POWER IN CONNECTION:

The LGBTQIA+ Cross-Border Mentoring Toolkit



EUROPEAN PRIDE BUSINESS NETWORK

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1. INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

Mentoring has the power to strengthen confidence, change careers, and create lasting professional relationships. For LGBTQIA+ professionals and leaders, it can also provide something equally important: a sense of belonging, supporting them to become Role Models and creating a trusted space to navigate challenges that are similar for the target group, yet always unique to the individual lived experiences.

The EPBN - WISE Mentoring Toolkit was developed based on the implementation of the EPBN - WISE – Workplace Inclusion for a Sustainable Europe mentoring programme, coordinated by the VK – Vielfalt und Karriere e.V. (ex-Völklinger Kreis) and European Pride Business Network (EPBN) with its member organisations. Throughout the programme, LGBTQIA+ professionals from across Europe participated in workshops, peer-learning activities and one-to-one mentoring sessions designed to support their personal and professional growth.

This toolkit brings together the practical experience, lessons learned and recommendations gathered throughout the programme. Rather than presenting a pure theoretical model, it offers a practical framework that can support organisations interested in designing and implementing mentoring programmes for LGBTQIA+ talent.

While every mentoring programme should reflect the needs of its own community, the principles presented in this toolkit can be adapted to different organisational contexts, sectors and countries.

WHO IS THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

This toolkit is designed for:

- ★ Organisations developing LGBTQIA+ mentoring programmes
- ★ Diversity, Equity & Inclusion professionals
- ★ LGBTQIA+ employee resource groups (ERGs)
- ★ Mentoring programme coordinators
- ★ Non-profit organisations and professional networks
- ★ Companies seeking to support LGBTQIA+ talent through structured mentoring

Whether you are launching your first mentoring programme or further developing an existing initiative, we hope the experiences from WISE will provide practical inspiration and guidance for your own mentoring journey.

2. THE WISE MENTORING JOURNEY



AN OVERVIEW OF THE MENTORING PROGRAMME FROM ONBOARDING TO COMPLETION

The EPBN - WISE Mentoring Programme was designed as a structured learning journey that gradually prepared participants for their mentoring relationships. Rather than starting directly with one-to-one mentoring sessions, the programme combined onboarding, leadership skills development, peer learning, networking and mentor preparation before the individual mentoring phase began.

The programme was intentionally divided into **two complementary phases**.

Phase I focused on collective learning through leadership skills workshops and cross-border peer-to-peer exchange, enabling participants to build new skills, expand their professional networks and prepare for mentoring.

Phase II, following the mentor–mentee matching process, shifted towards personalised development through one-to-one mentoring sessions, complemented by parallel supervision sessions for mentors and mentees.

This two-phase structure ensured that participants entered the mentoring phase as part of a supportive European LGBTQIA+ community, with a clear understanding of their development goals and a strong foundation for mentoring relationships.

THE WISE MENTORING JOURNEY

Nomination & Selection
25 mentees were nominated by EPBN member organisations across five European countries.

Welcome Call & Individual Onboarding
The programme officially started with the Welcome Call on **29 October 2024**. Participants who were unable to attend received an individual onboarding session by the program lead to ensure everyone started the programme with the same understanding and expectations.

Workshops & Peer Learning (Phase I: November 2024—May 2025)
A series of interactive workshops and peer-to-peer meetings strengthened leadership skills, professional development and cross-border connections before mentoring began.

Networking & Matching
Mentees and mentors first connected during the Mix & Match Networking Session at the WISE Conference in Warsaw (May 2025). Following the session, mentees submitted their top three mentor preferences, which, together with compatibility, professional interests and mentoring goals, informed the final matching process.

One-to-One Mentoring (Phase II: June 2025—May 2026)
Mentors and mentees met regularly throughout the programme to work on individual development goals in a confidential and supportive environment.

Supervision & Ongoing Support
Throughout Phase II, mentors and mentees were supported through separate supervision sessions, creating dedicated spaces for reflection, peer exchange and shared learning. Running alongside the one-to-one mentoring relationships, these sessions allowed participants to discuss their experiences, explore common challenges and learn from one another in a confidential environment.

Closing & Reflection
During the final mentoring sessions, mentors supported mentees in translating their learnings into their further development. The programme concluded with a series of final workshops in May 2026, encouraging mentees to reflect on their learning journey and identify how they would apply their insights beyond the programme.

