

Module 3 – Mentoring Skills & Competencies

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. Demonstrate key communication skills critical to effective mentoring (active listening, emotional intelligence, leadership development).
2. Recognise and manage conflict and difficult conversations within mentoring relationships.
3. Understand & recognise frameworks to provide constructive feedback and support goal-setting with mentees.
4. Understand the importance of and recognise opportunities to implement trauma-informed approaches to mentoring interactions.

B. Core Theory Content

Section 1: Active Listening Skills for Mentors

Questions answered in this section:

- *How can mentors recognise verbal and non-verbal cues?*
- *What are common listening types?*
- *What are the core elements of active listening and empathetic communication?*
- *How do open and closed questions influence mentoring dialogue?*

Recognising Verbal and Non-Verbal Cues

Mentors must remain alert to cues that go beyond spoken words:

- **Verbal indicators:** Tone of voice, pace, and choice of words can reveal underlying emotions such as frustration, hesitation, or enthusiasm.
- **Non-verbal indicators:** Posture, eye contact, gestures, and micro-expressions can signal openness, defensiveness, or discomfort. For example, crossed arms may suggest resistance, while leaning forward can indicate engagement. It is important to read such indicators with the knowledge of your conversational partner.
- **Emotional congruence:** Discrepancies between verbal statements and body language can reveal hidden concerns for instance, a mentee saying “I’m fine” while avoiding eye contact.

By acknowledging both spoken content and physical signals, mentors can respond more accurately, validating the mentee’s feelings and encouraging trust. Active listening, when paired with empathetic communication, transforms mentoring from a transactional exchange into a supportive, growth-oriented relationship. In detention environments where stress, mistrust, and power imbalances are common, these skills are not just beneficial; they are essential for building the rapport that underpins successful mentoring outcomes.

Common Listening Types and Their Relation to Active Listening

Active listening is more than just hearing words but rather a deliberate practice that allows mentors to fully understand and respond to their mentees. To do this effectively, mentors should recognise other listening types and how they interplay to build comprehension, trust, and actionable insight.

The Listening Skills Training Pyramid

Effective active listening, thus, involves **avoiding** bias-driven filters (discriminative listening). Subsequently it is important to **ensure** full context is grasped (comprehensive listening), critically evaluating content when needed (critical listening), and responding with empathy (empathetic listening), ultimately culminating in reflective listening to support mentee growth. The pyramid illustrates the progressive development of effective listening skills in mentoring. Each level builds upon the one beneath it beginning with **Comprehensive Listening** as the foundation and culminating in **Reflective Listening** as the most advanced form.

Mastery of each level strengthens a mentor's ability to understand, evaluate, empathise, and respond thoughtfully, ultimately creating deeper, more meaningful mentor-mentee interactions. Subsequently, the listening skills are further defined.

AVOID Discriminative Listening

- **Definition:** This form is focused on identifying and distinguishing sounds, tones, and speech patterns. It aims to confirm pre-existing beliefs, assumptions, or expectations. This type of listening can distort understanding and limit empathy.
- **Avoid discriminative listening.** Be mindful of your biases and make a conscious effort to hear the mentee fully, even if their perspective challenges your assumptions.



1. Comprehensive Listening

Definition: Assigns meaning to what is heard by integrating words, context, and nonverbal cues. It is essential for building understanding and avoiding misinterpretation.

Mentor Application: Pay attention not just to the words, but also to gestures, posture, and facial expressions. This ensures that the mentor fully understands the mentee's perspective and intentions.

2. Critical Listening

Definition: Analyses content, tone, intent, and credibility to evaluate the validity of the information received. Helps in weighing different perspectives and separating facts from interpretations.

Mentor Application: Use critical listening when the mentee presents concerns or proposes solutions. Determine which elements are fact-based, which reflect opinion, and where guidance or clarification might be needed. This helps mentors provide constructive feedback.

3. Empathetic Listening

Definition: Focuses on understanding the speaker's emotions and perspective. Attentive to non-verbal cues, it builds trust and validates the speaker's experience.

Mentor Application: Notice the mentee's emotions (tone of voice, body language, use of words) whilst listening. Empathetic listening creates a safe space for mentees to explore challenges while feeling supported.

4. Reflective Listening

Definition: Reflective listening integrates aspects of comprehensive, critical, and empathetic listening, creating a holistic approach to understanding the mentee. It involves mirroring **both the content and the emotional undertone** of the mentee's communication. It goes beyond merely understanding the words and instead seeks to clarify meaning, uncover unspoken feelings, and demonstrate empathy. Reflective listening is a core component of peer-mentoring practices too.

Mentor Application: Use reflective statements such as, "It sounds like you felt frustrated when that happened" or "You're worried about how that might be perceived." This validates the mentee's experience and encourages self-awareness, problem-solving, and emotional regulation.

You can learn more about this particular listening style in the materials developed by the M4PRIS Project.

Elements of Active Listening and Empathetic Communication

Active listening is a cornerstone of effective mentoring, especially in challenging environments such as detention settings and prison institutions. It is an intentional process of listening attentively, interpreting both verbal and non-verbal cues, and responding in a way that fosters trust, empathy, and understanding.

- Avoiding discriminative listening (bias-driven filtering)
- Applying comprehensive listening when grasping full context
- Using critical listening when assessing content & validity thoughtfully
- Practicing empathetic listening when supporting & understanding implications
- Implementing reflective listening when building trust and empowering the mentee

Active listening draws on several interconnected skills:

- **Attentive focus:** Being fully present and free from distractions
- **Switching & understanding perspectives:** Making a conscious effort to comprehend the mentee's viewpoint, challenges, and emotions.
- **Empathy and patience:** Demonstrating genuine care and emotional intelligence, responding without judgment.
- **Clarification and summarising:** Using phrases like "Can I check that I understood...?" ensures both parties share the same understanding and encourages accurate communication.
- **Non-verbal engagement:** Maintaining an open posture, steady eye contact, and appropriate facial expressions reinforces verbal messages and communicates interest.

When mentors display the skills consistently, they create a safe space for mentees to share openly, increasing the likelihood of constructive dialogue.

Influence of Open and Closed Questions

The way questions are framed also shapes the quality of mentoring conversations.

- **Open questions** ("How did that situation make you feel?") invite reflection, exploration, and storytelling. They empower the mentee to elaborate on experiences, leading to deeper insight and problem-solving.
- **Closed questions** ("Did you complete the task?") can help clarify facts quickly but may limit discussion. In a mentoring context, closed questions are useful for confirming details but should be balanced with open-ended prompts to encourage dialogue.

Skilled mentors use a blend of both, often starting with open questions to explore an issue and then narrowing with closed ones to confirm understanding.

Section 2: Conflict Management

Questions answered in this section:

- *What common sources of conflict arise in mentoring?*
- *What de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques can mentors use?*
- *When to seek additional support?*

Conflict is a natural part of human interaction, particularly in high-pressure environments like detention facilities. In mentoring, conflict may arise between mentor and mentee, among mentees, or between a mentee and their colleagues. Understanding how to navigate these situations constructively is key to preserving trust and promoting professional growth.

Common Sources of Conflict in Mentoring

Conflicts can emerge from various sources:

- **Miscommunication or misunderstandings** about expectations, roles, or responsibilities.
- **Value or approach differences**, where personal beliefs or preferred work styles clash.
- **Perceived unfairness** in workload distribution, opportunities, or treatment.
- **Stress and burnout**, which can heighten sensitivity and reduce patience.
- **Role ambiguity**, particularly when a mentee is transitioning to a new position and boundaries or responsibilities are unclear.

