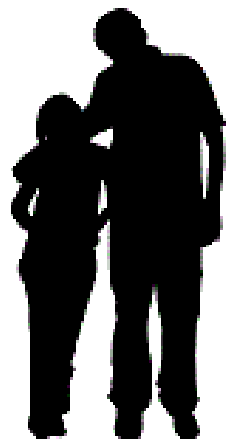


mates

mentor assist target engage skills

Mentoring Program Training Workbook



MODULE ONE

An introduction to mentoring

Resources

- Handout 1.1 – Aim and objectives of the MATES mentoring program
- Handout 1.2 – Young people: where are they at?
- Handout 1.3 – Impact of youth mentoring
- Handout 1.4 – Role of the mentor
- Handout 1.5 – Qualities and skills of an effective mentor

Role of the mentor

Activity: A Mentor is....'

Circle what the group decided a mentor actually is on the following list:

A MENTOR IS A

social worker	Supporter	negotiator
babysitter	ATM	guide
companion	nag	advisor
confidant	role model	parent
taxi driver	cool peer	foster parent
friend	rescuer	coach
motivator	counsellor	resource
psychologist		

Qualities and skills of mentors

Activity: Qualities of a mentor

What are some of the qualities of a mentor identified through the group activity?



HANDOUT 1.1

Aim and objectives of MATES Mentoring

Mission Statement:

'Providing positive role models who assist, target, engage and enhance the skills and life experiences of young local people.'

Purpose:

MATES is a mentoring program which has been designed as a model which is easy and effective for all schools to implement at very little cost. MATES draws on the strong support of the local community to be positive role models for students. MATES recognises that in a changing world, schools can't do it alone. Communities have to work together to help support and nourish the variety of needs and capabilities of our young people.

The MATES Mentoring program aims to:

- **MENTOR** – to provide an additional positive role model in the lives of young people
- **ASSIST** – to assist and extend the positive life experiences of young people
- **TARGET** – to specifically target the life and educational goals of young people
- **ENGAGE** – to engage young people with their schools and their local communities
- **SKILLS** – to identify and enhance the skills and strengths of young people

HANDOUT 1.2

Young people: where are they at?

A recent survey of young Australians identified both their values and issues of concern.¹

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
- social media pressures



¹ Mission Australia, 2009. *National Survey of Young Australians*, Sydney: Mission Australia.

HANDOUT 1.3

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.²

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.'³

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.⁴



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

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

⁴ 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 1.4

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 alienation⁵



⁵ Role descriptors taken from various Victorian mentor position descriptions

HANDOUT 1.5

Qualities and skills of an effective mentor

An effective mentor:

- ☐ is a good listener
- ☐ is non-judgmental
- ☐ is patient, tolerant and flexible
- ☐ is reliable and consistent
- ☐ respects others' values, cultures and viewpoints
- ☐ likes young people and cares about their futures
- ☐ shares their own knowledge and life skills
- ☐ can develop and work towards shared goals with a young person
- ☐ respects a young person's right to make choices
- ☐ seeks to understand a young person's struggles
- ☐ empathises rather than sympathises
- ☐ sees solutions rather than barriers
- ☐ is committed and available for the duration of the program.



MODULE TWO

Building mentoring relationships

Resources

- Handout 2.1 – Establishing the mentoring relationship
- Handout 2.2 – Things to do together
- Handout 2.3 – Goal-setting worksheet
- Handout 2.4 – The mentoring relationship cycle
- Handout 2.5 – Code of Conduct

Understanding the importance of trust

Activity: Trust

What was it like being led and having to trust the other person?

How might this be similar to the way a young person might be feeling when they first meet their mentor?

Establishing the mentoring relationship

- **Brainstorm session:** How do you establish rapport with people you have just met?

HANDOUT 2.1

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.⁶

⁶ Adapted from *MOIRA Mentor Training Manual*, Moorabbin, Victoria: South Directions Youth Service.

HANDOUT 2.2

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.

• Go to the movies	• 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	• Visit a friend or someone in hospital
• Repair a motorbike or car	Learn (or teach each other) a new craft	• Ride bikes	• Go ten-pin bowling
• Go window shopping	• Cook something to share	• Visit garage sales	• Arrange a visit to a workplace which might be of interest
• Plant a tree together	• 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	• Head to free events in your local park	• Go to an Open Day at a University or TAFE college	• Do an internet career or personality quiz: jobjuice.gov.au or myfuture.edu.au
• Visit an art gallery	• Enrol in a short course together, e.g. art, craft, dance	• Make jewellery	• Listen to a motivational speaker or guest speaker presenting locally
• Go rollerblading	• Do an aerobics session together	• Walk around a local lake	• Arrange a painting or sculpting session
• Visit an adventure park for bouldering, bushwalking, bbqing	• Go to the gym	• Go to a golf-driving range	• Have a game of pool
• Meditate	• Play a round of mini golf	• Take a pottery class	• Fish at the river

