



Education  
& Communities  
Northern Sydney

Northern Sydney Region

# Teacher Mentor Training

## Working Together



## Participants Handbook



Education  
& Communities  
Northern Sydney

Northern Sydney Region  
Leading Learning

## Course Outline

- Introduction
- Role and Qualities of Mentors
- Boundaries and Confidentiality
- Effective Communication
- Rapport Building
- Behaviour Management
- Decision Making and Goal Setting
- Matching Mentor to Mentee
- Where to from here?

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## Introduction- What is Mentoring?

- Mentoring is a structured, one-to-one relationship. It is based upon encouragement, constructive comments, mutual trust and respect and focuses on the needs of the mentoring participant.
- "The purpose of mentoring is always to help the mentee to change something - to improve their performance, to develop their leadership qualities, to develop their partnership skills, to realise their vision, or whatever. This movement from where they are, ('here'), to where they want to be ('there'). - Mike Turner

**The mentoring partnership is:**

**\* undertaken willingly   \* informed   \* interactive   \* confidential**

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## Role and Qualities of Mentors

- Ability to relate to mentees
- Motivate mentees
- Listen
- Assist mentees to make plans and carry them through
- Identify a mentee's hidden talents and skills
- Communicate hope and optimism
- Make a commitment to the mentor program
- Make time available
- Help mentees become more involved in school
- Set and maintain firm boundaries
- Maintain confidentiality and trust within appropriate limits
- Delegate responsibility to mentees

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### How is mentoring different from friendship?

- Think back through your life to the people who made a difference. Was that person a teacher?
- What made these people great mentors?




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### Differences between a mentor and a teacher

Role	Mentor	Teacher
Confidant		
Advisor		
Disciplinarian		
Instructor		
Guide		
Decision Maker		
Facilitator		
Assessor		

(Please put an "X" in the mentor column if you believe a role is part of your mentor responsibility; put an "X" in the teacher column if you believe this is strictly a teaching role. If it's a role of both teacher and mentor, put an "X" in both columns.)

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## Boundaries

- Firm boundaries
- Don't rescue the mentee
- It is distressing to know that some young people face difficult challenges in their home life but this is not something which the school can change.



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## Confidentiality

- Mentoring works best when mentors keep confidential everything that happens in the mentoring session unless they have the express permission of the student to disclose it.
- The only exception is student protection concerns. Mentors cannot keep disclosures of abuse or neglect confidential.

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## Building a Relationship

**The key to building an effective mentoring relationship lies in establishing trust.**

Effective mentors are likely to:

- See their role as one of supporting their student in a variety of ways
- Be able to establish honest open communication
- Take responsibility for keeping the relationship alive by initiating contacts and meetings
- See the student as capable and respect their abilities
- Involve the student in deciding how time will be spent together
- Incorporate an element of "fun" into the relationship
- Recognise that they don't have all the answers and seek advice of experts as needed

Effective mentors are careful not to:

- Look for the quick fix or push too hard too fast
- Focus on own agenda rather than the students
- Use sweeping value laden statements or be an authoritative figure
- Use directive terms like "You should stop- ...". Instead replace with suggestive language "Do you think ... what might be a better way ...."

***Mentors should recognise that boundaries may have been crossed or they are getting over involved when they are worrying about the student at home or are unable to get the students problems out of their head.***

## Effective Listening



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## What is Active Listening?

Attentive Body Language	Following Skills	Reflecting Skills
Body language showing involvement and attention	Friendly interested Conversation openers	Restating the feeling and content with understanding and acceptance
Appropriate body movement	Encourage without interrupting e.g. by nodding and saying "mm"	Checking that you have understood what was said
Appropriate eye contact	Infrequent questions	Summarising concerns
Non-distracting environment	Attentive silence	

## Empathy Blockers



Criticising  
Moralising  
Threatening  
Diagnosing  
Advising  
Reassuring

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## Responding to Anger

- Stay silent
- Wait for them to blow off steam.
- Listen and let the speaker know that you have heard the complaint, the anger and/or accusation by using obvious verbal indicators such as a clear 'yes' or 'OK' when you think they are ready to listen
- Ask questions to understand the basis of their attack.
- Remain calm and avoid showing agitation or tension.
- Avoid defensive or aggressive posture.
- Use eye contact and an assertive stance.

