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MentorMatch Guidelines and Resources

Whitmore's TGROW Model: A Guide to Mentoring Conversations

The TGROW model was created by Sir John Whitmore to frame coaching approaches. The model can also act as a useful guide in your mentoring conversations. It provides a route map: follow the sequence and ask questions that match the stages of the model. You may choose to revisit stages and questions as mentoring conversations evolve.

TOPIC

As the mentee starts to present their topic the first thing to clarify is the actual issue they want to work on. You ask questions to make sure you are both clear on the topic. This is especially useful if the mentee offers more than one issue to work on, or the issue itself contains a number of elements.

Questions you could ask at this stage:

- What is the issue you want to discuss today?
- What's the key issue? What do you want to focus on?
- I hear a number of aspects here. Which part is most important for you to work on?

Once the topic is clear and articulated the next step is to agree what on the mentee's goal. This is often twofold. Firstly, where does the mentee want to get to by the end of their sessions, and secondly, what is the outcome for the issue itself.

GOAL

Questions you could ask at this stage:

- What do you want to achieve?
- What would be a milestone along the way?
- On reaching your goal, what would you like to be different?

With the goals defined you can start to help the mentee explore the topic. This is done through asking questions that enable them to review what has already happened and gain new awareness of the topic and themselves in relation to the topic. Often the Reality and Options phases can merge together and inform one another.

REALITY

Questions you could ask at this stage:

- What is happening at the moment that is good? What is happening at the moment that you'd like to change?
- How sure are you that this is an accurate representation of the situation?
- How much control do you personally have over the outcome?
- To be successful, what obstacles will you need to overcome?

These questions help the mentee think through possible options and discover new possibilities for addressing their issue.

OPTIONS

Questions you could ask at this stage:

- What are the different ways you could approach this issue?
- What resources are available to you?
- If you had a choice, what would you do?

Finally, asking *how*, *what*, and *when* questions helps the mentee to reach a decision on the course of action that best meets their situation and to establish their genuine commitment to follow through with action.

WILL

Questions you could ask at this stage:

- How do you plan to move this forward?
- What will you do next?
- How committed do you feel to doing this?
- What support do you need and from whom?

Adapted for mentoring conversations from Sir John Whitmore, Coaching for Performance: The Principles and Practise of Coaching and Leadership, 2009 4th edition, Nicholas Brealey Publishing. ©University of Leeds, UK, 2016. Used by consent.