Graduation
The programme concluded with a graduation ceremony at the WISE Conference in Prague (May 2026), celebrating the participants' achievements and learning journey. Each mentee received a certificate in recognition of their commitment and active participation throughout the programme.

3. GETTING STARTED

WELCOMING PARTICIPANTS THROUGH ONBOARDING AND CLEAR EXPECTATIONS.

Successful mentoring starts long before the first mentor–mentee conversation. A good onboarding process helps participants understand the programme, clarify expectations and build the confidence needed to actively engage in the mentoring journey.

The WISE Mentoring Programme officially began with a Welcome Call on 29 October 2024, introducing participants to the programme structure, timeline, objectives and the organisations behind the initiative. To ensure equal access, mentees who were unable to attend the Welcome Call were offered individual onboarding sessions. This flexible approach ensured that every participant entered the programme with the same information and level of preparation.

As part of the onboarding process, all mentees received the **WISE Mentorship Guidelines and Agreements**, outlining the programme's core values, expectations and participation requirements. The document established a shared understanding of respectful communication, confidentiality and active participation, creating a safe and supportive learning environment from the very beginning.

Beyond the formal onboarding, participants were encouraged to reach out to the Mentoring Lead (Pavlo Stroblja) and WISE Project Coordinator (Jaime Romani), whenever questions or uncertainties arose. Establishing two accessible points of contact from the beginning helped to strengthen engagement and ensure that participants felt supported throughout the programme.

4. LEARNING BEFORE MENTORING

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS BEFORE ENTERING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Many mentoring programmes begin by matching mentors and mentees almost immediately at the beginning of the programme. The WISE Mentoring Programme chose a different approach intentionally.

Before participants entered one-to-one mentoring relationships in Phase II of the programme, they first completed a structured learning phase designed to strengthen leadership competencies, encourage self-reflection and create a sense of belonging within a European LGBTQIA+ community.

Rather than seeing mentoring as the starting point of personal development, WISE considered mentoring to be most effective when participants had already developed a clearer understanding of themselves, their aspirations and the challenges they wanted to address.

Phase I served several objectives simultaneously. It equipped mentees with practical leadership skills, introduced them to different aspects of networking and career development, created opportunities for peer learning and familiarised participants with the wider European Pride Business Network. By the time mentors and mentees were matched, participants had already established relationships with one another, gained confidence in discussing their development goals and built a supportive network extending beyond their future mentoring partnerships.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the first eight months of the programme, participants took part in a series of interactive workshops facilitated by experienced professionals from different industries and backgrounds, representing different facettes of LGBTQIA+ Community (gay, lesbian, trans*, non-binary). Each workshop was focused on a different competency that would later support participants throughout their mentoring and of course professional careers.

The programme began in November 2024 with Leadership Skills Part I: Leadership, Self-Awareness & Beliefs, facilitated by Cathérine Ngoli from Vaunda Consulting. The session explored different dimensions of leadership, personal values, self-awareness and limiting beliefs while encouraging participants to reflect on their own leadership potential and create individual growth plans.

The second leadership workshop, held in January 2025, focused on Networking and Elevator Pitch and was facilitated by Marcel Weber. Instead of presenting networking as a transactional activity, the workshop encouraged relationship building and demonstrated how professional connections create opportunities throughout one's career.

Participants gained practical skills in mapping their professional networks, identifying their leadership strengths and confidently presenting themselves through concise and authentic elevator pitches.

In February 2025, EPBN Role Model Liam Michelle Seifert together with Gaby Wasensteiner from LinkedIn delivered to WISE mentees a workshop on navigating digital spaces and creating content on LinkedIn. The session focused on professional visibility in digital environments and demonstrated how LinkedIn can be used strategically for networking, storytelling and career development. Participants reflected on their professional profiles and learned practical approaches for communicating their expertise online.

Recognising that sustainable careers require more than professional success, the programme

continued in March 2025 with a workshop on Work-Life Balance, Ikigai and Mental Health, facilitated by Pavlo Stroblja. Participants reflected on the relationship between career ambitions, personal wellbeing and purpose while exploring practical strategies for preventing burnout, maintaining healthy boundaries and identifying their individual sources of motivation using the Ikigai framework.

