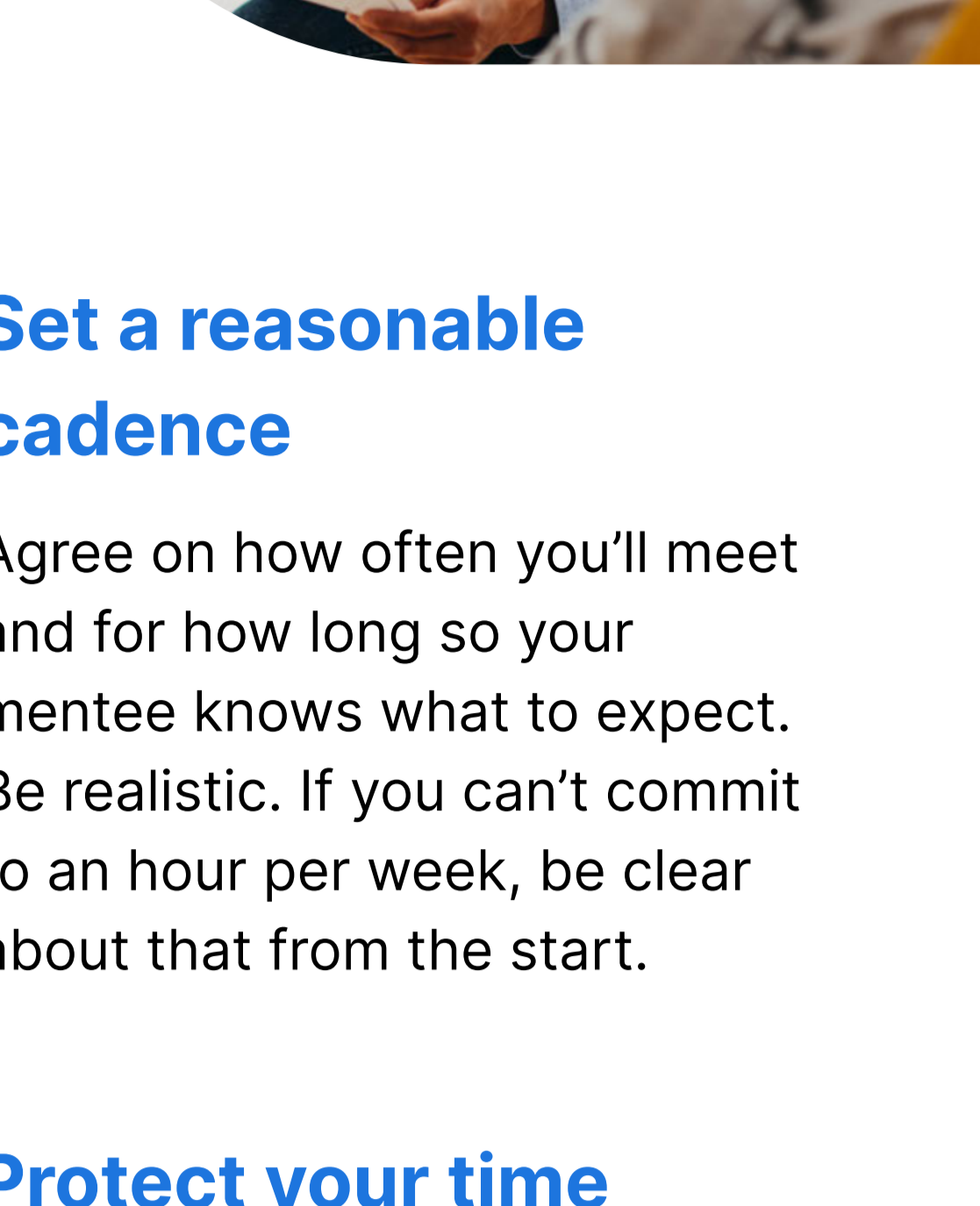




How to set up a mentoring relationship

Effective mentoring arrangements are a fantastic way to nurture up-and-coming talent in the psychology profession – and mentors can gain a lot from the experience too. However, to get the most out of it, it's important to set up the relationship properly.

