

Module 2 – The Role of the Mentor

This module has been carefully designed to provide a structured, practical, and theory-informed approach to mentoring in the prison context. It is organised into five key parts:

A. Learning Outcomes outlines what learners will know, understand, and be able to do by the end of the module;

B. Core Theory presents essential concepts, answers key questions, and references relevant case studies or frameworks;

C. Practice Activities offer interactive exercises for applying theory and developing mentoring skills;

D. Trainer Notes and Guidance provide crucial tips, reminders, and strategies for effective facilitation, including how to adapt content for different learner groups and questions to stimulate discussion;

and

E. Resources and References support further learning.

As a facilitator, please **read D before implementing any of the activities**, as it will guide you through the content and ensure effective delivery. The module flows from theory (B) into practical application (C), while trainer guidance (D) recontextualises the material and offers practical advice to maximise learning outcomes.

A. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Define the core responsibilities of a mentor in the prison context.
 2. Clearly distinguish the mentor's role from supervisors, therapists, or peers.
 3. Understand the boundaries, ethics, and expectations involved in the mentor-mentee relationship.
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B. Core Theory Content

Section 1: Core Responsibilities of a Mentor

Questions answered in this section:

- *What is the primary purpose of a staff mentor in detention settings?*
- *What are the expectations of a mentor towards their mentee?*
- *How can mentors support professional development and personal growth?*
- *How does mentoring help embed human rights and prison values in day-to-day practice?*

The primary purpose of a staff mentor in detention settings is to provide structured guidance, support, and orientation to colleagues and/or mentees working in demanding and fast-paced detention environments. Mentors act as professional role models, demonstrating the standards and behaviours expected in the role, while also creating an environment that fosters learning, reflection, and problem-solving. Their function goes beyond operational instruction, aiming to help colleagues **navigate daily challenges**, **strengthen resilience**, and develop the **competencies required for effective and ethical work**. In addition, mentors may be expected to support the ‘translation’ of new staff’s foundational training to the reality of the role and the local environment.

The Mentor-Mentee relationship is extremely valuable and based on a foundation of trust. Expectations towards mentees include active engagement in the process, openness to feedback, and a willingness to take responsibility for their own professional development. Mentees are expected to work collaboratively in finding solutions rather than relying solely on the mentor for answers. Mutual accountability, clarity in objectives, and professional respect are essential for the relationship to succeed. Since learning styles and needs vary, mentors adapt their approach, balancing technical guidance with emotional support depending on the individual’s preferences and circumstances (Sandvik et al., 2022). Moreover, while many mentoring programmes operate on the basis of voluntary participation, research indicates that mandatory participation can achieve comparable or even superior outcomes. Although the expectations for mentees may not be immediately realised, such programmes can have a meaningful impact over time.

Mentors contribute to professional development and personal growth by using techniques such as open-ended questioning, active listening, scenario-based learning, and reflective practices. They help define clear and realistic learning objectives, provide constructive feedback, and facilitate opportunities for mentees to reflect and problem-solve independently. Realistic learning objectives may include:

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1. Knowledge-Based Objectives

- Understand a specific policy, procedure, or practice relevant to your role.
- Gain clarity on expectations or responsibilities within a certain aspect of their job.
- Learn about tools or strategies used to manage difficult situations or high-stress moments in the prison environment.

2. Skills-Focused Objectives

- Practice and reflect on communication techniques (e.g. active listening, giving feedback).
- Build confidence in handling a specific type of incident (e.g. de-escalation, conflict resolution).
- Identify ways to manage workload or set professional boundaries.

3. Reflective/Insight Objectives

- Explore the impact of the work on personal wellbeing and resilience.
- Identify personal strengths and areas for development.
- Reflect on a recent challenge and extract learning from it (e.g. How to act or re-act in a similar situation in the future)

4. Confidence and Identity Objectives

- Increase confidence in decision-making or professional judgment.
- Explore your role and identity within the team.
- Envisioning progress and potential.

By connecting mentees with relevant resources and colleagues, mentors also promote networking and broaden professional perspectives. Psychosocial support, delivered within well-defined professional boundaries, strengthens trust and enables mentees to address personal or work-related concerns in a safe space. The combination of skill-building, emotional resilience, and professional orientation aims to ensure that mentees leave the process better equipped for their role than when they began.

