

# mates

mentor assist target engage skills

meaningful mentoring  
in our community



# Mentor Training Handbook

‘Being a mentor is about offering a supportive and non-judgemental relationship to a young person and becoming a positive and motivating influence in their life. Mentors connect, encourage and inspire young people to reach their full potential.’ Whitelion Mentoring Program

# TERMS of Reference

The MATES mentoring program is embedded in the curriculum of the schools coordinating the program and supported by the North Central LLEN and its community partners; local Health Services, Community Resource Centres, the Buloke Shire Council and the Loddon Shire Council.

The MATES mentoring program is a key strategy of the Local Shire Councils and part of the LLEN's strategic plan to enhance opportunities for young people in our communities.

The LLEN's strategic goals are to:

- increase the number of young people (12-19) moving from disengagement into school, other education options, training and meaningful employment
- decrease the number of young people (12-19) at risk of disengaging from school.

## Rationale

We all want to offer better opportunities to young people in our communities so as to improve their chances in life. This mentoring program tries to do that by supporting flexible relationships between young people and adults in one-to-one and group social settings.

## How does mentoring help?

There has been a great deal of international research carried out on the benefits of mentoring to a young person. The Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance published data below in October 2011.

'Realising their Potential: A Survey of Young People in Youth Mentoring.'

- 93% of young people mentored knew where to go for help if they need it
- 90% have a more positive view of their future
- 87% feel more confident
- 81% go to school more often
- 79% have a clearer idea of what they want to do in the future
- 78% are less likely to use drugs or alcohol
- 75% know more about the education/training/work options that are available to them

## Purpose

The program provides opportunities for young people to form relationships with adults outside the school environment. By providing support based on mutual respect, mentors contribute to young people's self-esteem and motivation to set goals for their future. MATES mentoring offers young people a better understanding of life and the world of work. It offers mentors increased understanding and appreciation of the issues and opportunities faced by young people.

## Values

These values are embedded in the policies and procedures of the program.

- Self-respect and respect for others
- Young people's right to learn and reach their full potential
- Being non-judgmental of each other
- Relationships that are meaningful and caring
- Individuals are unique and have qualities that should be valued
- See solutions and opportunities rather than barriers

## **POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

### **Screening**

Volunteers are asked to nominate referees and must apply for a Working with Children Check. The WWCC is available at any post office and free for volunteers. The school covers the cost of the photo needed to complete the WWCC and the card is valid for five years.

Having completed the initial training and WWCC, potential mentors discuss their continued interest and commitment to being mentors with the program co-ordinator, who will determine suitability to be a MATES mentor.

### **Ongoing training and peer support**

Training continues during the course of the mentoring program. Another great support for each mentor is the opportunity to meet other mentors regularly and share experiences and learning.

The program co-ordinator will arrange training and peer support opportunities when convenient that give mentors the chance to take part in discussion and interactive activities with other mentors.

### **Ongoing mentor support**

As well as ongoing training and peer support, the program co-ordinator will meet regularly with individual mentors. Regular feedback helps the co-ordinator to offer timely and meaningful support, and assists in evaluating the program.

### **Matching mentors and young people**

After doing the training mentors are invited to an informal meeting of mentors and young people. 'Matches' between adults and young people might occur readily and naturally. In other cases the mentor-co-ordinator will suggest matches based on interests and personalities.

Once a match is made, the pair decides on a meeting time and the activities they would like to do together. The program co-ordinator will attend the first meeting. Mentors and young people are encouraged to meet for a minimum two hours a fortnight over twelve months.

### **The mentoring agreement**

The program co-ordinator attends the first meeting between a newly matched mentor and a young person. They facilitate the meeting, and make sure the meaning of confidentiality, and its limitations, and the boundaries between mentors and young people are clear.

A mentoring agreement is signed by both parties

### **Duty of care**

The Schools and its volunteers must exercise 'duty of care'—they must take reasonable care to avoid actions or oversights that might reasonably be foreseen to result in injury to others.

The School is liable for the actions of its paid staff and its volunteers. The keys to duty of care are good risk management, appropriate insurance, parental consent, and common sense.



## Parents

A young person's parents must be fully aware at all times of their son's or daughter's whereabouts, who they are with and the nature and purpose of the activity. Mentors need to make sure that parents or a guardian know about any planned meeting or activity, especially outside school hours.

It is the young person's responsibility to ensure that the school principal is aware that they are seeing their mentor during normal school times and that their medical information is up to date.

## School permission

If the young person is a school student, mentors must get permission from the school, before meeting the young person during school hours. The school principal will require full details before giving approval for meetings or activities to take place.

## Transport

Mentors with a current (not provisional) driver's license can transport young people in a registered, comprehensively insured, private vehicle, if travel by public transport is either not available or is unreasonable. Ask the program co-ordinator if not sure.

## No touching

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has a strict policy that adults, including teachers and mentors, don't touch students.

## Child protection legislation—mandatory reporting

Victorian legislation requires mentors to tell the school principal or the *MATES* co-ordinator if they have any concerns about the physical or moral safety of their young person. It is the same legislation that requires mentors to complete the Working with Children Check before becoming a mentor.

## Referral procedure

Even if a mentor is a trained counsellor, social worker, teacher or psychologist, that is not part of their role as a mentor. If, during the course of their relationship, issues about the young person's physical or emotional health arise, the mentor should suggest the young person talk to their parents or school welfare officer.

If the young person is reluctant to approach others for assistance, and the mentor believes a risk to physical or emotional health exists, they should talk to the co-ordinator.

## Confidentiality

All information discussed between mentors and young people is private and remains in confidence, other than situations where the young person discloses information about self-harm, harm to others, or discloses an illegal act.



## Grievances

Notify the MATES co-ordinator of any incident or pattern of events involving disruptive, abusive or violent behaviour, or any grievance between a mentor and a young person. It is unlikely, but it can happen.

The co-ordinator will mediate between the parties, and might call upon others whose presence is mutually acceptable. If a grievance can't be satisfactorily resolved, the mentor and young person will agree to end their match and be re-matched with someone else.

If a grievance involves the program co-ordinator, the aggrieved party should contact the Principal of the School.

## Expenses

Mentors are volunteers. Paying mentors would effectively make them employees or sub-contractors and subject the School and mentors to many risks and legal liabilities. That said, it is not the intention that mentors should be 'out of pocket' by being mentors.

The list of suggested activities to do with young people is either cost-free or relatively inexpensive, and mentors and young people are expected to share any costs. No activity is compulsory and mentors are not expected to pay for young people.

If a mentor is unsure about the cost of any mentoring activity, they should contact the program co-ordinator for information or advice.

## Reimbursement

Where the program co-ordinator approves reimbursement for an activity, an application for expenses incurred should be completed and clearly state the purpose of the activity and the nature of the expenditure.

## Record-keeping

All documentation from initial expressions of interest and applications, to referee details and Working with Children Checks, are kept in a confidential file in the Coordinator's office.

