



HOW TO RUN AN ONLINE MENTORING PROGRAMME

A FutureLab Playbook | July 2021 Edition

INTRODUCTION

Hi there!

We see that you're interested in understanding how to run an online mentoring programme.

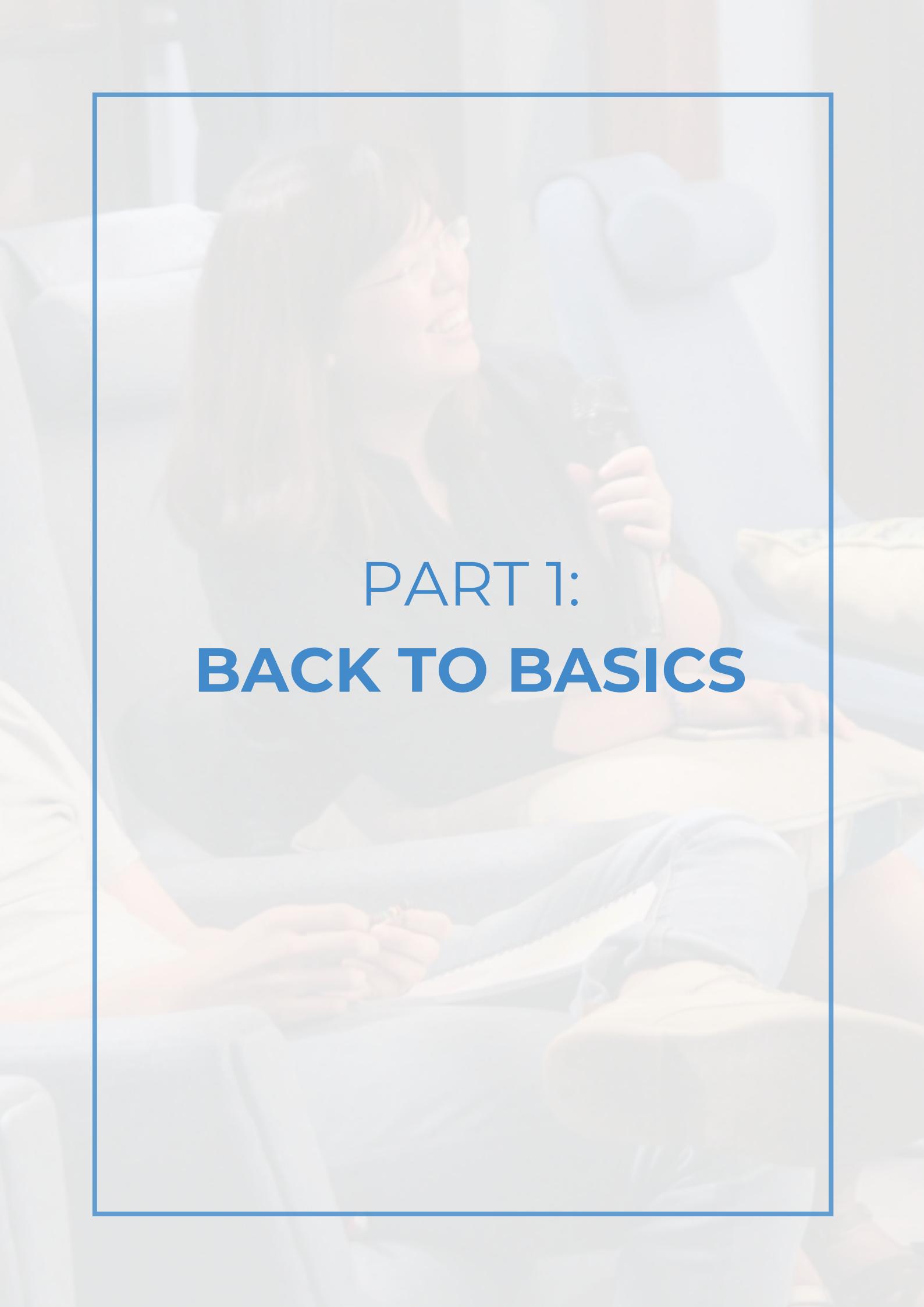
Well, you've come to the right place! This guide that you are holding in your hands (or, more accurately, scrolling through on your gadget) is a compilation of what FutureLab has learned so far in our 5 years of helping organisations and learning institutions conduct mentoring programmes.

