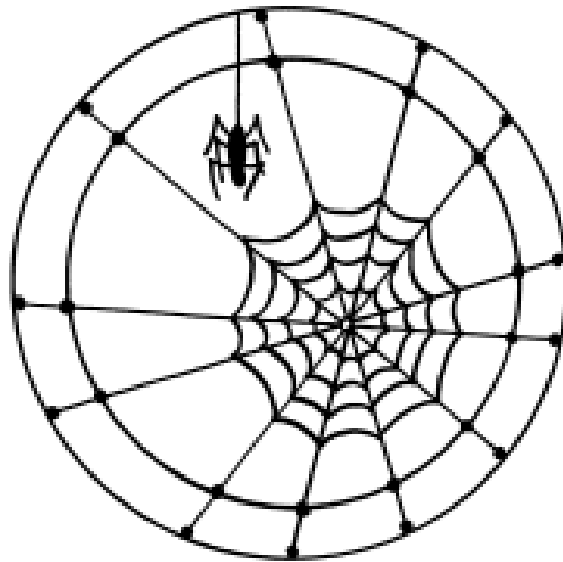


The Web Wheel Model



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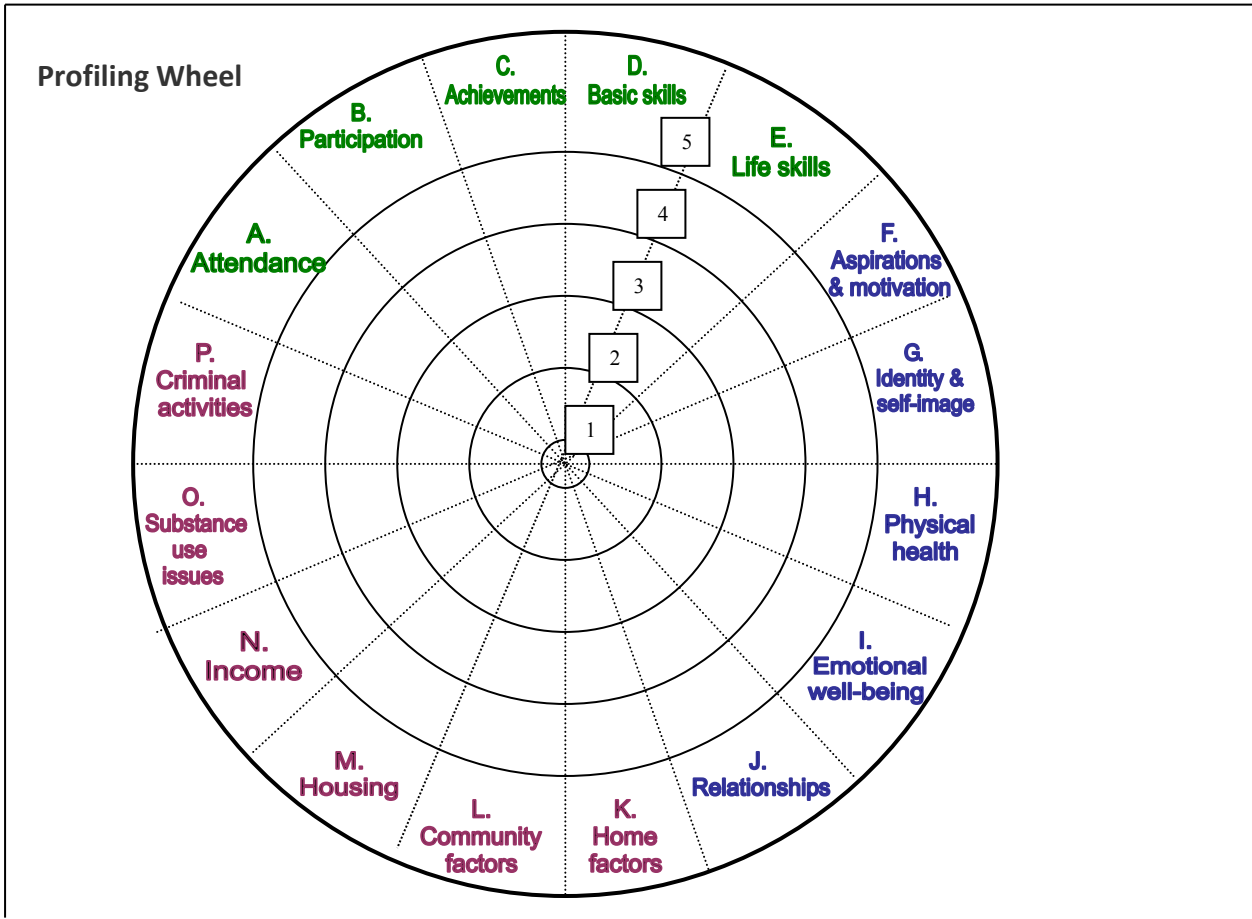
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1. Key elements in WebWheel mentoring process

