



NSW Government Graduate Program



Mentoring Guide

[Get started](#)

Welcome Mentors!

Congratulations on embarking on this important journey as a mentor in the Government Graduate Mentoring Program! We are grateful for your commitment to supporting and developing the next generation of leaders.

Mentoring is a mutually enriching experience that holds immense value for both mentors and mentees. As a mentor, you will play a pivotal role in guiding your mentee through their professional growth, offering insights, wisdom, and support derived from your own experiences. At the same time, mentorship provides an opportunity for fresh perspectives, new ideas, and personal reflection, making it a valuable learning experience for you as well.

What makes mentoring truly meaningful is the genuine connection that forms between mentor and mentee. It's more than just sharing knowledge and advice; it's about building trust, fostering meaningful discussions, recognising strengths, identifying opportunities for growth, and celebrating achievements together.

As you embark on this 18-month journey, remember that your guidance and support can have a lasting impact. There may be challenges along the way, but through open communication, patience, and a commitment to learning, you will not only empower your mentee but also grow as a leader yourself.

This guidebook has been specifically designed to support you in your mentoring role. It includes practical advice, insightful strategies, and valuable tools to help you navigate mentoring conversations with confidence. From goal-setting to effective communication, from problem-solving to celebrating success, this guide serves as a roadmap for building a strong, impactful mentoring relationship.

We thank you for your time, expertise, and dedication to this program. We hope your mentoring experience is filled with rewarding conversations, personal growth, and shared successes.

Here's to an enriching and fulfilling mentoring journey ahead!



Welcome to the Graduate Mentoring Program



How to use this toolkit

Follow the prompts to navigate to the conversation pathway you require. Then review the information and complete the reflection questions provided to prepare for the conversation.

Navigation tips:

You will be provided with links to relevant information along the way.