While mentoring in detention environments is not always explicitly framed around human rights or formal value frameworks, many core practices inherently reflect these principles. Building relationships based on trust and mutual respect, maintaining open and non-judgmental communication, encouraging personal autonomy, and ensuring fairness in guidance all align with the values of dignity and respect that underpin humane correctional work. By modelling and reinforcing these behaviours in everyday interactions,

mentors help embed professional ethics and values into routine practice, thereby strengthening a culture of respect and accountability.

In essence, mentoring is a multifaceted role that combines leadership, guidance, and support. It requires adaptability, emotional intelligence, and clear communication, with the overarching aim of fostering both competence and confidence in those entering or developing within the profession. Through consistent, well-structured support, mentors not only contribute to individual growth but also help reinforce a professional culture grounded in respect, trust, and responsibility.

Section 2: Beyond The Role - Avoiding Common Pitfalls

Questions answered in this section:

- *What is the difference between a mentor and a supervisor/manager?*
- *How is mentoring different from therapy, counselling, or peer support?*
- *Why must mentors maintain a non-evaluative, non-clinical role?*
- *Why do these distinctions matter in building trust and clarity?*

As mentioned in Module 1, a mentor's role is fundamentally different from that of a supervisor or manager. While supervisors and managers hold formal authority, evaluate performance, and are responsible for operational oversight, mentors provide guidance and support without carrying evaluative power. The mentoring relationship is built on trust, confidentiality, and personal development rather than on assessment or enforcement of rules. This distinction allows mentors to act as connectors, role models, and sources of professional and personal support, free from the hierarchical pressures present in managerial relationships.

Professional mentoring also differs from therapy, counselling, and informal peer support. Therapy and counselling are clinical interventions delivered by qualified professionals to address psychological or emotional difficulties. Peer support tends to be informal and based on shared experience, but may lack structured learning goals. Mentoring, by contrast, is a structured, non-clinical process designed to enhance skills, strengthen problem-solving abilities, and foster reflective practice. It involves methods such as open-ended questioning, active listening, and constructive feedback. While mentors may provide psychosocial support, they maintain clear professional boundaries and refer mentees to appropriate services if issues arise that fall outside their remit.

For this reason, mentors must maintain a non-evaluative and non-clinical role. Remaining outside the chain of command may ensure that mentees can speak openly without fear that what they share will affect their formal evaluations or be reported to management.

Similarly, avoiding a clinical approach prevents confusion about the mentor's purpose and preserves clear boundaries between mentoring and therapeutic support. Mentors focus on professional growth, problem-solving, and role modelling, referring mentees to appropriate resources if issues arise that fall outside their remit.

These distinctions are critical for building trust and maintaining clarity in the mentoring relationship. When mentees understand that mentors are neither managers nor therapists, they are more likely to engage honestly and fully in the process. This clarity reduces the risk of role conflict, helps set appropriate boundaries, and ensures that the mentoring relationship remains focused on development rather than evaluation or clinical intervention. By keeping the mentoring role distinct from other support or supervisory functions, detention settings can preserve a safe, open space for learning and reflection.

Section 3: Boundaries and Ethics of the Role

Questions answered in this section:

- *What are appropriate boundaries in the mentor-mentee relationship?*
- *What responsibilities do mentors have when challenges arise?*
- *How should mentors handle situations of confidentiality, disclosure, or over-dependence?*
- *When and how should mentors escalate or refer?*

A successful mentoring relationship is built on mutual trust, respect, and professionalism. To ensure that both mentor and mentee benefit from the process, clear boundaries and ethical standards should guide every interaction.

Appropriate Boundaries

Mentors offer guidance, reflection, and encouragement. However, they are not to be mistaken for line managers, therapists, or close friends. The relationship ought to retain a professional yet supportive nature, concentrating on growth and development rather than personal dependence. Establishing boundaries at an early stage, such as clarifying expectations, availability, and the extent and content of discussions, serves to prevent misunderstandings. Mentors ought to promote autonomy thereby empowering mentees to assume responsibility for their development instead of fostering reliance on the mentor.