- a. The process is introduced to the learners in advance so they know what it is about and understand the level of control they have before they start.
- b. The focus of the sessions is on the drawing up of an individual action plan.
- c. Mentoring is best done at a table with a copy of the Wheel, the IAP and the learner's file to hand. The atmosphere should be relaxed and friendly but business-like. Cups of tea can be brought into the room and if a learner is very anxious or uncomfortable the session can take place in the kitchen or even over the course of a snooker game or walk. Having something to do or look at during the session can make it more comfortable and less like a counselling session.
- d. The primary skill needed by the mentor is the skill of listening.
- e. The mentor doesn't probe – the learner decides what they will tell. If they don't feel under pressure to talk they will be less likely to make things up and will be more honest and real in the sessions (although this may take some time). Note the difference between the teaching role (where the teacher is the expert) and the mentoring role (where the learner is the expert because the subject is themselves). It is perfectly possible to move between these two roles but you might find it helpful to think about how you will manage it and to discuss it with colleagues.
- f. Mentoring is about offering help. This help largely takes the form of practical support, but it does so by paying attention to the young person and trying to understand their view of themselves and of their world. Paying close attention like this is also a form of emotional support and may in the end be what is most helpful to the learners. However, emotional support can come across as disempowering and suffocating and so it is important that the session be managed in a simple, straightforward fashion and experienced by the learner as ordered, practical and friendly.

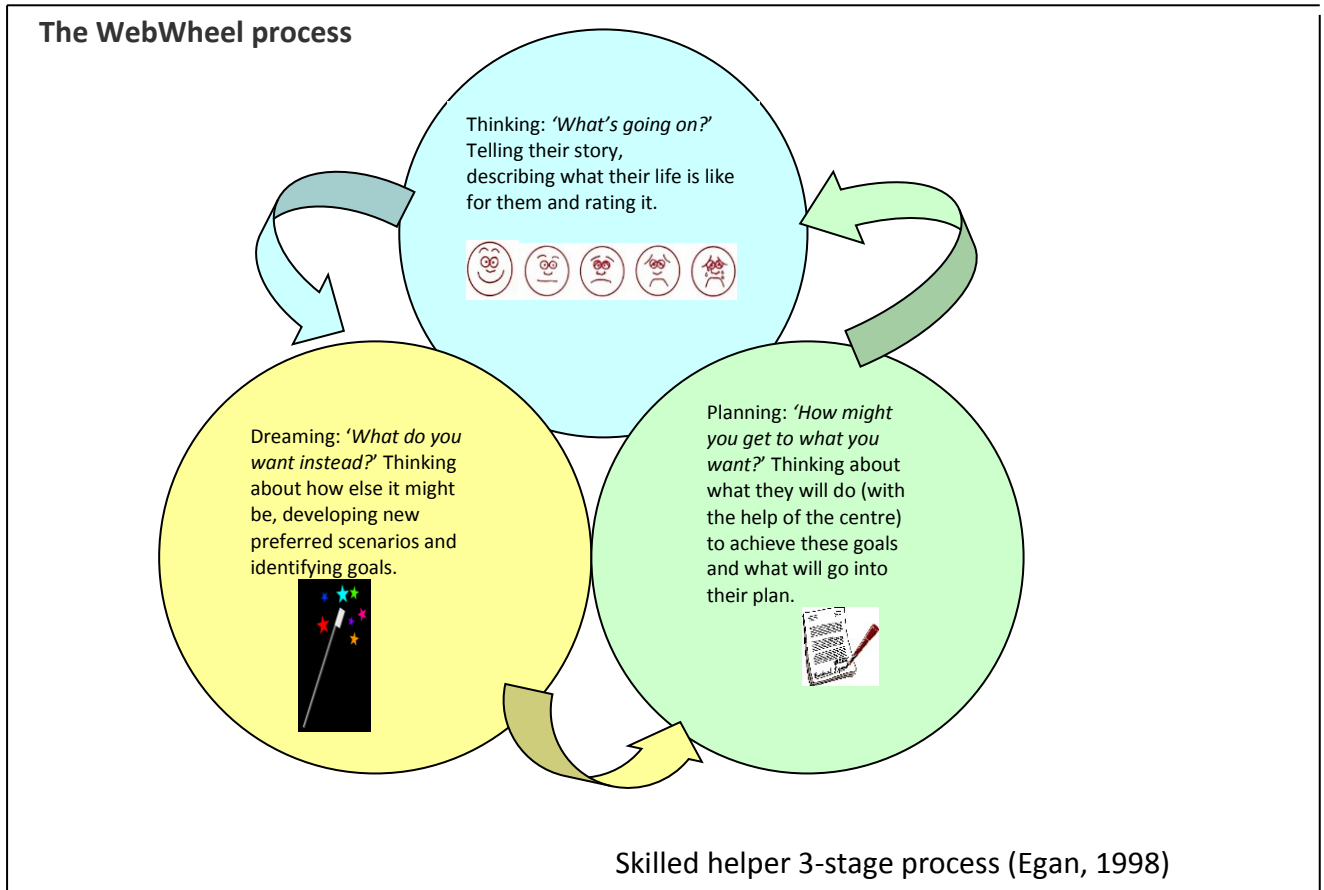
- g. The mentor's job is to assist in bringing rationality into the learner's thinking by helping them to make sense of their situations, to identify their options and to make decisions about what they will do. The Wheel helps with this task.