De-escalation and Crisis Intervention Techniques

Effective conflict resolution starts with recognising early signs of tension and applying techniques that prevent escalation:

1. **Stay calm and present:** Maintain a steady tone and open body language to signal safety and control.
2. **Acknowledge the conflict:** Naming the issue (“From what I hear, there’s frustration about...”) helps bring it into the open without assigning blame.
3. **Ask clarifying questions:** Seek to understand root causes, not just surface symptoms.

4. **Use neutral language:** Avoid inflammatory words and instead focus on describing behaviours and impacts rather than making personal judgments.
5. **Intentional pauses and lower volume:** Slowing the pace of speech or leaving space for intentional silence can help regulate emotions and keep the conversation productive.

In advanced mentoring situations, structured dialogue techniques such as joint problem-solving meetings can be used to co-create solutions acceptable to both parties.

When to Seek Additional Support

Not all conflicts can or should be resolved solely by the mentor. Additional support is warranted when:

- The conflict becomes personal and deeply emotional, making objectivity difficult.
- Safety is at risk, either physically or psychologically.
- Organisational policies require escalation (e.g.: harassment, discrimination).
- Repeated attempts to resolve the issue have failed, and neutral mediation is needed.

In such cases, mentors should follow institutional protocols, involving supervisors, HR staff, or professional mediators as appropriate. At the same time, it is essential to involve the mentee in any process that directly affects them. Avoid bypassing difficult conversations and instead approach them collaboratively to agree on next steps and identify possible forms of additional support. By approaching conflict as an opportunity for growth rather than an obstacle, mentors can model resilience, empathy, and professionalism. In doing so, they not only address the immediate issue but also strengthen the mentee's own conflict management skills.

Section 3: Feedback and Goal Setting

Questions answered in this section:

- *How to deliver feedback constructively?*
- *How to support mentees in setting realistic and meaningful goals?*
- *What frameworks can be used?*

An effective mentoring relationship relies on a continuous cycle of feedback and objective setting. Constructive feedback facilitates the mentee's development, while well-defined and attainable goals offer structure and motivation. Both components must be managed

with diligence, ensuring that discussions remain supportive, respectful, and focused on growth.

Delivering Feedback Constructively

Feedback should be descriptive rather than judgmental, focusing on actions and outcomes rather than personal traits. Effective feedback balances strengths and opportunities for growth. It is important to recognise what a mentee does well reinforces confidence, while identifying areas for improvement encourages learning.

To avoid defensiveness, mentors should:

- *Be specific:* Address concrete actions or examples rather than vague impressions.
- *Be timely:* Deliver feedback soon after an observation, but in a private and appropriate setting.
- *Balance positives and negatives:* Highlight achievements alongside constructive advice.
- *Remain objective:* Focus on actions, not character.
- *Follow-up:* Provide iterative feedback so the mentee can adjust.
- *Feedback should be presented as a collaborative process:* Mentors can employ active listening, pose reflective questions, and verify understanding to ensure mentees view feedback as an opportunity rather than criticism.
- *Model behaviour:* Ensure you are also open to constructive feedback and model feedback-seeking behaviours.

Supporting Goal-Setting

Constructive feedback and structured goals function most effectively when employed in conjunction. Feedback serves as checkpoints that maintain mentees' progress, while goals offer guidance and purpose. Collectively, they cultivate a mentoring process characterised by clarity, motivation, and development, thereby supporting mentees in enhancing their skills, confidence, and accountability over time.

Mentors ought to encourage mentees to convert feedback into practical and significant objectives, thereby maintaining their motivation and sense of responsibility. A widely adopted approach is the SMART framework, which ensures that goals are:

- **Specific:** Clearly defined
- **Measureable:** Progress can be tracked
- **Achievable:** Realistic within resources and skills
- **Relevant:** Aligned with professional and personal priorities
- **Time-bound:** Set within a defined timeframe.

Examples of SMART Goals

Example Goal 1: Improve conflict resolution skills

- **Specific:** Attend a conflict management workshop & apply techniques on shifts.
- **Measurable:** Successfully de-escalate at least three incidents without supervisor intervention.
- **Achievable:** Practice techniques in daily interactions with incarcerated individuals and colleagues.
- **Relevant:** Enhances safety and professionalism on the job.
- **Time-bound:** Attend the workshop within two months. De-escalate three incidents within four months.

Example Goal 2: Enhance report-writing accuracy

- **Specific:** Submit incident reports with no factual errors.
- **Measurable:** Supervisor feedback confirms 95% accuracy.
- **Achievable:** Review and revise reports before submission.
- **Relevant:** Improves official documentation and accountability.
- **Time-bound:** Maintain consistency over six weeks.

Example Goal 3: Develop effective communication with colleagues

- **Specific:** Lead weekly team briefings and actively solicit feedback.
- **Measurable:** Receive positive feedback from at least 80% of colleagues.
- **Achievable:** Prepare briefing notes in advance.
- **Relevant:** Improves teamwork and clarity during shifts.
- **Time-bound:** Implement and track for six weeks.

Example Goal 4: Increase knowledge of prison policies and procedures

- **Specific:** Complete all mandatory training modules and review policy updates.
- **Measurable:** Pass all knowledge assessments with at least 90% accuracy.
- **Achievable:** Dedicate two hours per week to study.
- **Relevant:** Ensures compliance and effective decision-making.
- **Time-bound:** Complete within ten weeks.

By breaking goals into manageable steps, mentees can track progress, celebrate small wins, and maintain momentum.

Beyond SMART goals, mentors can use structured coaching models that support mentees in exploring issues, clarifying thinking, and committing to action. Four frequently used frameworks are:

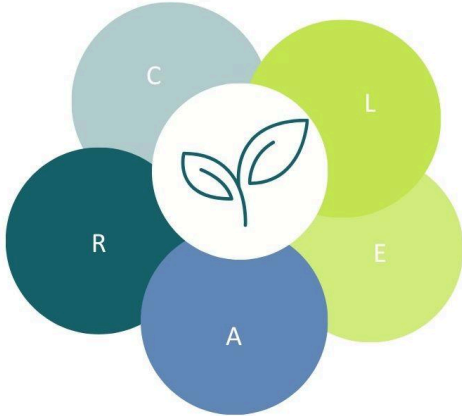
- CLEAR: Contract, Listening, Exploring, Action, Review.
- FUEL: Frame the Conversation, Understand, Explore, Lay out the Plan.
- T-GROW: Topic, Goals, Reality, Options, and Will/Way forward.
- OSKAR: Outcome, Scaling, Know-How, Affirm & Action, and Review.

CLEAR Framework

CLEAR stands for **Contract, Listening, Exploring, Action, Review**. It provides support at the start of new mentoring relationships to set out the aims of the mentoring relationship. It aims to support the mentors in building rapport and trust with their mentees early on.

CLEAR

When: Start of a Mentoring Relationship
Aim: Building Rapport and Trust



- **Contract:** Identify and clarify the goals, expectations, and limitations of the mentoring relationship.
- **Listening:** Actively listen to understand the mentee's concerns, perspectives, challenges, and aspirations.
- **Exploring:** Encourage reflection & explore beliefs and behavioural patterns.
- **Action:** Develop a skeleton of an action plan.
- **Review:** Evaluate and revise the action plan.