Navigate back



Navigate forward



Takes you to the homepage where you can choose your path



Instruction



Thinking point



Tips



Indicates a clickable button that will take you to relevant information

NSW Government Graduate Program

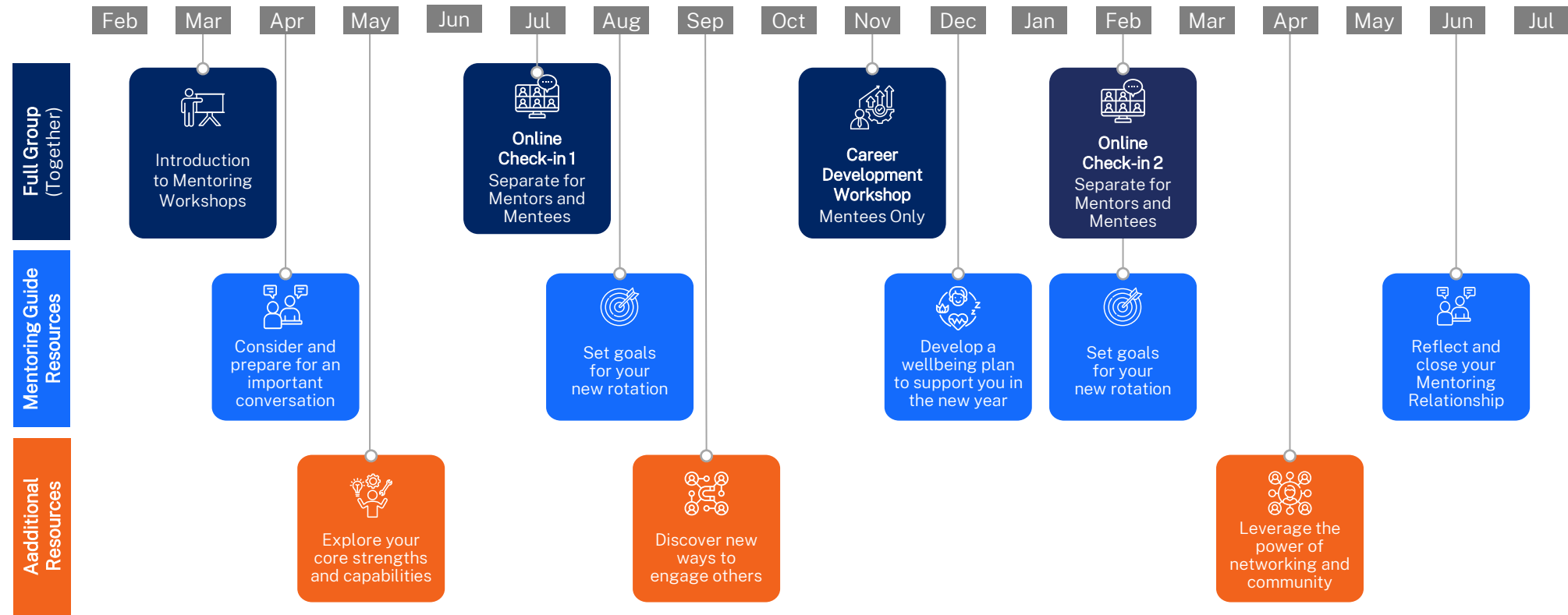
Mentor Program

[Explore](#)

Mentoring Program Overview

Here is an overview of the journey through our 18-month Graduate Mentoring Program. You'll find a detailed timeline highlighting the group sessions and various milestones throughout the program. This will help you keep track of key dates and events where you'll join forces with your peers and mentors.

To enhance your experience and success, we've also curated a selection of valuable resources. You can easily access the mentoring guide resources by clicking on the corresponding icons provided. Additionally, we will send all other essential resources directly to your email to ensure you have everything you need at your fingertips.



Introduction

Successful Mentoring Relationships

Mentoring Meetings

1 First Meeting

2 Ongoing Meetings

3 Final Meeting

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1 Setting Clear Goals

2 Engaging in Challenging Conversations

3 Powerful and Curious Questions

4 Supporting Your Wellbeing



Click on the buttons above to go to the relevant sections

Successful Mentoring Relationships

Successful Tips for Mentoring



- 1 Establish a genuine connection
- 2 Be open and honest
- 3 Set realistic expectations
- 4 Show appreciation and acknowledgement
- 5 Give constructive feedback
- 6 Take responsibility of your growth journey
- 7 Share your networks
- 8 Be proactive and follow through on commitments

Mentoring Meetings

First Meeting Checklist

The first mentoring meeting serves as a pivotal moment:

- **Kick-off is key:**
The first meeting sets the stage for a strong mentorship journey.
- **Trust and teamwork:**
This is where trust, understanding, and teamwork begin, guiding all future interactions.
- **Expectations and respect:**
It's the time to set clear expectations, open up the dialogue, and build mutual respect.
- **Foundation for success:**
Invest in this initial meeting to foster a productive partnership and drive growth.

An agenda – Your initial meeting



1 Engage in mutual discovery

Get to know each other as you embark on a journey of mutual discovery, sharing insights into individual strengths and areas for growth, laying the foundation for collaborative goal-setting.



2 Establish clear expectations

Navigate the landscape of expectations, defining roles and responsibilities to ensure alignment and accountability within the mentoring relationship.



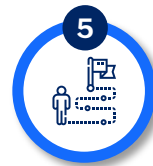
3 Tackle logistics

Consider meeting frequency, location, communication channels and any other details to help you to collaborate



4 Foster feedback and reflection

Create a space for open dialogue, where you can exchange feedback and reflect on experiences to inform your interaction and growth



5 Chart the path forward

Chart a course for the future, outlining actionable next steps and commitments, solidifying intentions, and reinforcing the shared commitment to the mentoring journey.

Mentoring Meetings



Ongoing Meeting

An agenda for your regular meeting with you graduate should provide structure, focus and opportunities for meaningful interactions.

Below is a suggested agenda you might like to try



1 Check in

Check in with each other to gauge how you are both feeling coming into the meeting and address any immediate concerns or updates.