## Inquiries

All inquiries about the program by potential mentors should be directed to the MATES mentoring coordinator, School Principal or administration staff.

## Closure

The end of the mentoring relationship is an anticipated event. The feelings of both mentors and young people, whatever they are, will be acknowledged and supported. The closure process contributes information to the evaluation process.

A local get together is held in October each year to celebrate Youth Mentoring Week and to recognise the commitment and support of mentors and young people to each other. Young people and their mentors share what they have gained from the program. Young people's parents or guardians, mentors' partners, and participating employers, school personnel, local government representatives, business and community leaders, and interested community members are invited to attend.

## Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of maintaining a successful mentoring program. The LLEN will oversee this process and assist in collecting written and verbal feedback from mentors, young people, parents and the schools.

This evaluation will contain responses regarding values, goals, possible improvements, and potential future involvement in mentoring programs.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### The rights of young people

Young people being matched with a mentor are informed of these rights and encouraged to discuss any issues or problems with the mentoring co-ordinator.

They have the right to

- feel safe
- be respected
- be listened to
- to be taken seriously
- have their concerns dealt with responsibly, without discrimination or judgment
- to say no!

### Ethical principles

- Mentors know, understand and protect the rights of young people
- Mentors respect every person's humanity, worth and dignity
- Mentors respect people's diversity—their race, gender and sexual orientation, culture, and belief system
- Mentors respect the privacy of other mentors and young people, and the confidentiality of information acquired during mentoring
- When making arrangements or offering advice or guidance mentors respect the rights and responsibilities of the young person's family or carers, their teachers, school, and any professional person working with them
- Mentors work to maintain and develop their capability as mentors
- Mentors abide by the laws

### Good practice

A mentor should:

- Meet regularly with a young person for one to two hours per fortnight or communicate once a fortnight by text, email or phone.
- be reliable and punctual in contacting and meeting the young person they are matched with (even if the young person is not)
- choose with care how much and what information about themselves they share with a young person

- discuss with the young person (and set) the personal boundaries they are comfortable with
- inform the program co-ordinator of any concern(s) about their relationship with the young person
- ask for advice from the program co-ordinator before involving the young person in any aspect of their personal life, such as a birthday party or family outing
- advise the program co-ordinator of any change in their personal or family situation which could affect their role as a mentor
- enter no financial arrangement (loan money to, or borrow money from) the young person
- not allow a young person to do anything illegal while in their company
- have a current driver's licence, if driving a young person anywhere, and only drive a registered vehicle
- be available for ongoing training

## Good conduct

The School's mission and values ask for a certain standard of behaviour

- Conduct consistent with being a positive role model to a young person
- Consideration for your own and the young person's safety and security
- Respect each young person's rights, dignity and worth, being aware of their gender, ability, cultural background or faith
- Be positive in your attitudes and expressions to young people
- Encourage young people, but don't force them
- Be honest, reliable, punctual and true to your word
- Take notice of a young person's reactions to your voice and manner
- Dress in a non-provocative way: avoid slogans or images of sex, violence, drugs, discrimination or politics, or advertising alcohol
- Try not to smoke around young people, even if they do



## **A mentor is a**

friend  
supporter  
coach  
companion  
advisor  
role model  
confidant  
motivator  
guide  
resource  
negotiator

## **A mentor is not a**

rescuer  
ATM  
babysitter  
social worker  
parent  
cool peer  
nag  
counsellor  
foster parent  
taxi driver  
psychologist

## ACTIVITIES to do with a MENTOR or YOUNG PERSON

- Go to the movies, concert, theatre or a market
- Repair a motorbike or car
- Go (window) shopping
- Plant a tree or do some gardening together
- Write up a resume or application for a job, work experience etc.
- Arrange a visit to a workplace that might be of interest
- Walk the dog or go for a run
- Do a fitness session together or go to the gym
- Play a round of mini golf or golf
- Ride bikes or fly kites
- Visit a friend or someone in hospital
- Ten pin bowling
- Train for a fun run, marathon or other event
- Skateboarding or rollerblading
- Take a train or bus to see a football match
- Have a pampering day – hair, pedicure, manicure
- Research careers on the internet [www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au)
- Learn to play bridge, take a dancing lesson or join a class
- Shoot some hoops (basketball or netball)
- Visit an art gallery
- Have breakfast together at the local café
- Volunteer together at the local show, scouts, sport coaching
- Visit the Mens' shed
- Prepare a meal you'd like to eat together
- Go to the Australian Open (tennis) in January
- Go to an agricultural field day or farming expo
- Watch your young person play footy, netball, hockey or badminton
- Explore local part time job opportunities
- Have a game of pool or billiards
- Go fishing at local lakes or rivers
- Meet with someone working in a career area of interest
- Open Day or information session at a University or TAFE
- Local motivational speaker or guest speaker
- Arrange a painting or sculpting session
- Organise a horse-riding trail
- Go to the local agricultural show
- Build or repair a shed, carport, chook house etc.



## 40 assets or factors that are critical for young people's growth and development

“Developmental assets” - both external and internal - decrease the likelihood that young people will engage in risky behavior and increase the chances they will grow up to be healthy, caring, and responsible adults.

### EXTERNAL ASSETS

The first 20 developmental assets focus on positive experiences that young people should receive from the people and institutions in their lives.

#### 1. Support

Young people need to experience support, care, and love from their families, neighbors, and many others. They need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments.

Family support - Family life provides high levels of love and support

Positive family communication - Young person and his/her parents communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from them.

Other adult relationships - Young person receives support from non-parent adults

Caring neighborhood - Young person experiences caring neighbors

Caring school climate - School provides a caring, encouraging environment

Parent involvement in schooling - Parents are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school

#### 2. Empowerment

Young people need to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secure.

The community values youth - Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth

Youth as resources - Young people are given useful roles in the community

Service to others - Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week

Safety - Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood

#### 3. Boundaries and Expectations

Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are “in bounds” or “out of bounds.”

Family boundaries - Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts

School boundaries - School provides clear rules and consequences

Neighborhood boundaries - Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior

Adult role models - Parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior

Positive peer influence - Young person's best friends model responsible behavior

High expectations - Both parents and teachers encourage the young person to do well

#### 4. Constructive Use of Time

Young people need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs, congregational involvement, and quality time at home.

Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours a week in lessons or practice in music, theatre, or other arts

Youth programs - Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations

Time at home - Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week

## **INTERNAL ASSETS**

These are qualities that young people should (with the help of adults, communities, and institutions) be developing within themselves.

### **1. Commitment to Learning**

Young people need to develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning.

Motivation for achievement - Young person is motivated to do well in school

School engagement - Young person is actively engaged in learning

Homework - Young person reports doing at least an hour of homework every school day

Bonding to school - Young person cares about her or his school

Reading for pleasure - Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week

### **2. Positive Values**

Youth need to develop strong values that guide their choices.

Caring - Young person places high value on helping other people

Equality and social justice - Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty

Integrity - Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs

Honesty - Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy”

Responsibility - Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility

Restraint - Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs

### **3. Social Competencies**

Young people need skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to succeed in life.

