

Mentoring conversations: using the GROW model

Typical questions for use in a mentoring conversation using the GROW model

GOAL

What are you trying to achieve?

Imagine that you have successfully addressed your issue. What does success look like? What does success feel like? What do you really, really want?

REALITY

What is going on that makes this an issue for you?

Who is involved?

What are the key features of the situation?

What assumptions are you making?

What - if anything - have you already done to address the situation?

What has been the effect of what you have done so far?

What else might you need to find out about the situation?

OPTIONS

What options do you have?

What else might you do?

If you had absolutely no constraints - of time or money or power or health - what would you do?

If you had a really wise friend, what would they do in your shoes?

WHAT / WILL

You have just generated a set of options. Looking back at these options, rate them quickly on a scale of 1 to 10 on how practical they seem (where 10 means completely practical).

Looking over your list of options, which options will you actually pursue?

For each chosen option, what specifically will you do?

What help or support do you need?

What deadlines will you set for yourself?

What is the first step that you will take?

Coaching using the GROW model, based on *Coaching for performance* by John Whitmore

Note: you don't need to ask all the questions, you can move around the GROW order if you need to, and you can adapt or use your own questions. Give the mentee time to think and to talk. If you get stuck, there are more suggestions on the back of this question sheet to help.

Additional useful questions and phrases for a mentoring conversation

Top tips:

You don't need to ask all the questions listed here!

You can move around the model if you need to – e.g. return to reality or goal

You can adapt these questions and use your own questions.

Give the mentee time to think and to talk.

Focus on positive regard for your mentee, be ready to offer encouragement, recognition and empathy. Offer challenge sensitively and constructively.

If you are not sure what to ask next, you could try:

We have covered quite a bit, what would you like to focus on next / re-visit?

What would it be useful for me to ask you about now?

Can you tell me a bit more about...?

So, I think what we've said so far is that..... (repeat back your understanding)

Repeat back a phrase *exactly as you have heard it*, and ask 'what does this mean for you?'

If you feel the conversation is going in circles, you could try:

What is most important here?

What advice would a wise friend give you?

If you were the main character of your own film or book, what would be your next move?

What assumptions are you making?

What will really make the biggest difference?

Have you solved problems like this before?

Does it matter?

Can I just check that I understand? (repeat back your understanding)

How are you feeling now?

If you want to help your mentee explore something more fully, you could try:

How does this feel to you?

What does that mean?

What's in the way? What else?

Can you say – the problem I want to solve is _____?

What does your intuition tell you about this?

It sounds to me as if

I heard you talk about x and y – which would you like to talk about first / now?

What needs to change?

If you want to help your mentee with identifying actions, you could try:

What's the first step?

What are you willing to stop doing?

What are you responsible for here?

How can you learn what you need to know about this?

What support do you need?

If you want to encourage your mentee, you could try:

What are you most proud of here?

What has gone well?

Use empathy, e.g. 'that sounds difficult, I am sorry you have had to go through that'

Use praise, e.g. 'well done for sticking it out; sounds like you really made a difference...'