2 Review goals and progress

Reflect on your current goals and discuss the progress made towards achieving them. Identify any successes, challenges, or barriers encountered since the last meeting.



3 Focused discussion topic and action planning

Spend time focused on a specific topic or area of interest relevant to your personal and professional development. You might like to leverage monthly resources or tools within this guidebook. Work together to identify actionable steps to address and challenges, capitalise on opportunities, or achieve discussed goals.



4 Feedback and reflection

Provide feedback to each other on the mentoring process. What is working well and what could be improved in your relationship. Reflect together on key learnings and insights gained.



5 Next steps and close

Summarise key action items from the meeting and responsibilities moving forward. Set a date for the next meeting. Express appreciation for the dedication and progress made during the session.

Final Mentoring Meetings



Ending a formal mentoring partnership

Congratulations!

Ending a mentoring relationship is a key milestone. Take time to reflect, respect the shared journey, and express gratitude for the invaluable support and guidance exchanged.

Some ideas on sharing your experiences with your graduate



- The biggest insight/lesson I have taken from my graduate is...
- The biggest growth I have seen my graduate make is...
- My graduate has helped me to grow by...

Consider these points in your final 'formal' meeting:



Review and celebrate achievements



Provide each other with feedback on the mentoring experience



Discuss future goals and aspirations



Share gratitude – for the time, efforts and insights you have both shared

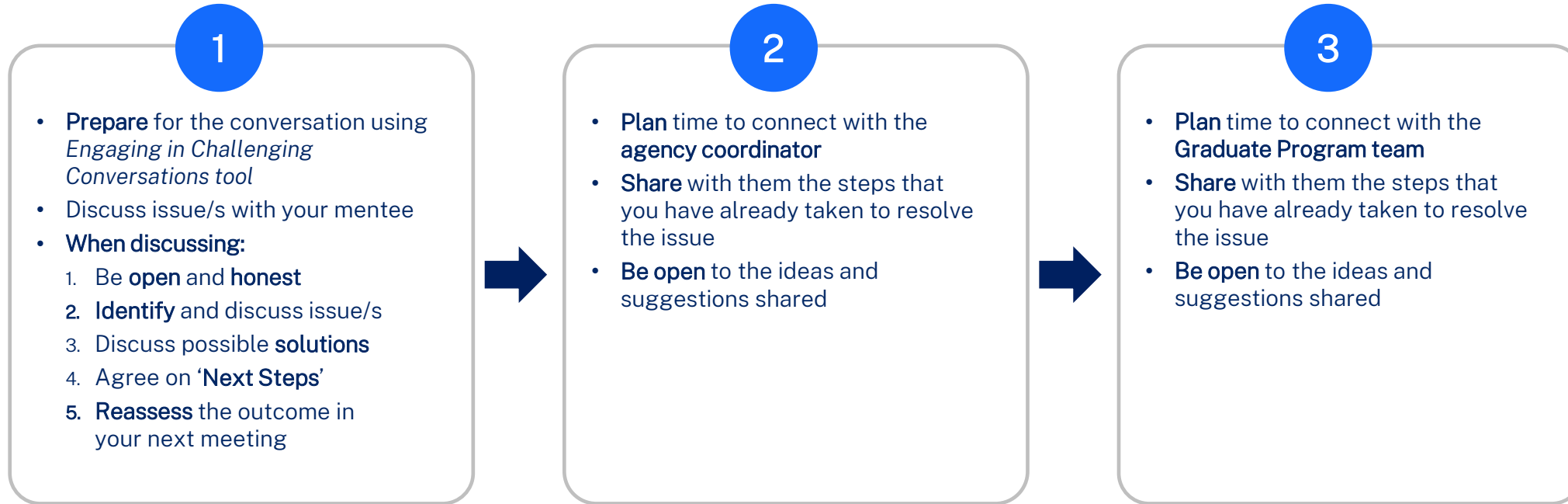


Consider how you might continue to communicate, leaving the door open for future interactions or collaborations

Challenges in the Mentoring Relationship

In any mentoring journey, challenges in compatibility and goals are common and part of the journey. Tackling these together, with open minds and patience, is key!