The final remote workshop of the learning phase took place in April 2025 when Dr. Max Appenroth introduced participants to the topic of Resilience from a specifically LGBTQIA+ perspective. The session addressed minority stress, identity-related challenges in professional environments and practical strategies for maintaining psychological wellbeing while experiencing discriminating and systemic barriers. This workshop presented resilience not only as an individual responsibility, but highlighted the importance of community, support systems and collective empowerment.

Together, these five workshops provided participants with a broad leadership foundation that combined self-awareness, communication, networking, wellbeing and resilience—competencies that would continue to shape their mentoring conversations throughout the programme.

LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER

While expert-led workshops formed the educational backbone of the programme, peer learning sessions became just as important as Phase I.

Approximately once every month, participants met in facilitated Peer-to-Peer Sessions, creating an informal yet structured environment for **exchanging experiences, discussing personal challenges and reflecting on the workshop topics together**. These sessions gradually transformed a group of individuals from different countries into a community.

An important element of the peer sessions was the participation of guests from across the European Pride Business Network. Representatives of EPBN member organisations introduced their work, shared national perspectives on LGBTQIA+ workplace inclusion and provided participants with insights into the diversity of initiatives taking place across Europe.

For example, Lucia Urciuoli and Tommaso Scalzi presented the work of EDGE in Italy and shared their experiences promoting LGBTQIA+ inclusion within Italian organisation. During another session, Tereza Kadlecova introduced the work of Pride Business Forum in Czech Republic, while Katharina Moser-Cziczatka presented the activities of Pride Biz Austria. These conversations demonstrated that although national contexts differ, many workplace challenges are shared across Europe, creating opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning. Other examples are some sessions that were covered by people from specific fields / firms, like OECD (with research), Orange and the construction industry (from the representative from OfB). These sessions were structured based on their interests and needs. We did check in with them to ask them what they needed and oriented the sessions better based on that feedback.

Beyond introducing participants to the wider EPBN network, these exchanges fostered intercultural dialogue and strengthened participants' understanding of different approaches to LGBTQIA+ inclusion. Many mentees reported that hearing directly from activists, professionals and Role Models across Europe expanded both their professional network and their sense of belonging to a broader European community.



WHY THIS PREPARATION MATTERS

The Phase I of the programme has not only equipped participants with a better understanding of LGBTQIA+ inclusion initiatives throughout Europe and strengthened their sense of community, but also shaped the quality of the mentoring relationships that followed.

By the time mentor matching began, participants already knew one another, had reflected on their own leadership journeys, identified personal development goals and developed greater confidence in articulating their aspirations.

Equally important, participants entered the mentoring phase knowing that they were supported not only by an individual mentor, but by an international community of peers, facilitators and EPBN member organisations. This combination of individual mentoring and community-based learning became one of the defining characteristics of the WISE Mentoring Programme and contributed significantly to participants' engagement throughout the programme.

5. FROM NETWORKING TO MATCHING

CREATING MENTOR–MENTEE TANDEMS THROUGH CONNECTION AND COMPATIBILITY.

Finding the right mentor is one of the most important factors influencing the success of a mentoring programme. While many programmes rely exclusively on written applications, WISE placed personal connection at the centre of the matching process.

Rather than assigning mentors based solely on professional backgrounds or stated interests, participants were first given the opportunity to meet one another during the **Mix & Match Networking Session at the WISE Conference in Warsaw in May 2025**. The session was designed to create authentic conversations between mentors and mentees before any matching decisions were made.

Through a series of facilitated networking rounds, mentees met several mentors, **exchanged experiences and discussed their expectations and mentoring goals**. These conversations enabled both mentors and mentees to gain an initial impression of potential mentoring relationships and to identify where a natural connection already existed.

Following this networking session, each mentee was invited to submit a ranked list of their three preferred mentors. These preferences formed an important part of the matching process and were carefully considered alongside additional criteria such as professional background, leadership experience, development goals, availability and overall compatibility.

The final mentor–mentee tandems were therefore not created through an automated



matching system, but through a thoughtful process that balanced participant preferences with the programme's objectives.

Following the matching process, each mentor–mentee tandem was invited to arrange an introductory Chemistry Call. Rather than assuming that a successful match would automatically translate into a successful mentoring relationship, WISE encouraged participants to use this first meeting to get to know each other, explore expectations and confirm that they felt comfortable working together.

To support this initial conversation (Chemistry Call), every tandem received the **WISE First Mentoring Conversation Starter Guide**, a practical resource to help structure the first meeting.