Responsibilities when challenges arise

Difficulties will inevitably arise in mentoring, whether related to engagement, boundaries, or well-being. Mentors bear the responsibility of addressing challenges directly and constructively. For instance, if a mentee persistently oversteps established boundaries

(e.g., seeking advice beyond the mentor's designated role or excessively relying on the mentor for reassurance), it is appropriate to revisit the mentoring agreement. When such challenges continue, mentors should engage programme personnel or their supervisors to ensure the relationship remains supportive and sustainable.

Confidentiality and Disclosure

Confidentiality is fundamental in establishing trust. Information that is personal or sensitive shared during sessions must be managed with discretion. Nevertheless, confidentiality is not absolute and any boundaries to confidentiality should be communicated to the mentee in advance. If a mentor becomes aware of concerns that may threaten safety, well-being, or professional conduct, it is essential to escalate these issues appropriately. Whenever possible, encourage the mentee to communicate the concern themselves, as this supports ownership and responsibility. Allow some time and space to reflect on the most appropriate approach, taking into account the severity and urgency of the situation. In all cases, maintain transparency with the mentee: explain the reasons for escalation beforehand and clarify which parties will be involved.

Managing over-dependence

Mentors should stay aware of power dynamics and avoid fostering dependency. Promoting reflection, asking open-ended questions, and emphasising mentees' problem-solving abilities can help prevent dependence. It is crucial for mentors to demonstrate healthy boundaries, such as respecting agreed meeting times, avoiding private communication outside the programme, and guiding conversations back to professional development.

Escalation Referral

Mentors are not expected to resolve every issue independently. When circumstances extend beyond their scope, such as in cases of professional crises, mental health issues, or organisational conflicts, they should escalate these depending on national systems and organisational structures. Referrals should be planned locally and may involve:

- Programme coordinators and supervisors: For issues affecting the monitoring relationship or professional conduct.
- Medical professionals (including therapists or psychologists): If health or mental health concerns arise.
- Line managers or HR: If workplace performance or organisational conflict is involved.
- External services (e.g., insurance, social services, legal advisors): For matters outside the mentor's remit.

By respecting these boundaries and ethical principles, mentors foster a safe, respectful, and constructive environment. This not only enhances individual mentoring relationships but also maintains the integrity and credibility of the mentoring programme as a whole.

C. Practice Activities

List of Practice Activities:

- *Activity 1: Role Boundaries*
- *Activity 2: Boundary Walk*
- *Activity 3: Scenario on professional boundaries*
- *Activity 4: Scenario on escalating an issue*

Activity 1: Role Boundaries

Purpose: Help learners clearly distinguish between mentoring, supervision, coaching, and therapy, and recognise “in-role”, and out-of-role” behaviours, including grey areas.

Time: 45 minutes

- Part 1: Role Scenarios Discussion – 25 minutes
- Part 2: Role Clarity Statements – 15 minutes
- Debrief – 5 minutes

Materials:

- Printed or digital copies of fictional mentoring interactions (4–6 examples)
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Markers or sticky notes
- (Optional) Role cards (Mentor, Supervisor, Coach, Therapist) for quick reference

Instructions:

Phase 1: Role Scenarios Discussion (25 min)

1. Divide learners into small groups of 3–5 people.
2. Provide each group with 4–6 short fictional mentoring interactions.

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3. Ask groups to discuss the following questions for each scenario:
 - Which role is being taken? (Mentor, Supervisor, Coach, Therapist)
 - Has the mentor overstepped their role?
 - What would be a better in-role response?
4. Each group selects one scenario to share back with the larger group, presenting their revised “in-role” response and the rationale behind it.

Example Scenario Prompt 1:

A mentee tells you they’ve been struggling to sleep and think they may be depressed. You suggest they try some breathing techniques and offer to check in daily to see how they’re feeling.

➤ What role are you taking here? What should a mentor do instead?

Example Scenario Prompt 2:

A mentee asks you to call their line manager to explain why they missed a shift.

➤ In or out of your role? How could you support without taking over?

Example Scenario Prompt 3:

A mentee shares they are unsure about their career path. You offer to help them explore training opportunities and map possible next steps.

➤ Is this within the mentoring role? Why or why not?