Before you start, consider:



1 Setting expectations early

Set a reasonable cadence

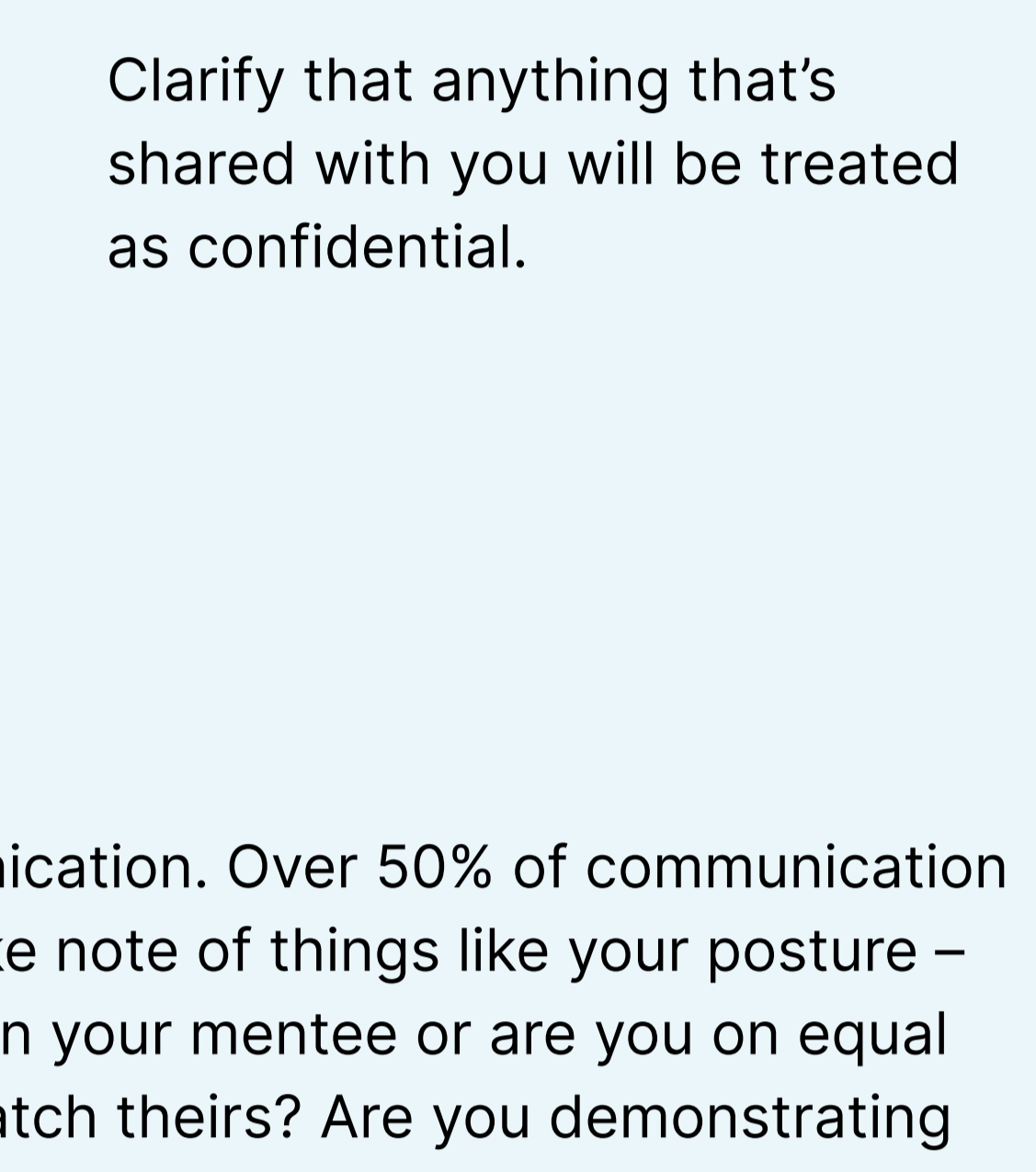
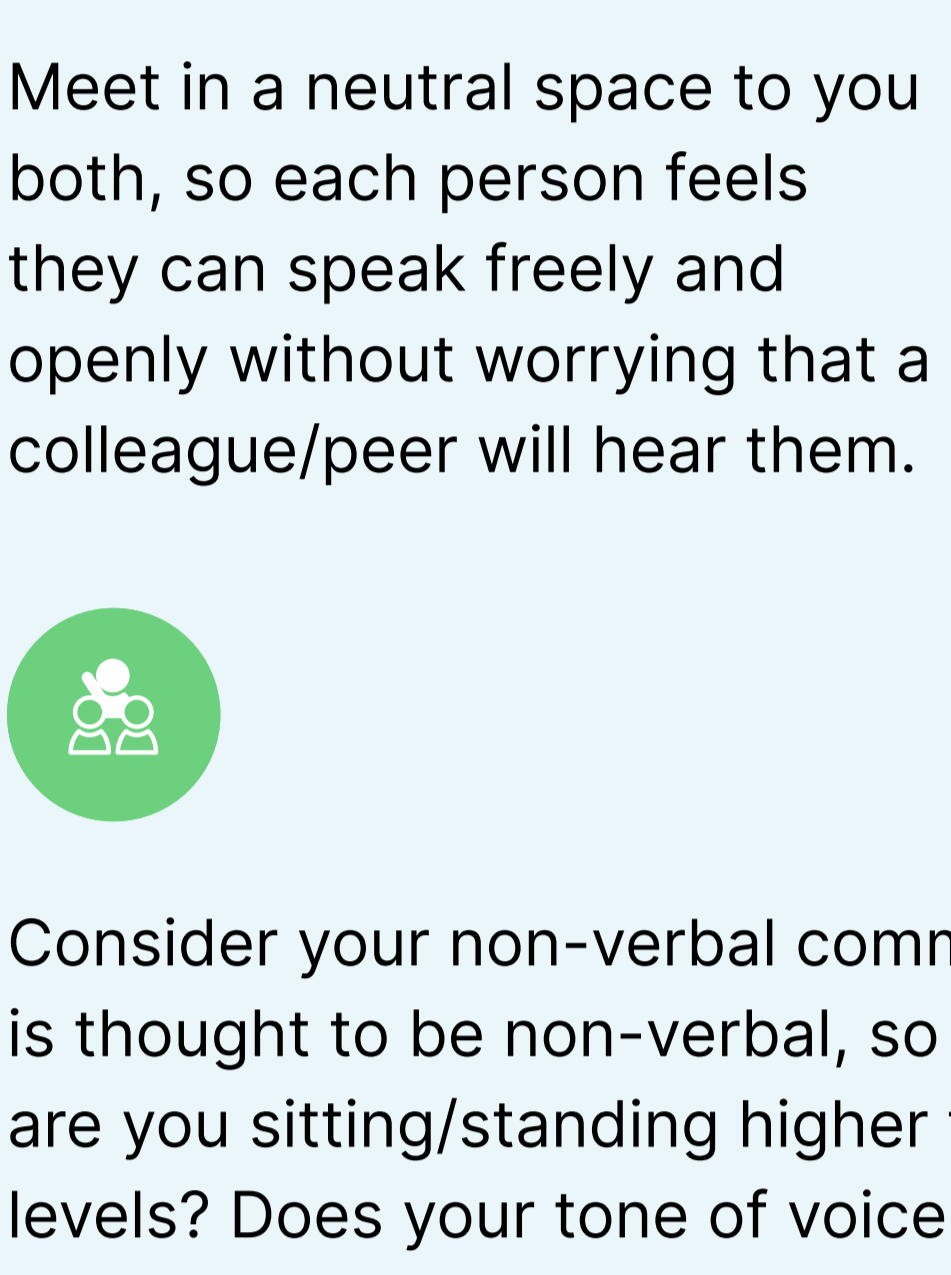
Agree on how often you'll meet and for how long so your mentee knows what to expect. Be realistic. If you can't commit to an hour per week, be clear about that from the start.