Planning and decision making - Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices

Interpersonal competence - Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills

Cultural competence - Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds

Resistance skills - Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations

Peaceful conflict resolution - Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently

### **4. Positive Identity**

Young people need a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise.

Personal power - Young person feels they have control over “things that happen to me”

Self-esteem - Young person reports having a high self-esteem

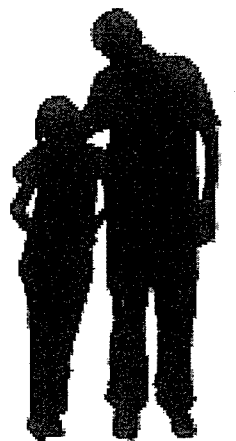
Sense of purpose - Young person reports that “my life has purpose”

Positive view of personal future - Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future

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# **Mentor Training Modules**



# Training Modules

## **Module 1 An Introduction to Mentoring**

- Young people: Where are they at?
- Impact of Youth Mentoring
- Role of the Mentor

## **Module 2 Establishing the Mentoring Relationship**

- The mentoring relationship cycle
- Establishing the mentoring relationship
- Ideas for engaging young people
- Things to do together



## **Module 3 Self Esteem and Resilience**

- Self esteem
- Resilience
- Building Resilience

## **Module 4 Communication and Cultural Awareness**

- Active listening
- Non-verbal communication
- Listening blocks
- Cross-cultural communication

## **Module 5 Young People Today**

- The stages of adolescent development
- Common issues of adolescence

## **Module 6 Conflict Management and Problem Solving**

- How we express anger
- Managing difficult behaviour
- Managing conflict
- Problem solving

## **Module 7 Values, Duty of Care and Confidentiality**

- Values
- Young people's rights and duty of care
- Confidentiality
- Where to from here

# HANDOUT 1.1

## Young people: where are they at?

A recent survey of young Australians identified both their values and issues of concern.<sup>1</sup>

### What young people value:

- family relationships
- friendships

### Who young people admire:

- family members
- friends

### Who young people go to for advice and support:

- friends
- parents
- relative/family friend

### Most popular community participation activities:

- sports (as a participant)
- sports (as a spectator)
- arts/cultural activities
- other popular responses included: entertainment, involvement with international aid organisations and community agencies helping disadvantaged people.

### Issues of concern:

- family conflict and relationship issues
- drugs and their potential negative impact on themselves, friends, family and the broader community
- mental health, including coping with stress and depression
- financial issues, including the impact of the global financial crisis and financial struggles associated with the transition to adulthood
- personal safety and active participation in the community.





# HANDOUT 1.2

## Impact of youth mentoring

### On mentors

- satisfaction through 'making a difference' in the life of a young person
- an opportunity to reflect on their own lives
- the chance to learn from young people.

### On the community

- increased community connectedness through real relationships
- countering negative youth stereotypes
- developing intergenerational trust between young people and adults
- strengthening through building collaborative partnerships across organisations and groups
- building young people's confidence, encouraging them to get more involved in their communities.<sup>2</sup>

### On young people

'A well-planned and organised formal mentoring program can provide strong individual support, advice and guidance for the young person and help in practical ways at important transition points in their life.'<sup>3</sup>

Research shows that mentoring improves young people's learning, social and emotional outcomes. Young people involved in mentoring are likely to experience:

- improved relationships with family and peers
- better communication skills
- reduced feelings of isolation
- a reduction in risky behaviour
- enhanced social and emotional development
- increased opportunities for community participation
- increased resilience.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>2</sup> A Guide to Supporting Effective Programs for Mentoring Young People, 2006. Office for Youth, Melbourne, VIC: Victorian Government Department of Planning and Community Development.

<sup>3</sup> Hartley, R., 2004. *Young People and Mentoring: Towards a National Strategy*, Sydney: The Smith Family.

<sup>4</sup> A Guide to Supporting Effective Programs for Mentoring Young People, 2006. Office for Youth, Melbourne, VIC: Victorian Government Department of Planning and Community Development, p.16.

# HANDOUT 1.3

## Role of the Mentor

*'Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship between a young person and a caring individual who offers guidance, support and encouragement.'*  
(National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks 2007)

Mentors are kind, concerned people – young and old and from all walks of life – who offer young people support, guidance and encouragement.

Mentors provide the sustained presence of a positive, caring role-model, and while they are neither surrogate parents nor responsible for solving a young person's problems, they are more than simply an older friend.

A mentor wants to help a young person navigate the everyday challenges of school, society and the community by drawing on his or her greater knowledge and experience, and their genuine concern for young people.

The role of the mentor is to:

- offer support, encouragement, optimism and hope
- offer guidance, support and realistic advice as requested
- help with goal-setting, suggest possible courses of action, and support the young person in making choices
- help young people identify their strengths and promote their self-esteem
- be a sounding-board for ideas and problems
- help young people develop skills
- offer a consistent, non-judgmental relationship and encourage the young person into a range of other relationships
- engage in social and recreational activities with the young person
- help the young person deal with any sense of alienation<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Role descriptors taken from various Victorian mentor position descriptions

## HANDOUT 2.1

# The mentoring relationship cycle

Stage	Characteristics	Effective communication <sup>6</sup>
<b>Beginning of the match</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know each other</li> <li>• First impressions</li> <li>• Looking for the positives in the relationship</li> <li>• Bonding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask open-ended questions</li> <li>• Use open (not guarded) body language</li> <li>• Use language you are okay with</li> <li>• Don't be afraid of silence</li> </ul>
<b>Challenging and testing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young person challenges mentor</li> <li>• Testing phase</li> <li>• Rethinking first impressions</li> <li>• Difficult emotions may surface</li> <li>• May occur at different stages of the relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be consistent in your contact</li> <li>• Maintain respect</li> <li>• Build problem-solving into your questions; e.g. 'I wonder how we would deal with this better next time?'</li> <li>• Raise any issues at the start of your interactions; e.g. 'Can we talk about why you didn't turn up last time?'</li> <li>• Separate behaviours from the young person; i.e. the young person isn't inconsiderate, their behaviour is.</li> <li>• Disclose your personal feelings and experiences when appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>'Real' mentoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relationship begins feeling right again</li> <li>• Trust is established</li> <li>• Growth in the young person can be observed</li> <li>• A 'deeper' bond and connection are formed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disclose as and when appropriate</li> <li>• Avoid advising, and allow the young person to actively solve their problems</li> <li>• Use the young person's strengths to foster deeper discussions</li> <li>• Give positive feedback and don't be afraid to let your young person know when something has hurt you</li> </ul>
<b>Ending</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing for closure</li> <li>• Relationship may become deeper or young person may start pulling away</li> <li>• Reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find common language to sum up your feelings</li> <li>• Provide feedback that describes growth that you observed</li> <li>• Be prepared to listen and acknowledge the young person's fears</li> </ul>

*Note - This framework is a guide only. Different relationships evolve in different ways.*



<sup>6</sup> Garringer, M. (ed.), 2007. Training New Mentors: Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in School Communities, Folsom, CA: National Mentoring Center.