• Skateboarding	• Fly kites	• Organise a horse-riding trail	• Catch the train somewhere for a day trip
• Visit a local business	• Go to an agricultural show	• Go cherry, apple, strawberry or flower picking	• Volunteer together (e.g. RSPCA animal grooming)
• Go to a swimming pool	• Shoot some hoops	• Visit a sick friend	• Go to the theatre
• Go to a local museum	• Explore what local part-time work is available	• Go trail-bike riding	• Visit a state park
• Take dance lessons	• Have breakfast together (cheap at some bakeries)	• Train for a fun run, or marathon	• Tennis, play or watch
• Take a trip to a popular tourist area	• Visit May Park	• Enjoy a restaurant meal on a special occasion	• Build or repair something – a shed, carport, chook-house or furniture
• Watch a fireworks display	• Research careers on the internet	• Go bushwalking	• Visit a farm
• Skateboarding	• Go to a free radio-station concert	• Go to a jazz festival	• Play lawn bowls

Add some of your own ideas

HANDOUT 2.3

Goal-setting worksheet

Using strengths to promote goals⁷

This goal-setting model uses individuals' strengths to promote the achievement of short- and long-term goals. Through this model, you will gain an additional tool to build goals for yourself and your young person.

You can think of each step as an area in which you can help your young person to develop skills. By giving young people opportunities to practise any and all of these steps, you give them incredible tools to achieve their potential.

Step 1. Defining strengths

The first step in this model is to define personal strengths. What are the qualities, skills and characteristics that you would define as your strengths? What are the abilities that you bring with you that you can use as a foundation for future success?

Step 2. Envisioning the future

Step 2 will help you see the big picture. What is your ideal future like?

How do you want to be living in 10 or 20 years?
What do you want to achieve in the long term? By thinking long term, you will gain insight into what you truly value. This will help to connect your goals and short-term activities with your long-term dreams.



Step 3. Goals for action

Having reflected on your personal strengths and vision for the future, choose three to five short-term goals that will help to move you towards that long-term vision.

Step 4. Concrete tasks

What specific and concrete activities can you start doing now to start you on your way to achieving these goals? Describe each activity and set a date by which you plan to accomplish the activity.

⁷ Cannata, A. (ed.), 2006. Ongoing Training for Mentors: Twelve Interactive Sessions for U.S. Department of Education. Folsom, CA: Mentoring Resource Center, pp. 50-51.

Step 5. Problem-planning

Think about potential barriers in your goal setting. What can get in the way of achieving your goals? What preventive steps can you take to prepare you for overcoming these barriers?

Step 6. Reflection

After you have worked towards your short-term goals, you should spend some time reflecting on how your goal-achieving activities worked. What did you learn? Have your goals changed? What specific activities worked or didn't work?

Step 1. Defining your personal strengths

Think about your personal resources that can help you in goal setting.

Strength 1: _____

Strength 2: _____

Strength 3: _____

Strength 4: _____

Step 2. Envisioning your future

Where do you see yourself in 10 or 20 years? What do you want to be doing in the long term?

Describe your vision:

Step 3. Establishing short-term goals

What are three short-term goals you can accomplish that relate to your long-term vision?

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Step 4. Goal activities

Describe activities that will help you achieve your goals. Set concrete dates for when you will accomplish these activities. If this is a recurring activity, describe how often you will do it (e.g. once a day, once a month).	
Activity 1:	Date this will be accomplished:
Activity 2:	Date this will be accomplished:
Activity 3:	Date this will be accomplished:

Step 5. Planning for potential barriers

What are the barriers that might prevent you from accomplishing your goal? What steps can you take to overcome these barriers?	
Barrier 1:	Preventive step:
Barrier 2:	Preventive step:
Barrier 3:	Preventive step:

Step 6. Reflection

<p>This step should be done throughout the goal-setting process. What did you learn? How have you changed since working on your goals? Reflection:</p>
--

HANDOUT 2.4

The mentoring relationship cycle

Stage	Characteristics	Effective communication ⁸
Beginning of the match	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know each other • First impressions • Looking for the positives in the relationship • Bonding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask open-ended questions • Use open (not guarded) body language • Use language you are okay with • Don't be afraid of silence
Challenging and testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young person challenges mentor • Testing phase • Rethinking first impressions • Difficult emotions may surface • May occur at different stages of the relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be consistent in your contact • Maintain respect • Build problem-solving into your questions; e.g. 'I wonder how we would deal with this better next time?' • Raise any issues at the start of your interactions; e.g. 'Can we talk about why you didn't turn up last time?' • Separate behaviours from the young person; i.e. the young person isn't inconsiderate, their behaviour is. • Disclose your personal feelings and experiences when appropriate
'Real' mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship begins feeling right again • Trust is established • Growth in the young person can be observed • A 'deeper' bond and connection are formed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclose as and when appropriate • Avoid advising, and allow the young person to actively solve their problems • Use the young person's strengths to foster deeper discussions • Give positive feedback and don't be afraid to let your young person know when something has hurt you
Ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for closure • Relationship may become deeper or young person may start pulling away • Reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find common language to sum up your feelings • Provide feedback that describes growth that you observed • Be prepared to listen and affirm fears that your young person may have

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

⁸ Garringer, M. (ed.), 2007. Training New Mentors: Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in School Communities, Folsom, CA: National Mentoring Center.

mates mentor code of conduct

Agreement to the following Code of Conduct is required in order to be a Mentor in the **mates** Mentoring Program. Any violation of this contract may result in termination of the position.