2. The Wheel



3. Egan 3-step method using the Wheel






- a. The Egan method takes the learner from a) thinking about their situation in relation to a wide range of factors and evaluating how they feel about it, b) to imagining how else they would like things to be, to c) to making a plan that will help to make their situation better.



i. Thinking about the current situation

- b. Mentoring is an invitation to the learner to talk about their lives and so the Wheel contains a range of factor areas to facilitate this.
- c. The development of self-awareness is a key part of the process and exploring the factors of the Wheel in a systematic way helps with this as it allows the learner to separate out different aspects of their life. It is beneficial for them to recognise what is going well as well as what is causing them problems. The same amount of time does not need to be spent on each factor as they are not all equally relevant to the learner at any particular time.
- d. Acknowledging that something is a problem is the first step to addressing it – it doesn't matter who else thinks it's a problem if the learner doesn't, and vice versa.
- e. Applying a rating requires the learner to make some kind of evaluation of their situation and this creates distance between themselves and their problems. It also 'socialises' their situations – their problems become talkable about and, as a result, helpable with.

The Wheel 5-point rating scale

	5: They give a rating of 5 if they feel happy about the situation under consideration or if it is an area of positive strength for them
	4: They give a rating of 4 if they feel they have no particular problem in this factor area
	3: They give a rating of 3 if they feel they have a bit of a problem in this area
	2: They give a rating of 2 if they feel that they have quite a big problem with some or all aspects of the situation under consideration
	1: They give a rating of 1 if they recognise that they have a very serious problem or feel that they are not coping generally in their life

Rating values:

5	Strengths / resources / resilience factors
4	_____
3	
2	Problems / difficulties needing attention
1	

ii. Imagining how else it might be

- f. In order to be able to dream, the learner has to be able to get in touch with their desires. This requires both self-knowledge and imagination. For some learners these are not skills that they have yet acquired and they may need time and support before they are able to do this part of the process with ease.
- g. Other learners may easily identify ways they would like their world to be different but they are describing fantasies that have little or no chance of happening. It may take some time before their dreams become more realistic.
- h. Dreams are the motivators for action and change. This is potentially the most powerful part of the process and should be given time as long as the learner is comfortable talking about their dreams and the possibilities that they can see for themselves.

iii. Drawing up an individual action plan

- i. The focus of the session is on action. The purpose is to come up with ideas for actions that will, hopefully, help the learner achieve their goals. The first step in the plan may simply be to do some research about what might be possible. Sometimes urgent action will have to be taken and the centre needs to have plans in place for these situations.
- j. The IAP only contains what the learner decides or agrees to. It is their document (the staff have their own teaching and centre plans that they are operating out of) and what is written in the IAP must have the learner's commitment if it is to mean anything to them.