This Guide offered conversation prompts covering personal introductions, mentoring expectations, development goals, communication preferences, meeting frequency and practical agreements for future collaboration. It also served as an icebreaker, helping both mentors and mentees establish openness from the very beginning of their relationship.

The Chemistry Call represented an important final step in the matching process. It provided participants with the opportunity to confirm that the proposed pairing felt right before embarking on several months of one-to-one mentoring.

The effectiveness of this participant-centred matching approach became evident throughout Phase II of the programme. All mentor–mentee tandems that were created through this process continued their mentoring relationships until the completion of the programme, demonstrating that investing time in personal connection before formal mentoring begins can significantly strengthen commitment and long-term engagement.

WISE TIP

Whenever possible, allow mentors and mentees to meet before matching. Even a short networking session provides valuable insights that no application form can capture and helps create mentoring relationships based on chemistry and genuine connection rather than on assumptions.

6. SUPPORTING MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS IN PHASE II

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH GUIDANCE, SUPERVISION AND CONTINUOUS SUPPORT

The transition from matching to active one-to-one mentoring in June 2025 marked the beginning of Phase II of the WISE Mentoring Programme. While many mentoring programmes consider the matching process to be the final organisational step, WISE intentionally viewed it as the beginning of a new phase of participants'support.

The quality of a mentoring programme is not only determined by how well mentors and mentees are matched, but by how well these relationships are accompanied throughout their development and if they are provided with methodology and tools they need. Mentoring relationships evolve over time. They require continuous reflection, while participants often encounter moments of uncertainty, changing expectations or unforeseen challenges.

For this reason, the WISE Mentoring Programme embedded in Phase II a **practice-based support structure alongside the one-to-one mentoring sessions**. Rather than leaving mentors and mentees to navigate the process independently, the programme combined individual follow-up, structured supervision sessions and continuous access to the mentoring lead and project coordinator. This ensured that participants never felt left alone with questions or uncertainties and that challenges could be addressed before they affected the mentoring relationship.

SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION FROM MATCHING TO MENTORING

The mentor–mentee matching process formally concluded after the Chemistry Calls. However, WISE considered these introductory conversations not as the final confirmation of a match, but as the first step in building a mentoring relationship.

Following the Chemistry Calls, mentors and mentees were invited to provide feedback. Appointments and feedback conversations with mentoring lead served indeed two purposes. Firstly, they confirmed whether both participants felt comfortable moving forward together. Secondly, they created an opportunity to identify potential concerns at a very early stage.

With 25 mentoring tandems involving participants from different countries, professional backgrounds, generations and personal experiences, it would have been unrealistic to expect that every relationship would immediately feel familiar or effortless. Particularly for participants engaging in mentoring for the first time, uncertainty during the first meeting should not automatically be interpreted as incompatibility.

The WISE programme demonstrated the importance of personal follow-up in one particular mentoring relationship. After the introductory meeting, one mentee expressed uncertainty because they did not immediately feel a strong personal connection with their mentor. Instead of proposing an immediate rematch, an individual conversation with the mentoring lead to better understand the participant's concerns, was scheduled.

During this conversation, the focus was not on convincing the mentee to remain in the proposed tandem, **but on creating space for reflection**. The participant was encouraged to consider that mentoring often brings together people with different communication styles, professional experiences and perspectives. While these differences may initially feel unfamiliar, they frequently become one of mentoring's greatest strengths.

The participant was reassured that the programme's priority was to ensure a positive mentoring experience. They were encouraged to give the relationship an honest opportunity to develop while knowing that programme support remained available at every stage. At the same time, it was clearly communicated that, should the mentoring relationship prove unsuitable despite these efforts, an alternative solution would be explored together.

The mentee decided to continue with the mentoring relationship. Over the following months, trust developed naturally and the tandem successfully completed the mentoring programme together.

This experience highlighted an important lesson learned during the WISE programme. Early uncertainty should not automatically trigger a rematching process. Instead, it often represents an opportunity for reassurance and personal growth. Especially for first-time mentees, the instinct to seek immediate familiarity may limit the transformative potential of mentoring. Encouraging participants to remain open to different personalities and perspectives can significantly strengthen both resilience and the quality of the mentoring experience.