If you find that your mentoring relationship is experiencing difficulties, there are constructive steps you can take to address the situation and foster a more positive and productive dynamic. The following three steps are designed to provide a clear and actionable process to help guide you back on track.



Tools

These core tools can be used to support you to make the most of your mentoring relationship. You will receive additional resources via email throughout the year.

Each tool sits across two pages; the first provides an overview and the second page provides the opportunity for practical application.

1 Setting Clear Goals

Goal setting provides clarity, direction, and guidance towards meaningful achievements.

3 Powerful and Curious Questions

Asking powerful and curious questions can enhance your mentoring experience.

2 Engaging in Challenging Conversations

Challenging conversations are difficult but necessary. They foster growth and understanding, and aid resolution.

4 Supporting Your Wellbeing

Focus on wellbeing is essential to ensure sustained success and performance.



Click on the buttons above to go to the relevant sections

Setting Clear Goals

Setting clear goals is crucial in any endeavor as it provides direction, motivation, and a sense of purpose. In the context of a mentoring relationship, clear goals serve as guiding beacons, helping both mentors and mentees navigate their journey effectively.

By defining specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals, mentors can support their mentees to establish a roadmap for success and track progress along the way. Clear goals also facilitate alignment of expectations, enhance communication, and foster accountability within the mentoring relationship.

Tips



- Ask your mentee questions about their goals to help them to clarify their goals and objectives.
- Support them to break down larger goals into smaller actionable steps.
- Regularly review your mentees goals during your meetings. Remind them that goals aren't just set and forget.

Ultimately, setting clear goals empowers mentors and mentees to work collaboratively towards shared objectives, driving growth, development, and success in the mentoring journey.



Specific

What is it that you actually want to achieve? Are there any milestones along the way to achieving this?



Measurable

What will success look/feel like?
How will you know when you have reached the goal?



Achievable

Be realistic. What can be accomplished by you, within the given timeframe?



Relevant

How is your goal relevant to your development, context and role?



Time bound

How long are you going to give yourself for this goal?



The next page provides an overview of the mentee activity and tips for you to support mentees to setting their own goals.

Supporting Your Mentee to Set Clear Goals

The mentee specific guide encourages mentees to prepare for a meeting with you by completing a goal setting activity.

Mentees are encouraged to think about a current aspiration, what are they hoping to achieve and why is it important for them right now.

The template they are provided helps them to get clear about what it is they want to achieve, why it is important and what is the SMART goal that can support them.

1 New rotations are a great time to consider setting new goals.

2 Dedicate time during each of your mentoring sessions to review goals.

3 Remember that growth and comfort do not coexist. Keep stretching your mentee.

Goal setting questions you might like to ask



- What are your long-term aspirations or vision for your career?
- Can you describe a specific area or skill you'd like to develop further?
- What specific outcomes would you like to achieve during your current rotation?
- How do you define success for yourself in your professional endeavors?
- What are the key challenges or obstacles you anticipate in reaching your goals?
- How might you break down your overarching goals into smaller, more manageable steps?
- How will you measure progress towards your goals? What indicators will you use to track your success?
- Who are the key stakeholders or collaborators you could engage with to achieve your goals?
- How will you manage setbacks?
- How can I support you in setting and achieving your SMART goals?



Setting goals can be just as helpful for Mentors. If you would like to leverage the goal setting template activity for yourself, [click here](#).

Engaging in Challenging Conversations

In both personal and professional spheres, the necessity of engaging in challenging conversations cannot be overstated. These are the conversations that demand courage, vulnerability, and a willingness to confront discomfort head-on.

While they may be difficult, it is through these courageous conversations that true growth, understanding, and progress are achieved. By leaning into these conversations, we create opportunities for profound connection, clarity, and resolution.