Content areas of an IAP



3. Rationale for mentoring

- a. Early school leavers are at greatly increased risk of poor levels of literacy and maths, problematic alcohol and drug use, youth offending, lone parenting, homelessness and unemployment. The incidence of disability in Youthreach is very high, especially in the areas of dyslexia and mild general learning difficulties and of emotional behavioural difficulties. There is a connection between negative early experience and subsequent psychopathology or mental health problems.
- b. Mentoring provides support at the practical, action-oriented level. The goal of mentoring is the development of an individual action plan that makes sense to the learner and takes account of their interests and desires for themselves. If there are any areas of difficulty in the young person's life these can be discussed and addressed. If the centre can help with a difficulty the action plan will detail how this will be done. If the problem is outside the brief and competency of the centre the learner will be referred to an agency or service that can help and the action plan will outline how this will be done. The centre will liaise with, or work in tandem with, outside agencies whenever any kind of joint action would be helpful to the learner.
- c. Mentoring provides support at the motivational, future-oriented level. Engaging with the learners at a personal level, knowing what they are interested in and what they want for themselves, is the key to finding what is motivating for them. It has to be their agenda. Good relationships, the warmth and safety of the centre and the experience of success in learning all open up possibilities for the future that the learner may not have seen for themselves before.
- d. Mentoring provides support at the connectional, reflective-oriented level. Theories from developmental psychology and psychodynamic practice emphasise the importance of the social context for the developing child and the interactions and relationships they have with their primary caregivers. These have a powerful influence on their personality development and, if inadequate or negative, can lead to social difficulties and mental

health problems. Good attachment experiences provide the opportunity for acquiring important emotional, social and cognitive tools. Their absence leads to an adolescent who is characterised by mistrust, shame, doubt, guilt and a sense of inferiority. The development of *secondary attachments* later in life, however, can be a means of changing young people's negative models of themselves and of the world and allow them to acquire these emotional, social and cognitive tools.

Erikson's Psychosocial Stages

Stage	Basic Conflict	Important Events	Outcome
Infancy (birth to 18 months)	Trust vs. mistrust	Feeding	Children develop a sense of trust when caregivers provide reliability, care, and affection. A lack of this will lead to mistrust.
Early childhood (2 to 3 years)	Autonomy vs. shame and doubt	Toilet training	Children need to develop a sense of personal control over physical skills and a sense of independence. Success leads to feelings of autonomy, failure results in feelings of shame and doubt.
Preschool (3 to 5 years)	Initiative vs. guilt	Exploration	Children need to begin asserting control and power over the environment. Success in this stage leads to a sense of purpose. Children who try to exert too much power experience disapproval, resulting in a sense of guilt.
School age (6 to 11 years)	Industry vs. inferiority	School	Children need to cope with new social and academic demands. Success leads to a sense of competence, while failure results in feelings of inferiority.
Adolescence (12 to 18 years)	Identity vs. role confusion	Social relationships	Teens need to develop a sense of self and personal identity. Success leads to an ability to stay true to yourself, while failure leads to role confusion and a weak sense of self.
Young adulthood (19 to 40 years)	Intimacy vs. isolation	Relationships	Young adults need to form intimate, loving relationships with other people. Success leads to strong relationships, while failure results in loneliness and isolation.
Middle adulthood (40 to 65 years)	Generativity vs. stagnation	Work and parenthood	Adults need to create or nurture things that will outlast them, often by having children or creating a positive change that benefits other people. Success leads to feelings of usefulness and accomplishment, while failure results in shallow involvement in the world.
Maturity (65 to death)	Ego integrity vs. despair	Reflection on life	Older adults need to look back on life and feel a sense of fulfilment. Success at this stage leads to feelings of wisdom, while failure results in regret, bitterness, and despair.

4. Implementation of the plan

- a. The implementation of the plan will be the responsibility of whoever is named in it – the young person themselves, the mentor, other members of staff, the centre counsellor or therapist or agencies outside the centre.
- b. The plan is continually reviewed and revised as it is a working document. While it is the process rather than the product that matters the most, the plan is the record of what was decided and should therefore be the document that is worked from between sessions. It should never be ignored (even if, say, because of a crisis, it is not referred to in a particular session). Revising it continually so that it keeps real and live for the learner is a way of taking it seriously.
- c. Some situations will require immediate action. Being prepared for situations that require urgent action is something that needs to be addressed in advance at staff meetings. At these meetings possible scenarios can be discussed and procedures agreed for how they will be dealt with. The contact details and referral routes for local services should be compiled and updated regularly, especially those that provide help in an emergency. Clear roles should also be allocated to members of staff in advance so that everyone knows what is required of them in an emergency situation. Critical incident plans should be devised and centre protocols drawn up and recorded.
- d. Liaison between staff and with local agencies is necessary for the implementation of individual plans. Procedures for sharing the plans among all relevant staff are needed. The need for liaison between teachers and between teachers and support personnel will arise. It will also be important for all mentors to be aware of the local services that the learner can receive support from and the sources of practical information that are available. It is highly recommended that good communication arrangements and relationships be established between the centre and local services.