SUPERVISION AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF MENTORING

A defining feature of the WISE Mentoring Programme was the integration of structured supervision throughout Phase II. Rather than viewing supervision as an additional activity, it was implemented as a core element of the mentoring methodology.

Separate supervision sessions were organised for mentors and mentees, creating dedicated spaces where participants could openly reflect on their experiences without affecting the confidentiality of their one-to-one mentoring relationships. This approach recognised that mentors and mentees encounter different questions, responsibilities and challenges throughout the mentoring process and therefore benefit from role-specific reflection.

The supervision programme followed the development of the mentoring relationships over time.

The first supervision sessions, offered in September 2025, focused on developing goal-oriented mentoring relationships. Mentees explored practical goal-setting methodologies, including SMART Goals and the NOW–NEXT–BEYOND framework, while reflecting on their progress halfway through the programme. In parallel, mentors received guidance on supporting goal-oriented development, clarifying the distinction between mentoring, coaching and therapy, and facilitating ownership rather than providing solutions.

The second round of supervision sessions in October 2025 addressed one of the most important aspects of mentoring relationships: building trust while maintaining healthy boundaries. Both groups, mentees and mentors, explored the same topic from different perspectives. Mentees reflected on openness, psychological safety and communicating personal boundaries, while mentors focused on holding space, managing emotional conversations and establishing healthy boundaries without reducing empathy. This mirrored learning design helped create a shared understanding of trust and responsibility from both sides of the mentoring relationship.

By November 2025, participants had already accumulated several months of mentoring experience. At this stage, both mentor and mentee supervision sessions intentionally shifted away from trainer-led input towards facilitated peer exchange. Participants reflected on challenges, shared successful practices and learned directly from one another's

experiences. This transition acknowledged that, over time, the collective experience within the group had become as valuable as sessions with a trainer input.

The final supervision sessions in April 2026 focused on closing mentoring relationships intentionally and sustainably. Instead of simply marking the end of the programme, participants reflected on personal growth, recognised achievements and explored how learning could be transferred beyond the formal mentoring relationship. Mentors worked with the **"Celebrate – Consolidate – Transfer" framework** to support the final stage of the mentoring, while mentees reflected on their next chapter through the "**Keep – Start – Stop" model** and explored how to maintain their personal support systems after the programme.

THE ROLE OF THE MENTORING LEAD

Individual support was available throughout Phase II. Whenever mentors or mentees encountered questions, uncertainties or specific challenges, they were invited to schedule one-to-one conversations with the Mentoring Lead.

In practice, these consultations addressed a wide range of topics. Some mentors were looking for inspiration for future mentoring conversations or wished to discuss how to maintain momentum within the relationship. Others asked for guidance when mentees disclosed mental health challenges or situations extending beyond the mentor's role. Rather than providing ready-made solutions, these conversations helped mentors reflect on their responsibilities, maintain healthy boundaries and identify appropriate ways of supporting their mentees while recognising when external support might be more appropriate.

This continuous availability significantly strengthened participants' confidence throughout the programme. Knowing that guidance was always accessible reduced uncertainty, encouraged early communication about challenges and prevented small concerns from developing into larger obstacles.

WISE INSIGHT

One of the key lessons learned from the WISE Mentoring Programme is that successful mentoring does not end with a good match. Sustainable mentoring relationships require ongoing accompaniment, structured opportunities for reflection and accessible programme coordination. Investing in continuous support strengthens mentors, empowers mentees and creates mentoring relationships that are strong enough to navigate uncertainty and learn from challenges to grow over time.



7. COMMON CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE WISE MENTORING EXPERIENCE.

Implementing a cross-border mentoring programme inevitably brings both opportunities and challenges. Throughout the WISE Mentoring Programme, continuous reflection with mentors, mentees and the programme team helped identify practices that contributed most significantly to participant engagement and the overall quality of the mentoring experience.

The following lessons are based on the practical implementation of the programme and may support organisations developing similar mentoring initiatives.

Challenges related to the program that you may face:

- ★ Problems with participation from some mentees, and then find solutions to overcome this or follow up on this.
- ★ Problems with mentors no longer participating or not having enough time.

LESSON 1

Invest in mentees before matching them

One of the strongest elements of the WISE Mentoring Programme was the decision to postpone mentor matching until participants had completed several months of leadership development, peer learning and community building.