Embracing the discomfort in these conversations is not only a testament to our bravery but also a pathway to profound personal and professional development.

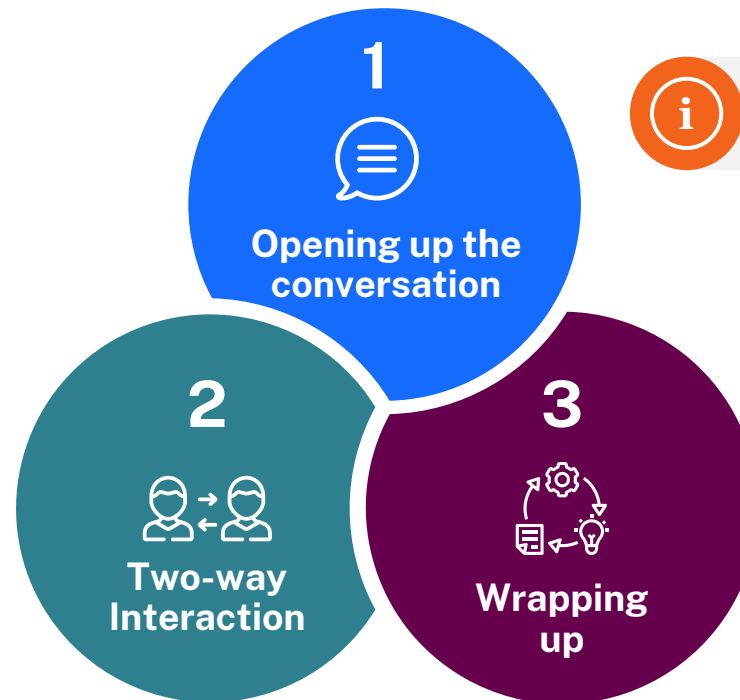
Tips

- **Be courageous:** feel comfortable engaging and leaning into challenging conversations
- **Be authentic:** bring your full self and make the conversation real
- **Be present:** fully engage and be present in the conversation



Planning for challenging conversations

Planning for three stages of the challenging conversation can support you to deliver with courage, compassion and skill.



See the next page for a template to help you to [navigate challenging conversations](#).

Supporting your Mentee to Engage in Challenging Conversations

The mentee specific guide encourages mentees to prepare for a challenging or courageous conversations they need to have:

Mentees are encouraged to think about a challenging or courageous conversation they need to have, and plan for it using the template provided.

The template helps them prepare for this type of conversation by considering three parts of the conversation; the opening, the two-way conversation and the wrap up.

Remember...



Courage over comfort



Candour: direct is faster



Clarity is kindness

Questions you might like to ask your mentee



- **Understanding the Context:** What is the main issue that needs to be addressed in this conversation?
- **Clarifying Objectives:** What are your specific goals for the conversation? What would a successful outcome look like for you?
- **Anticipating Reactions:** How do you think the other person will react to what you have to say?
- **Strategising Responses:** How can you address these concerns or objections calmly and effectively?
- **Emotional Preparation:** What emotions do you feel going into this conversation? How can you manage them effectively during the discussion?
- **Communication Techniques:** What key points do you need to communicate clearly?
- **Role Play:** Would you like to role play the conversation to practice your approach?
- **Plan B:** If the conversations starts to go off track, what strategies can you use to get it back on track?
- **Support System:** Who else can support you before and after this conversation? How can they help?



Preparing for these types of conversations can be just as helpful for Mentors. If you would like to leverage the preparation template for yourself, [click here](#).



Asking Powerful and Curious Questions

Asking questions is an important part of communication – it's how we sense-make, gather information, and show care or interest in others. However, sometimes asking questions can be difficult. Powerful, curious questions are those that come from a place of seeking to learn and understand.

