



FARM' IN

INCLUSION THROUGH
SOCIAL FARMING



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Lesson 3:

Training and Mentoring Approaches



Training and Mentoring Approaches

- ✓ Social farming needs more than farming skills – it requires **guidance, support and empowerment** of vulnerable participants.
- ✓ Mentoring is at the heart of **inclusive and sustainable farm environments**.
- ✓ Mentors are not supervisors but **facilitators of learning and inclusion**.
- ✓ Through empathy, encouragement and guidance, everyday farm tasks become **opportunities for growth**.
- ✓ This lesson combines **theory and practice** to show how mentoring builds confidence, independence and belonging.

Role of Mentors in Social Farming

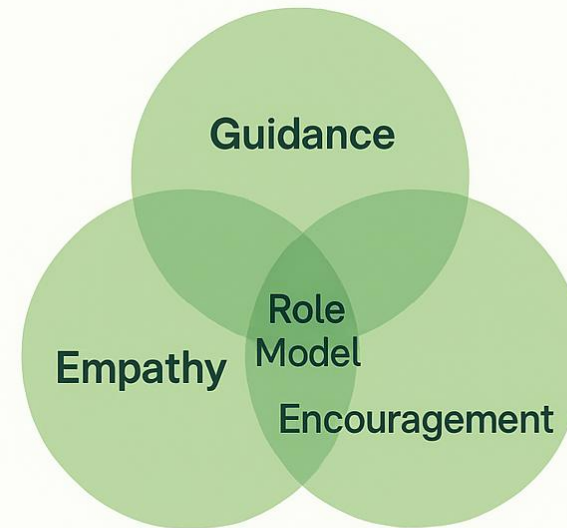
Cornerstone of inclusion: Mentors link farm work with the mission of empowering vulnerable groups.

Lead through empathy & encouragement: Not authority or control.

Role models: Patience, respect and consistency create safety and belonging.

See the person, not only the task: Understand hidden challenges (anxiety, trauma, low self-confidence).

Balance: Provide structure without overprotection, freedom without neglect.



GUIDANCE

Mentoring involves building a safe, trusting environment where participants feel valued.

EMPATHY

Good mentors understand challenges and adapt tasks to individual needs.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Recognizing small successes boosts confidence and promotes resilience.

LEADERSHIP

Mentors lead by example, fostering a community culture of respect and inclusivity

Listening & Giving Instructions: Everyday Mentoring in Action

Active Listening

- Participant avoids eye contact and gives short answers → Mentor asks: *“Would you like me to explain again?”*
- During seed planting: *“Can you show me with your hands how deep we should place the seed?”*

Clear Instructions

- Instead of *“Prepare the garden bed”* → **4 steps**: bring tools → remove weeds → smooth soil → mark rows.
- Color-coding: green watering can = indoor plants, blue = outdoor.
- Mentor demonstrates slowly: *“I place the seedling → cover with soil → press gently → water once.”* Participant repeats.

Feedback & Everyday Problem-Solving: Turning Barriers into Opportunities

Constructive Feedback

- ✓ *"I see you planted in straight rows – well done."*
- ✓ *"The soil was pressed too hard, let's try more gently together."*
- ✓ Sandwich method: *"You focused really well → try spacing plants a bit more → I know you can do it."*

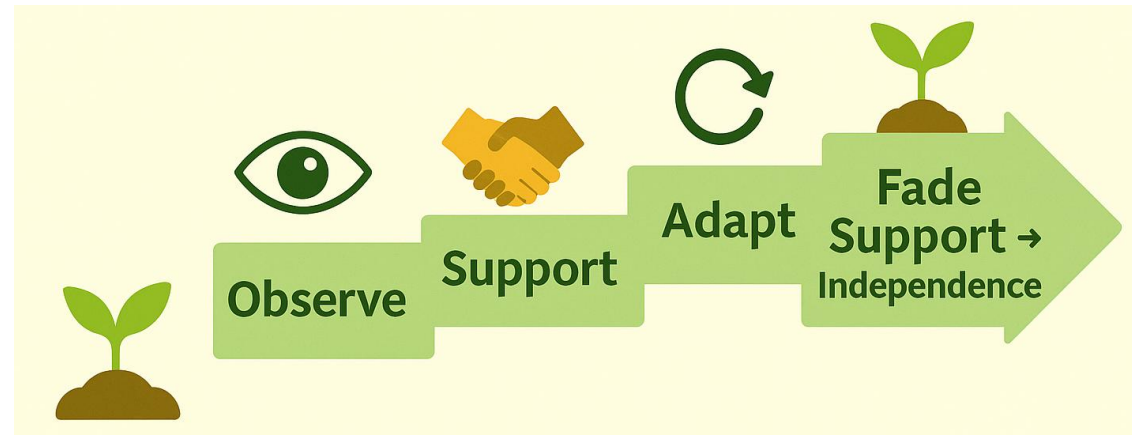
Practical Everyday Solutions

- ✓ Low focus → 10-minute tasks + visual timer.
- ✓ Anxiety with tools → start with small hand tool.
- ✓ Memory support → laminated step-by-step cards at workstation.
- ✓ Low endurance → alternate heavy and light roles (weeding ↔ labeling jars).
- ✓ Safe failure → practice planting in tray before moving to the field.

