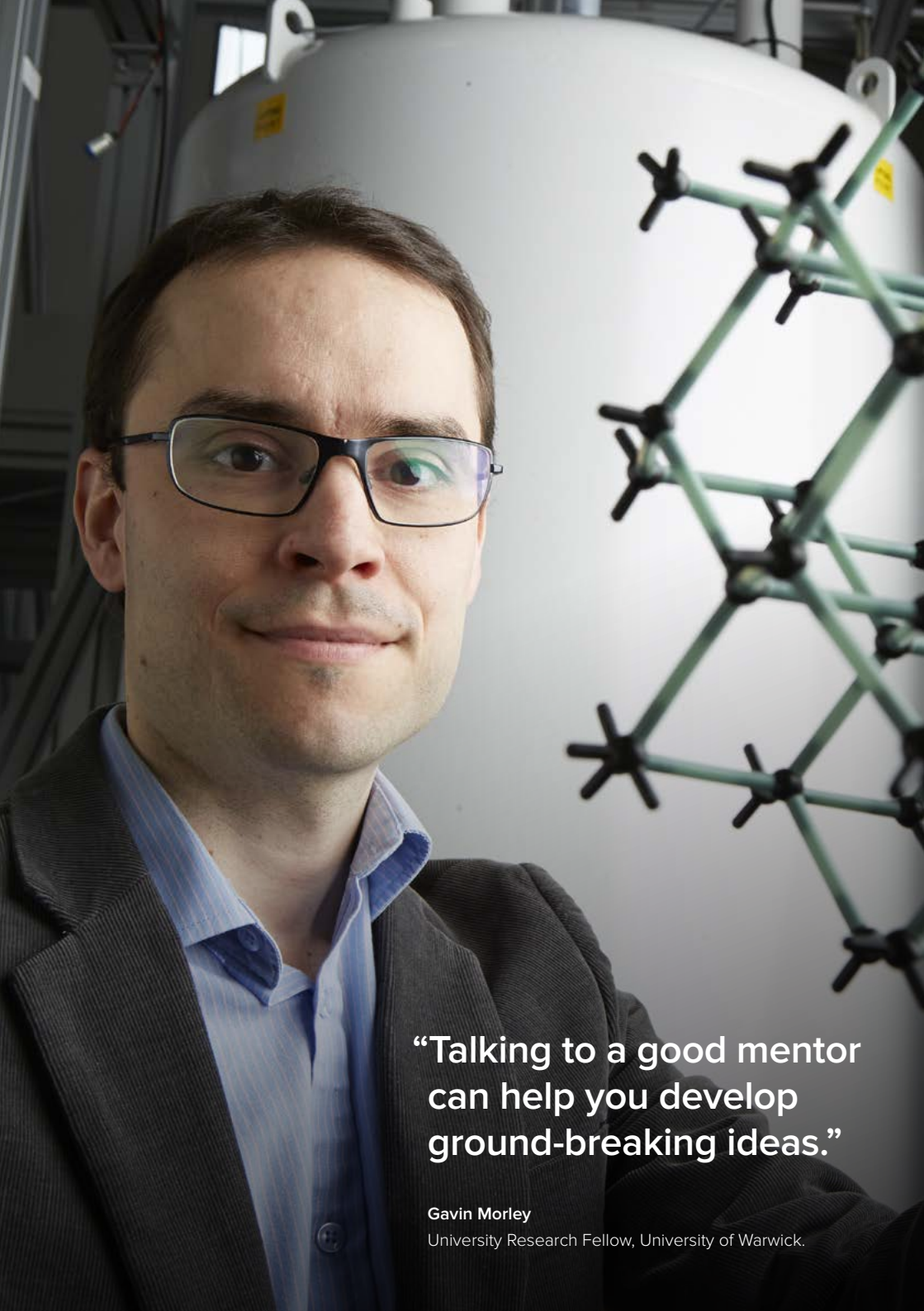


A scenic view of a valley with unique rock formations and several hot air balloons floating in the sky. The foreground shows a large, colorful hot air balloon with a checkered pattern. Other smaller balloons are visible in the distance against a clear blue sky. The landscape is rugged and rocky, with some sparse vegetation.

# Royal Society Mentorship Scheme



**“Talking to a good mentor  
can help you develop  
ground-breaking ideas.”**

**Gavin Morley**

University Research Fellow, University of Warwick.

## What is mentoring?

The Royal Society mentoring programme matches the next generation of research leaders with experienced mentors to help them navigate their first steps into independence.

Mentoring is a supportive learning partnership that helps mentees develop in their career and recognise their potential. Mentors act as an impartial sounding board, bringing their own lived experience and insight, to help the mentee navigate challenges.

Mentors use their own experience to help discuss situations the mentee encounters. They can provide impartial support with:

- Career and research advice;
- Establishing independence;
- Managing group and relationships;
- Building effective networks;
- Work-life balance; and
- Identifying funding opportunities.

## Benefits of mentoring

Royal Society Early Career Fellowships mark the start of a move towards independence.

It is natural for Research Fellows to face challenges and go through a type of ‘transition curve’ as they navigate these first steps to independence. A mentor may have experienced similar situations themselves and so can offer insight and guidance.