## HANDOUT 2.2

# Establishing the mentoring relationship

### Initial engagement strategies

- Make eye contact and address the young person directly when you first meet.
- Shake their hand, if you (and they) are comfortable with this.
- Don't hold eye contact if they aren't comfortable doing so.
- Walk and talk, or get a drink as you chat.
- Be yourself and act in a way that is genuine; e.g. don't use slang you wouldn't normally use; don't wear your hat sideways.
- Smile and be friendly but don't appear too confident.
- Ask open-ended questions and tell them a bit about yourself.
- Nod and encourage their answers.
- Present yourself as a regular person with flaws and weaknesses rather than a perfect role model.
- Be realistic about mentoring; e.g. 'We'll see how it goes for both of us', rather than, 'You're mine for a year.'



### Ideas for building relationships

- Your early efforts should focus on developing rapport.
- Be a friend, not a parent or an authority figure.
- Have realistic expectations of the young person.
- Have fun together: go bowling, or do any activity you both enjoy.
- Give your young person a choice in what you do together.
- Let your young person have control over what the two of you talk about, and how you talk about it.
- Listen. Just listening without criticising or judging will help to develop trust.
- Always be reliable. Show that you are committed to the relationship.
- Your primary relationship is with the young person, not their parents, carers, teachers or workers.
- The mentor builds the relationship, so take responsibility for maintaining contact, and don't expect too much feedback from the young person.<sup>7</sup>

## HANDOUT 2.3

# Ideas for engaging young people

- Stay patient and positive.
- Being non-judgmental will assist in a young person speaking up more.
- Be curious – enquire about what they're saying.
- Use encouraging language.
- Talking and listening should ideally be about 50–50.
- Listening is good. Silence is fine.
- Use body language and encouraging sounds to show that you are listening.
- Beam quality attention at them.
- Give them a compliment. For example, 'I know it must have been hard to tell me. I admire your courage.'
- Ask questions rather than telling them what you think is best. For example, 'What do you think are the consequences of not putting in the work at school?' Or, 'Do you have some ideas about how to solve that problem?'
- Try to understand their point of view and check back to see if you understood properly. For example, in order to reflect the young person's feelings, you could say, 'It seems like you were really embarrassed' or, 'It seems like you felt hurt'. In order to check that you understood the message the way it was intended, you could say, 'It sounds like what you're saying is ....'
- Use open-ended questions. For example, 'How was school today?' will probably get a one-word answer, whereas asking, 'What did you do at school?' is more likely to get a longer response.
- Use question words such as 'where', 'when', 'why', 'who' and 'what'.<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> Adapted from *Mentor One on One Volunteers Manual (MOOOV)*, Collingwood, Victoria: Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services.

## HANDOUT 2.4

### Things to do together

NB: You'll need to check in with your co-ordinator before doing some of the more high-risk activities; e.g. swimming, rock climbing, horse or trail-bike riding.

• <b>Go to the movies</b>	• Go to a music show or festival	• Climb a mountain	• Go to an AFL game or local footy match
• Have a picnic: you bring something, they bring something	• Fish from a jetty or in a river or lake (licence required)	• Explore tastes of the world – different national cuisines	• <b>Visit a friend or someone in hospital</b>
• Repair a motorbike or car	Learn (or teach each other) a new craft	• <b>Ride bikes</b>	• Go ten-pin bowling
• Go window shopping	• <b>Find a maze and get lost</b>	• Visit garage sales	• Arrange a visit to a workplace which might be of interest
• <b>Plant a tree together</b>	• Meet a person working in the career area of interest to your young person	• Walk or ride a rail trail	• Visit a gold mine
• Help your young person to write their résumé	• <b>Head to free events in your local park</b>	• Go to an Open Day at a University or TAFE college	• Do an internet career or personality quiz: <a href="http://jobjuice.gov.au">jobjuice.gov.au</a> or <a href="http://myfuture.edu.au">myfuture.edu.au</a>
• Visit an amusement centre	• Enrol in a short course together, e.g. art, craft, dance	• <b>Make jewellery</b>	• Listen to a motivational speaker or guest speaker presenting locally
• <b>Go rollerblading</b>	• Do an aerobics session together	• Walk around a local lake	• <b>Arrange a painting or sculpting session</b>
• Visit an adventure park for bouldering, bushwalking, bbqing	• Go to the gym	• <b>Go to a golf-driving range</b>	• Have a game of pool
• <b>Meditate</b>	• <b>Play a round of mini golf</b>	• Take a pottery class	• Take a ride on Puffing Billy



# HANDOUT 3.1 Self-Esteem

## Where does self-esteem come from?

Self-esteem develops and evolves throughout life as we build an image of ourselves through our experiences and relationships. Childhood experiences play a crucial role in shaping self-esteem. Successes and failures, and how young people are treated by family, teachers, peers and others all contribute to people's evolving self-esteem.

## Consequences of low self-esteem

Low self-esteem can have devastating consequences, such as:

- anxiety, stress, loneliness and increased likelihood of depression
- problems with friends and relationships
- impaired academic and job performance
- under-achievement and increased vulnerability to drug and alcohol misuse
- a downward spiral of lower self-esteem, and non-productive or self-destructive behaviour.



## Strategies for building self-esteem

- **Avoiding 'shoulds'.** Concentrate on doing what is possible and what feels right instead of paying attention to the 'shoulds' of others.
- **Respecting personal needs.** Self-care is about identifying longer-term fulfilment, not just immediate gratification. By respecting personal needs, individuals can increase self-worth and well-being.
- **Setting achievable goals** and working step by step to get there.
- **Engaging in positive self-talk.** Try to stay positive and don't allow the 'inner critic' to take over. Telling yourself that you are ok and you can succeed can be very powerful.
- **Experiencing success** by doing things that stretch but don't overwhelm your abilities.
- **Taking chances.** New experiences are learning experiences; mistakes are part of the process. Feel good about trying something new.
- **Solving problems.** Face rather than avoid problems. Identify ways to solve or cope with challenges.
- **Making decisions.** Practise making decisions and trust yourself to deal with the consequences.
- **Developing skills.** Know what you can and can't do. Assess the skills you need; learn and practise those.
- **Emphasising your strengths.** Focus on what you can do rather than what you cannot. Live comfortably with limitations, and consider what strengths to develop next.
- **Relying on your own opinion of yourself.** Listen to feedback from others, but don't rely on it. Apply your own values to making decisions about what is right for you.<sup>9</sup>
- **Find opportunities to help others.** This can help put your own life and struggles in perspective. Helping others can make you feel you have a positive impact on the world around you.



<sup>9</sup> Adapted from the *Gippsland Mentoring Alliance Training*, Traralgon, Victoria: Gippsland Mentoring Alliance.