Stage	Purpose	Example Mentor Questions
C – Contract	Identify and clarify the goals, expectations, and limitations of the mentoring relationship.	“What would you like to achieve through this mentoring relationship?” “What are your expectations of me as a mentor?”
L – Listening	Actively listen to understand the mentee’s concerns, perspectives, challenges, and aspirations.	“What’s been on your mind recently?” “Can you tell me more about what led to this situation?”
E – Exploring	Encourage reflection and explore beliefs and behavioural patterns.	“What do you think influences the way you’ve approached this challenge?” “What might you do differently next time?”
A – Action	Develop a skeleton of an action plan.	“What steps could you take to move toward your goal?” “What support or resources might help you take that step?”
R – Review	Evaluate and revise the action plan.	“What’s been working well so far?” “What might you want to adjust moving forward?”

The CLEAR framework provides a clear, structured approach that guides mentees in establishing a mentoring relationship by promoting clarity, accountability, and self-directed growth.

FUEL Framework

FUEL stands for **Frame the Conversation, Understand, Explore, Lay out the Plan**. It provides support at the start of new mentoring relationships to support the mentors in establishing a framework for the mentoring with the aim to improve behaviours and motivation of the mentee.

FUEL

When: Starting a Mentoring Relationship
Aim: Improve Behaviour & Motivation

- **Frame the Conversation:** Agree on the purpose of the mentoring relationship.
- **Understand:** Determine weaknesses and challenges, attitudes and motivations.
- **Explore:** Envision the future state and set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) goals for achieving it.
- **Lay out the Plan:** Let the mentee make a plan and revise it with them. Give feedback and support.

This framework guides mentors to structure conversations envisioning motivational and behavioural goals rather than specific outcomes.

Stage	Purpose	Questions
F - Frame the Conversation	Agree on the purpose of the mentoring relationship	"What would you like to achieve from this mentoring relationship?" "How do you see us working together to support your growth?"
U - Understand	Determine weaknesses, challenges, attitudes, and motivations	"What do you feel are your biggest challenges right now?" "What motivates you to succeed, and what barriers do you notice?"

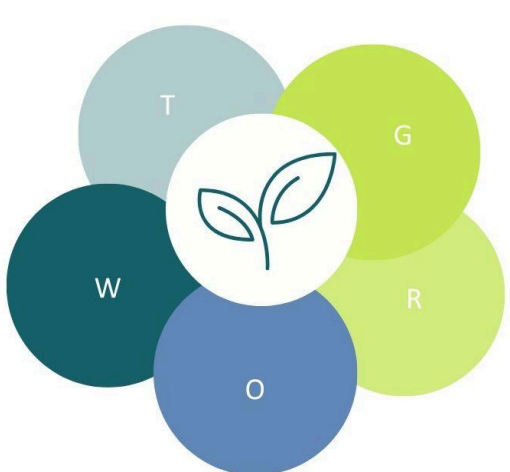
E - Explore	Envision the future state and set SMART goals	"If everything went perfectly, where would you like to be in 6–12 months?" "Which specific goals would make the biggest impact for you right now?"
L - Lay out the Plan	Let the mentee make a plan and revise it with guidance; provide feedback	"What steps do you think you should take first to reach your goal?" "How can I support you as you implement your plan?"

T-GROW Framework

T-GROW stands for **Topic, Goal, Reality, Options, and Will (or Way Forward)**. It provides a logical flow for coaching and mentoring discussions, ensuring that conversations remain structured yet flexible. It is best implemented in established mentoring relationships for the support of **short-term goals**.

TGROW

When: Established Mentoring Relationship
Aim: Short-Term Goals



- **Topic:** Clarify the topic & situation.
- **Goals:** Determine SMART goals.
- **Reality:** Determine weaknesses and challenges.
- **Options:** Brainstorm options & strategies to close the gap between goals and reality.
- **Will:** Draw an action plan with specific steps.








T-GROW helps mentees move from **problem awareness to solution ownership**, fostering reflection and empowerment rather than dependency on the mentor.

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Stage	Purpose	Example Mentor Questions
T – Topic	Identify the area the mentee wants to explore.	“What would you like to focus on today?”
G – Goals	Define a clear, meaningful goal for the session or overall mentoring journey.	“What would success look like by the end of this conversation?”
R – Reality	Explore the current situation, barriers, and contributing factors.	“What’s happening right now that makes this challenging?”
O – Options	Brainstorm possible strategies or alternatives.	“What different ways could you approach this?”
W – Will / Way Forward	Commit to concrete next steps and accountability.	“What will you do first, and how will you keep track of your progress?”

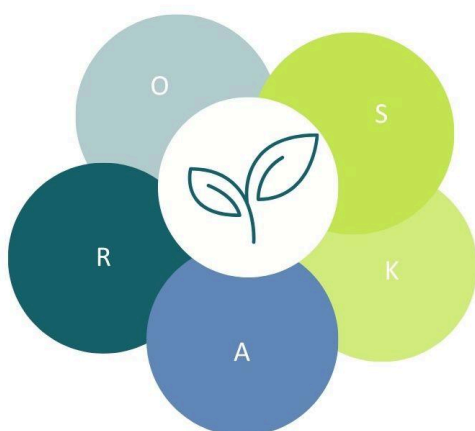
OSKAR Framework

OSKAR stands for **Outcome, Scaling, Know-How, Affirm & Action, and Review**. It builds on GROW but integrates **evaluation and iteration**, making it particularly effective in professional or performance-based mentoring contexts and **long-term goals** in an established mentoring relationship.

OSKAR

When: Established Mentoring Relationship

Aim: Long-Term Goals



- **Outcome:** Define the result.
- **Scaling:** Evaluate the scale & review realities.
- **Know-How:** Determine the skills & resources needed.
- **Affirm & Action:** Affirm strengths and create specific actions.
- **Review:** Regularly review progress.

Stage	Purpose	Example Mentor Questions
O – Outcome	Define the desired outcome or vision.	“What do you want to achieve by the end of this process?”
S – Scaling	Evaluate the current reality & options for scaling in depth.	“Where are you now in relation to that goal?” “How can you move up the scale?”
K- Know-How	Determine the skills and resources needed.	“What are your current strengths and weaknesses?” “What resources will you require?” “What choices do you have to move forward?”
A – Affirm & Action	Affirm strengths and create specific, measurable steps.	“How will you implement your strengths here?” “What action will you take and by when?”
R – Review	Reflect on progress and adapt.	“What have you learned so far, and what needs adjusting?”

OSKAR emphasises **continuous feedback and reflection**, ensuring that one solution is not over-relied on. It promotes adaptability and learning through experience.

All presented frameworks complement SMART goal-setting by giving mentors **conversation structures** that encourage reflection, problem-solving, and personal accountability. They transform mentoring sessions from abstract discussions into actionable, forward-focused learning experiences.

As this guide offers an overview, trainers & mentors are advised to consult Module 4 for comprehensive explanations and practical applications of both frameworks.

Section 4: Trauma-Informed Mentoring Basics

Questions answered in this section:

- *What does trauma-informed mentoring mean in the context of leadership and professional excellence?*
- *How can mentors recognise the impact of trauma on learning, communication, and trust?*
- *How can mentors lead in ways that create psychologically safe, ethical, and empowering relationships?*
- *What are the ethical and human rights responsibilities mentors hold when supporting others?*

This section focuses on *trauma-informed mentoring as a leadership competency*, that is, how awareness of trauma and its effects can enhance communication, build trust, and strengthen professional integrity. It is **not** a module on mental health support or burnout prevention. Those topics are covered comprehensively in the EMCC Advanced Diploma in Mental Health and Wellbeing Coaching (EMCC – Grad), the PRISGRADS competency checklist and the M4PRIS programme, which focuses on occupational health, recognising signs of distress, and supporting staff resilience.