Covering fundamental mentorship concepts and structures that determine the success of your programme from the get-go, to insider tips and tricks in keeping your mentors and mentees engaged, we hope this guide will inspire you to run a fantastic mentorship programme for your own community.

Are you ready? Let's begin!

Sincerely,
The FutureLab Team



A soft-focus photograph of a person's hands. The hands are positioned in the center, with fingers slightly curled as if holding a small, delicate object. The background is a plain, light color, creating a minimalist and focused composition.

PART 1: **BACK TO BASICS**

WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

Essentially, mentorship occurs when a more knowledgeable or experienced person in a particular field or industry helps to guide another person who has lesser experience or knowledge in that field.

Mentorship has been around since FOREVER (it's widely cited that the word "Mentor" and the concept of mentorship stemmed from Ancient Greek times some 3000 years ago!), but did you know that mentorship can have measurable positive impacts on both individuals and organisations?

The benefits of mentorship

For individuals



- Helps to clarify professional and personal development goals
- Builds confidence in communicating
- Great way to practice receiving and giving feedback
- Improve relationship-building skills
- Increases self-awareness (a mentor can help you identify your blindspots!)

For organizations



- Companies that offer mentorship for their talents experience an increase in employee engagement and retention by 50%
- 87% of employees that are mentors feel empowered by their mentoring relationships, increasing job satisfaction and motivation
- Mentorship helps to cultivate a learning ecosystem within organisations through knowledge and experience-sharing

With all these benefits, it's no wonder that not only big organisations conduct mentoring programmes, but learning institutions and societies do it too!

LET'S KICK THINGS OFF!

- **Identifying your mentee group**

When planning your online mentoring programme, you will need to first and foremost identify the mentees that you are trying to help.

By **defining the group of mentees** that you would like to empower through your programme, it will then be easier for you later on to determine the objective of the programme and the mentors you will need to invite.

- **Identifying your programme objective**

Now that you know who are the mentees, it is now time to identify **WHAT** you are trying to help them with. Each group of mentees will have their own set of general mentorship goals. Some examples include:

- **Students that want to learn about how to get a job once they graduate**
- **Working professionals might want to gain career advice to move up from their current position**
- **Early-stage entrepreneurs who want to validate their idea and learn fundamental entrepreneurial skills**

The more you understand about your mentee group and their needs, the better your mentorship programme will be in the long run.