I _____ (print name) agree to:

- Consistent conduct - being a positive reliable role model to my Mentee and being honest and tolerant of individual differences, values and viewpoints
- Do my best to meet the aims of the program for my Mentee
- Follow all Rules, Guidelines and Code of Conduct outlined by the **mates** Program Coordinator, the School and in Mentor Training and Policies.
- Attend Mentor Training Sessions
- Commit to the **mates** Mentoring Program for one year and spend a minimum of two hours per month one-to-one with my Mentee
- Stay in regular monthly contact with the **mates** Program Coordinator and report on how the Mentor/Mentee match is going
- Take responsibility for seeking advice/support from the **mates** Coordinator regarding the Mentee's behaviour/actions/issues or stories and any difficulties or areas of concern that may arise
- Notify the **mates** Program Coordinator if my contact details change
- Respecting the Rights and Responsibilities of my Mentee's family/guardian, their teachers, school and any professional person working with them
- Respecting the privacy of my Mentee and other Mentors and Mentees in the program and the confidentiality of information acquired during the **mates** Mentoring Program except where it may cause harm to them or others
- Never consume alcohol or controlled substances in the presence of my Mentee or be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs, during mentoring sessions
- Trying not to smoke around my Mentee, even if they do
- Not engage in a romantic or sexual relationship with my Mentee regardless of whether or not they are over the age of consent
- Not organise to see my Mentee out of School until at least three months and only when the 'Three Month Permission Form' has been signed by all parties including Mentor, Parents/Guardian and Mentee.
- Provide a duty of care to my Mentee and keep them safe from risky activities to the best of my ability during out of school meetings

In signing I agree to abide by the **mates** Mentoring Program Code of Conduct. I also understand that upon match closure future contact with the Mentee is beyond the scope of **mates** Mentoring Program and may only happen with the mutual consensus of the Mentor, Mentee and Parent/Guardian.

Mentor Signature _____ Date _____

Witnessed by **mates** Program Coordinator _____ Date _____

MODULE THREE

Self-esteem and resilience

Resources

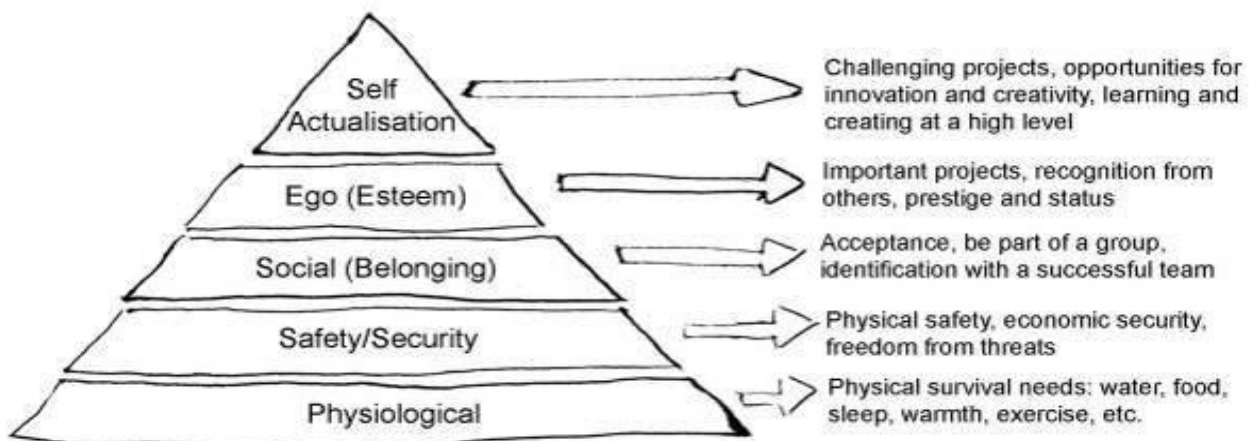
- Handout 3.1 - Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Handout 3.2 - Self-esteem
- Handout 3.3 - Resilience
- Handout 3.4 - Building resilience

Risk and protective factors

Activity – Complete Asset Checklist activity

HANDOUT 3.1

Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is shown above. The pyramid illustrates the five levels of human needs. The most basic are physiological and safety/security, shown at the base of the pyramid. As one moves to higher levels of the pyramid, the needs become more complex.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs⁹ is generally accepted as a fundamental part of the field of human-resource development. It also helps explain the idea of self-esteem. Maslow believed that people meet their needs in ascending order from the most basic need for survival. For example, a person usually meets their physiological needs (food, sleep) before their needs for belonging and self-esteem. The hierarchy helps explain why some young people are not ready to engage in a mentoring relationship. They may remain at the two lowest levels because survival is their number-one priority, or because their safety and security needs are not being met. Mentors and program staff need to be aware that if a young person is homeless or involved in an abusive relationship, they may not be able to engage as easily in a mentoring relationship. Mentoring offers support to young people as they move into the top sections of the hierarchy, particularly when considering a sense of belonging and self-esteem.