## Responding to Anger

- Ignore relevant comments and redirect the speaker back to the problem at hand.
- Propose solutions to the problem- don't start advising early on to end the conflict. Firstly, acknowledge the right of the other person.
- Avoid the defensive reflex- when people are angry they often get personal. Don't defend yourself.
- Once the speaker is calm, you may wish to use the incident to discuss ways of dealing with anger.

## Reframing

- When the student says what they can't do about a situation, ask what they can do.
- When the student says something is good "but..." help them to add to it substituting 'and' for 'but'.
- Never say what the student should do instead discuss what they could do.
- Instead of judging an action describe what is happening in a neutral way.
- When the student says everything has gone wrong, ask for specifics and brainstorm solutions.
- Change negatives into positives by finding the upside or stating the preference
- Give choices rather than orders.

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## Rapport



- Good rapport establishes good relationships
- Only when rapport is present will the other person follow your lead happily.
- Skills - Active listening
  - Begin from where the other person is
  - Back track often for clarity and agreement. Use their words when back tracking
  - Smile when talking
  - Use their name in conversation
  - Minimize distractions and focus on the conversation
  - Use and instead of but
  - Often others just want to get things off their chest.

## Trust

- The purpose of mentoring is to provide a positive relationship. It is a relationship based on trust.



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### How to get your mentee to talk to you?

- Ask how come rather than why
- Say "Do you want to talk about it"
- Make statements like "That must have been terrible for you"
- Say something about them socially like " I like your cap"
- Show interest in them
- Get down to their level

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### Starting a conversation

- Greet the other person
- Establish eye contact
- Look for things to talk about
- Decide whether the other person is listening to you
- Make it clear you have a point to get across
- Keep the conversation interesting
- Allow the other person to talk
- Listen to the others point of view

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### Behaviour Management

- What rules do you think you need to have for the mentoring sessions?
- The best way to prevent misbehaviour is to focus on strengths and give verbal positive reinforcement ie praise



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### Safety for the Mentor

Be aware of your own boundaries and think before saying "yes".  
Don't become a substitute for a playground friend or promise to keep a secret.  
Watch for warning signs that the student isn't coping.  
Share any concerns you have about what your student has disclosed with appropriate support people.







## SCENARIO 1

Discuss the following scenario and develop a support plan based on the framework below.

Troy is 15 years old and comes from a volatile and dysfunctional family situation. He is constantly moved between family members, including his grandparents and friends on a weekly basis. He has been suspended due to chronic truanting issues and antisocial behaviour. The school counsellor reports that there are strong indicators for depression in her findings. Troy wants to get his school certificate and has dreams of being a pilot. He is capable academically but his surly and aggressive behaviour hinders and masks his ability. As a result teachers do not have any expectations of him. He is in danger of receiving “N” awards in several subjects.

Identified issues:

Implications as a mentor:

Overall plan (timeframe, times, impact on current workload):

How do you feel the Learning Support Team should be involved?

## SCENARIO 2



Discuss the following scenario and develop a support plan based on the framework below.

Rhall is 13 years old and is returning from the Pennant Parade Tutorial Centre. Before attending the tutorial centre he was rude to teachers and made loud sexist comments in class. In the playground the remarks generally become more degrading. He never took responsibility for his actions and always denied that he is at fault. His father and grandfather defend him when these issues are reported to them. His father blames the school for his identified learning difficulty. There was a noticeable reduction in swearing and loud talking on his return from the tutorial centre, but all are concerned about how long this will last without support.

Identified issues:

Implications as a mentor:

Overall plan (timeframe, times, impact on current workload):

How do you feel the Learning Support Team should be involved?

### SCENARIO 3



Discuss the following scenario and develop a support plan based on the framework below.

Chelsea is a 12 year old girl who feels her mother walked out on the family for her own interests. Due to this Chelsea is very resentful of girls from what she perceives as middle class families with settled home lives. She was suspended for physical aggression on a bus which she admitted was because she was jealous of the girl and her family life. Chelsea displays no interest in school and once very popular and keen in class is showing increasing signs of isolation and being drawn to a risk taking peer group. She is starting to truant from classes.

Identified issues:

Implications as a mentor:

Overall plan (timeframe, times, impact on current workload):

How do you feel the Learning Support Team should be involved?

## SCENARIO 4



Discuss the following scenario and develop a support plan based on the framework below.

James is a 14 year old boy in the care of DoC's and has just moved into another residential placement. He is returning from a placement in a behaviour school. Although he says he is very happy in his new situation and school, he is constantly putting his placement at risk by his erratic outbursts and taking out his frustrations on destroying property. He is extremely non communicative and anxious at school. However, he can get angry and lash out verbally at staff and students. He has gaps in his learning due to the constant upheaval residentially and educationally and is resistant to completing tasks in class. The only positive noted by staff is his keen interest in athletics but his behaviour has hindered him competing in school events.

