

What and why?

WHAT IS A COACH?

A coach is an experienced specialist who supports their coachee to achieve a specific goal, to improve performance or navigate a new organisation.

Coaching returners

In the context of returners, a coach is someone who supports an individual to navigate their return to the workplace, providing guidance and social supports.

WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A mentor is someone who supports their mentee's continuous development. The relationship is driven by the mentee, and in return the mentor acts as a guide to help their mentee access and grow their network and navigate the organisation's system.

Mentoring returners

In the context of returners, a mentor is generally a dedicated supporter as a returner (the mentee) makes their transition back to the workplace. The mentor's job may be to support the returner to navigate the organisation and industry systems, and to build confidence and connections.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

For women returning to work or making a career transition, having a mentor can make a big difference. Three of the biggest benefits include:

1. **BUILDING A NETWORK:** Giving returners access to professional networks that may not have been available before increases their visibility, opens doors to more opportunity and access to new and different people.
2. **GAINING CONFIDENCE:** Leveraging the support a mentor provides can increase a returner's confidence through gaining broader skills, meeting new and different people and receiving personalised and constructive feedback.
3. **ARTICULATING AMBITION:** A mentor relationship builds a safe space for returners to openly discuss their ambitions and receive nuanced support and guidance to realise these.



[Mentoring is about] building self-confidence. It gives you the confidence that you belong at the table and that you have a right to be there.

- Insights from Harvard Business Review article: 'The Men who Mentor Women', interviews by Anna Marie Valerio and Katina B. Sawyer



The three principles

An effective mentoring relationship requires both the mentor and mentee to understand themselves, build effective relationships and focus on outcomes of the mentoring relationship. The foundations for a solid mentor and mentee relationship are outlined below.

KNOW YOURSELF	BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP	FOCUS ON OUTCOMES
5 TOP TIPS	5 TOP TIPS	5 TOP TIPS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notice your feelings and reactions e.g. "I'm really stressed and have 1 million things on my list." 2. Be aware of your own beliefs and how they might impact a conversation. 3. Recognise your own motivation and style, and how this may differ from others. 4. Be present in the conversation. Clear all distractions and put devices away. 5. Be aware of when you're talking too much or too little. As a guide for mentors, speak 10% of the time and allow your mentee to take up 90% of the space. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a mentee, understand and express emotions if you feel them. For mentors, pick up and validate these i.e. "it sounds like you are feeling overwhelmed, and that's ok". 2. Hold space for silence. Don't feel confronted or awkward about it. 3. Give each other time and space to think about what is to be said next. 4. Avoid telling each other what to do. If you think it is necessary, ask permission first. 5. Set, agree to, and respect clear guidelines and boundaries for your interactions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulate goals of the mentor / mentee relationship early. 2. Assume good intent and know that you both are there trying your best. 3. Be open to new ways of thinking. Be prepared to put learnings into action. 4. Don't avoid difficult conversations. These are important for growth. 5. Acknowledge the possibility that the relationship isn't working for you – it may be time to move on.
DEEP DIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding my approach (page 16) • Listening (page 17) 	DEEP DIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Trust (page 18) • Questioning (page 19) • Conveying empathy (page 20) 	DEEP DIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging open exchanges (page 21) • Disengaging with gratitude (page 22)

The mentoring journey

The map below highlights critical moments in the mentor and mentee relationship. Tools and resources are provided to help you navigate each stage in the relationship.

