MENTORING CONVERSATION GUIDE

A practical tool for developing others through reflection, challenge, support, and intentional practice

Purpose: Mentoring is not about creating a "mini-me." The goal is to help another clinician develop judgment, confidence, autonomy, and an approach that is authentically their own.

1 BEFORE THE MEETING — PREPARE

Check Yourself

- What am I bringing into this conversation?
- What assumptions or expectations do I need to name or reconsider?
- What does this person need from me—not what would I have needed?
- What is their motivation for learning and growth?

Clarify the Purpose

- What does the mentee want to become more confident or competent doing?
- Are we addressing knowledge/skill, a specific performance goal, or broader professional growth?
- What would make this conversation useful today?
- What is one meaningful next step—not ten?

TRAIN • COACH • MENTOR? Training = teach specific knowledge/skills. Coaching = develop performance toward a goal. Mentoring = guide, challenge, support, and build perspective over time.

2 DURING THE MEETING — ASK • LISTEN • REFLECT • CHALLENGE • SUPPORT

ASK	"What are you noticing?" • "What do you think is happening?" • "What are you wondering?"
LISTEN	Listen for the answer—and for silence. Notice confidence, uncertainty, assumptions, and what is not being said.
REFLECT	"Tell me why you made that choice." • "What worked?" • "What would you keep?" • Summarize or reformulate without taking over.
CHALLENGE	"What might you try differently?" • "What is just beyond what feels comfortable right now?" • Push thinking without removing psychological safety.
SUPPORT	"What would help you be ready to try that?" • Offer guidance, demonstration, resources, feedback, or practice at the level actually needed.

MENTOR CHECK: Am I doing the thinking for them—or creating the conditions for them to think?

MENTORING CONVERSATION GUIDE — PAGE 2

Match your support to the learner, make feedback actionable, and leave with a next step

3 DECIDE — HOW MUCH SUPPORT IS NEEDED?

Use the least amount of support that allows productive growth. Adjust the challenge, type of support, and pace to the individual rather than expecting every mentee to learn the same way.

I DEMONSTRATE	WE DO IT TOGETHER	YOU DO / I COACH	YOU DO / I REFLECT	YOU LEAD
You observe I make my thinking visible	Shared practice I scaffold	You lead I cue or give feedback	You lead I ask and reflect	Independent judgment You explain/teach others

Ask yourself: Is this challenge just beyond what the mentee can currently do alone? What support will help without creating dependence?

4 FEEDBACK — MAKE IT A CONVERSATION

Before You Give Feedback

- Set the stage: agree that feedback is part of growth.
- Ask first: "How do you think that went?"
- Start with what you observed—not a judgment about the person.
- Connect feedback to the mentee's stated goal.

Make Feedback Useful

- Be timely, concrete, guided, and respectful.
- Identify what should continue and one thing to adjust.
- Check understanding: "What are you taking from this?"
- End with action: "What will you try next time?"

5 AFTER — REFLECT • PLAN • FOLLOW THROUGH

Mentee Reflection

- What did I learn or notice?
- What did I do well?
- What would I change next time?
- What is my next learning goal?
- What support or resource do I need?

Mentor Reflection

- What did the mentee discover for themselves?
- What did I teach that they could have discovered?
- Did I provide too much support—or too little?
- What assumption of mine needs another look?
- What will I do differently next time?

6 CLOSE THE LOOP — ONE WORK PLAN

Learning goal	_____
Success will look like	_____
Next learning task / action	_____
Resources or support needed	_____
Target date / next check-in	_____

THE GOAL IS GROWTH, NOT REPLICATION.

Support • Challenge • Vision • Reflection • Mutual Accountability