Characteristic of powerful questions



- **Open (can't be answered with a yes/no):** Powerful questions should be open ended, so they encourage thought and require more than a one-word response.
- **Clear and Simple:** Powerful questions are clear and to-the-point. They do not need to be complex or long to be powerful.
- **Purposeful:** Powerful questions include a key purpose. For example, are you trying to further unpack the other person's viewpoint? Are you encouraging a new perspective?
- **Thought-provoking:** Powerful questions should seek to trigger new, creative or deep thinking.

The GROW model is a simple but powerful framework that can be leveraged to guide effective conversations with your mentee. This framework can be used to guide how you ask question.



Goal

What does a good 'G' question look like? What are the types of questions that help identify the goals?



Reality

What will success look/feel like? How will you know when you have reached the goal?



Options

Be realistic. What can be accomplished by you, within the given timeframe?



Way Forward

How is your goal relevant to your development, context and role?



See the next page for a template to help you prepare for your next mentoring session.

Asking Powerful and Curious Questions

Using the template below, brainstorm 3-5 questions for each section that could be asked in your next mentoring session. Consider the following points:

- Are the questions **open-ended** to encourage meaningful discussion?
- Are they **clear** and **easy** to understand?
- What is the **intended purpose** of each question?
- Do the questions **provoke thought** and **promote insights**?

Example questions:

G Goal What does a good 'G' question look like? What are the types of questions that help identify the goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What challenge/issue do you want to discuss/focus on today?• Why is this one most important to you and on your mind at the moment?• On a scale of 1-10, how important is this issue to you?	
R Reality What will success look/feel like? How will you know when you have reached the goal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where are things at right now?• How are you feeling?• What are you telling yourself?• What are others saying?• What are your strengths?	
O Options Be realistic. What can be accomplished by you, within the given timeframe?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are your options?• What action could you take?• What else?• What have you seen others do when they've been in a similar situation?	
W Way Forward How is your goal relevant to your development, context and role?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the first step you'll take after this conversation?• What might help you to do this?• What might get in your way, and how might you overcome this?	



Supporting Your Mentees Wellbeing

Thriving throughout the graduate program

Wellbeing is the cornerstone of success, encompassing mental, physical, emotional, and economic health. Prioritising your wellbeing isn't just about feeling good; it's about ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience.

As you continue to support your mentee on their journey, navigating challenges and pushing boundaries, remember that their wellbeing is non-negotiable. It equips them with the tools to tackle setbacks, overcome obstacles, and perform at their peak.

The NSW Government graduate program is designed to stretch graduates, but amidst the hustle, they must not forget to prioritise self-care. It's not a luxury; it's a necessity for unleashing their potential and thriving in every aspect of their journey.

Benefits of prioritising wellbeing

- Ensuring long-term success and sustainability: Prioritising their wellbeing throughout the graduate program and beyond is key to achieving sustained success. A focus on wellbeing helps mentees to maintain a healthy balance between their responsibilities, leading to greater resilience and adaptability.
- Navigating job-related challenges: A focus on wellbeing allows mentees to develop the resilience and emotional intelligence necessary to navigate challenges effectively. This will help them to manage stress, overcome setbacks, navigate complex problems and enhance their overall performance and growth.
- Optimal performance: Wellbeing is closely linked to performance and positive work-related outcomes. By taking care of their wellbeing, they allow themselves to consistently perform at their best.

A note for Mentors



It's important to acknowledge that graduates can often struggle to manage their own wellbeing during the initial years of their transition into new work environments.

The shift from academia to professional life can bring about a myriad of challenges, from navigating new responsibilities and expectations to adjusting to workplace demands.

With so much to learn and adapt to, it's not uncommon for graduates to feel overwhelmed and find it difficult to prioritise their own wellbeing amidst the hustle and bustle of their new roles.

Recognising these challenges is the first step in addressing them, and providing support and resources to help graduates navigate this transition can make a significant difference in their overall wellbeing and success.



The next page provides an overview of the mentee activity and tips for you to support mentees in setting their wellbeing plan.

Support Your Mentees Wellbeing

In the mentee section of this guide, graduates are encouraged to reflect on their current state of workplace wellbeing and create a personalized wellbeing plan. As a mentor, you play a key role in supporting their wellbeing journey by fostering open conversations and co-developing strategies to navigate challenges.