What is trauma-informed mentoring?

Trauma-informed mentoring is an approach that integrates awareness of trauma into all aspects of leadership, support, and communication. Rather than asking “What is wrong with this person?”, trauma-informed mentors ask, “*What might have happened that shapes how this person learns, behaves, or responds?*”

This approach recognises five foundational principles: **Safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment**. For mentors, applying these principles means creating an environment where mentees feel respected, seen, and supported rather than managed or corrected. It shifts the focus **from control to connection**, helping mentees take ownership of their learning and growth.

In the context of leadership development, trauma-informed practice is about **how we exemplify leadership in mentoring**: setting boundaries without judgment, giving feedback constructively, and using authority in ways that foster confidence, not fear.

How Trauma Shapes Learning and Communication

Many people working in, or connected to, correctional or justice-associated environments such as staff and incarcerated individuals carry experiences of trauma. These may include

violence, loss, systemic discrimination, or chronic stress. Such experiences can influence how mentees:

- Interpret authority or feedback
- Respond to conflict or uncertainty
- Regulate their emotions
- Trust others in professional relationships.

Trauma may manifest as hyper-vigilance, mistrust, difficulty in emotional regulation, or avoidance behaviours. A mentee might appear defensive, withdrawn, or overly compliant not out of disinterest, but as a form of protection. Additionally, trauma can affect **concentration, memory, and problem-solving abilities**, thereby impacting goal-setting and participation in learning activities.

Mentors should interpret these responses as **coping mechanisms rather than resistance**. This perspective allows the mentor to respond with empathy and professional understanding instead of frustration or judgment.

For practical guidance on recognising and managing emotional distress, see the CIPD Resources on Supporting mental health at work or M4PRIS: Section on “Mentoring and Mental Health.”

Creating safe and supportive spaces

Mentors play a crucial role in establishing stability and safety within their mentoring relationships. A psychologically safe mentoring space is one where both parties can reflect honestly, take risks in learning, and know that confidentiality and respect are maintained.

Key practices include:

- **Consistency and reliability:** Keep scheduled sessions and follow through on commitments.
- **Clear, predictable communication:** Use calm, respectful language and transparent feedback and open body language.
- **Confidentiality:** Clarify what confidentiality means within the mentoring relationship, set boundaries transparently, and ensure both parties understand when information must be shared (e.g., for safety or ethical reasons). See more in **Module 2 - B.3:** Boundaries and Ethics of the Role & **Module 4 - B.1:** Confidentiality in Mentoring Roles.
- **Choice and collaboration:** Invite mentees to co-shape agendas and feedback focus areas, or determine how progress is evaluated.
- **Strength-based reflection:** Emphasise and reinforce existing skills, resilience, and capacity for growth rather than deficits.

- **Talents vs. Skills:** Help mentees recognise their natural talents and understand how these can be developed into skills through practice and reflection. Encourage awareness that not all abilities can be fully mastered without inherent aptitude, and support mentees in focusing on areas where they have potential to grow.

Creating safety is not about avoiding difficult conversations but rather about **managing them with care, structure, and respect.**

When mentees disclose distressing experiences, mentors should listen without judgment, validate emotions, and avoid probing for unnecessary detail. If issues appear beyond the mentor's remit, such as significant trauma, mental health crises, or burnout, referral is the responsible next step. It is important to communicate any necessary referrals and to escalate concerns responsibly to healthcare professionals or other designated authorities.

Refer to institutional procedures on when and how to escalate concerns appropriately.

Researching Ethical and Human Rights

Mentors are also leaders in ethical practice. They set the tone for integrity, fairness, and respect in every interaction. Therefore, they should be aware how ethical responsibilities and reporting procedures differ across countries and institutions. Each trainer and mentor is encouraged to research and understand the local frameworks that apply in their context.

To maintain this standard, mentors should:

- Understand the local and institutional protocols for **reporting** ethical or professional **concerns**. Including which organisations or individuals to contact (e.g., supervisors, medical staff, therapists, legal counsel, or external oversight bodies).
- Actively research your national codes of conduct and confidentiality frameworks as well as policies on confidentiality, safeguarding, and professional accountability. Ensure you understand any national, regional, or local procedures for reporting ethical concerns, concerns related to DEI issues, or corruption prevention mechanism.
- Familiarise themselves with the human rights standards that guide professional behaviour in correctional settings, ensuring respect and dignity, fairness, and integrity, such as the **UN Mandela Rules**, **European Prison Rules**, and **Council of Europe guidelines**.

Familiarity with these procedures ensures that mentors can act responsibly when dilemmas arise, while also safeguarding mentees and themselves. International standards

(e.g., UN Mandela Rules, Council of Europe guidelines) are included in Section E: Resources for further orientation.

When dilemmas arise, mentors should seek guidance within your prison institution (your supervisor, an operational manager, or a member of the senior management team) or from your National Prevention Mechanism or Corruption Prevention Boards and Advice Services (when escalation seems necessary) rather than act in isolation and communicate such steps to the mentee as transparently as possible. Acting ethically ensures that both mentees and mentors are protected, reinforcing the integrity and professionalism that underpin excellence in leadership.

Leadership Reflection:

Trauma-informed mentoring is not about avoiding difficult emotions but rather about leading with empathy, awareness, and ethical clarity.

By integrating trauma-informed principles into daily practice, mentors strengthen trust, improve communication, and model the kind of leadership that upholds human dignity and professional excellence.

C. Practice Activities

List of Practice Activities:

- *Activity 1: Coaching Frameworks in Mentoring Conversations*
- *Activity 2: Active Listening Scenarios (1-3)*
- *Activity 3: Scenarios on Conflict Resolution (4-6)*
- *Activity 4: Trauma-Informed Mentoring*

Activity 1: Coaching Frameworks in Mentoring Conversations

Purpose: Help learners recognise how structured coaching and goal-setting frameworks (SMART, T-GROW, and OSKAR) appear in mentoring conversations. The focus is on identifying the frameworks in use, understanding their logic, sequence, and language rather than mastering them for already established relationships. Adapt the exercise to test CLEAR and FUEL Frameworks if required. This activity supports mentors in noticing how goal-oriented dialogue can stay mentee-centred and developmental. More detailed application of these concepts will be covered in Module 4 (Tools for Mentoring).

Time: 45 minutes

- Part 1: Framework Overview – 10 minutes
- Part 2: Script Analysis in Pairs – 25 minutes
- Debrief & Reflection – 10 minutes

Materials:

- Printed or digital handouts summarising SMART, T-GROW, and OSKAR frameworks
- Copies of the sample mentor-mentee dialogue
- Highlighters or pens
- Flipchart or whiteboard for group summary

Instructions:

Phase 1: Framework Overview (10 minutes)

1. Introduce the three frameworks briefly: SMART, T-GROW, and OSKAR.
 - Emphasise that mentors do not need to apply them fluently yet as this activity focuses on recognition and awareness.
 - Highlight that these models offer structured ways to guide mentees toward self-defined goals.
 - Do not use the CLEAR or FUEL framework - focus on established mentoring relationships and the frameworks for those in this activity.
2. Explain that a deeper exploration of practical application will take place later in Module 4: Tools for Mentoring.