Phase 2: Role Clarity Statements

1. Present short statements describing mentor-mentee situations.
2. Ask “Is this within the mentor’s role?”
3. Discuss edge cases and where personal judgement might vary.

Example Statements:

- “Listening when a mentee is struggling with workplace stress.”
- “Giving legal advice on a disciplinary procedure.”
- “Helping a mentee reflect on their values.”

Facilitator Guidance:

- *Anchor the discussion:* Remind learners that mentoring is about guiding reflection and empowering mentees, not solving their problems or assuming other professional responsibilities.

- *Reinforce boundaries:* Clarify that mentors are *supportive & empowering*, not therapists or managers.
- *Encourage reflection:* Ask, “What might motivate a mentor to overstep?” (e.g., empathy, pressure, habit). Explore how to redirect that energy constructively.
- *Use the grey zones:* When disagreements arise, invite learners to explain their reasoning — this deepens understanding of ethical and contextual differences.
- *Conclude with clarity:* Summarise by writing on a flipchart “A mentor’s role is to enable reflection, not to rescue.”
- Use this activity to surface *grey zones*. The key takeaway is not rigid categorisation but ethical discernment. Mentoring is about guiding reflection and empowering the mentee, not solving every problem but whether they should do it in the context of trust, ethics, and role boundaries.

Activity 2: Boundary Walk

Purpose: Create a physical, visual exploration of boundaries in mentoring.

- Place statements in extremes (Green Flag / Red Flag)
- Discuss where the line is drawn in mentoring vs. other support roles.

Time: Activity: 20–25 minutes; Discussion & Debrief: 10–15 minutes;

Materials

- Open space for participants to move forward/backward
- *Optional:* Tape or marker to designate a “line” in the room
- List of statements printed or on a screen/projector

Instructions:

1. Place a clear line or demarcated area in the room. One side represents **Green Flag** (within the mentoring role), the other **Red Flag** (outside the mentoring role).
2. Introduce the activity: “As mentors, it’s easy to want to help in every way, but we have to know where our role starts and where it stops. This activity will help you reflect on those edges. I’ll read out a series of statements and you have to decide whether this is definitely within the mentoring role or outside of it. Afterwards, we’ll talk about what this felt like and where the tricky spots were.”

3. Read out a series of mentoring-related statements (see examples below).
4. Learners move physically to indicate whether they believe this is within or outside the mentor's role. **No grey zones: Each statement must be categorised as 100% green or 100% red.**
5. After all statements were read out, ask a few learners to explain their reasoning and whether they struggled with the activity. Emphasise that grey areas are where ethical awareness grows.

Sample Statements:

- “Listening when a mentee is struggling with workplace stress.”
- “Taking over a mentee’s administrative tasks temporarily to help them catch up.”
- “Telling a mentee how to discuss workload issues with their manager.”
- Advising a mentee to take a mental health day and telling them exactly how to arrange it.
- “Providing feedback on a mentee’s communication style during an interaction with another staff member.”
- “Suggesting a specific external professional service for the mentee to contact.”
- “Checking in daily on a mentee’s wellbeing and intervening personally if they seem upset.”
- “Encouraging a mentee to reflect on ethical dilemmas they faced in the past month.”
- “Giving legal advice on a disciplinary procedure.”
- “Helping the mentee reflect on how their values align with prison service goals.”
- “Sharing your personal experience about stress management to illustrate coping strategies.”
- “Telling a mentee’s line manager they need mental health support.”
- “Helping a mentee interpret prison policies for career progression without giving directives.”
- “Fixing performance issues by giving direct orders.”
- “Role-modelling coping strategies in a real-time stressful scenario, then discussing what was observed.”

Debrief Questions:

- Which statements were easiest to place?
- Where did you hesitate or feel unsure?
- How do personal values affect how we draw boundaries?
- How can you respond supportively while still stepping back when needed?

Facilitation Guidance:

- Reinforce that the activity is about **decisive judgment**, not compromise. Grey areas are not allowed in this exercise.
- Encourage participants to articulate *why* they chose green or red. Highlight the **ethical reasoning** behind clear boundaries.
- Use this opportunity to discuss how mentors can **support mentees without taking over responsibilities**.
- Keep the discussion focused on the **mentoring role**, distinguishing it from supervision, coaching, or therapy.
- Conclude with a debrief.

