Cultural Sensitivity and Inclusion in Mentoring Practice

FACILITATOR GUIDE

A comprehensive training guide for current and future mentors working with women from diverse and underserved communities — designed to build reflective, inclusive, and culturally sensitive mentoring practice.

Target Group

- Women from rural communities
- Disadvantaged backgrounds
- Migrant communities
- Minority groups
- Women facing socio-economic barriers

Training Approach

- Non-Formal Education
- Experiential Learning
- Reflection
- Peer Learning
- Real-Life Practice

Total Duration: 6 hours



Session 1: Understanding Diversity and Inclusion

60 MINUTES

Participants explore the layers of personal identity and how visible and invisible identities shape communication and mentoring relationships.

Session Objectives

- Understand what diversity means in a mentoring context
- Understand inclusion as an active, ongoing practice
- Recognise both visible and invisible identities

Materials Needed

- Participant Workbook
- Identity Wheel Worksheet
- Flipchart & Markers

Activity 1 — Identity Wheel *(20 min)*

01

Distribute Worksheet 1 to all participants

02

Participants complete their Identity Wheel individually

03

Invite participants to discuss in pairs

04

Facilitate a full plenary discussion

💬 Debrief Questions

- Which identities are visible?
- Which identities are hidden?
- How might these identities influence mentoring?

✅ Key Messages

- Everyone carries multiple identities
- Identity influences communication
- Mentors should avoid making assumptions

Session 2: Recognising Bias

75 MINUTES

This session invites participants to examine their own unconscious biases and understand how stereotypes can silently shape mentoring interactions — and how awareness is the first step to change.

Session Objectives

- Recognise unconscious bias in everyday thinking
- Understand how stereotypes influence mentoring
- Develop critical self-awareness as a mentor

Materials

- Assumptions Reflection Sheet
- Bias Statements Cards
- Flipchart

Activity 1 — Bias Reflection *(20 min)*

Participants complete Worksheet 2, reflecting on personal assumptions they may hold.

Activity 2 — Agree–Disagree Line *(30 min)*

Facilitator reads statements aloud. Participants position themselves along a continuum from Agree to Disagree:

- *"Women from rural areas are less ambitious."*
- *"Young mothers have less time for professional development."*
- *"Migrant women face more barriers."*

💬 Debrief Questions

- Why did people choose different positions?
- What assumptions appeared during the activity?
- How can assumptions affect mentoring relationships?

✅ Key Messages

- Everyone has biases — this is human
- Bias does not make someone a bad mentor
- Awareness significantly reduces the impact of bias

Session 3: Inclusive Communication

75 MINUTES

Effective mentoring depends on how we communicate. This session builds practical skills in inclusive language and helps participants recognise the communication habits that either open or close doors.



Activity 1 — Communication Style Profile *(20 min)*

Participants complete Worksheet 4 to identify their own communication style and reflect on how it may be perceived by others.



Activity 2 — Inclusive Language Practice *(20 min)*

Participants receive a set of exclusionary statements and rewrite them using inclusive, respectful language — building practical vocabulary for mentoring conversations.



Activity 3 — Pair Discussion *(20 min)*

Participants discuss: What makes communication inclusive? What communication habits create barriers for mentees from diverse backgrounds?

Communication styles differ

What feels direct to one person may feel aggressive to another. Context and culture shape how words land.

Inclusive language creates safety

The words we choose signal whether someone belongs — or doesn't. Language is a powerful tool for inclusion.

Listening over speaking

In mentoring, listening is often more important than speaking. Creating space for the mentee's voice is essential.

Session 4: Trust Building in Mentoring

60 MINUTES

Trust is the foundation of every effective mentoring relationship. This session explores what trust looks and feels like — and how mentors can build it intentionally and consistently over time.

