

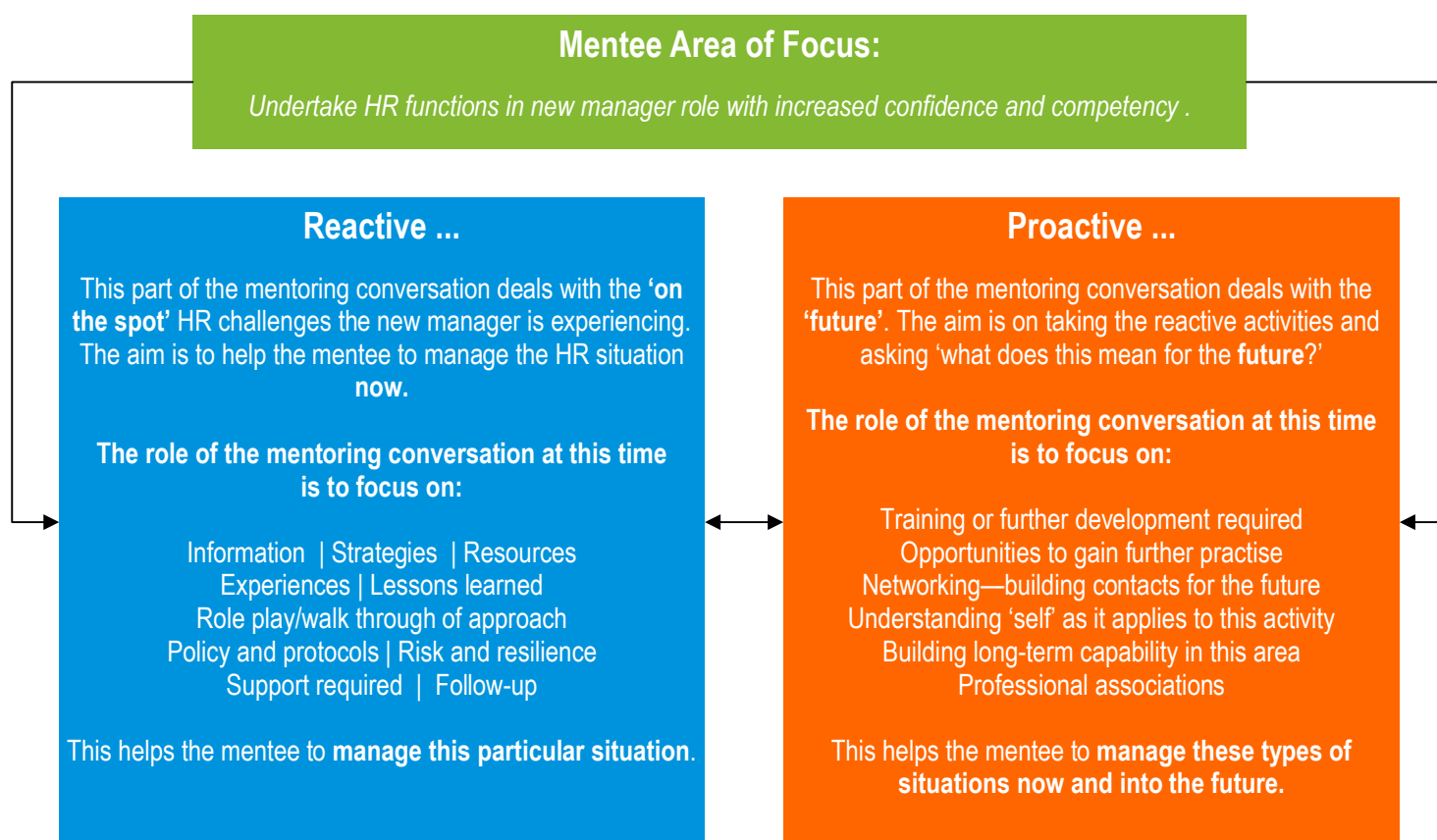
OVERVIEW

'I was surprised that much of the conversation with my mentee was about day-to-day tensions in the work environment rather than longer-term career and professional development.' (Mentor)

This quote from a mentor provides some insight into the delicate balancing act of the mentoring conversation. The contemporary mentoring conversation should be a **healthy balance** of exploring development in both the **reactive** and **proactive** spheres. While each mentoring partnership will have its own unique developmental focus, what you don't want to do is to mistake the mentoring conversation for a forum of deconstructing the various situations and personalities of the workplace in a less than constructive manner. **So how can you avoid this?**



Let's take the example of a new manager (mentee) who expresses their concern with their lack of knowledge and experience in the field of human resource management. As a new manager, this mentee will need support and development in both the **reactive (on the spot)** situations and also the **proactive (longer term)** requirements. Your mentoring conversation should be able to include **both** of these elements. Let's use the diagram below to illustrate this concept.



The list of elements for the reactive and proactive is not finite—but it serves to demonstrate that the mentoring conversation can include conversations that help with the 'here and now', while at the same time, still focussing on the overall developmental needs of the mentee for the future.

Plus—it's not essential that both aspects of the conversation happen in the one mentoring meeting—but rather that your overall mentoring conversation includes both elements.

Why not try this approach the next time you meet with your mentoring partner?