



Structuring Mentoring Conversations for Success

Purpose

This job aid is designed to help learners improve their mentoring relationships by exploring the goal, reality, options and will (GROW) model to better structure mentoring conversations with individuals and groups. This information is particularly useful for learners enrolled in [Cultivating Productive Mentoring Relationships \(TRN465\)](#).

What is the difference between coaching and mentoring?

Both coaching and mentoring relationships provide opportunities for discovery and learning and aim to support a coachee or mentee in achieving outcomes important to them.

In a coaching relationship, the coach and coachee partner in a supportive, thought-provoking and co-creative process of inquiry, reflection and discovery. There is no hierarchy, and coachees are inspired to maximize their personal and professional potential.

In a mentoring relationship, mentors guide the conversations more than coaches do and take on the role of expert. This helps mentees sharpen their thinking by developing the instincts and skills needed to achieve professional goals over time. At the same time, they are building a supportive network or community.

In great mentor relationships, both parties show up to teach and both show up to learn. In other words, it's a two-way street.

—Simon Sinek, author, visionary thinker and inspirational speaker

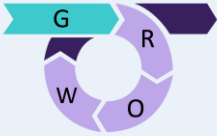
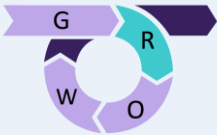


Using the GROW model to structure mentoring conversations

The GROW model is an action-oriented approach that can be used to structure mentoring conversations. Listed below are suggestions for how this model can be used in both individual and group mentoring sessions.

Reflection with one mentee (on a single issue)

What are the benefits of this approach?

- Allows deep exploration of a single issue
- Adapts specifically to the needs of the mentee


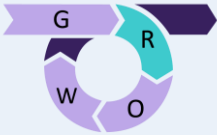

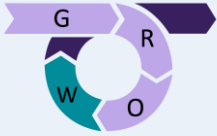
 <p>Goal</p>	<p>What do you want?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mentee establishes the professional development goals they would like to achieve during the session. • The mentor supports the mentee in achieving their goals.
 <p>Reality</p>	<p>What is happening now?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mentee shares their current situation (giving an overview of the issue, constraints and challenges) with a mentor. • The mentor can ask probing questions to get more insight into the reality the mentee is facing.
 <p>Options</p>	<p>What could you do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the goal and the reality, the mentee brainstorms and explores options to resolve their issue. • The mentor can provide advice and ask probing questions to promote critical reflection.
 <p>Will</p>	<p>What will you do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mentee works with the mentor to develop actions to achieve their goals. • The mentor and mentee ensure these actions are realistic, engaging, actionable and linked (REAL).



Reflection with a group of mentees (on a single issue)

Benefits of this approach


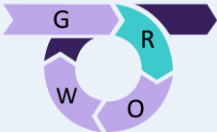
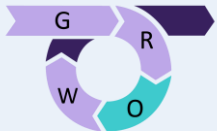
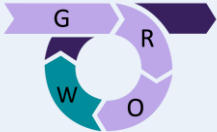
- Participants learn from others' perspectives.
- Participants can develop their mentoring skills.
- Participants can develop a strong supportive community together.

 <p>Goal</p>	What do you want?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each participant has “airtime” (a 60 to 90-minute session dedicated to sharing their goal).• The participant with airtime comes prepared to discuss a goal they want to achieve during the session.
 <p>Reality</p>	What is happening now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The participant with airtime presents their current situation regarding the issue, giving the group an overview of the issue, constraints and challenges.• Other participants can ask probing questions to get more information.
 <p>Options</p>	What could you do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through the group posing powerful questions, the participant with airtime explores their issue in diverse ways.
 <p>Will</p>	What will you do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The participant with airtime shares actions they will take to achieve their goal.• The mentor and the group ensure these actions are REAL.

Reflection with a group (on a specific theme)

Benefits of this approach

- Participants learn from each others' perspectives and challenges.
- Participants can develop their mentoring skills.
- Participants can develop a strong, supportive community together.

 <p>Goal</p>	<p>What do you want?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group of participants selects a common theme, and each participant shares their own goal as it relates to the chosen theme.
 <p>Reality</p>	<p>What is happening now?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each participant shares their current situation regarding the theme, giving the group an overview of the issue, constraints and challenges. • Other participants can ask probing questions to get more information.
 <p>Options</p>	<p>What could you do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the group posing powerful questions, the participant with the airtime explores their issue in diverse ways.
 <p>Will</p>	<p>What will you do?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participants share actions they will take to achieve their goals. • The mentor and the group ensure these actions are REAL.

Job aid: TRN4-J49



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Examples of powerful questions to ask at each step in the GROW model



Goal

- What would you like to accomplish in this session?
- What skills do you want to develop in your current role?
- What is important about your goal?
- What outcome would be ideal?
- Is that outcome realistic in the time we have available?

Reality

- What led you to your current career path?
- What is happening to you now?
- What steps have you already taken?
- What are the obstacles in your way?
- What is motivating this change?

Options

- What are feasible options?
- What can you do to be more proactive in carving out your career path and future?
- What else could you do?
- What are the pros and cons of these options?
- Which option energizes you most?

Will

- Which option will you select?
- What actions will you take to achieve your goal, and when?
- How committed are you to these actions?
- How would you like to be held accountable?
- How would you like to celebrate success when you have achieved your goal?



Other opportunities to use the GROW model approach

- Individual or peer-group coaching sessions
- Performance reviews
- Conversations about difficult issues



Other related job aids and websites

- [5 Steps for Developing Effective Mentoring Relationships \(TRN4-J51\)](#)
- [Shape Your World with E-Mentoring \(TRN4-J07\)](#)
- [Using the GROW Model in a Coaching Approach \(TRN4-J31\)](#)
- [Peer Coaching Process: Using the GROW Model Approach \(TRN4-J32\)](#)
- [Mentorship](#)
- [Mentoring - Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#)