## HANDOUT 3.2

# Resilience

*'Resilience is the happy knack of being able to bungy jump through the pitfalls of life. Even when hardships and adversity arise it is as if the person has an elastic rope around them that helps them to rebound when things get low and to maintain their sense of who they are as a person.'*

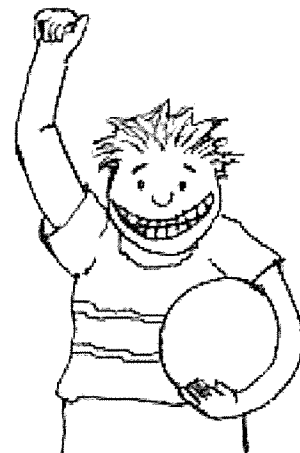
(Andrew Fuller, *From Surviving to Thriving*)

### **Risk and protective factors for young people**

Risk factors are elements of a young person's life that can prevent them from being able to bounce back. They exist in all areas of young people's lives – community, school, family, and within the individual themselves.

The more risk factors present in a young person's life, the greater the risk of developing problems like substance misuse, delinquent behaviour, dropping out of education, unwanted pregnancy and violence.

Protective (or resilience) factors are key to young people being able to navigate through life's challenges. Access to protective factors can lessen the impact of risk factors in a person's life. Protective factors are like a safety net that prevents young people from falling hard.



## HANDOUT 3.3

# Building Resilience

*'...Most of all, self-esteem and self-efficacy were promoted through supportive relationships. The resilient youngsters in our study all had at least one person in their lives who accepted them.'*

*(Prof. Emmy Werner)<sup>10</sup>*

*'One factor helping at-risk children [young people with many risk factors in their lives] beat the heavy odds against them was the presence in their lives of a charismatic adult – a person with whom they identify and from whom they gather support.'*

*(Dr Julius Segal)<sup>11</sup>*

Research tells us that having a positive adult role-model in their lives greatly increases the resilience of young people.

### Strategies that build resilience

- Help the young person set realistic goals and take small steps to achieve them.
- Be a positive person and compliment the young person (without overdoing it).
- Encourage them to identify and spend more time with optimistic people; i.e. people who do positive things, play sport, environment groups.
- Help them recognise the good things around them.
- Admit that sometimes there are things you can't do yet, but show that you still try.
- Encourage and join them in exercising, learning new skills and being active.
- Role model how you accept your mistakes and apologise when it is appropriate.
- Take time to reflect on and celebrate even small achievements.
- Try new things together and keep an open mind.



<sup>10</sup> Werner, Emmy E., and Smith, Ruth E., 1992. *Overcoming the Odds: High Risk Children from Birth to Adulthood*, Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press.

<sup>11</sup> Segal, J., 1988. 'Teachers Have Enormous Power in Affecting a Child's Self-Esteem,' *The Brown University Child Behaviour and Development Newsletter*, 4:1-3.



# HANDOUT 4.1

## Active listening

Listening is the mentor's greatest tool for developing relationships. Being listened to makes someone feel valued, important and respected. Often young people don't feel truly listened to. This is one of the greatest gifts a mentor can give.

### Active listeners:

- suspend judgement and criticism
- don't interrupt
- respect the speaker's viewpoint and value system
- resist distractions
- let the speaker know if they are inaudible, ambiguous or incongruent
- are open and deal with any negative emotions they might be hearing.

### So when communicating with your young person:

- clear your mind of unnecessary thoughts and distractions
- make (culturally appropriate) eye contact
- check your body language
- pay attention to the young person's facial expressions, gestures and body language
- read between the lines for implicit feelings
- ask open-ended questions that provoke conversation
- paraphrase what you think they've said
- clarify what you don't understand
- put yourself in the young person's place and get their perspective
- put aside preconceived ideas and pass no judgments
- nod your head and say things like, 'I see'.



Mentors sometimes wonder if they're listening and responding effectively. If a young person talks with their mentor about personal issues, shares their joys and woes and occasionally their feelings, a mentor will know they are being understanding and helpful. In some cases the cues are more subtle.<sup>12</sup>

## HANDOUT 4.2

# Non-verbal communication

How we use our bodies plays a big role in communicating our attitudes and feelings.

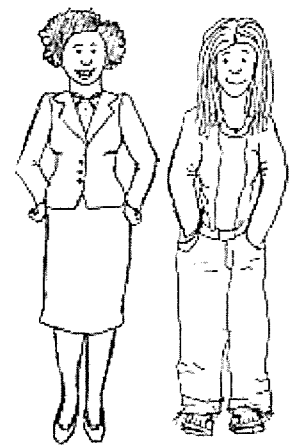
Research tells us that 80 per cent of communication occurs through non-verbal means. This includes pitch, speed, tone and volume of voice, gestures and facial expressions, body posture, stance, and proximity to the listener, eye movements and contact, and dress and appearance.<sup>13</sup>

Non-verbal behaviours may not always read in the same way due to cultural or other reasons. For example, Indigenous young people might not use eye contact as it is a cultural sign of disrespect.

Young people who have a disability in the autism spectrum will often find eye contact difficult.

Here are some behaviours and attributes and the body language that goes with them.

- **Openness** is shown by facing a person both with face and body.
- A relaxed posture conveys **receptivity**, but being too relaxed (slouching) can suggest **lack of interest**.
- Leaning too far forward can be an invasion of someone's personal space and conveys **aggression** or **dominance**.
- Excessive use of fiddly or fidgeting movements may indicate **nervousness, impatience, or boredom**.
- Eye contact signals that the listener is **interested** and really **listening**.
- Infrequent eye contact can be interpreted as **boredom** or **lack of interest**, but could also indicate **shame, unfriendliness** or **guilt**.
- Too much eye contact can make the other person feel uncomfortable and could be interpreted as **aggression** or **dominance**.
- Physical appearance – clothes, hair style, attention to fashion – can offer cues about **role, status** and **power**.
- Head nods are messages that a person is **paying attention**, but do not necessarily signify that they agree with everything being said.<sup>14</sup>



<sup>13</sup> Pease, B. and Pease, A., 2006. *The Definitive Book of Body Language*, New York: Bantam.

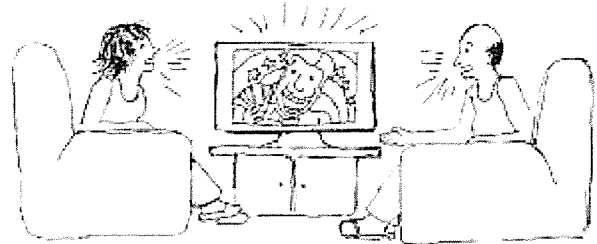
<sup>14</sup> Adapted from MOIRA Mentor Training Manual, Moorabbin, Victoria: South Directions Youth Service.

