# Mentoring and Support:

## Purpose

Mentoring gives apprentices the confidence, skills, and habits to become safe, capable tradespeople. It provides guidance, encouragement, and a sense of belonging in the workplace. Where supervision ensures apprentices work safely and correctly, mentoring helps them understand the bigger picture - why things are done, how to handle challenges, and how to grow into a trusted tradesperson.

## What is a mentor

A mentor is an experienced person who shares knowledge, skills, and insight to support an apprentice’s personal and professional growth. Mentors act as role models - teaching not only trade skills, but also work ethics, communication, and problem - solving. They help apprentices navigate both workplace expectations and life as a new worker.

Mentoring is the best practice because it strengthens learning, reduces mistakes, and builds confidence. Research shows that apprentices who receive consistent workplace mentoring are significantly more likely to complete their training and stay in the trade long-term.

***Supervisor Tip:*** *A strong mentor doesn’t just train a worker - they shape a future tradesperson. Be patient, share your experiences, and take time to listen*

## Mentoring vs Supervision

Supervision focuses on the work being done safely, correctly, and efficiently. Mentoring develops the person - helping them build confidence, judgement, problem solving skills, and pride in their trade. In most workplaces, supervisors naturally take on both roles. Mentoring means slowing down a little - asking questions, setting goals, reflecting progress, and recognising small wins.

## Practical Steps for Supervisors: How to Mentor an Apprentice

**1. Set up for success**

* Schedule a short introduction meeting with your apprentice on day one.
* Talk about goals, communication preferences, and expectations.
* Explain your role as both supervisor *and* mentor.

**2. Make learning visible**

* Demonstrate each new task clearly - explain what, why, and how.
* Let them try under your supervision.
* Review and discuss what went well and what to improve.

**3. Stay consistent**

Check in regularly - short chats work best.

* Use the GROW model to guide discussions (Goal, Reality, Options, Way Forward).
* Give balanced feedback - highlight effort as well as results.

**4. Encourage independence**

* Gradually increase task responsibility as skills improve.
* Ask questions instead of giving answers to build problem solving.
* Celebrate small wins and visible improvement.

**5. Support the whole apprentice**

* Be approachable - make it clear they can ask for help with theory or workplace knowledge.
* Notice changes in behaviour, confidence, or attendance early.
* Reach out to ACAP or the RTO for extra support if needed.

## Early Warning Signs and What to Do

Early intervention can prevent small issues from becoming big problems. Watch for signs like:

* Attendance or punctuality slipping - have a same day conversation and reset expectations.
* Unsafe shortcuts - stop the task, retrain, and supervise a redo.
* Reluctance to ask for help - model it by showing that asking questions is encouraged.
* Confidence dropping - reduce task complexity and add buddy support.

If issues continue for more than two weeks or impact safety or quality, document a short plan and involve your ACAP mentor for extra support.

**Best Practice Scenario: Peer Mentoring in the Workshop**  
Some businesses take mentoring a step further by encouraging experienced apprentices to support new starters. A 3rd or 4th year apprentice can act as a “peer mentor” for a 1st year apprentice under the guidance of the supervisor.

This approach:

* Builds leadership and communication skills in senior apprentices
* Creates a supportive, team - based learning environment
* Helps new apprentices feel comfortable asking questions and settling into the trade
* Reinforces the skills and knowledge of the senior apprentice through teaching.

***Tip:*** *Hold short mentor check-ins each fortnight. Ask the senior apprentice what’s working, where they need support, and what successes they’ve noticed.*

**Key message:**  
Peer mentoring strengthens teamwork, builds mentoring capability early, and creates a positive culture of learning within the workshop.

## The Support Ecosystem

Your Apprentice Connect Australia Provider (ACAP) should always be your first contact with apprentice support and in-training mentoring. They coordinate with Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), Group Training Organisations (GTOs), and specialist services to address barriers early.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Need or Barrier** | **First Step in the Workplace** | **ACAP Provider** | **Other Partners** |
| Skills gaps | Adjust tasks  Add micro lessons | Arrange extra mentoring  Coordinate with RTO | RTO Trainer/Assessor |
| Attendance issues | Discuss and reset expectations | Provide mentoring and time management support | Family/Carer |
| Safety or wellbeing risk | Pause work  Re-train  Toolbox talk | Connect with WHS  Wellbeing support | SafeWork or EAP |
| Disability or health | Identify adjustments  Document | Guide on workplace adjustments  Connect to JobAccess | GP/Allied Health |
| Conflict or communication | Private meeting  Set ground rules | Mediate and reset training plan | RTO Trainer or GTO |

## Supporting Women in Trades

* Provide correctly fitted PPE and clean facilities with sanitary bins
* Address inappropriate behaviour or language immediately and fairly
* Offer skills rotation, not just repetitive or lighter tasks
* Encourage participation in prestart and toolbox talks
* Be flexible where possible with rostering or family responsibilities.