Phase 2: Script Analysis in Pairs (25 minutes)

1. Divide learners into pairs or small groups.
2. Provide each group with the sample mentor–mentee dialogue (below).
3. Task:
 - Read through the script together.
 - Highlight or annotate each place where a SMART, T-GROW, or OSKAR element appears.
 - Discuss which framework seems most evident at different stages of the conversation and where they overlap.
4. Each group chooses one short extract to present to the wider group, explaining which framework it illustrates and how it supports mentoring.

Sample Mentor–Mentee Script - You can find this as **Annex A at the end of the module**.

Facilitation Guidance

- Anchor the learning: Emphasise that these frameworks are *tools for structure and focus*, not scripts to follow word-for-word.
- Use the sample script provided in this section (or adapt it to your prison context).
- Encourage discussions on how this framework could be used in prison mentoring conversations.
- Encourage noticing: Ask, “Which framework felt most natural to you? Why?” and “How can different frameworks be combined in one mentoring session?”
- Link to mentoring philosophy: Reinforce that good mentoring keeps the *mentee in charge of their goals*. Such frameworks simply give shape to that process.
- Invite reflection: Discuss what happens when mentors overuse structure versus when they stay too unstructured.
- Conclude with clarity: Summarise group thoughts on the flipchart “Coaching frameworks help mentors stay purposeful, but reflection and empowerment must remain at the centre.”
- Use the table in **Annex B at the end of the module** to help you in your identification of coaching structures.

Activity 2: Active Listening Scenarios

Scenario 1 – Early Signs of Distress

Goal: Help mentors practice identifying emotional cues and using active listening to support mentees who may be struggling with stress or personal issues.

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

Timings: 2x 5 minutes (3-4 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 group reflection

Situation: The mentor engages with a new prison officer who has recently begun showing signs of stress such as arriving late, being less patient with others, and appearing distracted. The mentor must use active listening to explore what's behind the change without judgment.

Roles:

- *Mentee:* You have been working as a prison officer for 3 months and have been loving your job. You have felt like you are making a positive difference. However, in the past two weeks you fell out with a colleague, who has subsequently started spreading rumours about you. Additionally, you have had some financial problems at home, which have been burdening you. As a result, you are struggling to sleep and have become less punctual & empathetic to the people around you. Your mentor approaches you and wants to talk to you. Initially, you dismiss them but when you feel supported, the conversation provides an opportunity to open up. Open up more if you feel actively listened to.
- *Mentor (Learner):* You are a mentor guiding a new prison officer. They are usually very punctual & work hard in their role to support colleagues and the people on their wing. As you are walking on the wing, you see that they just came in late and

just dismissed a prisoner's request for help. They seem agitated. You decide to arrange a supportive conversation to understand what's going on. Your task is to use active listening to explore feelings and offer space for reflection.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identifying key components of active listening
- Practise active listening and emotional reflection.
- Recognise early behavioural signs of distress.
- Demonstrate empathy and non-judgment.

Success Checks:

- Look for different reactions.
- Use summarising and paraphrasing.
- Maintain open posture and eye contact.
- Identify emotions without rushing to fix.

Facilitation Guidance:

Encourage mentors to reflect on how body language, silence, and tone influence the mentee's willingness to open up. Discuss differences between listening *to respond* versus *listening to understand*.

Scenario 2 – Overwhelmed by New Responsibilities

Goal: Help mentors use active listening to support mentees transitioning into new leadership roles and feeling overwhelmed.

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

Timings: 2x 5 minutes (3-4 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
- Reflection sheet

Situation: A newly promoted officer is struggling to delegate tasks and is feeling pressure to perform perfectly. The mentor notices the signs of stress and invites a conversation.

Roles:

- *Mentee:* You have recently been promoted and now lead a small team of prison staff. While you were proud to take on this new responsibility, the transition has been more difficult than expected. You feel overwhelmed by the workload and the commitment to delegate tasks. You also want to make sure everything is done right, so you think it is easiest to just do it yourself. Thus, you start to doubt whether you are suited for the new role. Your mentor has reached out to you to check in with you. The conversation provides an opportunity to open up. Open up more if you feel actively listened to.
- *Mentor (Learner):* You are a mentor guiding a newly promoted prison officer who oversees a small team for the first time. You have noticed they seem overwhelmed by their new task and take on too much themselves without effectively delegating tasks. Thus, you reach out to your mentee to give them room to reflect on their leadership qualities. The aim is to practice active listening, rather than providing immediate advice. Create space for the mentee to express their experience, reflect their content, display open body language, and ask open questions to encourage self-awareness.

Learning Outcomes:

- Apply active listening in conversations about leadership stress.
- Encourage self-reflection and ownership.
- Build trust through non-judgmental curiosity.
- Demonstrate appropriate non-verbal communication to convey attention.

Success Checks:

- Summarise & rephrase key points
- Have an open posture
- Hold eye contact
- Match your facial expressions
- Keep your tone supportive and calm.

Facilitation Guidance:

After practice, invite the participants to reflect how the mentor's presence (tone, posture, silence) helped or hindered openness. Highlight the difference between empathy and rescuing.

Scenario 3 – Exploring Professional Identity

Goal: Enable mentors to help mentees explore their evolving professional identity through reflective listening.

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

Timings: 2x 5 minutes (3-4 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
- Reflection note sheet

Situation: A newly recruited officer performs well but seems detached and uncertain about their professional role and values. The mentor invites reflection.

Roles:

- *Mentee:* You are a newly recruited prison officer, who has been really motivated to join the prison service. While you are meeting the expectations of your role, you have been feeling detached and uncertain about new tasks. Also some tasks and parts of your role do not align with your idea of your professional identity and purpose at work. Your mentor asks you for a meeting, where you have the opportunity to reflect and explore how your role is evolving. You'll open up if your mentor truly listens and acknowledges what you're feeling.
- *Mentor (Learner):* You are a mentor for a newly recruited prison officer. Although they are performing well, you have noticed they appear detached and uncertain, not about what to do, but about how they see themselves in this new position. You invite them to reflect on their role, to explore their identity, values, and meaning, and how these align using open-ended questions and paraphrasing. The aim is to gently prompt the officer to openly reflect on their new role and experiences, encouraging greater self-awareness by listening rather than advising immediately.

Learning Outcomes:

- Support mentee reflection on values and role fit.
- Use active listening to deepen self-awareness.
- Recognise emotions and express empathy appropriately.

Success Checks:

- Summarise & rephrase key points
- Have an open posture
- Hold eye contact
- Match your facial expressions
- Keep your tone supportive and calm.
- Ask open questions.
- Reflect emotional content (“It sounds like you feel...”).
- Avoid premature advice.
- Use minimal encouragers (hmm, I see (...), aha)

Facilitation Guidance:

Encourage discussion on how mentors can balance empathy with professional objectivity. Debrief how “naming emotions” affects connection.

Activity 3: Scenarios on Conflict Resolution (4-6)

Scenario 4 – Handling Mistakes and Team Tension

Goal: Develop mentors’ ability to support mentees in managing workplace conflict calmly and constructively after making a mistake.

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

Timings: 2x 5 minutes (3-4 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

Situation:

A new officer made a counting error that delayed everyone's shift. They feel humiliated and angry. The mentor's role is to help them process emotions and plan how to restore working relationships.

