

Subsequent meetings activity guide

Use this guide for every meeting after your first one. It's designed to help mentors and mentees build a goal-oriented relationship, and provides a framework for reflection, planning, and action across multiple sessions.

Review

- Review action items from previous meeting.
- Discuss progress, barriers and new insights gained.
- Celebrate achievements and lessons learned.
- Identify any shifts in priorities or motivation since the last conversation.

Focus

Select a theme for discussion. Refer to the section 'Thematic focus for discussion' for some suggestions, or come up with your own. The GROW framework below is adapted from 'Coaching for Performance' by John Whitmore.

Goal

- What are your objectives, short term and long term? How does this relate to the end goal? A good goal is:
 - SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound
 - PURE – Positively stated, Understood, Relevant, Ethical
 - CLEAR – Challenging, Legal, Environmentally sound, Agreed, Recorded
- What would you like to get out of this session? (e.g. an outline, an agreed budget, an understanding of the principal issues, a clear idea of my next two action steps)
- When do you want to achieve your goals by?
- How are your goals positive, challenging, attainable, measurable?

Distinguish between end goal and performance goals:

- End goal – The dream outcome or grand vision, often not completely within your control (e.g. get promoted to the C-suite, secure \$1 million in new contract revenue, win an Olympic medal).
- Performance goal – SMART, short-term milestones that act as stepping stones to your end goal (e.g. make 20 client calls per day, master a specific skill set, improve personal lap time by 2 seconds etc).

Avoid negative goals (e.g. 'To not be bottom ranked in sales'), as they tend to be counterproductive.

Reality

Help the mentee develop self-awareness.

- What is happening now? (What, when, where, how much)
- Who is involved?
- What have you done about this? What factors influenced your decision?
- What results did that produce?
- What is happening both internally and externally?
- What are the major constraints to finding a way forward?
- Other self-awareness questions:
 - What do you feel when ... e.g. summoned unexpectedly by the boss?
 - What emotions are you left with after XYZ?
 - What do you think you are afraid of?
 - In what ways do you inhibit your potential?
 - What feeling do you have when you know you've done well?
 - On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you about ... e.g. giving a good presentation today?

Minimise 'why' questions as it tends to produce defensive justifications or answers that the mentee believes the mentor wants to hear.

Remember to use descriptive rather than evaluative terminology. Descriptive language focuses on observable facts that can be used to improve one's own performance. Evaluative language imposes judgment, triggering defensiveness and dependence on a mentor's opinion.

✗ Evaluative	✓ Descriptive
The presentation was a success.	The presentation was clearly structured, and three major stakeholders requested follow-up proposals right after.
The start-up was a failure.	The start-up did not achieve positive cash flow within a 24-month runway, and the team was unable to close its Series A funding round.

Options

It's not about finding the 'right' answer, but finding and listing as many alternative courses of actions as possible.

- What options to you have?
 - What else can you do?
 - What if... e.g. you had a large enough budget? More staff? What if that obstacle did not exist?
 - Would you like another suggestion from me?
 - What are the benefits and costs of each alternative?
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Will

Convert a discussion into a decision. Make an action plan that is clearly specified, thoroughly surveyed and using the widest possible choice of materials.

- What are you going to do?
 - When are you going to do it?
 - Will this action meet your goal?
 - What obstacles could you face? How will you overcome them? When will you do this?
 - Who needs to know?
 - What support do you need?
 - How and when are you going to get that support?
 - What other considerations do you have?
 - On a one-to-ten scale, rate the likelihood that you will carry out this action.
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Debrief

- What was helpful? Why or how?
- Is there anything that should be done differently?
- What did you learn? What worked well?
- Revisit goals, expectations, ground rules and communication guidelines from partnership agreement.
- Update mentoring partnership if necessary.

Plan next steps

- Agree on specific action items for follow-up.
- Define what success looks like before the next conversation.
- Alternatively, select a thematic focus (e.g., leadership presence, networking strategy, negotiation, or managing ambiguity).