5. Staff support

- a. WebWheel mentoring must not be carried out without appropriate training and without staff support and supervision arrangements being put in place. The case supervision and mentor support elements are essential to the safety and welfare of both the learners and the members of staff who engage in mentoring.
- b. It is imperative that case supervision and staff support be provided by suitably qualified personnel. This means a psychotherapist or psychologist with relevant qualifications and experience. They need to have engaged in a minimum of three years supervised clinical practice themselves. In addition to having a recognised qualification in a branch of psychology or psychotherapy they need to be a member of an appropriate professional body (e.g. the Psychological Society of Ireland or British Psychological Society, the Irish Council for Psychotherapy, the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, the Irish Association of Humanistic and Integrative Psychotherapy).

- c. Staff support may be provided through group or individual sessions, or through a combination of both (perhaps with individual sessions being available to staff on the basis of need rather than as a matter of course). Case supervision and staff support are linked processes but can be organised as separate sessions if the centre prefers.

6. Practical issues for consideration when introducing the WebWheel mentoring model

- a. The learners should all be informed about the process before it begins. The best way to do this is to hold one or more sessions – for all the learners together or in smaller groups – at which the mentoring idea is introduced. Go through the process with them and explain how it is designed to produce an individual action plan that they are responsible for and are happy with. Show them the Wheel and discuss what might be covered by each of the factor areas. Make it clear that they do not have to say anything more about each factor than they want to. Explain about the rating system. Show them how the Egan process works and how it ends up in an action plan. Explain how the Wheel can be gone around in any order and as often as they like and that the action plan can be revised whenever they want.
- b. As the purpose of mentoring is to draw up an individual action plan with the learner their consent, and that of their parents' if they are under 18 years, is not strictly necessary. However, as mentoring involves a collaborative process it is important to obtain their agreement before starting. This signals that the process is under their control and that responsibility for addressing problems and making choices rests with them and not their mentor. This will help with their engagement in mentoring and to increase their trust in the process.
- c. Both staff and learners must be clear about the parameters of confidentiality. All need to understand that any disclosure which indicates that there is a risk to the welfare of the learner or of another child or young person has to be reported to social services immediately. The IAP that is developed through the process is not confidential. This is shared with the full staff team because responsibility for implementing it does not belong to the mentor but to the centre as a whole. Some parts of the mentoring conversation however may be kept confidential between the learner and the mentor. An example would be when the learner discloses something about their family that they don't want others to know and which does not have any implications for their plan or for their welfare.
- d. It is essential that mentoring does not undermine the general policies of the centre and that mentors do not ally themselves with learners against other members of staff or against the rules of behaviour in the centre or other policies.
- e. Power is an aspect of mentoring that needs to be realised and thought about carefully. Speaking about oneself (and particularly talking about problems) can make anyone feel uncomfortable and exposed. Mentors need to be sensitive to how power and control are being managed during mentoring. It is crucial that you respect the learner's right not to take up your invitation to talk about their problems if they do not wish to. The practical

focus on the development of an individual action plan gives a practical purpose to the conversation, and it is okay if the learner just talks about their academic and vocational progress and chooses not to talk about their difficulties or to consider how else their life might be.

- f. The essence of mentoring is being able to listen non-judgementally and without becoming upset or angry. The mentor needs to be as calm and unfazed as possible. Mentoring qualities include having a light touch, using humour, being able to listen calmly to whatever they are telling you (whether you approve or not and whether you believe it or not), being able to move comfortably between your teacher and mentor roles, conveying a sense of normality and that what they are dealing with is manageable, and avoiding entering into their despair, chaos or irresponsibility.
- g. It takes practice to develop mentoring skills – to know how to listen well, how to ask questions without sounding judgemental or critical and how to talk with learners in ways that help them to think about and gain insight into themselves. In addition to practice, training helps with the development of these skills. Both initial and ongoing training are available to centres for this purpose.
- h. It is very useful for staff to consider what it is about mentoring that might make them lacking in confidence or anxious. For some it is the intimacy, or the issues that might arise. Worrying about being shocked, perhaps hearing about criminal activities or other activities that you cannot approve of. Feeling that you are implicated in what they are telling you about if you don't express disapproval or concern. For others it may be the fear of feeling overwhelmed by the learners' situations and problems, perhaps panicking, not knowing what they should do or having the answers. There is always the real possibility of becoming upset because their issues trigger problems or losses in your own life. What would help you deal with your own anxieties or fears about mentoring? These issues can be considered by the staff team when planning to introduce mentoring into the centre. They can be addressed in the staff training and then dealt with on an ongoing basis as they arise in staff support sessions.