⁹ Maslow, A.H., 1943. 'A Theory of Human Motivation', *Psychological Review*, 50(4):370-96.

HANDOUT 3.2

Self-esteem

People's thoughts and feelings about themselves fluctuate depending on daily experiences, like how others treat them and what happens at school or work. These factors all temporarily affect our well-being and may result in a range of feelings from anger to joy and from frustration to elation.

Self-esteem goes beyond situational 'ups and downs'. Good self-esteem mitigates the daily fluctuations in our well-being. For people with poor or low self-esteem these ups and downs can make all the difference in the world.

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're ok and can succeed can be very powerful.
- **Experiencing success** by doing things that stretch but don't overwhelm 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.¹⁰
- **Find opportunities to help others.** This can help put your own life and struggles in perspective. Helping others can make you feel you are have a positive impact on the world around you.



¹⁰ Adapted from the Gippsland Mentoring Alliance Training Package, Trafalgar, Victoria: Gippsland Mentoring Alliance.

HANDOUT 3.3

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.



Level	Risk factors	Protective factors ¹¹
Community	Availability of drugs	Cultures of co-operation
	Media portrayals of violence	Stability and connection
	Transitions and mobility	Good relationship with an adult outside the family
	Low neighbourhood attachment and community disorganisation	Opportunities for meaningful contribution
	Poverty	
School	Detachment from school	A sense of belonging and fitting in
	Academic failure, especially in the middle years	Positive achievements and evaluations at school
	Early and persistent antisocial behaviour	Having someone outside your family who believes in you
	Low parental interest in education	Attendance at preschool
Family	History of problem alcohol or drug use	A sense of connectedness to family
	Inappropriate family management	Feeling loved and respected
	Family conflict	Proactive problem solving and minimal conflict during infancy
	Alcohol/drugs interfere with family rituals	Maintenance of family rituals
	Harsh or inconsistent parenting	Warm relationship with at least one person
	Marital instability or conflict	Absence of divorce in adolescence
Individual and peer	Favourable parental attitudes towards risk-taking behaviours	A 'good fit' between parents and child
	Constitutional factors, alienation, rebelliousness, novelty seeking	Temperament and activity level, social responsively autonomous
	Seeing peers taking drugs	
	Friends with problem behaviour	Developed a talent and zest for life
	Positive attitude to problem behaviour	Work success during adolescence
	Early initiation of the problem behaviour	High intelligence (when not paired with sensitive temperament)

¹¹ Hawkins, J.D., Catalano, R.F. and Miller, J., 1992. 'Risk and Protective Factors for Alcohol and Other Drug Problems in Adolescence and Early Adulthood: Implications for Substance Abuse Prevention,' *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(1):64-105.

HANDOUT 3.4

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)¹²

'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)¹³

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's appropriate.
- Take time to reflect on and celebrate even small achievements.
- Try new things together and keep an open mind.



¹² Werner, Emmy E., and Smith, Ruth E., 1992. *Overcoming the Odds: High Risk Children from Birth to Adulthood*, Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press.

¹³ 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.

MODULE FOUR

Active listening and communication

Resources

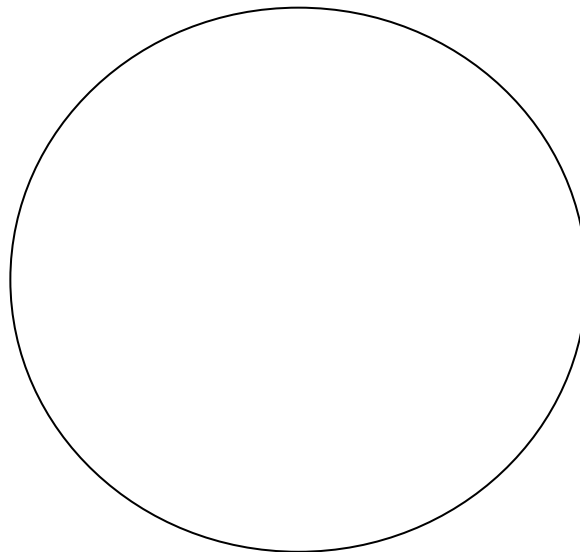
- Handout 4.1 - Four communication styles
- Handout 4.2 - Verbal communication
- Handout 4.3 - Non-verbal communication
- Handout 4.4 - Active listening
- Handout 4.5 - Listening blocks

Communication styles

Activity: What's my style?

Use the circle below to 'slice' into four pieces to represent assertive, passive, aggressive and indirect communication.

Referring to Handout 4.1, reflect on your own communication style and divide the pie up in proportion with your own communication styles.



What did you learn about yourself through this exercise?

--



HANDOUT 4.1

Four communication styles

All of us have at some time used each of these styles of communicating. Generally we tend to have a dominant style. This is a summary of the behaviours associated with each of the four communication styles. Not all characteristics of any one stereotype are present in any one person's communication. They can be present to differing degrees.

