



## Model for Coaching and Reflection Questions

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Coaching questions provide a tool for mentors to empower the mentee to solve challenges by themselves. By asking the right types of questions and providing constructive criticism, mentors give agency to the mentees over their research and career.

### Instructions

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Below are examples of questions and methods to use in a mentor/mentee relationship. Delete irrelevant lines or replace them (and add more lines!) with any other important information or questions that will help guide the coaching of your mentee.

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## Coaching Questions

Instead of telling your mentee what you would do in their situation, listen to them and then hold space for conversation and collaborative problem-solving. Below are different types of questions you can ask of them.

### Clarifying questions to seek understanding.

- *When you say \_\_\_\_\_, what does that mean?*
- *Can you tell me more?*
- *Could you give me an example?*

### Open-ended questions to explore options.

- *Describe what led to the situation.*
  - *What?*
  - *How?*
  - *When?*

### Insightful or creative questions.

- *Imagine what would happen if...*
- *What outcome do you want?*
- *Have you considered...?*
- *How do you envision tackling this challenge?*

## Providing Difficult Feedback

Constructive feedback is an essential part of helping a mentee grow and develop skills. When providing feedback, practice kindness and try not to impose your own judgment or interpretation on other's actions. Keep in mind what you know of your mentee's personal life (background, health, family, etc.) when deciding how and when to provide feedback. Be concise and specific when giving difficult feedback. Avoid packaging feedback in inappropriate humor or sarcasm.

### A feedback method that might be helpful: Situation-Behavior-Impact

- *I noticed that {observe behavior}*
- *When you do this it {explain impact}*
- *I would like you to {set expectation}*
- *Some areas to develop {set goal}*





## Next Steps

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Providing difficult feedback is not a one and done conversation. Rather, it is an ongoing process.

**Ask your mentee to reflect on the feedback.**

- *What steps do you think you can take to address these points?*
- *How do you perceive the feedback?*

**Encourage a growth mindset.**

- *Help mentee view setbacks as opportunities rather than failures.*

**Follow up.**

- *Check-in after providing feedback to see how your mentee is doing.*
- *See how they incorporate your feedback.*
- *Offer additional support.*
- *Update your mentoring plan if needed after a difficult conversation to try to prevent a similar situation*