Identified issues:

Implications as a mentor:

Overall plan (timeframe, times, impact on current workload):

How do you feel the Learning Support Team should be involved?

## SCENARIO 5



Discuss the following scenario and develop a support plan based on the framework below.

Soanna is a 14 year old Aboriginal girl whose parents have moved to a new area and she has had to start at a new high school. This has disconnected her from her previous peer group. She was suspended from her new high school for mobile phone bullying and cyber bullying using the schools computers. Academically she is very focused but this is constantly undermined by playground issues. Soanna manipulates her family by implying she will run away and brags about risk-taking behaviours to impress her new schoolmates.

Identified issues:

Implications as a mentor:

Overall plan (timeframe, times, impact on current workload):

How do you feel the Learning Support Team should be involved?

## Decision Making

- Step 1: Identify the problem
- Step 2: List all the possible solutions
- Step 3: Make a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each solution
- Step 4: Choose the best solution that takes into account skills, money, time, resources
- Step 5: List the steps to achieve the goal
- Step 6: revise and make changes if necessary

## Goal Setting

- Makes an action statement
- Helps the students work on setting goals
- Goal setting gives learning a focus
- Prevents problems from getting out of hand

## A Decision-making Process



### STEP 1: Identify the problem

- Discuss the events and highlight the main troubling issue
- Write down what you think is the main problem.

### STEP 2: List all the possible solutions

- Write down all the ideas you can think of to solve the problem. Be as creative as you like.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### STEP 3: Make a list of all the advantages and disadvantages for each solution.

#### ***Advantages***

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### ***Disadvantages***

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



**STEP 4:** Choose the best solution that takes into account your skills, money, time, resources. Write it down.

**STEP 5:** List the steps you will take to reach the desired result. List the things you need at each step to help you carry out your solution

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Things I need</i>
•	#
•	#
•	#
•	#
•	#

**STEP 6:** Revise your progress and make changes to your plan where necessary

**Change 1:**

**Change 2:**

## Matching Mentors to Mentees

- You don't need to take someone on if you don't want to.
- For mentoring to be effective, both the mentor and mentee need to be committed.
- The matching is an important part of the program.
- In matching mentors and mentees it is important to take account of preferences.

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## Program Details

- Mentoring agreement
- How many mentees?
- Target students?
- Mentoring pamphlet
- On going training
- debriefing
- District Office support

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# Appendix





## Checklist for Mentoring Programs

An effective mentoring program will have the following.

- ☐ Clear aims for the whole program and for each student in the program
- ☐ Executive support
- ☐ A recruitment plan for both mentors and mentees
- ☐ Information for parents and students
- ☐ Training for mentors
- ☐ Child protection screening for mentors
- ☐ A program co-ordinator who participates in training and is provided with release time to debrief mentors after each session
- ☐ A strategy for matching mentor and mentee and for dealing with relationship difficulties
- ☐ Flexibility to allow new students to enter the program
- ☐ Regular, consistent contact between mentors and mentees
- ☐ A quiet place for mentors and mentees to meet for one to one mentoring sessions
- ☐ Materials for mentors and mentees to work on together
- ☐ Records of mentees progress
- ☐ Support for mentors including debriefing after each session
- ☐ Feedback for mentors on the progress of their mentee
- ☐ Top up training for mentors when needed
- ☐ A definite end point
- ☐ Celebrations and recognition of mentor efforts and mentee progress
- ☐ An evaluation process

To be used in conjunction with - **A CHECKLIST FOR MENTORING PROGRAMS Student Welfare**

# Setting Up a School Mentoring Program

## Steps to Success



### A. Step by Step Guide to Setting up a School Mentoring Program

#### 1. Establish the aims and objectives of the mentoring program

A formal meeting needs to be set up between all interested parties. This might include district office staff such as the student welfare consultant and/or the student services and equity co-ordinator, principals of participating school/s, proposed co-ordinator of participating school/s and interested teachers.