Roles:

- *Mentee:* You are a new prison officer and made a mistake during roll count, which resulted in you and your colleagues being late off of work. You are frustrated with yourself about the mistake you made and also are angry at your colleagues for holding an honest mistake against you. If the mentor listens calmly and empathetically, you soften and reflect.
- *Mentor (Learner):*
You are a mentor and have a conversation with your mentee. They seem frustrated and they tell you that they made a mistake whilst counting (roll count) which resulted in a freeze on movement last night. They were told off for it by their colleagues and made fun of. You hear that your mentee is upset and defensive. You need to guide them to process emotions and consider next steps without minimising their feelings.

Learning Outcomes:

- Recognise and manage emotional responses during conflict.
- Support reflection and accountability.
- Model calm, constructive dialogue.

Success Checks:

- Use clarifying questions.
- Stay calm and steady in tone and posture.
- Encourage self-directed solutions.

Scenario 5 – Team Disagreement on Procedures

Goal: Enable mentors to facilitate constructive dialogue between conflicting colleagues using neutral communication and clarification techniques.

Instructions: In groups of three carry out the following scenario, swap roles after each practice period.

Timings: 3 x 7 minutes (5 minute practice + 2 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
- Debrief notes

Situation: A newly promoted officer introduces a new rotation system, which an experienced colleague finds rigid. Conflict escalates. The mentor facilitates a joint meeting.

Roles:

- *Mentee (New Officer):* You are a newly promoted prison officer responsible for managing and restructuring the work rotation system for the wing. Your goal is to ensure fairness and consistency. However, the changes you have implemented have disrupted existing informal arrangements that your colleague believes were functioning well. The colleague has expressed frustration, accusing you of being inflexible and dismissive of his experience. A recent disagreement escalated, and you have now been called into a joint meeting facilitated by your mentor.
- *Experienced Officer:* You are a long-serving prison officer with extensive experience in how things work. Recently, a newly promoted officer has taken over work coordination and has introduced a new system. You feel that, in practice, it seems rigid and overlooks arrangements that have been working well for years. You have tried raising concerns because you feel that your input has been dismissed. The tension between you and the new officer has escalated. You have now been asked to join a meeting with the officer and their mentor to discuss it. You are quite agitated but start to become calmer when the mentor is using practical conflict resolution techniques.
- *Mentor (Learner):* You are the mentor for a recently promoted officer, who is responsible for coordinating and implementing a more structured rotation system for the work of the persons on their unit to ensure fairness. However, an experienced officer on the team strongly disagrees with how the new system is being applied. He believes the new officer is too rigid and overlooks other effective arrangements that have worked for years. Tension has escalated, resulting in a heated disagreement that recently occurred. You observed the situation and decided it is an opportunity to support the new officer in understanding and

practicing conflict resolution. You invite the officers to a joint meeting to seek a constructive way of restoring a productive working relationship.

Note: *European prison systems vary in their hierarchy and staff autonomy. Be mindful of the national working culture and unwritten norms when facilitating this conversation.*

Learning Outcomes:

- Practise neutral facilitation and mediation skills.
- Identify emotional and practical needs beneath conflict which contribute to (de-) escalation of the situation
- Apply effective communication strategies, such as using neutral language, clarifications, and paraphrasing
- Use structured questioning to restore communication.

Success Checks:

- Use clarifying questions.
- Stay calm and steady in tone and posture.
- Encourage self-directed solutions.
- Maintain calm body language.
- Ask open, neutral questions.
- Paraphrase each perspective fairly.
- Take intentional pauses

Scenario 6 – Conflict in the Mentoring Relationship

Goal: Help mentors address interpersonal tension directly and rebuild trust through open, respectful dialogue.

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

Timings: 2x 6 minutes (4-5 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
- Reflection sheets

Situation: A mentor and mentee have developed tension after several missed meetings and a disagreement. The mentor wants to clear the air and restore trust.

Roles:

- *Mentee:* You are a newly promoted prison officer trying to navigate the pressures of your new role. You feel as if your mentor does not understand the situation you're facing. As a result, you have skipped two mentor meetings because you're unsure whether those sessions would be helpful. In a recent encounter, you challenged your mentor's suggestions and walked away feeling irritated and dismissed. Since then, things have felt tense between you. You have now been invited to a conversation with your mentor to address the tension. When the mentor is giving you meaningful reasons for the conflict & asks you to co-create solutions you engage more.
- *Mentor (Learner):* You are a mentor to a newly promoted prison officer. Over the past few weeks, you have noticed that your mentee has become increasingly resistant to your feedback and hesitant to engage in scheduled mentoring conversations. They have skipped two meetings, and when approached informally, the mentee challenged your suggestions and subsequently walked away visibly frustrated. You feel disrespected but also recognise that something deeper might be going on. You have decided to initiate a conversation to address the conflict between you. Your goal is to invite open discussion and rebuild the relationship collaboratively.

Learning Outcomes:

- Address conflict directly and calmly.
- Recognise emotional triggers and communication breakdowns.
- Rebuild trust through empathy and shared problem-solving.

Success Checks:

- Name the conflict clearly and calmly.
- Use open questions and reflective listening.
- Collaboratively agree on next steps.

Activity 4: Trauma Awareness Reflection

Purpose: Help learners recognise and apply trauma-informed principles in mentoring conversations by identifying trauma-related behaviours, selecting safe communication strategies, and reflecting on their own practice. The activity promotes understanding of how mentors can maintain empathy and boundaries while creating a space of trust, safety, and empowerment.

Time: 45 minutes

- Part 1: Scenario Discussions – 25 minutes
- Part 2: Trauma-Informed Principles in Practice – 15 minutes

Materials:

- Printed or digital copies of 3–4 trauma-related scenarios (see examples below)
- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Markers or sticky notes
- Handout summarising the five trauma-informed principles (Safety, Trust, Choice, Collaboration, Cultural Awareness)

Instructions

Phase 1: Scenario Discussions (25 min)

1. Introduction (5 min)
 - Briefly recap the five trauma-informed principles:
 - i. **Safety:** Creating an environment where mentees feel physically and emotionally secure.
 - ii. **Trust and Transparency:** Being consistent, reliable, and honest.
 - iii. **Choice and Empowerment:** Offering agency and encouraging mentees to make decisions.
 - iv. **Collaboration and Mutuality:** Building partnership and shared ownership.
 - v. **Cultural and Historical Awareness:** Recognising and respecting diverse experiences and contexts.
 - Emphasise that trauma can affect trust, communication, and consistency. Trauma-informed mentoring is about *how* we engage, not *what* we fix.

2. Small Group Reflection (20 min)

- Divide learners into small groups of 3–5 people. Provide each group with 2–3 short mentoring scenarios that illustrate possible trauma-related behaviours.
- Ask each group to discuss the following:
 - i. How might trauma show up in this mentee’s behaviour?
 - ii. Which trauma-informed principle(s) could guide your response?
 - iii. What specific language or approach would make the conversation safer?
 - iv. Where might the mentor’s role end, and when should a referral be considered?

3. Encourage groups to note examples of effective phrasing or actions.

Example Scenario Prompts

Scenario 1: Last-Minute Cancellations

A mentee in custody has cancelled three sessions in a row, each time only minutes before the meeting. They always agree to reschedule, but the same pattern repeats.

➤ *Possible trauma signals:* avoidance, fear of failure, difficulty trusting consistency.