Co-design the process with them

Ask them what they're hoping to get out of the relationship and what they'd like to learn, so you can come to your first session prepared with relevant insights and talking points.

Protect your time

Talk about how the relationship might evolve as time passes. Mentoring someone is important work, and it also requires a lot of effort and preparation for the mentor. It can be helpful to clarify the timeline of the mentorship (e.g. 3-6 months) so your mentee doesn't expect to be able to call on you 24/7 for the rest of their career.

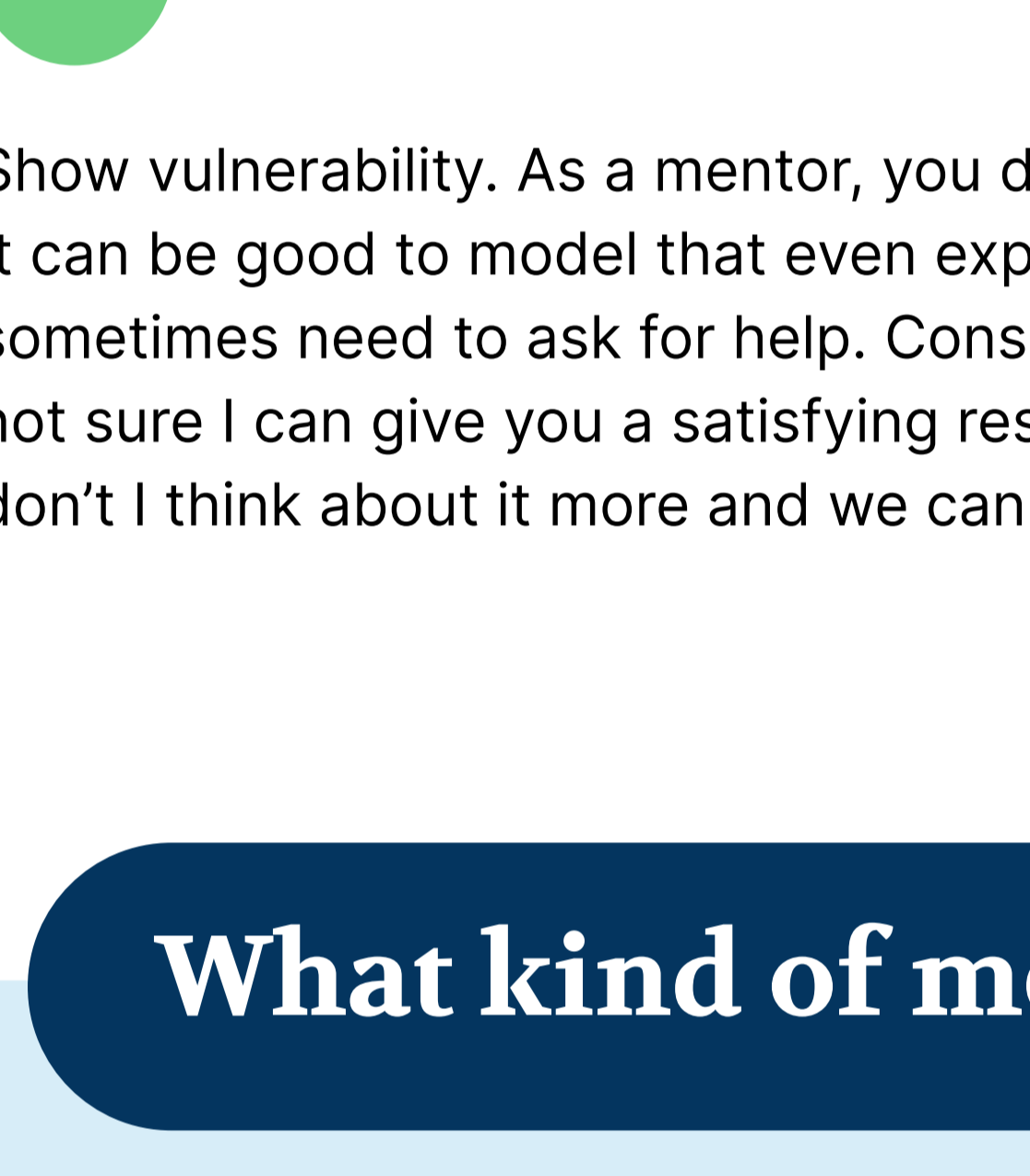


2 Creating a safe place

Meet in a neutral space to you both, so each person feels they can speak freely and openly without worrying that a colleague/peer will hear them.

Clarify that anything that's shared with you will be treated as confidential.

Consider your non-verbal communication. Over 50% of communication is thought to be non-verbal, so take note of things like your posture – are you sitting/standing higher than your mentee or are you on equal levels? Does your tone of voice match theirs? Are you demonstrating active listening? This can help put them at ease.