## Supporting Apprentices with Disability

* Ask what helps them perform best and agree on reasonable adjustments
* Break complex tasks into smaller steps and use visual prompts
* Identify safety risks together and create a response plan
* With consent, involve ACAP (Apprentice Connect Australia Provider) to connect with JobAccess or specialist services.

## Supporting Indigenous Apprentices

* Respect cultural commitments and plan flexibly for events like Sorry Business
* Ask about preferred name and cultural considerations early on
* Pair with a supportive mentor and, where possible, an Indigenous mentor through ACAP (Apprentice Connect Australia Provider)
* Recognise and celebrate achievements publicly to build confidence and belonging.

## Wellbeing Check-ins

Keep wellbeing check-ins regular and consistent. Check ins can help identify issues early and address them before it becomes a bigger issue or the apprentice leaves.

**Refer to the Wellbeing Check-In Example in the resources section.- LINK**

**Things you could ask are:**

* How’s your energy this week? Anything making work or training difficult?
* What’s one thing you’re proud of? One thing to do next week?
* Do you feel comfortable asking for help when needed?
* Is there any change or support that would make next week easier?

## Escalation and Referrals

* Start with a written mentoring plan outlining goals, supports, and review dates
* Refer to the resources section for Personal Reflection and Growth tools, or further tools to assist you
* If issues continue, contact your ACAP (Apprentice Connect Australia Provider) mentor for mediation or support
* Coordinate with the RTO (and GTO if relevant) to agree on the next steps
* Review after 2 - 3 weeks and escalate if further intervention is required.

## Where to Get Support

* ACAP (Apprentice Connect Australia Provider) mentor - for in-training support, mediation, adjustments, advice, and referrals
* RTO trainer/assessor - training plan changes or learning support
* GTO - for additional pastoral care and employment admin (If applicable)
* Work Health & Safety advisors - for managing risks and psychosocial safety
* JobAccess - for workplace adjustments advice
* Community and industry networks - for women, Indigenous, and youth mentoring support.

## Key Message

Mentoring doesn’t slow the job, it prevents rework, keeps people safe, and grows future tradespeople. With consistent coaching and effective use of ACAP (Apprentice Connect Australia Provider) and RTO supports, most challenges can be resolved early, helping apprentices stay and succeed.

## Mentoring Programs in Apprentice Connect Australia Provider) (ACAPs)

In addition to workplace mentoring, apprentices can access free external mentoring through Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (ACAP) providers. These programs offer professional guidance, well-being support, and help to overcome barriers that affect learning or work performance.

### MEGT

13 69 63

(Email varies by state)

MEGT - Mentoring and Support Services: <https://www.megt.com.au>

**Mentoring Programs Include:**  
- Navigating workplace hurdles  
- Time management  
- Career guidance and progression  
- Assistance completing assessments  
- Access to financial incentives  
  
**Personal Support:**  
- Mental health and wellbeing support  
- Financial and housing assistance  
- Cultural and legal guidance  
  
**Free mentoring is targeted to:**  
- Women in male-dominated trades  
- First Nations apprentices  
- Apprentices with a disability  
- Apprentices in remote or regional areas

### MAS National

1300 627 628

info@masnational.com.au

**Mentoring Areas:**  
1. Life Skills Coaching - budgeting, nutrition, travel, housing support  
2. Health & Wellbeing - physical and mental health resources  
3. Professional Growth - job readiness, working rights in Australia  
  
**The MAS Achieve Program offers mentoring through:**  
- Video calls  
- In-person meetings  
- Phone check-ins  
- Peer-to-peer networking opportunities  
  
MAS National - Mentoring Programs: <https://www.masnational.com.au>

### Apprenticeship Support Australia (ASA)

1300 363 831 (Email varies by state)

**Mentoring and Personal Support Services Include:**  
- Assistance with workplace challenges  
- Building skills and career pathways  
- Wellness and resilience programs  
  
**Specialist support available for:**  
- Women in trades  
- First Nations Australians  
- Apprentices in clean energy industries  
  
Apprenticeship Support Australia - Mentoring: <https://www.apprenticeshipsupport.com.au>

### BUSY At Work

13 28 79

busy@busyatwork.com.au

**Youth and Community Services Program - Mentoring for:**  
- Mature-age apprentices  
- School-based apprentices  
- First Nations apprentices  
- Clean energy apprentices  
- Family and personal relationship challenges  
- Drug and alcohol diversion programs  
- Legal and justice support  
- Housing and homelessness assistance  
- Physical and mental health needs  
- Youth justice and re-engagement  
  
BUSY At Work - Mentoring Support: https://www.busyatwork.com.au