➤ *Mentor challenge:* How can you hold them accountable while remaining understanding of potential trauma triggers?

Scenario 2: Defensive Anger

During a feedback session, the mentee becomes tense and raises their voice, saying they feel “singled out.” They cross their arms and withdraw.

➤ *Possible trauma signals:* heightened threat response, sensitivity to criticism, mistrust of authority.

➤ *Mentor challenge:* How could you de-escalate and re-establish a sense of safety without avoiding the issue?

Scenario 3: Withdrawal and Disengagement

The mentee attends every session but seems emotionally distant — avoiding eye contact, giving one-word answers, and shrugging off goal-setting.

➤ *Possible trauma signals:* emotional numbing, self-protection, hopelessness.

➤ *Mentor challenge:* How could you create a space that feels safe and motivating without forcing engagement?

Scenario 4: Overcompliance and People Pleasing

Your mentee agrees to every suggestion and says “yes” to all actions but later completes none.

- *Possible trauma signals:* fear of rejection, survival strategy to appease others, lack of authentic voice.
- *Mentor challenge:* How can you encourage honest dialogue and empower choice — including permission to say “no”?

Scenario 5: Sharing Personal Trauma (Optional)

A mentee unexpectedly discloses a story of past violence, becomes emotional, then quickly laughs it off and changes topic.

- *Possible trauma signals:* ambivalence about trust, shame, testing boundaries.
- *Mentor challenge:* How can you acknowledge this safely without probing or taking on a counselling role?

Phase 2: Trauma-Informed Principles in Practice (15 min)

Bring the group together. Present short reflection statements on a flipchart or screen.

Ask: “Is this a trauma-informed response?” or “Which principle does this demonstrate?”

Encourage discussion on which actions build trust and which might unintentionally harm it. Invite participants to share phrases they personally find effective in maintaining safety and choice.

1. Facilitate a brief reflection discussion:
 - What insights stood out from these scenarios?
 - How does being trauma-informed change the way mentors communicate?
 - What small action could you take in your next mentoring session to enhance safety and trust?
2. Invite learners to write one personal takeaway:

“One thing I can change in my mentoring practice tomorrow to be more trauma-informed is...”

Facilitator Guidance

- **Anchor the discussion:** Emphasise that trauma responses are survival strategies, not defiance or laziness. Clarify that trauma-informed mentoring is not therapy; it is about *how* we listen and respond safely within professional boundaries.
- **Realism:** Encourage the trainer to adapt the scenarios to their local prison context (e.g., typical challenges mentees face in their country/facility)

- **Reinforce boundaries:** Clarify that mentors can acknowledge trauma without needing to “fix” it. Referral (in communication with the mentee) to appropriate support is often the best response.
- **Encourage reflection:** Ask learners, “*What might make a mentor overstep in a trauma situation?*” (e.g., empathy, discomfort with silence, desire to help).
- **Use grey zones:** When learners disagree on an interpretation, explore why as these differences reveal values and professional judgement.
- **Conclude with clarity:** “A trauma-informed mentor creates safety, not solutions empowering choice, not control.”

D. Trainer Notes and Guidance

This section provides guidance on facilitating learning about the core mentoring skills and competencies needed to support mentees effectively. It emphasises helping participants practise communication, conflict management, goal-setting, feedback, and trauma-informed approaches while maintaining professional boundaries. This module builds on role clarity from Module 2 and focuses on developing practical mentoring skills that enable reflective, supportive, and ethical mentoring relationships.

- Stress the importance of patience and presence in communication.
- Normalise challenges in managing conflict and feedback delivery.
- Provide local resources or referral options for trauma support.
- Encourage peer learning and support during activities.

Emphasise the Importance of Communication Skills

Why it matters: Communication is the foundation of all mentoring. Mentors must actively listen, recognise verbal and non-verbal cues, and ask questions that promote reflection. Strong communication fosters trust, encourages openness, and supports the mentee’s professional growth.

How to do it:

- Introduce different listening types: comprehensive, critical, empathetic, and reflective.
- Demonstrate how active listening supports understanding beyond words, including emotions, tone, and body language.
- Explore the impact of open versus closed questions in shaping mentoring dialogue.

Practical tips:

- Use scenario exercises (e.g., Active Listening Scenarios) to allow participants to practise recognising verbal and non-verbal cues.
- Highlight how reflective statements validate mentee experiences and encourage autonomy.
- Encourage participants to test out and reflect on different modes.
- Emphasise attention, empathy, and patience as critical components of effective communication.

Gentle prompts:

- “How does your posture or tone influence the mentee’s willingness to share?”
- “Which type of listening are you using right now, and how does it affect understanding?”
- “How do you balance open-ended exploration with factual clarification?”

Support Conflict Management and Difficult Conversations

Why it matters: Conflict naturally occurs in high-pressure environments, including mentoring contexts. Mentors who can manage tension constructively model resilience and professionalism, preserving trust and promoting problem-solving skills.

How to do it:

- Present common sources of conflict: miscommunication, role ambiguity, value differences, stress, or perceived unfairness.
- Demonstrate de-escalation techniques: calm presence, naming the conflict, neutral language, and intentional pauses.
- Use structured methods for resolution when needed, ensuring mentees are involved in co-creating solutions.

Practical tips:

- Incorporate scenarios (e.g., Scenarios 4–6) to practise early identification of tension and applying conflict management strategies.
- Encourage mentors to recognise when escalation or additional support (HR, supervisor, mediator) is required.
- Reinforce modelling appropriate emotional regulation and professional responses.

Gentle prompts:

- “What cues signal that a conversation is escalating?”
- “How can you acknowledge the issue without assigning blame?”
- “When should you involve others, and how do you communicate that to the mentee?”

Facilitate Constructive Feedback and Goal-Setting

Why it matters: Feedback and goal-setting are central to mentoring. Providing structured, constructive feedback and helping mentees set realistic, meaningful goals builds competence, accountability, and motivation.

How to do it:

- Teach mentors to provide descriptive, objective feedback focused on actions, not character.
- Introduce frameworks (SMART, T-GROW, OSKAR) to structure mentoring conversations while keeping the mentee at the centre.
- Practise guiding mentees to convert feedback into tangible, achievable goals.

Practical tips:

- Use sample dialogues and exercises to highlight where frameworks naturally appear.
- Emphasise balancing feedback: Highlight strengths while exploring opportunities for growth.
- Encourage mentors to model feedback receptivity and reflection themselves.

Gentle prompts:

- “Which part of this dialogue illustrates mentee ownership of the solution?”
- “How could feedback be delivered to maximise reflection and motivation?”
- “Where might a mentor unintentionally take over, and how can this be avoided?”

Integrate Trauma-Informed Mentoring Practices

Why it matters: Many mentees bring experiences of trauma that influence learning, communication, and trust. Trauma-informed mentoring allows mentors to respond empathetically while maintaining boundaries, creating psychologically safe environments conducive to growth.

How to do it:

- Introduce the five trauma-informed principles: Safety, Trustworthiness, Choice, Collaboration, Empowerment.
- Train mentors to recognise trauma signals such as hyper-vigilance, withdrawal, defensiveness, over-compliance.
- Practise responses that validate emotions, maintain professional boundaries, and provide safe options for escalation.

Practical tips:

- Use group discussions and scenarios to explore strategies for creating safety and supporting autonomy.
- Encourage reflection on language, tone, and body language that reinforces trust and choice.
- Stress that trauma-informed practice is about awareness and leadership, not therapy and emphasise referrals to specialist support when needed.