At the meeting consider the following:

- The aims and objectives of the mentoring program.
- Anticipated achievements of the mentoring program.
- The feasibility of incorporating mentoring into the welfare structure of the school.
- The resources to be allocated to the program.
- Involvement of staff in the program
- Involvement of students in the program
- Evaluation

The key elements of successful mentoring programs include:

- ✓ the support of the principal and executive staff
- ✓ the involvement of staff and parents
- ✓ realistic expectations of what the program can achieve.
- ✓ starting with a small, manageable group
- ✓ consistent monitoring and evaluation of the program (involving all school members) community with clear data
- ✓ regular, formal meetings with documentation of objectives (agenda) and outcomes (minutes).

#### 2. Identify the target group

All students can benefit from mentoring so multiple mentoring strategies can be implemented however it is best to start with a single program which can be built on. Begin by considering which students are most likely to benefit from a mentoring partnership so that the initial program is a success.

The nature of the target group will determine the sort of mentors recruited and the support required.

**Participation in the program must be voluntary.**

### 3. Recruit mentors

Schools need to consider a range of recruitment strategies to target appropriate mentors. Advertising for expressions of interest is the most effective strategy. This can range from promotion at school assemblies, articles in school newsletters to articles in local newspapers.

It is important that schools establish criteria for selection including (where appropriate) child protection checks.

### 4. Select mentors and mentees and inform parents

It is wise to start with a small group of mentees in the initial implementation of a mentoring program. This way the program can be evaluated and hiccups ironed out before extending the program.

The mentees, mentors and parents should be informed about the program. The aims and objectives need to be carefully explained as well as the benefits the program will offer. Parents should be provided with the opportunity to discuss the program with the co-ordinator.

All parties should sign a mentoring agreement to demonstrate commitment to the program.

### 5. Train mentors

Training must assist mentors to develop the skills to work effectively with mentees. It is crucial to include information on the aims of the program, support for mentors, child protection, boundaries and confidentiality. Training also needs to cover the specific materials that mentors and mentees will work on together in mentoring sessions.

Ideally, training for student mentors should occur over two days. On the first day, the program should be explained to mentors so that they understand the type of commitment that will be required and the nature of the mentor's role. They need to practice communication skills and clarify the differences between mentoring and friendship.

The second day should develop mentor's skills in the activities that they will be working on with mentees.

Training for community mentors should occur over two days. The first day should include information about the role of the mentor. The second needs to equip mentors more specifically on the skills they will need to work effectively with young people.

Teacher mentor training need only take a day as teachers have had formal training on working effectively with young people. Training should include information on the role of a mentor, boundaries and confidentiality, information specific to meetings between themselves and their mentee and program details.

Mentors must be afforded the opportunity to practise skills in small groups. They should be encouraged to raise questions and discuss issues and concerns throughout the training. At the conclusion of mentor training, mentors should be provided with a certificate.



## **6. Prepare mentees to be mentored**

Mentees should understand what the relationship can and can not do for them. The aims of the program, benefits to them, their responsibilities and the role of the mentor should be carefully explained.

Mentees may need to be taught specific skills to enable them to work effectively with their mentor. The basic skills they need are help seeking skills, conversation and asking questions. They need to understand the limits of the relationship. Where mentees travel outside the school to meet their mentor at a workplace, skills such as train travel and finding their way to and around work sites may be important.

In a student mentoring program, initially mentors and mentees can meet informally to have lunch and/or play games. These meetings can take place at the high school and primary school. This provides a less threatening introduction to meeting new people.

## **7. Develop materials for mentoring sessions**

## **8. Start the program in school**

A short informal event hosted by the school can allow a relaxed, non-threatening introduction to the program. Providing mentors and mentees with opportunities to work in small groups together can ease tension.

Providing mentors and mentees with the opportunity to meet informally can also help determine which people may work best together.

## **9. Match mentor and mentee**

Consider the criteria to be used to match mentors with mentees. Criteria may include sex, similar interests, personalities, career choices or suggestions from teachers and year advisors.

Matching may be limited by the number of mentors available. Relationships need to be carefully monitored and a system put in place for when relationships break down.

## **10. Agree on ground rules**

Discussing ground rules can provide a focus for the first formal meeting between mentors, mentees and parents. Everyone participating should understand the aims of the program. It is particularly important that everyone is aware of the positive feedback which mentors will receive on their mentee.

Both the mentor and mentee and their parents should sign a mentoring agreement.

Parents need to be informed about their child's involvement in the program. They should be made aware of the aims and objectives of the mentoring program. An information night and/or brochure can help achieve this. Parents need to be kept informed about the progress of the program and encouraged to participate where possible.

## **11. Provide feedback and support**

Both mentors and mentees need to be able to give feedback on how the relationship is going. This can help to identify problems early and smooth out glitches in the program. Having a mentors' journal for participants can be useful for this purpose.