Activity 3: Scenario on professional boundaries

Goal: Help mentors practice keeping clear professional boundaries while still providing support, guidance, and encouragement.

Instructions: In pairs carry out the following scenario, swap roles in the middle.

Timings: 2x 5 minutes (3 minute practice + 1 minute feedback)

Trainer Tip: Advise your learners that if the scenario resolves quickly or ends before the 3-minute mark, to **start again**. This time, challenge the participants to adjust one element. Repetition with small changes deepens learning and helps participants see how subtle differences in approach can shift outcomes dramatically.

Materials:

- Scenario handout
- Note-taking sheets
- Optional whiteboard for debrief

Situation: The mentor engages with a mentee who asks for advice or assistance about relationships, physical health, and also asks several private questions. The mentor must guide the mentee without overstepping, modeling reflection and self-responsibility.

Roles:

- *Mentee:* You are struggling with personal stress that is affecting your physical health but also your work. You ask your mentor for relationship advice and also for support in getting some time off work. You start asking your mentor private questions, because you believe it will help you. If your mentor does not disclose or

avoids your questions you get suspicious and probe more. If your mentor is clear with the limits of their support you become more understanding.

- *Mentor (Learner)*: Must provide guidance on navigating workplace procedures themselves without acting on behalf of the mentee.

Learning Outcomes:

- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Support the mentee to reflect and problem-solve independently.
- Communicate empathy while keeping the role appropriate.

Success Checks:

- Explain the limits of your mentoring role clearly.
- Encourage the mentee to take ownership of actions.
- Demonstrate empathy without taking responsibility for mentee's tasks.

Facilitation Guidance:

- Emphasise the distinction between mentoring, coaching, supervision, and personal involvement.
- Prompt mentors to reflect aloud on why they are drawing a boundary.
- Encourage discussion on alternative ways to support the mentee without taking over responsibilities.

Activity 4: Scenario on escalating an issue

Goal: Enable mentors to guide mentees in escalating concerns appropriately, while reinforcing the mentee's autonomy.

Instructions: In pairs carry out the following scenario, swap roles in the middle.

Timings : 2x 5 minutes (3 minute practice + 1 minute feedback)

Trainer Tip: Advise your learners that if the scenario resolves quickly or ends before the 3-minute mark, to **start again**. This time, challenge the participants to adjust one element. Repetition with small changes deepens learning and helps participants see how subtle differences in approach can shift outcomes dramatically.

Situation: The mentee has observed a safety issue or ethical concern. The mentor must help them articulate and escalate the issue through proper channels, without taking over the action themselves.

Materials:

- Scenario handout
- Note-taking sheets
- Optional checklist of escalation steps

Roles:

- *Mentee*: You have noticed that one of your colleagues is consistently ignoring safety protocols, which could put staff and incarcerated people at risk. During your night shift, you observed a colleague entering a cell, which is not permitted during night state. While you did not witness any direct wrongdoing, certain additional behaviours suggest there may be potential misconduct. You are uncertain about whether, when, or how to escalate the matter, and you are concerned about the seriousness of the situation as well as being perceived negatively by others for reporting it.
- **Mentor (Learner)**: Your mentee has disclosed a colleague's concerning behaviours to you and you think they must be reported. You guide your mentee through reflection and decision-making. You must support them in identifying facts versus assumptions, understanding the escalation process, and planning how to report professionally. Avoid acting as a co-complainant or taking over responsibility.

Learning Outcomes:

- Practice structured escalation coaching.
- Reinforce mentee autonomy and accountability.
- Encourage clear communication and professional judgment.

Success Checks:

- Support your mentee in developing a clear, actionable plan for escalation.
- Demonstrates guidance without taking over the responsibility.
- Encourage your mentee to act, whilst also leaving the decision to them.
- Ask your mentee to articulate their reasoning for next steps.

Facilitation Guidance:

- Remind mentors to focus on coaching the mentee's decision-making.
- Encourage mentors to practice asking guiding questions rather than providing solutions.

- Debrief by discussing how autonomy, accountability, and professionalism intersect.