Gentle prompts:

- “How might trauma show up in this mentee’s behaviour?”
- “What language or actions would create a safer space?”
- “Where do we draw boundaries while still demonstrating empathy and support?”

Encourage Reflective Practice and Self-Awareness

Why it matters: Reflection allows mentors to improve skills, recognise biases, and respond thoughtfully. It strengthens ethical and empathetic mentoring and models reflective leadership for mentees.

How to do it:

- Include exercises after each practice scenario to debrief and analyse decisions.
- Pose reflective questions linking theory to practice: “What worked well?” “What could be done differently?”
- Promote sharing of diverse perspectives to explore multiple approaches.

Practical tips:

- Encourage note-taking or journaling for ongoing skill development.
- Highlight how reflection informs ethical decision-making and boundary maintenance.

- Revisit scenarios with small variations to deepen learning.

Gentle prompts:

- “Which response encouraged the mentee to think independently?”
- “How did your own emotional response shape the conversation?”
- “What insights can you apply to future mentoring situations?”

Model Professionalism in Facilitation

Why it matters: Trainers’ behaviour sets the standard for mentee interactions. Calm, ethical, and reflective facilitation reinforces the skills being taught.

How to do it:

- Demonstrate neutral, non-judgmental responses during activities.
- Model active listening, empathy, and constructive questioning.
- Emphasise clarity, respect, and consistency in all guidance.

Practical tips:

- Co-facilitate exercises to show multiple approaches.
- Connect trainer actions back to mentoring principles, highlighting why certain behaviours build trust.

Gentle prompts:

- “How does your facilitation style influence participants’ learning?”
- “Which behaviours demonstrate ethical and trauma-informed practice?”
- “How might your approach affect mentee engagement in real scenarios?”

Reinforce Learning Through Practice and Iteration

Why it matters: Mentoring skills are refined through repetition, feedback, and adaptation. Iterative practice fosters confidence and ethical discernment.

How to do it:

- Rotate roles in exercises to experience different perspectives.
- Debrief after each scenario to highlight key takeaways and ethical considerations.
- Connect learning to institutional values and professional expectations.

Practical tips:

- Track emerging principles on flipcharts to consolidate learning.
- Encourage experimentation with communication styles and conflict resolution approaches.
- Emphasise that skill development is gradual and requires reflection.

Gentle prompts:

- “What did you learn by taking the mentee’s perspective?”
- “Which strategies balanced support and autonomy effectively?”
- “How will you apply these lessons in your mentoring practice tomorrow?”

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Annex A

Context:

A newly promoted prison officer (mentee) is struggling to balance administrative duties with leading their team. The mentor helps them set a development goal.

Mentor: Thanks for meeting today and I am looking forward to hearing more about your new role. You've had a few weeks in it now - how has it been feeling so far?

Mentee: Honestly, a bit much. I'm buried in paperwork, and I don't feel like I'm spending enough time with my team.

Mentor: That sounds frustrating. When you picture things going well, what would look different for you?

Mentee: I'd actually be out there more - on the landings - and also leading briefings, checking in with the officers, not just sitting at a desk all day.

Mentor: So more presence and connection with your team. If we made that your focus for now, what would success look like in, say, the next few months?

Mentee: Maybe being able to spend two hours a day on the wing, minimum. Right now it's barely half an hour.

Mentor: That's a clear shift. What's standing in the way at the moment?

Mentee: Mostly admin tasks such as incident reports, shift rotas, email follow-ups. They pile up fast.

Mentor: If you could change one of those things first, which would free up the most time or energy?

Mentee: Probably the reports. Maybe I could delegate part of that, but I've never trained anyone else to do it.

Mentor: That's a good insight. What options do you have for sharing or streamlining that work?

Mentee: I could ask one of the junior officers to take on a few standard forms and maybe use the digital log system better.

Mentor: Which of those ideas feels most doable this week?

Mentee: Training the junior officer. It'd take effort now, but it'd help long term by helping them grow and develop whilst also relieving me of some of the paperwork.

Mentor: Great. How will you know it's working? What will tell you you're getting that time back?

Mentee: I could track how much time I spend on the floor daily. If it increases to two hours a day for a full week, that's progress.

Mentor: Perfect. So, your plan is to train your colleague on reports and keep track of your own floor time. When shall we check back in on how it's going?

Mentee: Let's review it next session maybe in two weeks.

Mentor: Excellent. It would also be good to reflect on whether you are attaining your goal through the training. Sounds like you've got a practical next step and a way to measure progress. How confident do you feel about starting this?

Mentee: Pretty good and a lot clearer than before. It feels good to have a gameplan.

Mentor: That's great to hear. Let's see how it works, and I will help you adjust if needed.

Annex B

Framework Element	Mentor Line / Example	Framework	Purpose / Trainer Notes
<i>Topic / Context Setting</i>	"You've had a few weeks in your new role — how's it been feeling so far?"	T-GROW (Topic)	Opens the conversation and clarifies the focus area before goal-setting. Encourages self-reflection without judgment.
<i>Empathic Acknowledgment</i>	"That sounds frustrating."	OSKAR (Scaling)	Validates emotion and creates psychological safety which is vital for honest goal-setting.
<i>Vision of Success</i>	"When you picture things going well, what would look different for you?"	T-GROW (Goal)	Encourages mentee to define success in their own terms; connects emotional and practical aspects.
<i>Goal Definition</i>	"Maybe being able to spend two hours a day on the wing, minimum."	SMART (Specific)	Makes the mentee's aspiration measurable and clear. Helps transition from vague desire to actionable aim.
<i>Barrier Exploration</i>	"What's standing in the way at the moment?"	OSKAR (Scaling) / T-GROW (Reality)	Surfaces real challenges; tests feasibility and reveals what may need addressing before action.
<i>Prioritisation</i>	"If you could change one of those things first within your power, which would free up the most time?"	OSKAR (Know-How)	Focuses on decision-making and control. Helps mentee identify leverage points.
<i>Exploring Options</i>	"What options do you have for sharing or streamlining that work?"	T-GROW (Options) / OSKAR (Know-How)	Promotes brainstorming without directing. Reinforces mentee ownership and problem-solving capacity.
<i>Commitment / Decision</i>	"Which of those ideas feels most doable this week?"	SMART (Achievable) / OSKAR (Affirm & Actions)	Bridges reflection to commitment and ensures the step is realistic within constraints.

<i>Measurement & Evaluation</i>	“How will you know it’s working? What will tell you you’re getting that time back?”	SMART (Measurable) / OSKAR (Review)	Builds self-monitoring habits and connects goals to observable indicators.
<i>Timeline Setting</i>	“When shall we check back in on how it’s going?”	SMART (Time-bound) / T-GROW (Will / Way Forward)	Anchors accountability and ensures progress is tracked.
<i>Relevance</i>	“It would also be good to reflect on whether you are attaining your goal through the training.”	SMART (Relevant)	Continuous feedback prevents overdependence on a single solution.
<i>Confidence Check</i>	“How confident do you feel about starting this?”	OSKAR (Review)	Gauges emotional readiness and reinforces agency and it enables mentors to offer appropriate encouragement.
<i>Closure and Support</i>	“That’s great to hear. Let’s see how it works, and I will help you adjust if needed.”	OSKAR (Review)	Ends on a collaborative tone reinforcing adaptive learning and growth mindset.