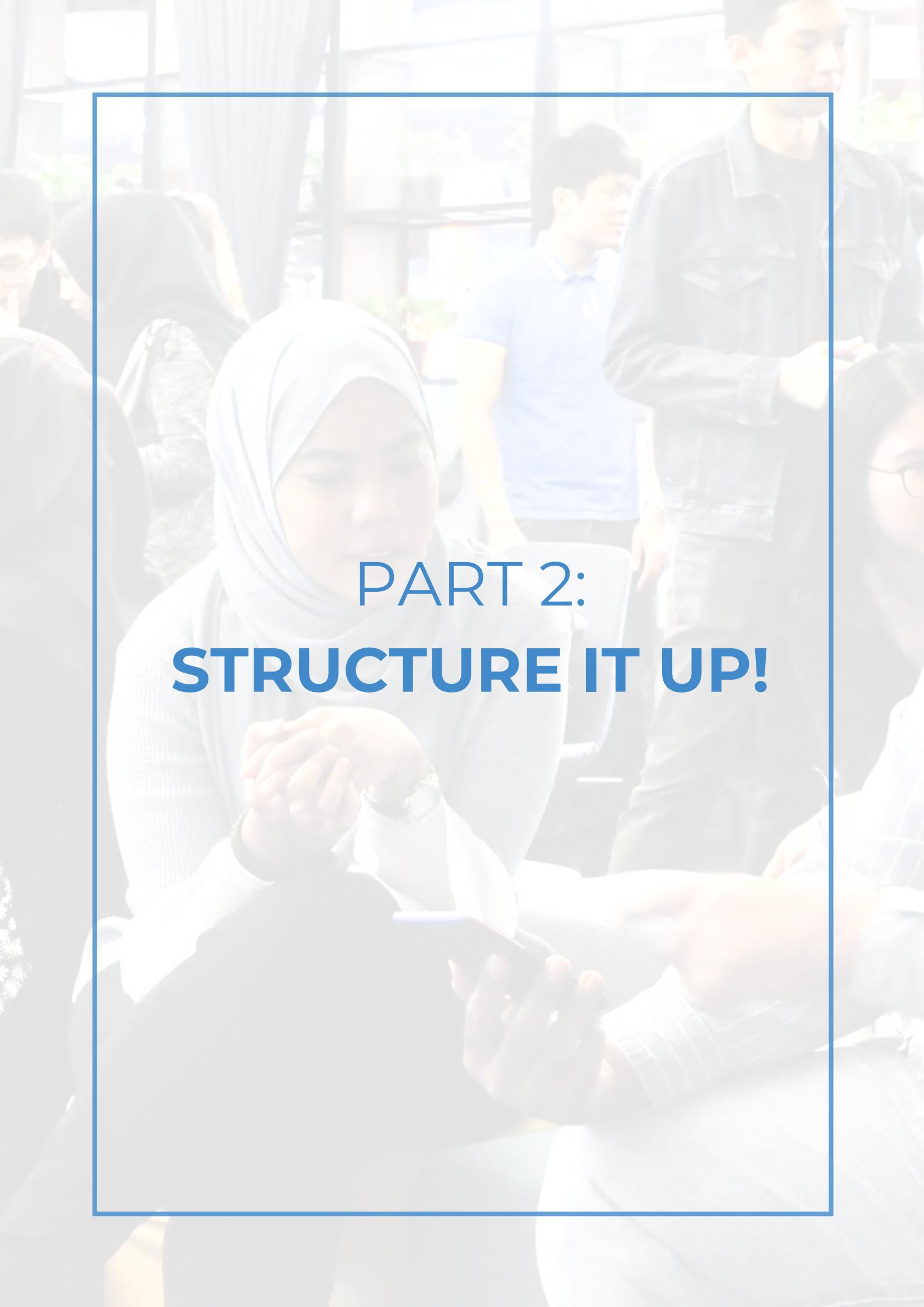


- Inviting the right mentors

The next step would be to identify the type of mentors that will be suitable for your mentees and programme. These mentors must:

- Match the needs and mentoring goals of the mentees
 - Be from relevant industries that the mentees are interested in
 - Be able to commit throughout the duration of your programme
 - Be filtered and handpicked to ensure a high quality mentorship experience for the mentees

You can also tap into your existing trusted network of industry partners or alumni to become potential mentors.