D. Trainer Notes and Guidance

This section provides guidance on how to facilitate learning about the mentor role effectively. It emphasises supporting participants to understand responsibilities, maintain professional boundaries, and develop ethical discernment in mentoring relationships.

- This module builds on the foundational understanding of mentoring from Module 1 but focuses more deeply on **role clarity**.
- Encourage learners to reflect on how unclear roles can undermine trust.
- Use real-life examples (suitably anonymised) to illustrate common boundary issues.
- Reinforce the idea that strong mentoring relationships *require* clear role understanding.

Emphasise the Purpose and Responsibilities of Mentoring

Why it matters: Mentors play a critical role in guiding professional development, modelling behaviour, and reinforcing institutional values. Understanding this purpose ensures mentors focus on reflection and learning rather than operational supervision or personal support.

How to do it:

- Begin discussions by asking participants what they believe a mentor does in their context. Compare these with the defined responsibilities in the module.
- Highlight that mentoring combines guidance, reflection, and skill development, not task completion or evaluation.
- Encourage participants to link mentoring to institutional values such as dignity, fairness, and human rights.

Practical tips:

- Use real-life examples (without breaching confidentiality) to illustrate how mentors influence professional growth and embed ethical standards.
- Reinforce that mentoring benefits both the mentee and the organisation by strengthening culture, trust, and professional competence.

Gentle prompts:

- “Which aspects of mentoring go beyond operational instruction?”
- “How does a mentor influence workplace culture without exercising authority?”

Clarify Role Distinctions

Why it matters: Confusion between professional mentoring, supervision, therapy, or peer support can undermine trust, blur boundaries, and create ethical dilemmas. Clear distinctions help mentors maintain focus and credibility whilst also supporting them in maintaining professional boundaries and personal well-being.

How to do it:

- Present a simple comparison chart of Mentor vs. Supervisor vs. Therapist vs. Peer Support.
- Discuss scenarios where role overlap might tempt overstepping and invite participants to reflect on how to respond in-role.
- Reinforce that mentors are non-evaluative, non-clinical, and structured facilitators of reflection and growth.

Practical tips:

- Encourage discussion of “grey areas” using scenario examples. Explore reasoning behind participants’ choices.
- Emphasise that understanding what is *not* a mentor’s role is as important as knowing what is.
- Use the proposed interactive activities (e.g., role mapping, boundary walks) to strengthen conceptual clarity.

Gentle prompts:

- “If a mentee asks for advice outside your remit, what would be the appropriate response?”
- “How can you guide reflection without taking over responsibility?”

Support Ethical Awareness and Boundary Management

Why it matters: Clear boundaries protect both mentor and mentee, prevent over-dependence, and foster trust. Ethical awareness ensures mentors act professionally in challenging situations.

How to do it:

- Introduce principles of confidentiality, professional limits, and escalation procedures.
- Encourage discussions on limits and communication of confidentiality during theoretical sections.
- Invite participants to discuss potential boundary challenges and brainstorm safe, supportive responses.
- Stress the importance of early clarification of expectations, availability, and scope of discussions.

Practical tips:

- Use physical or visual exercises (e.g., boundary walk) to illustrate the limits of mentoring versus other roles.
- Highlight referral pathways for issues beyond the mentor's scope, such as HR, supervisors, or health professionals.
- Emphasise promoting mentee autonomy and reflection rather than dependency.

Gentle prompts:

- “Where do you draw the line between support and over-involvement?”
- “What would you do if a mentee shares sensitive information that raises concern for safety?”
- “How do we balance empathy with professional boundaries?”

Encourage Reflective Practice

Why it matters: Reflection is central to mentoring, allowing mentors to improve their own practice and guide mentees effectively.

How to do it:

- Incorporate opportunities for participants to reflect on case studies, role scenarios, or their own experiences.
- Use guided questions to connect theory to practice: “What would you do differently?” or “How does this align with professional values?”
- Promote peer discussion and sharing to explore different perspectives.

Practical tips:

- Summarise key ethical principles and boundary guidelines the group agreed on after reflection exercises.
- Use structured debriefs to consolidate lessons learned and reinforce in-role behaviour.
- Encourage participants to document reflections for ongoing personal and professional development.