## HANDOUT 4.3

# Listening blocks

Just as there is effective listening, there is also ineffective listening. There are many causes of ineffective listening, including:

- **Environmental limits**, such as places that are noisy, cold, badly lit, poorly ventilated or badly arranged, and have constant distractions like mobile phones or television.
- **Language or cultural limits** can include multiple or ambiguous meanings of words, poor command of vocabulary due to age, education, jargon, slang, dialect, or English being a second language.
- Being critical or **making moral judgments** puts the other person on guard, and usually reduces their willingness to share and be honest.
- **'Shoulding'**, telling the other person what they should do, is extremely judgemental behaviour. It's guaranteed to create distance.
- **Put-downs** and **patronising statements** ridicule or shame the other person. They are likely to be countered by aggression at one extreme and withdrawal at the other.
- **Explaining something away**, looking for causes and excuses, interpreting or intellectualising are all talking about the experience rather than experiencing it.
- **Interruption** shows an unwillingness to listen, being more concerned with dominating or impressing the other person than achieving understanding.
- **Generalising**, using 'people', 'we', 'you' or 'one' instead of 'I', impersonalises the conversation and avoids responsibility for the view expressed.
- **'Alwaysing'**, using always, is a sure sign that a sweeping generalisation is on the way and discussion is almost impossible.
- Using **clichés**, using those tired and worn-out phrases like 'better late than never' and 'can't see the wood for the trees', results in little value or significance.
- Asking **pseudo-questions**; these are questions that attempt to manipulate, influence or control, such as 'Would you agree that ...?', rather than questions that elicit information or opinion.
- **Shifting** is about moving the focus away from oneself and introducing red herrings to divert the discussion and avoid dealing with anything uncomfortable or threatening.<sup>15</sup>



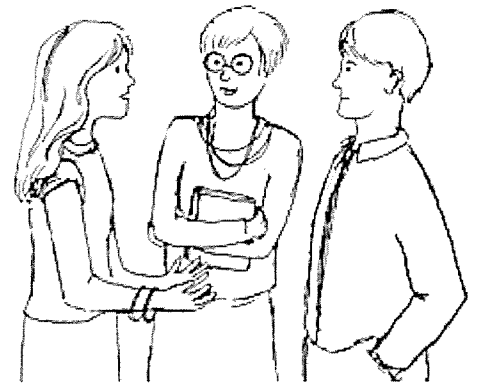
# HANDOUT 4.4

## Cross-cultural communication

Key points to consider when communicating with others whose English language skills are limited.

### Do:

- Listen attentively
- Explain technical terms
- Keep language simple and use short sentences
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use a professional interpreter to assist in communicating your message
- Remember that you are engaged in a dialogue rather than just needing to get your message across
- Make the message visual if you can
- Check that the message has been understood – ask questions and be patient
- Give people plenty of time to respond
- Recognise the influence of culture on communication styles and meanings; e.g. the degree of directness or indirectness, formality and informality, non-verbal/body language
- Remember that many languages are structured differently to English and some English terms will not have a direct translation
- Use direct questions; e.g. 'Have you finished signing that form?' rather than, 'You haven't finished that form yet, have you?'
- Learn and use some words in your young person's native language.



### Don't:

- Shout, mumble or speak really slowly
- Show impatience
- Replicate the client's accent

Use technical terms, abbreviations, slang or jargon. <sup>16</sup>



# HANDOUT 5.1

## The stages of adolescent development

'Adolescence is a rollercoaster ride, and no one gets off before it's over.'

(Anonymous)

Adolescence is the transition from childhood to adulthood. It can begin as young as eight years old and can end as late as 26 years, but is most commonly seen in ages 11 to 21.

The developmental changes adolescents undergo – physical, cognitive and social-emotional – are dramatic, which makes it one of the most confusing and stressful times of life.

Erik Erikson's model of human development, The Eight Ages of Man, describes adolescence as the period of 'identity versus role confusion'. It is marked by early, middle and late stages, and poses three big questions: Who am I? Am I normal? What is my place in the world?

To become an adult adolescents must complete the 'tasks of adolescence'. These are to:

- form a secure and positive identity
- achieve independence from adult carers and parents
- establish 'love' objects outside the family
- find a place in the world by establishing a career direction and economic independence.

The changes adolescents undergo are intense, demanding and frightening, and largely out of their control. They can't see the light at the end of the tunnel and often have no idea what's coming at them next



## HANDOUT 5.2

# Common issues of adolescence

Young people face issues that relate to the 'developmental tasks' of adolescence, which revolve around identity, independence, love, sex and money. Some adolescents have the resilience to overcome these struggles, while others simply get stuck.

### **Family issues**

Adolescence is a time for breaking away from family and becoming independent, yet many young people have complex family situations that make this process even more tumultuous. Single parents, parents with drug and alcohol or mental health issues and siblings with disabilities are just some of the struggles young people might face.

### **Alcohol, tobacco and other drug misuse**

Binge drinking and favourable attitudes to alcohol misuse are a great concern for adolescents, whose physical and mental development is at significant risk from intoxication.

### **Difficult behaviour**

Socially unacceptable behaviour is often highly visible during adolescence. Some of this behaviour is a way of separating from parents, some is a challenge to parental and societal values, and some is misplaced anger.

### **Adolescent pregnancy**

The need to be loved and be the centre of attention is high during adolescence, and it coincides with sexual maturation and extreme hormonal activity. Alcohol is a major factor in sexual activity, unwanted sexual attention, and pregnancy.

### **Depression and suicide**

Adolescents are susceptible depression and even suicide. Girls are more susceptible to depression, but boys are catching up. Boys complete suicide attempts more often – they use more lethal means – but girls aren't far behind.

High levels of stress or anxiety, loss of a boyfriend or girlfriend, poor school performance, unwanted pregnancy, and family instability and unhappiness are causes of depression and triggers for suicidal ideation.



## HANDOUT 6.1

# How we express anger

### We may feel angry when:

- our rights have possibly been violated
- we are threatened with loss
- we feel powerless and not respected

Many people, including young people, are angry because they feel used or pushed around. Anger has a real purpose in our lives but needs to be managed, not ignored.

When you experience anger, your body goes into a fight-or-flight response; that is, you want to attack or run away. Anger can be expressed through the following behaviours.



### Passive behaviour

Some people escape by being passive. They ignore their rights or allow others to violate them. They don't express their needs, feeling and ideas. They allow others to choose or make decisions for them. Many people become resentful or angry with themselves.

Passive behaviour reduces self-esteem and is less likely to earn the respect of others. It may invite others to exploit or bully the person who is displaying passive behaviour.

### Aggressive behaviour

Aggressive behaviour can be triggered by extreme anger or anxiety. A person may be standing up for their rights, but in doing so they attack others, violate others' rights, or force decisions on them.

Following aggressive behaviour, a person may experience guilt about dominating or humiliating another person, and the aggressor's self-respect diminishes. Constant aggressive behaviour leads to ineffective relationships.