Checking in on wellbeing is not just a one-time activity, it should be an ongoing part of your mentoring relationship. Taking time to reflect on and discuss wellbeing can strengthen resilience, performance, and overall growth for both you and your mentee.

Consider facilitating a wellbeing conversation using the prompts below:

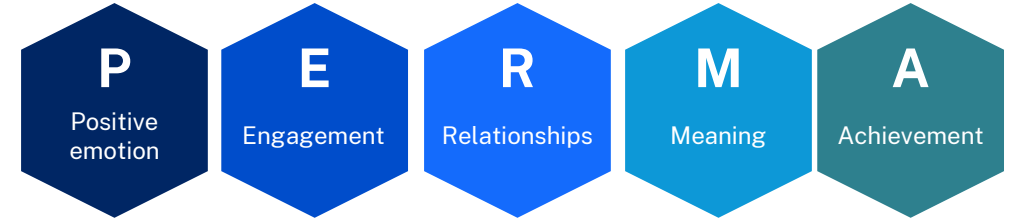
1. **Positive emotions.** What activities or moments at work bring you energy and motivation? How can you encourage more of these?

2. **Engagement.** Are there aspects of your work that excite and challenge you? What factors impact your ability to stay engaged??

3. **Relationships.** How connected do you feel to your colleagues and team? Are there ways to build stronger workplace relationships?

4. **Meaning.** Does your work align with your personal values? What could enhance your sense of purpose?

5. **Achievement.** How do work demands impact your wellbeing? What strategies can help you sustain high performance while maintaining balance?



Next time you meet, you might like to ask...



- How are you feeling about your workload and the demands of your role?
- How do you feel about your current level of social connectedness and support network?
- Are there any specific areas where you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed?
- What strategies are you using to take care of your physical health?
- What resources or support systems might you seek out to better manage your wellbeing?
- How can I best support you in prioritising your wellbeing during this time in your graduate program?



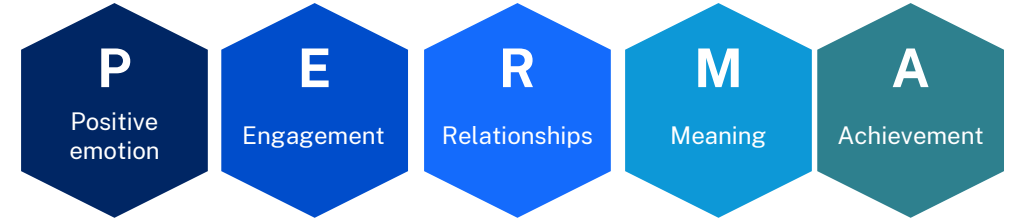
Your own wellbeing as a mentor is just as critical. If you would like to develop your own wellbeing plan, please [click here](#) to complete the activity for yourself.



Wellbeing Development – A Shared Conversation

Wellbeing plays a critical role in professional success and personal growth. Instead of just reflecting in isolation, consider **discussing wellbeing together** – both yours and your mentee’s – using the **PERMA model** below. This will help you both identify practical ways to maintain **balance, resilience, and performance** throughout the program.

As a mentor, you provide valuable **support and guidance**, but your own wellbeing is equally important. Engaging in these discussions allows you to **role-model healthy wellbeing habits**, while also reflecting on areas where you might benefit from additional focus or strategies.



- 1. Positive emotions.** What moments at work bring you positive emotions?
How can you **increase** those moments?

- 2. Engagement.** How engaged do you feel in your work?
Are there any challenges affecting your engagement?

- 3. Relationships.** How are your workplace relationships?
Are there ways to strengthen your professional connections?

- 4. Meaning.** How meaningful does your work feel to you?
What could enhance your sense of purpose?

- 5. Achievement.** How are your work demands affecting your wellbeing?
What strategies could help you balance performance and self-care?

Thank you