Passive

- do not assert themselves
- allow others to deliberately or inadvertently infringe on their rights
- fail to express their feelings, needs or opinions
- tend to speak softly or apologetically
- exhibit poor eye contact and slumped body posture.

Aggressive

- try to dominate others
- use humiliation to control others
- criticise, blame, or attack others
- can be very impulsive
- have low frustration-tolerance
- speak in a loud, demanding and overbearing voice
- act threateningly and rudely
- do not listen well
- interrupt frequently
- use 'you' statements (eg "you are irresponsible".)
- may have an overbearing posture.

Assertive

- state needs and wants clearly, appropriately and respectfully
- express feelings clearly, appropriately and respectfully
- use 'I' statements (eg "I feel frustrated when you turn up late")
- communicate respect for others
- listen without interrupting
- have good eye contact
- speak in a calm and clear tone of voice
- have a relaxed body posture
- feel connected to others
- stand up for their rights.

Indirect

- mutter to themselves rather than confront the person or issue
- have difficulty acknowledging their anger
- use facial expressions that don't match how they feel; i.e. smiling when angry
- deny there is a problem
- appear co-operative while purposely doing things to annoy and disrupt.

HANDOUT 4.2

Verbal communication



Idea. A speaker has an idea. There is a piece of information they want to get across, such as what happened on a TV program, or what they think of such and such.

Encoding. They must then encode the message. That is, they must choose how they will get the message across – which words they will use.

Message transmitted. They then send the message – saying or demonstrating what they've planned.

Decoding. The listener then interprets the words, body language, facial expressions, voice, and so on that make up the message.

Message decoded. The listener understands the message in a certain way and may then provide feedback to the speaker about what has been heard.

NB: Effective verbal communication is also influenced by the listener's cultural background, physical and mental health and their previous experiences with the person who is communicating the message.

Verbal communication transmits the content of messages. Research suggests that only 20 per cent of communication is expressed via the spoken word.¹⁴

¹⁴ Mehrabian, A., 1971. *Silent Messages*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

HANDOUT 4.3

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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶



¹⁵ Pease, B. and Pease, A., 2006. *The Definitive Book of Body Language*, New York: Bantam.

¹⁶ Adapted from MOIRA Mentor Training Manual, Moorabbin, Victoria: South Directions Youth Service.

HANDOUT 4.4

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.¹⁷

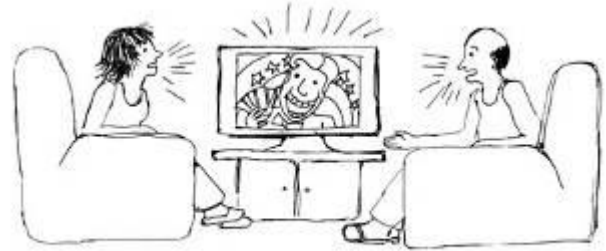
¹⁷ Adapted from the 'Gippsland Mentoring Alliance Training Package', Trafalgar, Victoria: Gippsland Mentoring Alliance.

HANDOUT 4.5

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, accent 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.¹⁸



¹⁸ Adapted from *MOIRA Mentor Training Manual*, Moorabbin, Victoria: South Directions Youth Service.

MODULE FIVE

Adolescence and the issues facing young people

Resources

- Handout 5.1 – The stages of adolescent development
- Handout 5.2 – Young people today
- Handout 5.3 – Common issues of adolescence
- Handout 5.4 – Ideas for engaging young people

Defining adolescence

Activity: My adolescence

One word that describes what my adolescence was like is:

Reflecting on adolescence

Activity: Reflecting on adolescence

What were you like as a young person?

What or who influenced you?

What pressures did you experience?

What did you enjoy?

What were your needs?

Young people today

Common issues of adolescence

- **Brainstorm session:** What issues might young people face today?

Engaging with young people

Activity: Engaging young people

Group 1: *Considering what you've learnt about communicating with young people so far, what might be some particular ways you could interact?*

Group 2: *Considering what you've learnt about communicating with young people so far, list some of the worst things you could do when talking to a young person.*

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 and 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.



Stage	Physical	Cognitive	Social-emotional ¹⁹
Early ~ 11–13 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puberty: grow body hair, increased oil production in hair and skin • Girls: breast and hip development, menarche • Boys: growth in testicles and penis, wet dreams, deepening of voice • Tremendous physical growth: height increase and weight gain • Greater sexual interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing capacity for abstract thought • Mostly interested in present with limited thought of the future • Intellectual interests expand and become more important • Deeper moral thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift from top position in primary school to being less powerful in secondary • Struggle with sense of identity • Feel awkward about self and body; worry about being normal • Realise parents are imperfect; greater conflict • Increased influence of peer group • Desire for independence and privacy • Return to 'childish' behaviour, particularly when stressed • Rule and limit testing
Middle ~14–18 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puberty is completed • The average age for sexual maturation is 10.5 years for girls and 12.5 years for boys • Physical growth slows for girls, continues for boys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even greater capacity for abstract thought • Increased general knowledge applied to new tasks • Interest in learning life skills like cooking, fixing things, driving • Greater ability to set goals • Interest in moral reasoning • Thinking about meaning of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep self-involvement, changing between high expectations and poor self-concept • Adjustment to changing body, worries about being normal • A sense of ego and personal uniqueness, and thinking no one can understand them • Distance selves from parents, drive for independence • Driven to make friends and develop greater reliance on them; popularity can be an important issue • Feelings of love and passion
Late ~ 19–21 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young women, typically, are fully developed • Young men continue to gain height, weight, muscle mass and body hair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to think ideas through • Ability to delay gratification • Increased contemplation • Increased concern for future • Continued interest in moral reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firmer sense of identity • Increased emotional stability, independence and self-reliance • Increased concern for others • Peer relationships remain important • Development of more serious relationships • Social and cultural traditions regain some importance