Gentle prompts:

- “Which statements were challenging, and why?”
- “How can your approach support professional growth without overstepping your role?”
- “What did you notice about the impact of your guidance on the mentee’s autonomy?”

Model Professionalism and Facilitation Skills

Why it matters: Trainers’ behaviour sets the standard for mentoring interactions. Demonstrating calm, ethical, and reflective facilitation encourages participants to adopt similar approaches.

How to do it:

- Highlight the **importance of neutrality and non-judgment** when addressing dilemmas or grey areas.
- Model clear communication, empathy, and adherence to boundaries during activities and debriefs.
- Reinforce active listening, validation, and constructive questioning as core mentoring skills.

Practical tips:

- Co-facilitate when possible to demonstrate different approaches to mentoring.
- Link ethical principles and boundary decisions back to real-world mentoring challenges.

Gentle prompts:

- “How does your tone and approach influence the mentee’s willingness to reflect?”

- “Which aspects of your practice model the values of respect, trust, and professionalism?”
- “How would you handle this situation differently in your real role?”

Reinforce Learning Through Active Engagement and Iteration

Why it matters: Mentoring is learned through practice, reflection, and guided discussion. Repetition and variation in exercises build ethical discernment and confidence.

How to do it:

- Encourage repeated scenario engagement with small changes to explore different approaches.
- Debrief each activity to highlight learning points, ethical considerations, and boundary management.
- Connect reflections to institutional values and professional expectations.

Practical tips:

- Rotate roles during exercises to experience different perspectives.
- Use flipcharts or notes to track key principles that emerge across groups.
- Highlight progress over time, reinforcing that ethical and professional mentoring develops gradually with experience.

Gentle prompts:

- “What did you learn from taking a different perspective?”
- “Which approach balanced support with professional limits most effectively?”
- “How might these lessons influence your mentoring practice tomorrow?”

E. Resources and References

- VIDEO: Duke University: Be a Good Mentor. Watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1ZbEk8OdNo>
- Council of Europe. (2011). *Draft European Code of Ethics for Prison Staff (PC-CP(2011)7 rev 3)*. European Committee on Crime Problems / Council for Penological Co-operation. [Read it here.](#)
- European Mentoring & Coaching Council. (2016). *Global Code of Ethics for Coaches & Mentors (v1.0)* [PDF]. Association for Coaching & European Mentoring & Coaching Council. [Read it here.](#)

- Sandvik, J., Saouma, R., Seegert, N., & Stanton, C. T. (2021). *Should workplace programs be voluntary or mandatory? Evidence from a field experiment on mentorship* (NBER Working Paper No. 29148). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- LESSON PLAN: “Professional Boundaries and Communication” (PREA Resource Center)
This comprehensive lesson plan provides guidance on establishing and maintaining professional boundaries in correctional settings. It covers effective communication, ethical considerations, and strategies to prevent boundary violations, ensuring mentors can support newly recruited prison officers in developing appropriate relationships with colleagues and incarcerated individuals. The resource includes discussion prompts, real-life scenarios, and role-playing exercises to reinforce learning. [Access the Lesson Plan Here.](#)
- U.S Department of Labor - Employment and Training Administration (2024). Tipsheet: This tipsheet gives insights to how to connect and build trust as a mentor. While it is mostly aimed at mentoring relationships with incarcerated individuals it has sections which can be applied to create positive mentoring relationships in general. [Access it here.](#)
- Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace: Mentoring Toolkit step 2 (Jump to page 10 – Module 2: Confidentiality). Presentation.
This resource gives a short summary of why confidentiality is crucial within mentoring of correctional staff, when confidentiality may or may not apply. [Access it here.](#)
- Setting healthy boundaries at work: This article gives a broad step-by-step guide to setting boundaries at work, as well as provides a list of recommended boundaries. [Access it here.](#)
- How to set boundaries at work – with examples: This article firstly gives an overview of different types of boundaries before giving tips on how to set boundaries to achieve a better work life balance. It is important to note that these resources may not apply depending on your jurisdiction and shift requirements. Additionally, it is not specified for the mentoring context, but recommended techniques to support mentors. [Access it here.](#)