### Assertive behaviour

Assertive people stand up for their rights without attacking or violating others' rights. They make choices and decisions and give others the same right. Healthy self-assertion does not mean forcing opinions or decisions on others, or vice versa. Having been assertive, people feel calmer and their self-respect and confidence grow.<sup>17</sup>

## HANDOUT 6.2

# Managing difficult behaviour

Sometimes mentors have to manage anger and the difficult behaviours associated with it. Anger may be self-directed or expressed towards a particular person or the world in general.

### Responding to difficult behaviour

In inflamed and emotive situations how things are perceived may be temporarily distorted because thoughts are highly charged. In these situations it is useful to take a deep breath and try to stay calm so that problems can be addressed in a way that protects the relationship.

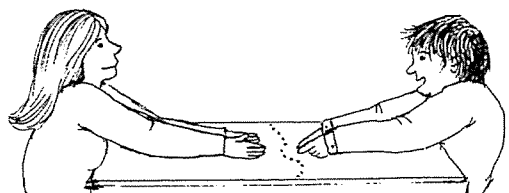
- Using a calm tone of voice and just being 'ordinary' can help relax people. 'Let's go get a coffee and talk about this.'
- A calm, assertive statement about listening and trying to find an answer to the problem is a good way to go. 'Tell me what the problem is. Maybe together we can find a solution.'
- Mentors should try not to take the anger personally (even if it is personal), and should stick with 'I-messages' and low-key language (see examples below).
- Mentors should keep the focus on the issue and not be sidetracked.
- Mentors should not try to change the young person's mind by arguing or debating – a person who is angry is less likely to respond to logic or reason.

### How to make things worse

- Criticise or insult people with 'you-messages'. 'You're being really silly about this.'
- Try to make them feel guilty. 'You're not the only person who has rights here.'
- Insist on the supremacy of logical argument. 'Don't you realise that ...?'
- Interrogation. 'Did that really happen? Are you sure?'
- Empty reassurance. 'I'm sure it's not as bad as you think.'
- Inappropriate humour. 'Guess who got out of the bed on the wrong side!'

### Additional tactics

- An angry person usually needs and benefits from more personal space.
- Body language needs to match verbal language. A relaxed stance says the mentor is listening and calm.
- Eye contact shows interest and attention but staring can increase anxiety.





## Summing up

The ability to not take on other people's issues enables mentors to step back from difficult behaviour. It allows them to see the behaviour for what it really is, while assisting the other person to understand their own behaviour.

The young person may be exploring their values and might experience some conflict while sorting this out. An important way the mentor can assist is to negotiate with the young person about how they will treat each other, and to keep consistent expectations about behaviour within the mentoring relationship.

### Young people need to know that there are:

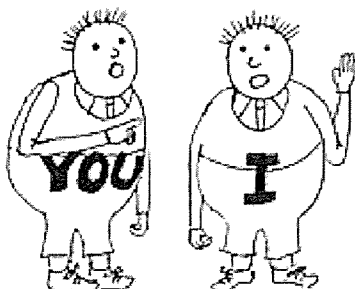
- clear and fair expectations, and definite limits about acceptable behaviour
- consequences for inappropriate behaviours
- sometimes disagreements within relationships, which also provide opportunities for understanding and honesty without hostility.

### Using I-messages instead of you-messages

You-messages are likely to inflame a situation because they are generally hostile, threatening or hang an unflattering label on the other person.

I-messages are about owning your feelings and being assertive when describing them, without seeking to harm the other person.

<i><b>You-message</b></i>	<i><b>I-message</b></i>
'What you said about me to ... was pretty nasty. You're a low scumbag.'	'I don't like things being said about me behind my back. It doesn't make either of us look good. Please don't do that again.'
'You never let me do anything for myself. You're a real control-freak.'	'I want to be able to do it myself. If I get it wrong, so what? People learn by making mistakes.' <sup>18</sup>



# HANDOUT 6.3

## Managing conflict

Conflict is usually about values, beliefs and needs and may occur when people have opposing interests or opinions. Behaviours resulting from conflict may include arguments, fights or disagreements that may be verbal or physical.

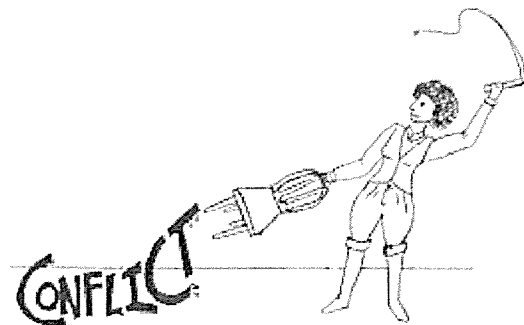
Formal conflict resolution is a skill for trained counsellors, but everyone can learn to manage conflict by practising a few personal skills.

### Advantages of conflict:

- brings about change
- presents an opportunity to learn
- encourages a person to do better
- helps people to see and understand differences
- helps people to become more flexible
- clears the air and helps people to move on.

### Disadvantages of conflict:

- people can become hurt
- people can become angry
- people can become confused
- it can be scary
- it can stop people taking risks.



### A formula for mentors managing conflict<sup>19</sup>

#### Step 1: *Treat the person with respect*

- Address the behaviour, not the person.
- Use appropriate language. Don't swear.
- Don't dismiss their concerns.

#### Step 2: *Listen until you experience the other side*

- The goal is to understand the other person's thoughts and ideas.
- Understand content. What meaning do you think it has for them?
- What feelings do you think they are experiencing?

#### Step 3: *State your feelings, needs and views briefly*

- State your point of view.
- Avoid loaded questions.
- Say what you mean and mean what you say.
- Disclose your feelings.

#### Step 4: *Move on to problem solving if required*

<sup>19</sup> Bolton, R., 1986. *People Skills: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflicts*, Florida: Touchstone Books.

# HANDOUT 6.4

## Problem solving

Some young people can have limited problem-solving skills. Mentors can use the following model to solve problems with young people and to help them to improve their problem-solving skills.

### Define the problem

Begin with wants. What does the young person want? If it's a big problem, it may need to be broken down into sub-problems that can be looked at one at a time.

### Brainstorm possible solutions

Come up with as many solutions as possible, without criticism or evaluation of the suggestions. To relieve tension a mentor might throw in some deliberately silly solutions, if they feel the young person would be comfortable with this.

### Evaluate the possibilities

Go down the list of solutions, noting the pros and cons and the probable consequences of each one. Write them down if it helps.

### Select the solution

Explore whether one solution emerges as the best option. Does one clearly have more pros?

#### 1. Plan the solution

Explore who will do what and by when. Are there resources needed? Who will get them and how?

#### 2. Implement the plan

Do it. If it works, great. If it doesn't, figure out why, and start back at whichever step you need to.<sup>20</sup>



### Case study

Amina is 19 years old and came to Australia from Somalia 18 months ago. She lives with her mother and three younger brothers in a housing estate flat. One day you meet up with Amina and she is very upset. She tells you that she and a friend got matching tattoos at the weekend and that her mother is very angry and wants her to leave home. Amina doesn't want to leave, and really wants her mum to understand that she lives in Australia now and that things are different here. She asks you what she should do.