¹⁹ Adapted from MOIRA Mentor Training Manual, Moorabbin, Victoria: South Directions Youth Service.

HANDOUT 5.2

Young people today

'People resemble their times more than they resemble their parents.'
(Old Proverb)

Generation Z

Generation Z are people born from 1995 to the end of 2009. They are also called the 'silent generation', 'iGeneration', 'generation quiet' and 'net generation'.

- Make up nearly 18 percent of the world's population.
- Are typically the children of Generation X, however their parents also include younger Baby Boomers and the older members of Generation Y.
- Are 'digital natives'. Most of their communication takes place on the internet and they can show very little verbal communication skills.
- Can be impatient as they are used to instant action and satisfaction due to internet technology.
- May struggle with interaction with others and may contact with others as intrusion of space.²⁰

Generation Y

Generation Y is often defined as those born between 1978 and 1995. By 2012 Gen Y will comprise 40 per cent of the Australian working population.

- There are over 4 million Gen Y Australians.
- One in three is of an ethnic background other than Caucasian.
- One in four grew up in a single-parent household.
- Of current high-school students, almost 80 per cent will complete Year 12. The majority of these will go on to post-secondary education.
- There are more careers on offer today than ever before. In Australia today there is an estimated shortage of over 20,000 skilled-trade workers.
- In 1960 employees spent an average of 15 years with each employer. Today, this figure has dropped to four years.
- Of the total workforce, 30 per cent is employed on a casual basis. For Generation Y this figure is over 40 per cent.²¹

²⁰ Adapted from www.babyboomercaretaker.com/baby-boomer/generation-z and www.generationz.com.au

²¹ Huntley, R., 2006. *The World According to Y*, St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Seminal influences on different generations

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y ²²	Generation Z
Prime Ministers	William McMahon Gough Whitlam Malcolm Fraser	Bob Hawke Paul Keating	John Howard	Kevin Rudd Julia Gillard
Iconic technology	TV, 1956 Audio cassette, 1962 Colour TV, 1975	VCR, 1976 Walkman, 1979 IBM PC, 1981	Internet, e-mail mobile phones DVD, 1995 Play Station	Internet iPhones Facebook Twitter
Music	Elvis Beatles Rolling Stones	INXS Nirvana Madonna	Eminem Britney Spears 50 Cent	Megan Washington 50 cent Alicia Keys
TV & movies	<i>Easy Rider</i> <i>The Graduate</i> <i>Jaws</i>	<i>ET</i> <i>Hey Hey it's Saturday</i> <i>MTV</i>	<i>Lord of the Rings</i> <i>The Simpsons</i> Reality TV	<i>MasterChef</i> <i>The Incredibles</i> <i>Twilight</i>
Popular culture	Flared jeans Mini skirts Barbie, frisbee	Rollerblades Hyper colour Grunge	Body piercing Baseball caps Metrosexuality	Tattoos 'Emo' style Slim fit jeans
Landmark events	Decimal currency, 1966 Neil Armstrong, 1969 Vietnam War, 1965-73 Cyclone Tracy, 1974 Advance Australia Fair, 1974	Challenger explodes, 1986 Haley's comet, 1986 Stockmarket crash, 1987 Berlin Wall down, 1989 Newcastle earthquake, 1989	Columbine shootings, 1999 New millennium, 2000 September 11th 2001 Bali bombings, 2002 Iraq War, 2003+	SARS epidemic (2003) Boxing Day Tsunami (2004) Barack Obama US president (2008) Global financial crisis (2008)
Aspirational figures	John F Kennedy Audrey Hepburn Muhammed Ali	Bono (U2) Princess Diana Andre Agassi	Richard Branson	Paris Hilton



²² Adapted from McCrindle, M. and Hooper, D., 2006. *Generation Y: Attracting, Engaging and Leading a New Generation at Work*, Hobart: Drake International.

HANDOUT 5.3

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 to 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.



Eating disorders

Once an issue confined to young females, eating disorders in males are on the increase. With Anorexia nervosa the teenager pursues thinness through starvation, while bulimia is a binge-and-purge sequence.

Cultural issues

Many young people in our community come from diverse cultural backgrounds with different understandings and approaches to their lives. These differences provide rich experiences, but can also mean misunderstandings can occur through assumptions about the way things 'should' be done.