Discussion and feedback for mentors is a crucial component of the mentoring program. Regular times need to be set aside for mentors to discuss the mentoring relationship with the co-ordinator. Where teachers are mentors the debrief sessions serve to emphasise the distinction between the role of a teacher and a mentor which is vital for program success. Students need a discussion and feedback session so that they can let go of the mentor's problems rather than being burdened by them.

In community mentor programs their needs to be an opportunity to discuss what went well and what problems arose over a cup of tea or coffee after every session. Community members need to be provided with positive feedback on their mentee in order to see that their work is having an impact. Discussion sessions allow them to bond as a group which maintains their commitment and punctuality.

## **12. Monitor progress**

There are several ways of monitoring a mentoring program. Surveys, questionnaires, meetings, telephone calls and e-mails all keep the lines of communication open. Monitoring will provide information on progress of the program and can be useful to resolve problems or conflicts at an early stage.

## **13. Celebrate success**

It is important to celebrate milestones in the program to recognise success.

Giving mentors and mentees a certificate to celebrate success is a good idea.

A formal celebration for mentors and mentees should be organised to conclude the program. Parents should be included where possible.

## **14. Evaluate**

Evaluation provides information that can be used to make the program more effective. It can also be used to promote the success of the program.

To evaluate effectively, schools must be clear on the aims and objectives of the program. Data should be collected at the start and end of the program and at intervals throughout, from a variety of sources (mentees, mentors, parents, teachers, program co-ordinator).

Evaluation should look at the effectiveness of the structures in place as much as the relationship between participants.

## Role of the Co-ordinator

### What skills and qualities does a mentoring co-ordinator need?

- ☒ Good organisational skills
- ☒ Effective communication skills
- ☒ Diplomacy, tact and patience
- ☒ Commitment and enthusiasm
- ☒ The ability to motivate others

### Who might best fill the role of co-ordinator?

Schools need to think carefully about how the program will be co-ordinated and by whom. The person nominated as the co-ordinator may already have a complementary role within the school such as that of year advisor, head teacher welfare, school counsellor, senior teacher or careers advisor, learning support team co-ordinator.

It is advisable to appoint an assistant co-ordinator to relieve the work load and provide program continuity.

### What is the role of the co-ordinator?

The co-ordinator might be responsible for, or help with a number of tasks. These tasks could involve:

- co-ordinating planning meetings with key personnel
- promoting the program to the school community – informing students, parents and teachers and the local community about the mentoring program
- liaising between program participants (community members, principals of participating schools in a transition mentoring program)
- helping to select mentors and mentees
- assisting with the matching of mentees with mentors
- managing the day-to-day operation of the program such as finding suitable venues for mentoring sessions, reminding mentors and mentees about appointments and organising debriefing sessions for mentors and mentees
- organising support material for mentoring sessions
- co-ordinating planning of celebration events
- co-ordinating monitoring and evaluation of the program.

## What are some of the challenges mentoring co-ordinators face?

Some of the main challenges school co-ordinators find in implementing a mentoring program are:

- recruiting mentors and ensuring their commitment and retention
- administration and logistics such as finding rooms for mentoring meetings, ensuring that mentees arrive on time and keeping in contact with mentors
- matching mentees and mentors
- ensuring the quality of interactions at mentoring sessions
- the unrealistic expectations of some colleagues, e.g. that in a short time mentoring can transform students with attendance and behaviour problems
- tracking student progress
- taking on the role after the current co-ordinator has left the school.

## How can these challenges be addressed?

Commitment to the program from the whole school community can address some of the above challenges. Some strategies to build commitment include the following.

- Promoting interest in the program amongst staff and parents provides more 'willing helpers' to implement the program. Staff and parents may be able to help:
  - administer and collate surveys and questionnaires
  - write articles for the school newsletter and local paper
  - remind mentors and mentees of meeting times via school assemblies, newsletters, phone calls, emails
  - help organise celebration events
  - debrief mentors and mentees.
- If staff see the program as worthwhile they are more likely to be accommodating. Staff flexibility may be crucial to provide suitable venues for meetings and mentoring sessions such as the school hall or library.
- Within the program budget, co-ordinators need to be provided with relief time. Mentoring programs typically take between 30 minutes to 2 hours of co-ordinators time per week.
- The co-ordinator can record the implementation process of the mentoring program to keep on file with the principal/deputy principal. This provides support for new co-ordinators and promotes continuity of the mentoring program.



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