This preparation enabled mentees to better understand their own development goals, build confidence and establish relationships within the cohort before beginning one-to-one mentoring. As a result, mentoring conversations could start from a much stronger foundation.

Recommendation:
Prepare participants before matching them. Well-prepared mentees create stronger mentoring relationships.

LESSON 2

Personal connection matters more than perfect profiles

Professional background and shared interests are important, but they should not be the only criteria for matching mentors and mentees.

Allowing participants to meet during the Mix & Match Networking Session before submitting their mentor preferences significantly improved the quality of the final matches. Personal chemistry often revealed aspects that application forms could never capture.

Recommendation:
Whenever possible, create opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet before finalising the matching process.

LESSON 3

Don't rematch too quickly

Not every mentoring relationship feels natural after the first conversation. Particularly for participants experiencing mentoring for the first time, uncertainty may simply reflect unfamiliarity rather than incompatibility.

One mentoring relationship within WISE initially appeared uncertain after the Chemistry Call. Instead of immediately searching for a new mentor, the participant was encouraged to reflect on their expectations and give the relationship time to develop. The tandem continued and successfully completed the programme.

Recommendation:
Treat early uncertainty as an opportunity for dialogue rather than as evidence of a failed match. A conversation with the mentoring lead may be all that is needed to build confidence.

LESSON 4

Supervision is part of mentoring, not an optional extra

Separate supervision sessions for mentors and mentees became one of the defining features of the WISE methodology.

Providing dedicated spaces for reflection, peer learning and trainer input on relevant topics enabled participants to discuss challenges openly, strengthen their mentoring practice and learn from one another without compromising the confidentiality of the mentoring relationship.

Recommendation:
Build supervision into the programme design from the beginning. Reflection should accompany mentoring, not come after the programme is finished.

LESSON 5

Support mentors as much as mentees

Mentors are experienced professionals, but they also benefit from guidance.

Throughout the programme, mentors requested individual consultations on topics such as maintaining momentum, defining appropriate boundaries and responding to situations involving mental health or personal wellbeing. Continuous support strengthened mentors' confidence while improving the quality of the mentoring relationships.

Recommendation:
Create accessible support structures for mentors throughout the programme. Supporting mentors ultimately benefits mentees as well.

LESSON 6

Community strengthens individual mentoring

Although mentoring took place in one-to-one relationships, participants consistently highlighted the value of belonging to a wider European learning community.

Peer learning sessions, supervision workshops and interactions with EPBN member organisations ensured that participants never experienced mentoring in isolation.

Recommendation:
Complement individual mentoring with opportunities for peer learning and community building.

LESSON 7

Programme coordination matters

Successful mentoring programmes rely not only on excellent mentors but also on strong programme coordination.

The close collaboration between the Mentoring Lead and Project Coordinator ensured continuous communication, timely support and a positive participant experience throughout the programme. This combination of pedagogical guidance and reliable coordination proved essential for maintaining engagement over the course of the programme.

Recommendation:
Clearly define roles and responsibilities within the programme team and ensure that participants always know whom to contact for mentoring-related and organisational questions.

FINAL REFLECTION

The WISE Mentoring Programme demonstrated that successful mentoring is not created through matching alone. It emerges through careful preparation, human connections, structured reflection and continuous support.

Investing in these elements requires additional time and coordination, but it creates mentoring relationships that are more engaging and ultimately more impactful for everyone involved.

8. LOOKING AHEAD

ADVANCING LGBTQIA+ WORKPLACE INCLUSION THROUGH FUTURE MENTORING PROGRAMMES.

The WISE Mentoring Programme demonstrated that mentoring could become much more than a professional development tool. When thoughtfully designed, it creates spaces where people gain confidence, expand their networks, challenge limiting beliefs and discover new possibilities for themselves and others.

Looking ahead, mentoring should increasingly be understood as part of a broader ecosystem of leadership development rather than as a standalone intervention. Future programmes have the opportunity to integrate mentoring with leadership training, peer learning, community building and cross-border collaboration, creating learning journeys that accompany participants over time instead of offering isolated mentoring relationships.

For LGBTQIA+ professionals, this perspective is particularly important. Many participants are not only navigating career decisions but are also looking for role models, supportive communities and spaces where authenticity and professional ambition can coexist. Mentoring therefore contributes not only to individual careers, but also to strengthening representation, visibility and inclusive leadership across organisations and countries.

