the goal is to practise interview techniques or to share career experiences, a structured conversation allows both mentor and mentee to maximise value, encourage reflection, and foster growth. The following model provides a simple yet comprehensive structure for mentoring discussions.

### 1. Opening and Rapport Building

Begin by creating a comfortable and open environment. This helps to establish trust and sets a positive tone for the session.

- Warm greeting and informal catch-up
- Agree on confidentiality and ground rules
- Briefly revisit progress since the last meeting (if applicable)

### 2. Setting the Agenda

Clarify the purpose of the session and agree on discussion topics. For interview practice, this may include specific interview types or competencies; for experience sharing, it could relate to particular challenges or successes.

- Ask the mentee what they hope to achieve from the session
- Agree on specific areas to focus on (e.g., CV review, competency-based questions, sharing a recent workplace experience)

### 3. Exploration and Practice

Delve into the chosen topic using active listening and open-ended questions.

1. For Interview Technique Practice:
2. Conduct mock interview questions and role-play scenarios
3. Encourage the mentee to answer as they would in a real interview
4. Pause for reflection after each question or scenario
5. For Sharing Experiences:
6. Invite the mentor or mentee to recount relevant experiences
7. Explore the context, actions taken, and outcomes
8. Discuss lessons learned and key takeaways

### 4. Feedback and Reflection

Provide constructive feedback and facilitate self-reflection to encourage learning and development.

- Ask the mentee how they felt during the discussion or exercise

- Share observations and specific feedback (focus on both strengths and areas for improvement)
- Encourage the mentee to identify what worked well and what could be improved

## 5. Action Planning

Support the mentee in setting clear, achievable next steps.

- Outline actions to practise or apply before the next session (e.g., preparing answers, researching companies, reflecting on experiences)
- Agree on any resources or support needed
- Set a date for follow-up or review

## 6. Closing

End the session positively, summarising key points and expressing appreciation for the discussion.

- Summarise main learnings and agreed actions
- Thank each other for contributions and engagement
- Confirm next meeting details, if applicable

## Sample Conversation Flow

1. Welcome and check-in
2. Agree agenda (e.g., focus on competency-based interview questions)
3. Conduct role-play: mentor asks, mentee answers, followed by feedback
4. Reflect on what went well and identify improvements
5. Set action points (e.g., practise specific answers, read up on STAR technique)
6. Close the session and confirm next steps

## Tips for Effective Mentoring Conversations

- Be present and listen actively
- Use open questions to encourage deeper thinking
- Balance support with challenge to promote growth
- Maintain confidentiality and respect throughout

This framework is designed to be flexible and can be adapted to suit the needs and preferences of both mentor and mentee, ensuring each session is purposeful and impactful.