Cyberspace and technology

New technologies have meant that young people can be constantly connected to friends, family and even complete strangers through mobile phones and the internet. These technologies have deeply influenced the way young people engage with others and have even opened them up to dangerous situations such as cyber-bullying.

Coping with peer pressure and peer influence

Peer pressure is not always bad, however teenagers can sometimes get involved in negative activities simply because their friends think it's a good idea. Mostly, being with friends reinforces rather than undermines family values.

Young people themselves reject the notion of peer pressure. But peer influence – who they spend their time with – can't be underestimated.

HANDOUT 5.4

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'.²³



²³ Adapted from *Mentor One on One Volunteers Manual (MOOOV)*, Collingwood, Victoria: Good Shepherd Youth and Family Services.

MODULE SIX

Conflict management and problem solving

Resources

- Handout 6.1 - How we express anger
- Handout 6.2 - Managing difficult behaviour
- Handout 6.3 - Managing conflict
- Handout 6.4 - Problem solving

Understanding anger

Responding to difficult behaviour

Brainstorm session: What are some of the ways you would respond to a young person displaying anger?

Activity: Difficult behaviour

How would you respond to a young person who says the following:

"This sucks. I hate doing this stuff. You're so boring!"

"Don't tell me what to do. Screw you. You're not my mum/dad."

"How would you know? You've never been through this. You're old!"

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.²⁴

²⁴ Adapted from *MOIRA Mentor Training Manual*, Moorabbin, Victoria: South Directions Youth Service.

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.

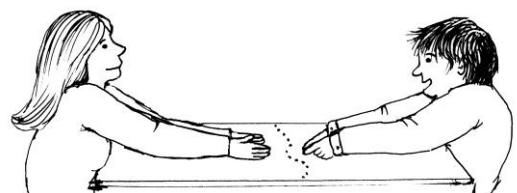
- Using a calm tone of voice and just being 'ordinary' can help relax people. 'Let's go get a coffee and talk about this.'
- A calm, assertive statement about listening and trying to find an answer to the problem is a good way to go. 'Tell me what the problem is. Maybe together we can find a solution.'
- 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:

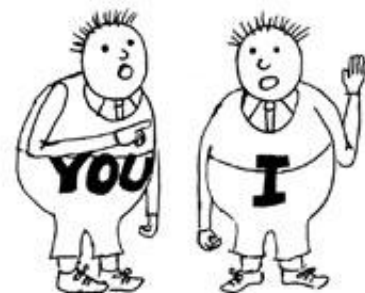
- clear and fair expectations, and definite limits about acceptable behaviour
- consequences for inappropriate behaviours
- sometimes disagreements within relationships, which also provide opportunities for understanding and honesty without hostility.

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.

You-message	I-message
'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.' ²⁵



²⁵ Adapted from *MOIRA Mentor Training Manual*, Moorabbin, Victoria: South Directions Youth Service.

HANDOUT 6.3

Managing conflict

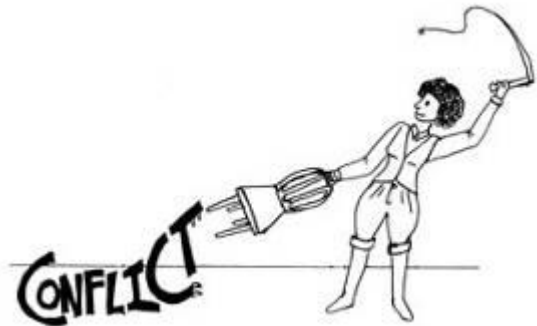
Conflict is usually about values, beliefs and needs and may occur when people have opposing interests or opinions. Behaviours resulting from conflict may include arguments, fights or disagreements that may be verbal or physical. Formal conflict resolution is a skill for trained counsellors, but everyone 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 conflict²⁶

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***

²⁶ 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.²⁷



²⁷ Adapted from the 'Gippsland Mentoring Alliance Training Package', Trafalgar, VIC: Gippsland Mentoring Alliance.

MODULE SEVEN

Values, duty of care and confidentiality

Resources

- Handout 7.1 – Exercise: Clarifying values
- Handout 7.2 – Young people's rights and duty of care
- Handout 7.3 – Confidentiality
- Handout 7.4 – Where to from here?

Understanding your values

Activity: Clarifying values

Complete the values exercise on Handout 7.1. How might different values become an issue in a mentoring relationship?

[Optional] Activity: Values case studies

Scenario 1: *Anna is a mentor in a community-based mentoring program. She has been matched to 13-year-old Katie for 6 months. Katie recently told Anna she has been giving oral sex to some of the boys in her class. She says, 'It's fun. Everyone does it these days. It doesn't mean anything.'* Anna is shocked by Katie's attitude and tells her she should respect herself.

What are the value differences between Anna and Katie? What is informing their values?

What can Anna do about the values Katie holds?