The future of mentoring is also likely to become increasingly international. As workplaces become more connected and organisations operate across borders, mentoring programmes can create opportunities for participants to learn from different cultures, leadership styles and lived experiences. Cross-border mentoring encourages curiosity, broadens perspectives and demonstrates that while national contexts may differ, many professional and personal challenges are shared.

Finally, mentoring should not be viewed as a programme with a fixed beginning and end. Every mentoring relationship creates new networks, future mentors and role models. In this way, mentoring becomes a continuous cycle of learning, giving back and strengthening communities.

We hope that the experiences shared through this toolkit inspire organisations not simply to replicate the WISE methodology, but to adapt, improve and build upon it. Every new mentoring programme contributes to a stronger, more connected and more inclusive Europe.

9. APPENDIX. PRACTICAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

TEMPLATES AND TOOLS TO SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL MENTORING PROGRAMMES.

The WISE Mentoring Programme generated a comprehensive set of practical resources that supported mentors, mentees and programme coordinators throughout the mentoring journey. Rather than being developed as standalone documents, these materials formed an integrated mentoring methodology in which every tool supported a specific stage of the participant experience.

Together, these resources demonstrate that effective mentoring is not based on a single mentoring relationship alone, but on a structured process that prepares participants, supports reflection and enables continuous learning.

The WISE methodology follows six interconnected stages:

1. Prepare

Building a strong foundation before mentoring begins.

Resources

- ★ WISE Mentoring Methodology
- ★ Welcome Call Agenda
- ★ Individual Onboarding Process
- ★ WISE Mentorship Guidelines & Agreements
- ★ Programme Timeline

2. Build Community

Creating belonging before creating mentoring relationships.

Resources

- ★ Leadership Skills Workshop Series
- ★ Peer-to-Peer Learning Sessions
- ★ Cross-border exchange with EPBN Member Organisations
- ★ Community-building activities

3. Match Intentionally

Creating mentor–mentee relationships through personal connection and compatibility rather than profiles alone.

Resources

- ★ Mix & Match Networking methodology
- ★ Mentor preference process
- ★ Matching criteria
- ★ Chemistry Call
- ★ First Mentoring Conversation Starter Guide

4. Accompany

Supporting mentoring relationships throughout the entire journey.

Resources

- ★ Mentor Onboarding Toolkit
- ★ Mentee Support Materials
- ★ Individual consultations
- ★ Ongoing programme coordination
- ★ Communication templates

5. Reflect

Creating structured opportunities for learning throughout the mentoring process.

Resources
Mentee Supervision Framework
★ SMART Goals
★ NOW–NEXT–BEYOND
★ Building Trust & Boundaries
★ Keep – Start – Stop

Mentor Supervision Framework
★ Goal-oriented mentoring
★ Mentoring VS coaching and therapy
★ Holding Space
★ Healthy boundaries
★ Celebrate – Consolidate – Transfer

6. Close Sustainably

Supporting participants in transferring their learning beyond the programme.

Resources
★ Closing supervision methodology
★ Graduation process
★ Certificate of Completion
★ Final reflection methods
★ Alumni transition

THE WISE MENTORING METHODOLOGY

At the beginning of the WISE Mentoring Programme, a mentoring methodology was developed to guide the overall design and implementation of the programme. Throughout the project, this methodology evolved continuously through practical experience, participant feedback and ongoing reflection.

The resources presented in this appendix illustrate how the original methodology was translated into concrete tools and facilitation practices across every stage of the mentoring journey. Rather than functioning as isolated templates, they form a coherent framework that organisations can adapt to their own mentoring programmes.

THE EUROPEAN PRIDE BUSINESS NETWORK: DRIVING MEASURABLE LGBTQIA+ WORKPLACE INCLUSION

EUROPEAN PRIDE BUSINESS NETWORK



Founded in 2022, the European Pride Business Network (EPBN) is a politically independent umbrella organization that brings together national and regional LGBTIQ+ professional associations from across Europe. EPBN works to advance workplace equality, foster inclusive business environments, and promote the economic empowerment of LGBTIQ+ individuals. Today, the network unites 28 member organizations across 24 European countries, forming a strong and growing alliance committed to driving sustainable change through visibility, advocacy, and collaboration.

Have questions, feedback, or ideas? Whether you're a professional, organization, or partner, we'd love to hear from you at info@epbn.eu

Discover our work and impact at www.epbn.eu.