What is Job Coaching?

Job Coaching on Social Farms

- ✓ Focused on **task performance** & building **work habits**.
- ✓ Goal: **guide step by step** until participants work independently.
- ✓ Role of job coach:
observe → **support** → **adapt** → **fade support**.



Builds confidence, autonomy and resilience.

Core Principles & Practical Approaches

Principles:

- Individualised support
- Step-by-step skill development
- Hands-on learning
- Encouragement of independence
- Consistency & predictability

Practical Approaches:

1.Task breakdown: e.g. lettuce harvest = select → loosen → cut → wash → crate.

2.Visual supports: step cards/icons for planting.

3.Prompting & fading: demo → verbal → visual → independence.

4.Positive reinforcement: *“You harvested 3 heads today—improvement from yesterday!”*

5.Problem-solving together: *“What do you think happened here?”*

Challenges, Solutions & Exercise

Common Challenges & Solutions:

- ✓ Slow pace → ***adjust, repeat in short sessions, celebrate small wins.***
- ✓ Resistance/anxiety → ***start with low-risk tasks, build gradually.***
- ✓ Inconsistent performance → ***maintain routine, adapt tasks to energy.***
- ✓ Communication barriers → ***gestures, demos, simple visuals.***

Practical Examples:

- Selling products at market → coach models greetings → fades support.
- Packaging boxes → break into stages, reduce supervision over time.
- Weeding → marked row, breaks, check-ins → longer focus achieved.

Why Ongoing Support Matters: Sustaining Inclusion and Empowerment

- ✓ Mentoring continues **after tasks are learned**.
- ✓ Ensures **growth, motivation and belonging** over time.
- ✓ Not constant supervision → but **systems of stability & encouragement**.
- ✓ Protects dignity: adapts to health, motivation and energy changes.

Examples:

- Tired participant → ***lighter task (sorting, labeling, preparing tools)***.
- Outdoor work canceled → ***indoor alternative (seed sorting, packaging)***.

Key Strategies in Practice: From Feedback to Flexibility

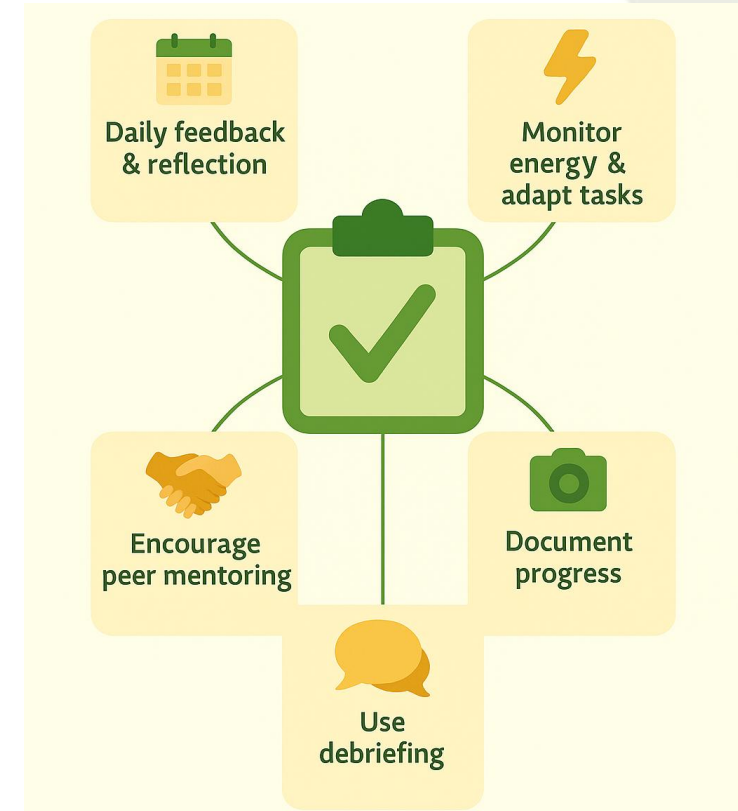
- ✓ **Regular feedback** → balanced correction + recognition of effort.
- ✓ **Reflection sessions** → daily/weekly sharing of achievements & struggles.
- ✓ **Peer support** → newcomers paired with experienced participants.
- ✓ **Consistent routines + flexibility** → structure with adaptable alternatives.
- ✓ **Crisis response** → supportive debriefs:
what happened → one improvement → recognition of support.

Examples:

- Friday reflection circle → feedback adjusts next week's roles.
- Younger participant helps older with tools → teamwork & pride.
- Conflict resolved → group agrees on clearer signals.

Practical Tools: Designing Ongoing Support Plans

- ✓ Daily feedback & reflection routines.
- ✓ Monitor energy & adapt tasks promptly.
- ✓ Encourage peer mentoring.
- ✓ Document progress (checklists, photos, charts).
- ✓ Use debriefing to rebuild trust.