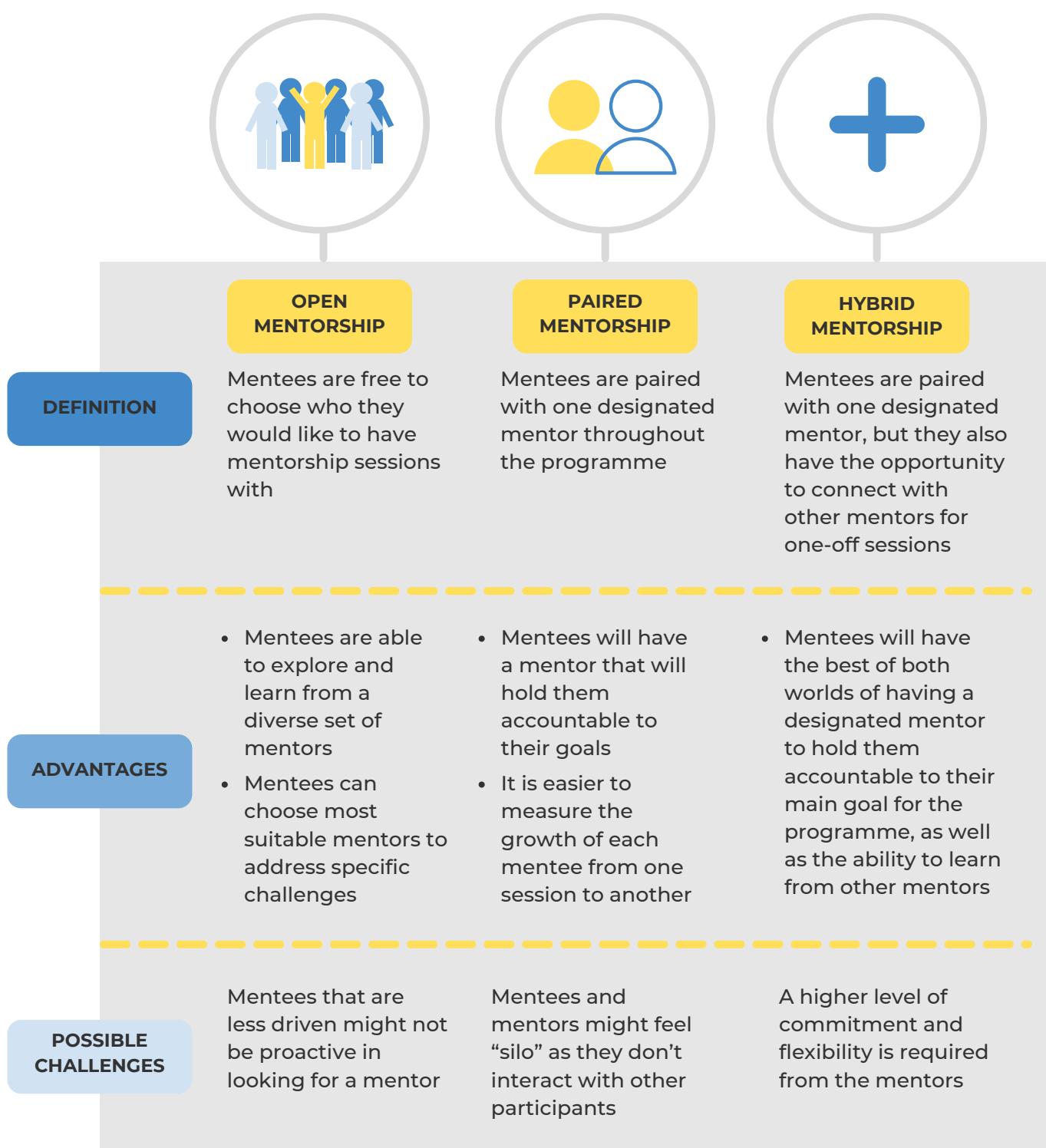
A photograph of a classroom or lecture hall. Several students are visible, some wearing headscarves and others in various attire. They are all looking towards the front of the room, likely at a teacher or presentation. The background shows desks and windows.

PART 2: **STRUCTURE IT UP!**

SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

Congratulations, you've completed Part 1! Let's now move on to Part 2: Structuring your online mentorship programme. There are three major formats of mentorship programmes, which are: Open Mentorship, Paired Mentorship and Hybrid Mentorship.

- **Choosing the right mentorship format**





- Other considerations for your programme structure

PROGRAMME TIMELINE

With any learning programme, you will now have to determine a suitable timeline as to **how long the mentorship programme will be**. As a rule of thumb, you can choose between a short-term mentorship or long-term mentorship

TOPICS GUIDELINE

It's important to set up a **basic mentorship topic guideline** that both mentors and mentees can refer to throughout the programme. We have found that this is vital because:

- Without a guide, mentors and mentees might not know what to discuss during the sessions, especially at the beginning

- It keeps everyone on track towards achieving their mentorship goals in the programme

MENTORSHIP IMPACT METRICS

How do you ensure that there is growth in both the mentees and mentors from one mentorship session to the next? The answer is to measure it systematically at every milestone. One effective way to do this is to collect feedback and a report at the end of every mentorship session from both sides.