3 Building rapport

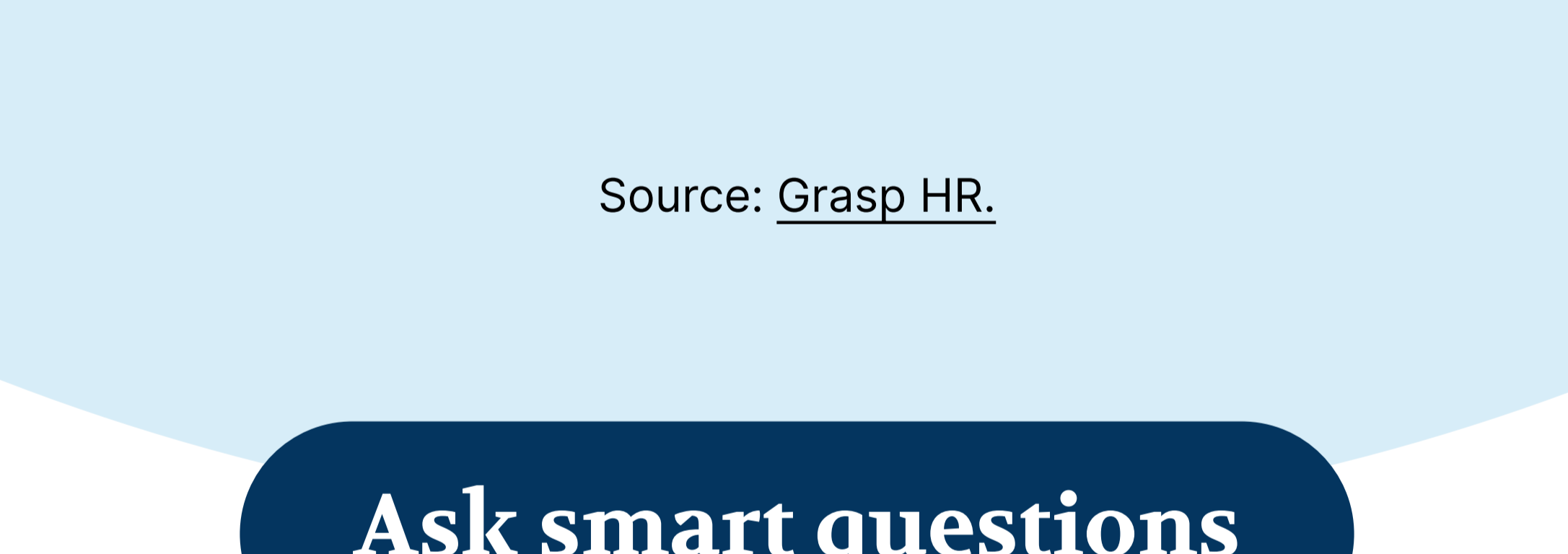
Get to know each other in a casual environment. Learn about their career aspirations, families, fears, hopes, previous challenges. This will help you to cater your mentoring style and questions to their needs.

Ask the question: 'What does good mentoring look like to you?' to make sure you're both on the same page.

Show vulnerability. As a mentor, you don't need to have all the answers. It can be good to model that even experienced professionals sometimes need to ask for help. Consider saying something like, "I'm not sure I can give you a satisfying response to that question. Why don't I think about it more and we can discuss it when we next meet?"

What kind of mentor are you?

Knowing what type of mentor you are (or need to be) can help make your mentorship more effective.



Source: [Grasp HR](#).

Ask smart questions

Get the conversation flowing by asking good questions that will get your mentee thinking deeply and critically. And remember, the role of a mentor isn't to talk the entire time. You want to ask the right questions to help your mentee draw their own conclusions and problem solve with your support.

What feels out of your control right now? Why?

Who are your professional role models?

If you could add a new skill to your toolkit right now, what would it be and why is it important to you?

What's a piece of work that you've done that you feel really proud of? Why?

Have you got a process for setting and tracking your career goals?

In what part of your job do you feel your weaknesses hinder you?

Practice reverse mentoring

An effective mentoring relationship isn't just about passing down wisdom from mentor to mentee. It should encompass shared learning opportunities. Use this time with your mentee to ask questions about their experience and expertise.

Consider asking questions like:

- Q What's something interesting that you've been learning at university (if they are a student)?
- Q What's your perspective on the new treatment recommended for [X]?
- Q Where do you go to find interesting articles or information about the psychology profession?
- Q How have you responded to [X situation] in the past?
- Q What's a psychological technique that you think needs refreshing? Why?

Sources: [Amazingif.com](#); [Science of People](#); [University of Texas, Permian Basin](#); and [Indeed](#).

Note: A mentoring relationship and a supervisory relationship are quite different. If you'd like to learn how to become a supervisor, APS offers [training](#) that will set you up for success.