Session Objectives

- Understand the core principles of trust-building
- Identify specific behaviours that strengthen mentoring relationships

Materials

- Trust Building Reflection Sheet

Activity — My Story, My Strength *(35 min)*

In a safe, supported environment, participants share:

- A personal challenge they have faced
- A strength they developed through that challenge

This activity builds empathy and models the kind of vulnerability that creates trust in mentoring relationships.

💬 Debrief Questions

- What helped you feel safe during this activity?
- What built trust in the group?

Trust Takes Time

It cannot be rushed. Mentors must be patient and consistent in their presence.

Trust Requires Consistency

Showing up reliably — in words and actions — signals safety to the mentee.

Trust Grows Through Empathy

Genuine curiosity about a mentee's experience is the most powerful trust-builder of all.

Session 5: Scenario Cards and Role Plays

90 MINUTES

The longest and most dynamic session of the training — participants step into real mentoring situations, practice their skills, and build confidence through structured role play and peer feedback.

Session Objectives

- Apply learning in realistic mentoring situations
- Practice authentic mentoring conversations
- Strengthen empathy and adaptability

Materials

- Scenario Cards
- Role Play Packs
- Observer Sheets

Instructions

01

Divide participants into groups of three

02

Assign roles: **Mentor**, **Mentee**, **Observer**

03

Distribute scenario materials to each group

04

Allow 10–15 minutes per role play round

05

Conduct group debrief after each rotation

Participants should rotate roles so everyone experiences each perspective — mentor, mentee, and observer.

💬 What worked well?

Identify moments of genuine connection, effective listening, and inclusive language in action.

⚡ What challenges emerged?

Surface the difficult moments — where did communication break down or assumptions appear?

🔄 What could be improved?

Encourage constructive, specific feedback that participants can apply immediately.

Practice builds confidence

The more mentors rehearse difficult conversations, the more naturally inclusive responses come.

No single correct response

There is rarely one right answer in mentoring. Flexibility and reflection matter more than perfection.

Curiosity over judgement

Approaching mentees with genuine curiosity is far more effective than evaluating or advising too quickly.

Session 6: Inclusive Mentoring Planning

60 MINUTES

In this final session, participants bring together everything they have learned and translate it into concrete, person-centred mentoring plans tailored to specific mentee profiles.

Session Objectives

- Integrate learning from all previous sessions
- Create inclusive, adaptive mentoring approaches
- Develop practical strategies for real mentoring contexts

Materials

- Inclusive Mentoring Plan Canvas

Activity

Participants work in small groups. Each group receives one mentee profile and completes the mentoring canvas together.

Mentee Profiles



Rural Woman



Migrant Woman



Young Mother



Financial Hardship

Each group presents their completed plan to the full group for shared learning and discussion.

💬 Debrief Questions

- What adaptations were necessary for each profile?
- What barriers were identified in each context?
- How can mentors respond effectively to these barriers?

✅ Key Messages

- Inclusion requires active adaptation — not a one-size-fits-all approach
- Effective mentoring is always person-centred
- Context matters: understanding a mentee's world is essential

Final Reflection & Facilitator Tips

20 MINUTES

Final Reflection Activities

Participants complete two closing documents to consolidate their learning and commit to action:

1

Personal Action Plan

What will I do differently as a mentor?

2

Training Evaluation

Feedback to improve future training delivery

Reflection Questions

- What is my biggest learning from this training?
- What will I do differently as a mentor going forward?
- What one action will I take within the next month?

Facilitator Tips

Create Safety

Establish ground rules early. Encourage respect and protect confidentiality throughout.

Manage Sensitive Topics

Avoid judging participants. Encourage curiosity and allow different perspectives to coexist.

Encourage Participation

Use pair discussions. Invite quieter participants. Balance speaking time across the group.

Handle Resistance

Explore concerns with questions. Avoid confrontation — curiosity is more powerful than debate.

> The goal is not to make participants agree on everything. The goal is to help them become more **reflective**, **inclusive**, and **culturally sensitive** mentors.