<sup>20</sup> Adapted from the 'Gippsland Mentoring Alliance Training Package', Trafalgar, VIC: Gippsland Mentoring Alliance.

## HANDOUT 7.1

### Values

Values are principles in which an **individual** has an emotional investment. Values are used to decide about right and wrong, good and bad, should and shouldn't. Sometimes values conflict with one another and the person must decide which is the more important.

Values like equality, honesty, privacy, security and education are of fundamental importance to people.

People usually feel strongly about their values, although they may find them difficult to describe or discuss.

A person's values begin to develop during childhood, influenced by family, peers, religion, culture and society in general, and can change over time.

These values greatly affect the person's:

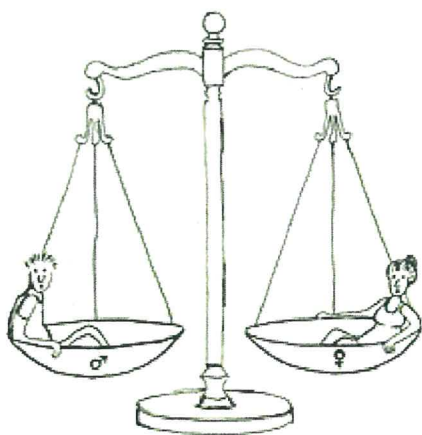
- opinions or judgments
- beliefs about what is true
- attitudes, feelings or emotions
- decisions about education, work, friends and relationships.



#### So what?

Mentors can have wonderful qualities and skills but be brought undone by their values. This is why mentors are strongly encouraged to be non-judgmental and avoid being reactive when young people's values differ to theirs.

A mentor should take special care not to censure a young person's values, or to take the 'moral high ground', as this will be perceived as saying that the mentor is a better person, a sure recipe for relationship disaster.





## HANDOUT 7.2

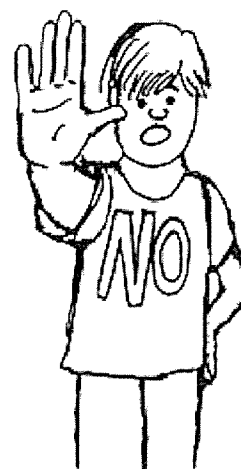
# Young people's rights and duty of care

Young people have the right to:

- freedom
- respect
- equality
- dignity.<sup>21</sup>

These rights mean they should be able to:

- feel safe
- be respected
- be listened to
- to be taken seriously
- have their concerns dealt with responsibly, without discrimination or judgment
- say 'no'.



**An organisation conducting a mentoring program, and its volunteers, must exercise 'duty of care' – they must take care to avoid actions or oversights that might reasonably be foreseen to result in injury to others.**

The organisation is liable for the actions of its paid staff and volunteers. The key to duty of care is good risk-management, including codes of conduct, appropriate insurance and (parental) consent. Every organisation should have a risk-management plan that ensures appropriate responses to incidents within its programs.

Legal liability arises where, in the eyes of a court, an organisation or individual has been negligent in minimising the risk of injury. 'Injury' also refers to emotional and psychological damage.

By its nature a mentoring relationship requires the mentor to exercise duty of care.

### **Some risks are reasonable**

The law does not expect mentors to provide absolute protection against every conceivable injury to a young people for whom they have a duty of care.

For example, it is **reasonable** to expect that you might cross a road to get to a café. Risks are a part of life and duty of care is not a duty to avoid every risk.

Some risks – like doing something for the first time – have developmental benefits for young people. A mentor might support a young person in confronting risks safely, so long as the mentor supports the young person in ways that minimise any chance of injury.



<sup>21</sup> Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC).

# HANDOUT 7.3

## Confidentiality

### Confidentiality builds trust

Confidentiality exists when a young person entrusts their mentor with information that they are confident will remain private. Confidentiality is important to the mentoring relationship because it:

- builds trust
- builds respect
- allows an honest relationship to grow
- encourages the young person to talk about things they might not be comfortable to tell others.



not be

That said, there are limitations and legal issues when considering confidentiality and privacy.

### Information Privacy Act 2000 (VIC)<sup>22</sup>

The Act requires personal information that identifies a person, or could be used with other readily available information to identify them, to be stored securely and to remain confidential. Mentors should be aware of the following.

**a) A mentoring program can only collect information about someone – mentor or young person – if that person agrees to it.** The person is informed about why the program needs the information and how it will be used, and is entitled to see the information.

**b) Some information cannot be kept secret.** A mentor cannot 'sit on' information. Confidentiality does not apply:

- Where a young person has disclosed that they intend to harm themselves or someone else.
- Where they have disclosed some form of abuse.
- Where the young person has given permission for information to be disclosed.

If a young person says they want to tell a mentor something, but only if the mentor promises not to tell anyone else, the young person should be told the limits of confidentiality as described above.

In this situation the conversation could go as follows:

'Everything you tell me will be in confidence, however there may be times I'll need to share that information with someone else in the mentor staffing team. The only reason I would tell anyone else would be if I thought you were going to hurt yourself or someone else, or someone has hurt/is hurting you. I will always speak with you first if I need to tell someone else about important things like this.'

### Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC)<sup>23</sup>

Under the Act any person who believes a young person is being abused can report the matter to the Child Protection Service. Doctors, nurses, police and teachers are mandated to report such abuse.

<sup>22</sup> Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents. Available online at [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au).

<sup>23</sup> Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents. Available online at [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au).

## HANDOUT 7.4

### Where to from here?

From this point forward the official Mentoring begins!

The MATES Mentoring Coordinator will be in touch with you very soon to arrange a time and place for you to meet and they will introduce you to the young person to whom you have been matched.

Remember the match is based on what the coordinator knows about you and the young person. Please complete the details of your interests and experience on the application forms carefully so they understand as much about you as possible to help make the match a success.

At this first meeting, the coordinator will read out the **MATES Mentoring Contract** which has to be understood and agreed to by both the young person and the mentor. Both parties sign the contract.

Then, decide on a date in the next week when you will catch up with your young person and exchange contact details. You may decide to meet at school for the first time, have a tour around the school or help in a class room activity or you may want to meet somewhere locally.

The Program Coordinator will make a note of this time and will follow up on how the first meeting went.

**Parent Consent forms** must be signed before you can meet with your young person. The Program Coordinator will meet with the parents of the young person and explain the program to them and ensure they are happy about the match.

The Coordinator will let you know if the parent would like to meet with you and will arrange a time and place that suits. It is a good idea if the young person and the coordinator are there to introduce you.

The Program Coordinator will offer support from that point forward through regular contact to ensure the success of the match.

**You are also expected to keep in frequent contact with the Program Coordinator and let them know of all catch ups from that point forward.**

The Program Coordinator will also organise group activities for Mentors and Mentees to attend.

In conclusion **mates CONGRATULATES** you for completing the full training and for taking on this important, rewarding and positive role. We wish you every success and happiness as you begin to mentor, assist, target, engage and enhance the skills and life experiences of local young people.