



## Cards for Mentoring Conversations (2)

### The Journey to Working Parenthood

Conversation type	The idea	What's needed	Card side	Timing
Return to work 1-1 mentoring conversation or as a paired activity in a return to work workshop	This activity is an opportunity for a returner to look back and 'map out' their journey away from work, through maternity / parental / adoption leave and return to work as a parent	One set of Cards for Mentoring Conversations per pair and pens and paper for notes / drawing if preferred	Photographic images	Post return to work

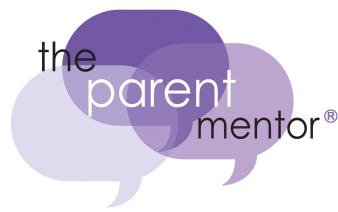
#### Background

The Kubler-Ross Change Curve (1) is frequently used as a framework for leading business change; helping an organisation and its employees understand more of the process they go through in relation to significant change and the potential impact on productivity and motivation. With that in mind, the aim is to expedite change and smooth the transition as far as possible.

Becoming a parent is a dramatic example of a life-changing situation and the stages within the change curve may be equally applicable in this context. As one parent explains: *'I assumed the journey would run on rails. I had my son and of course it all changed. You run the office exactly the way you want, then you have a baby and it's chaos!'*

Though research and our own experience as working parents, we have identified a number of distinct stages in the journey to working parenthood which are concerned with;

- Early pregnancy
- Ending work
- Maternity leave – early days
- Maternity leave – countdown to return
- Return to work
- Moving forward



For a mentee post return to work, this activity may be a useful way to look back at their journey to working parenthood and reflect on the highs and lows of their experience, perhaps contrasting how they anticipated things would be with the reality of their experience. It is also an opportunity to reflect on what - and who - helped moved them move forward and perhaps consider what resources they might want to draw on in future.

### The activity

1. Open by establishing your mentee's knowledge and understanding of the change curve, exploring how this concept might also relate to their recent experiences of becoming a parent and returning to work. With their permission, invite your mentee to either:

- Create a visual map of their journey to working parenthood across the different stages selecting different images from the cards  
or
- Draw out their journey to working parenthood indicating different stages, peaks and troughs

2. Offer some questions to support exploration e.g.

- Talk through your journey as you've drawn it / as shown in the images
- What are the highs and lows as you look back?
- What comes to mind as you look at the journey as you have mapped it out?
- How does your experience contrast with what you anticipated before the start of your maternity / paternity / adoption leave?
- Where are you now on the journey?
- What have you learned about yourself through this period of transition?
- What is needed to help you move forward?
- What do you want to take away which may help with future change?

3. Draw out key learning and reflections