The transition curve (right) reflects some of the experiences a Research Fellow may encounter on receiving their prestigious fellowship. Such incidents may affect confidence and Research Fellows’ reactions

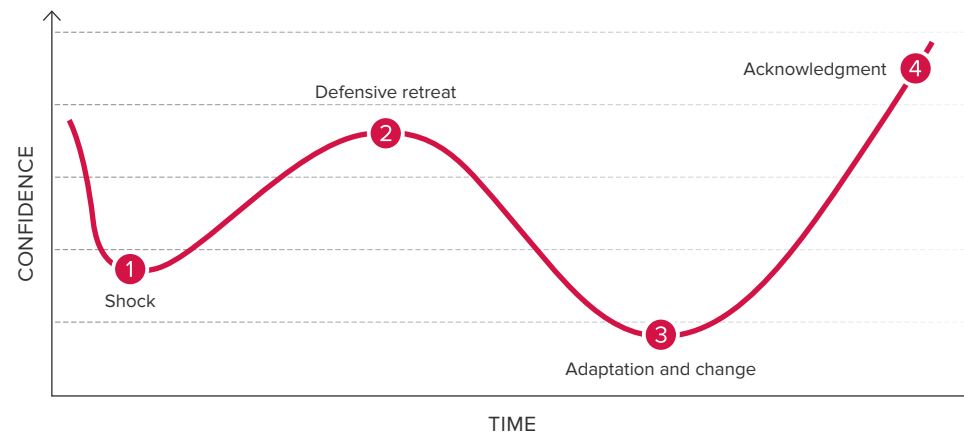
can vary from surprise at being chosen for being awarded ①, to doubts about their ability to achieve the high standards expected ②, to adapting to the new circumstances ③ and acknowledging the task at hand and forging ahead with it ④.

Individuals may not experience all of these, but mentoring partnerships can provide an opportunity and framework, for reflection on some of the issues faced when planning, establishing, and progressing in a scientific research career.

**“Mentoring will give you advice, support, experience and – maybe – inspiration. Your mentor will help you set up your group faster and provide a space to plan the next stage of your career.”**

Emeritus Professor Dot Griffiths OBE FRSA

Transition curve



**References:** E. Kubler-Ross (1969) *On Death and Dying* Routledge; R. Lewis and C. Parker (1981) *Beyond the Peter Principle-Managing Successful Transitions*; and J. European Industrial Training.

# Phases of mentoring

1

## Training

The Royal Society also offers mentoring training workshops for both mentees and mentors. We recommend participating in these, preferably towards the start of the partnership, to get guidance on mentoring, network with fellow mentors or mentees, and meet our trainer Professor Dorothy Griffiths OBE FRSA.

For further details on workshops, eligibility and to hear about other training opportunities, visit [royalsociety.org](https://royalsociety.org)

2

## First meeting

Set up your initial meeting and use the following points to get your mentoring relationship started, cover the basics, set boundaries and discuss what will work best for you both to maintain this relationship:

- Tell your story: share your background, current research and what you are hoping to get out of the partnership.
- Discuss where you, as the mentee, might want support and what areas are most important at this point.
- Discuss what you both expect in terms of frequency of communication, time commitment and who will initiate contact.
- Decide how and when you are going to meet, and how often.

3

## Mentoring sessions

As your partnership progresses it is the responsibility of the mentee to drive forward contact in line with your agreed communication plan. Here are some tips to help utilise the time available:

- Send an agenda in advance with key areas of discussions – mentors should have the opportunity to add points.
- Ensure to reflect on experiences before each meeting as well as afterwards to implement learning.
- Ask open questions.
- Together agree on actions ahead of the next meeting.

4

## Moving on

The Royal Society mentoring programme recommends that partnerships are maintained for one year though it is up to both parties to decide whether they would like to continue.

As the time of the partnership draws to an end it might be useful to think about:

- Reflecting on the partnership including what has been discussed, learned and experienced.
- How you, as the mentee, will remain motivated to progress.
- What new goals and objectives you may have to focus on in future.





“Mentoring is a fantastic learning experience all round – I’ve learnt easily as much as I’ve been able to pass on.”

Claire Spottiswoode

Former Dorothy Hodgkin Fellow and mentor, University of Cambridge.

## Keeping the conversation going

### Questions for mentors to mentees

- What are you enjoying most about your Fellowship?
- What has surprised you the most?
- What are you finding difficult?
- Do you have any concerns about your Fellowship?
- Are there any particular areas that you would like help with, such as applying for grants?

### Questions for mentees to mentors

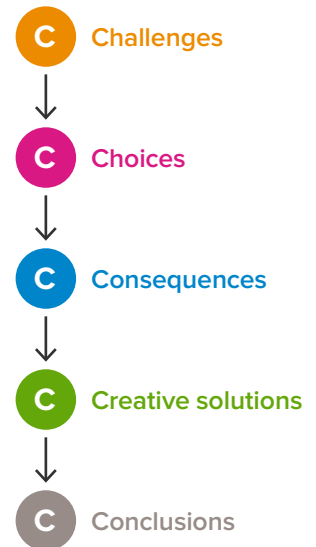
- What did you find difficult during the early stages of your Fellowship?
- What did you enjoy most?
- Is there anything you would have done differently?
- What do you wish you had known then, that you know now?
- How did you balance work and family?

Discussions can flow as you feel comfortable with but if you need structure here are a few prompts:

### GROW model:

- **Goal:** what do you want?
- **Reality:** where are you now?
- **Options:** what could you do?
- **Will:** what will do you?

### 5 C's prompts:



## The Royal Society

The Royal Society is a self-governing Fellowship of many of the world's most distinguished scientists drawn from all areas of science, engineering, and medicine. The Society's fundamental purpose, reflected in its founding Charters of the 1660s, is to recognise, promote, and support excellence in science and to encourage the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity.

### The Society's strategic priorities are:

- Promoting science and its benefits
- Recognising excellence in science
- Supporting outstanding science
- Providing scientific advice for policy
- Fostering international and global cooperation
- Education and public engagement

## For further information

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Founded in 1660, the Royal Society is the independent scientific academy of the UK, dedicated to promoting excellence in science

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