Scenario 2: *James is a 15-year-old involved in a school-based mentoring program. He tells his mentor, John, that he is going to leave school to work at McDonalds. He says he just wants to earn some money and have fun. John is frustrated as he thinks James should stay at school or go to TAFE.*

What are the issues for John and James?

Is it the role of the mentor to change the values of the young person?

Young people's rights

Brainstorm session: What are some of the rights of young people?

Confidentiality

Activity: Confidentiality

You have returned to the young person's home and are about to drop them off when they say they have something important to tell you that you mustn't repeat to anyone.

What would you do?

Confidentiality unpacked

[Optional] Activity: Confidentiality case studies

This activity aims to unpack more serious and complex examples of confidentiality issues.

Scenario 1: *Your young person confides to you that he stole a car last night.*

What would you do?

Scenario 2: *A 15-year-old young person speaks to you about her 18-year-old boyfriend pressuring her for sex.*

What would you do?

HANDOUT 7.1

Exercise: Clarifying values

	Agree	I'm not sure	Disagree
Unemployment benefits should be stopped after three months			
Termination of a pregnancy is a woman's right			
Women and men are equal			
Homosexuality is normal			
Kids get into trouble with the police because parents give them too much freedom			
Drugs should be legalised			
You can tell what a person is really like by their appearance			
My religion tells me what is right and what is wrong			
The death penalty is wrong			
People can be too honest			

More about 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.²⁸

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.

²⁸ Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (VIC).

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.

'When in doubt, contact your co-ordinator'

Mentors are encouraged to contact their co-ordinator if they are uncertain about whether a new activity might breach their duty of care.

An example

A mentor decides to take a young person fishing in a boat, knowing the young person can't swim. If the young person falls overboard and drowns, this was foreseeable and the mentor could be liable.



If the mentor can demonstrate that they considered the ramifications and took all care – provided a life-jacket, checked the weather forecast, briefed the young person about emergencies – they cannot be found to have been negligent.

Sometimes the young person contributes to their predicament, despite the mentor's efforts to prevent this. For example, if the young person decides to jump out of the boat even though they can't swim, the volunteer cannot be held totally responsible for the outcome.

Voluntary assumption of risk

If the young person decides they definitely want to go on the fishing trip, despite not being able to swim, then they have voluntarily entered into a risky situation and the mentor cannot be held liable.

Exemption from liability

The mentor needs to make it quite clear that they cannot guarantee the safety of the young person in a particular situation. For example, the mentor might have performed all regulation safety procedures on the boat, but they cannot guarantee that the boat will not sink.

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.



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

Information Privacy Act 2000 (VIC)²⁹

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.'

²⁹ Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents. Available online at www.legislation.vic.gov.au.

Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC)³⁰

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.

Mentors are not advised to act alone in a report to Child Protection. They are required to advise the co-ordinator if they have any concerns about the young person's safety.

Some handy hints

1) Mentors should ensure their understanding of confidentiality corresponds with that of the young person's

While the program co-ordinator will brief each young person about the issues and limits of confidentiality, the mentor should make sure that they share the same understanding. This is particularly important if there is a scenario where the mentor needs to discuss any issues or disclosures with the co-ordinator.

2) Mentors should not identify any young person

While they can talk to colleagues or friends about their mentoring experience, they should not identify any young person in the program. Nor should they leave the name and contact details of a young person where others might see or find them.

3) Mentors should respect the young person's privacy

A mentor is privy to personal information and it is important that they respect that privilege. Mentors must always remember that maintaining the trust of the young person is paramount to a successful relationship.

4) Mentors should always check in with their co-ordinator

The mentoring program has a duty of care to ensure the young person is safe. Mentors should always contact their co-ordinator if they are at all concerned about a young person.

³⁰ Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents. Available online at www.legislation.vic.gov.au.

HANDOUT 7.4

Where to from here?

Complete the accreditation procedure

- Complete an application and supply a Working With Children Check
- Attend an interview with the co-ordinator (varies with each school)
- Co-ordinator to complete a Reference Check where needed

The matching process

- Young person recommended for mentoring (processes vary with each school)
- Assessment conducted of the suitability of the young person for the mentoring program
- A suitable mentor match is identified based on mutual interests
- A mentor is approached about the proposed match
- The co-ordinator facilitates an introduction between the young person and the potential mentor³¹

Beginning the match :

- Your mentee's school may hold a launch of the mentoring program with several mentors at a time, usually of an evening and parents may be present. You will be introduced to your student and will have the opportunity to find out more about them

OR

- The school will organise individual meetings between mentors and their mentees.
- fortnightly face-to-face meetings with the young person
- a one-year commitment to the match
- regular supervision from the co-ordinator

Mentor support

Co-ordinators are employed to ensure that mentoring matches are safe and successful. Your co-ordinator is available to provide you with the guidance you need in order to give appropriate support to the young person. You are never alone in your mentoring match.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN is committed to providing ongoing support for mentors and schools. Feel free to contact the LLEN on 53810122 or pb@llen.com.au at any time if you have any queries about the **mates** mentoring program.

We thank you for completing the 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

³¹ Group activities may sometimes be run with young people and mentors to provide opportunities for 'natural' matches to be made.

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