Impact metrics for mentees



- **Happiness:** Did they enjoy speaking to the mentor?
- **Key takeaways:** What did they learn from the mentor?
- **Action steps:** What tasks will they undertake before meeting the mentor for the next session?
- **Mentor review:** How would they rate the mentor's mentorship skill such as communication?

Impact metrics for mentors



- **Happiness:** Did they enjoy speaking to their mentee?
- **Key advice and tasks given:** What was the key advice they shared with the mentee and what were some of the tasks given for the mentee to execute?
- **Mentee review:** How would they rate the mentee's growth since the last session they had? This can include communication skills, display of leadership, accountability in completing tasks given and confidence level.



A photograph showing a group of diverse individuals in what appears to be a professional or educational setting. Some people are wearing headscarves, and they are all looking towards the right side of the frame, likely at a presentation or a screen. The background is slightly blurred.

PART 3: PROGRAMME KICK-OFF

READY FOR THE RIDE?

With that, it's time for you to launch your programme! However, before everyone can begin their mentorship journey, you must first ensure that they are all on the same page when it comes to understanding the requirements and commitment needed for the programme.

Due to this, a pre-programme onboarding (or briefing) is extremely important! So much so that it will directly impact the success of your programme in the long run, so keep your eyes peeled on the next few points...

- **Good programme onboarding practices**

TIP #1

It should be a live event! Invite all your mentors and mentees to an online video call to officially launch the programme and brief them about it.

TIP #2

Record the onboarding session. The onboarding should be compulsory for all participants to attend, but in the event that some are not able to make it, you can share the recording with them.

TIP #3

Prepare a programme brief document. Consolidate all the important information about the programme into a single document and share it with your participants immediately after.





PART 4:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY

Another big factor that will determine the success of your online mentorship programme is how you engage your mentorship community, which are your mentors and mentees! Especially for long-term mentorship programmes, you will need to organise community events to bring them together outside of mentorship alone.

- **Community event ideas**

Mentee sharing sessions:

Mentees exchange mentorship experiences

Mentor support circle:

Mentors share tips with each other

Group mentoring sessions:

To encourage group learning amongst mentees

By conducting these events, you will be building an ecosystem of learning that will shift your participants from being merely participants to a real mentorship community!



A photograph showing a group of approximately ten people of various ethnicities and ages seated in rows, facing forward. They appear to be in a classroom or lecture hall. The lighting is bright, and the overall atmosphere is one of attentiveness. A blue rectangular border surrounds the central text area.

PART 5: BEST WRAP-UP PRACTICES

FINISH OFF WITH A BANG!

As you approach the end of the mentorship programme, it is time for you to plan a closing ceremony! Depending on the programme you have run, it can be either a demo day (for entrepreneurship programmes) or a graduation day.

Basic closing ceremony agenda



- Welcome remarks from host
- Thank you speech by programme owner for mentors and mentees
- Sharing of impact from the programme
- Sharing session by selected mentors and mentees
- Presentation of e-certificates for all participants
- Group photo

Optional: Community awards!



- Most active mentee throughout the programme
- Mentor that contributed the most hours via one-on-one sessions, group sessions, webinars, etc
- Most active mentor and mentee pairing



We made it to the end!

Thank you for making it this far into our playbook! We hope that all the insights that we have shared here will be helpful for you in organising your own online mentorship programme.

If you are considering using an online mentorship platform to make it easier for you to run such a programme, check FutureLab out! Our dedicated team is more than happy to help turn your vision of building an awesome mentorship community into a reality.

We wish you all the best and we look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,
The FutureLab Team

ABOUT FUTURELAB

FutureLab is an online mentorship platform that connects students, jobseekers, working professionals and entrepreneurs with industry mentors. A Cradle and EduSpaze-funded startup, FutureLab is recognized as one of the Top 50 Most Innovative EdTech Startups in Southeast Asia by HolonIQ 2020. FutureLab also provides mentoring software for organisations to run their own bespoke mentoring programmes.



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Reach out to us for a programme consultation!

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FUTURE LAB