Productivity & Learning: A Delicate Balance

- ✓ **Farms = economic units + learning environments.**
- ✓ Too much focus on productivity → pressure & exclusion.
- ✓ Too much focus on learning → loss of efficiency & sustainability.
- ✓ Balance = both goals **reinforce each other.**
- ✓ Productivity includes **social value**: confidence, skills, belonging.

Guidelines:

- View productivity as both **output + social growth.**
- Match tasks to abilities (slower + skilled roles together).
- Use production tasks as teaching opportunities.
- Clarify which tasks need precision vs. which allow practice.
- Celebrate yields **and** learning milestones equally.

Learning While Producing

Examples:

- Preparing vegetables for market → ***experienced weigh & clean, newcomers label.***
- Bread making → ***one kneads slowly (practice), another keeps schedule.***
- Orchard → ***faster workers harvest, learners sort by size/quality.***
- Packaging herbs → ***newcomers practice sealing, experienced check stock & quality.***

Principles & Approaches: Mentoring Vulnerable Groups

Core principles:

- ✓ **See the person, not the difficulty** → focus on abilities, interests, and potential.
- ✓ **Adaptation without overprotection** → support + freedom to try, fail, and learn.
- ✓ **Predictable routines** → reduce anxiety, increase stability.
- ✓ **Feedback with recognition** → highlight effort and progress.
- ✓ **Respect & dignity** → patience in every interaction.

Mentoring Vulnerable Groups: Approaches & Examples

Group / Challenge	Approach	Practical Example
 Physical disabilities	Adapted tools, raised beds, clear pathways	Limited mobility → raised bed + lightweight watering can → independence
 Mental health difficulties	Calm routines, encouragement on low days	Depression → warm greeting + small task list → gradual engagement
 Elderly	Shorter tasks, rest opportunities, value life experience	Older adult → garden work + labeling jars → balanced activity
 Youth at risk	Clear rules, visible success in small steps	Teenager with low focus → 3-step tasks + immediate feedback → completion celebrated
 Migrants / language barriers	Visual instructions, peer support	Language barrier → picture-based composting guide → independent practice

Good Practice Examples in Social Farm Mentoring

Approach	Description	Key Benefit
 Rotational Learning Circles	Participants rotate roles (planting, watering, harvesting).	Prevents boredom, reveals strengths.
 Story-Based Skill Training	Instructions embedded in simple stories (e.g., animal feeding as a daily story).	Easier recall, builds pride in repetition.
 Peer Shadowing	Newcomer paired with an experienced participant.	Builds skills and empowers both individuals.
 Quiet Zone Workspaces	Designated calm spaces for focused tasks.	Reduces anxiety while keeping participants included.
 Success Journals	Participants record achievements with drawings, notes or photos.	Creates visible progress, strengthens confidence.

Good Practice Examples in Social Farm Mentoring

Approach	Description	Key Benefit
 Group Problem-Solving	Challenges turned into collective brainstorming and solution testing.	Fosters teamwork and values participants' opinions.
 Inclusive Tool Design	Tools adapted for easier handling (lightweight watering cans, soft handles).	Enables participation for those with physical barriers.
 Celebrating Micro-Achievements	Weekly recognition of small victories (e.g., finishing a row, speaking up).	Weekly recognition of small victories (e.g., finishing a row, speaking up).
 Buddy Bench	A bench signals that someone needs support; peers/mentors offer conversation.	Encourages healthy communication, reduces anxiety.
 Market Simulation Training	Practice market setup and sales in a safe environment before real markets.	Increases confidence, prepares for real social settings.

Practical Mentoring Toolkit:

Everyday Tools for Inclusive Guidance

Category	Tools & Methods	Practical Examples
 Visual Support Tools	Step-by-step picture cards, laminated posters, colour-coded tools, checklists	Participant with limited literacy uses a laminated checklist → ticks tasks off daily.
 Communication & Feedback	Feelings board (😊 😐 😞), “Two stars & a wish” method	Mentor uses two positive comments + one suggestion → feedback stays balanced.
 Routines & Reflection	Morning briefing with visuals, daily reflection circles, progress folders	End-of-week reflection board → sticky notes under “I enjoyed / I learned / I found difficult.”
 Peer Support Tools	Buddy system, shared problem-solving board	New participant paired with a buddy → learns tasks and feels included.
 Applied Visuals in Tasks	Pocket-sized instruction cards	During animal care → pocket card with feeding steps ensures accuracy & independence.

Key Messages from Lesson 3

Mentoring in Social Farming means:

- ✓ **Empathy + Encouragement + Guidance** → safe, inclusive environment.
- ✓ **Practical skills** (listening, clear instructions, feedback) make daily tasks learning opportunities.
- ✓ **Job coaching** builds confidence through step-by-step support and gradual independence.
- ✓ **Ongoing strategies** (feedback, reflection, flexibility, peer mentoring) sustain motivation and belonging.
- ✓ **Balance productivity with learning** → both economic results and social value matter.
- ✓ **Tailored mentoring** ensures every vulnerable group can contribute and grow.
- ✓ **Good practices & toolkit** turn theory into practical, everyday tools.

