

What is the best way to ensure the match is successful for both the young person and the mentor?

For Mentors:

- Provide timely and regular phone calls to check on how the relationship is going and obtain feedback from the mentors. Provide both group and individual support to mentors.
- Ensure you provide appropriate support and additional training for mentors to assist with any new trends and issues with young people in the program as they arise.
- Facilitate regular mentor 'get togethers' to share challenges and highlights (over a meal if possible). This assists in showing your appreciation and giving them guidance. If the mentors feel valued and supported the match will be more likely to succeed.
- Identify the ongoing training needs of mentors and endeavour to provide these opportunities through guest speakers, group discussions and workshops or highlight external opportunities that are available.
- Distribute a regular newsletter advertising training opportunities, telling stories of match activities and introducing new mentors.
- Email mentors a 'Story of the Week' that is encouraging and uplifting (you could make the stories anonymous by changing identities if need be).
- Organise bimonthly coffee clubs as mentor support meetings - provide a comfortable location, coffee and snacks.
- Make sure you are available for mentors during tough times and pursue regular chats with them and normalise their experience. Be clear with mentors about what is realistic in a mentoring relationship, that they may not see any tangible results in the short term.
- Establish ongoing meeting times and days for consistency with the mentors.
- Ensure that the mentor asks for help if their mentee is in a risky situation or going through turbulent times.
- Ensure you are able to keep track of all mentors. Some mentors are very self-sufficient, others like to check in a lot. Some might not be good at e-mailing or returning your calls so make them a priority so they don't slip through the net.
- If possible set up a program of group activities which run every six weeks and strongly encourage all mentees and mentors to attend. This helps ensure that all mentors and young people are seen regularly by the coordinator.
- Wherever possible provide positive feedback to mentors to keep them engaged and feeling supported in their role. Mentor/mentee matches can be likened to a 'blind date', expectations can be high and it is difficult for mentors to gauge the success of the relationship, so feedback is of utmost importance.
- Ensure you have personal relationships with all of your mentors so that you are genuinely getting to know them and this will allow you to detect subtle changes in their demeanor to help you assess how their match is going.
- Ensure there is appropriate sharing of information between caseworkers, the program coordinator and the mentor.

- Ensure there are debriefing sessions after each group activity for programs operating in a group based mentoring model.
- By keeping in regular contact and showing your appreciation of mentors it can be easier to broach difficult issues if they arise.
- Establish a buddy system where more experienced mentors are paired with new mentors as an extra support.
- Provide both formal and informal opportunities for mentors to feedback what's working and not working for them.
- For school based mentoring programs ask the mentor to fill out a progress sheet after each meeting asking questions like "was the mentee receptive, was the meeting productive" etc. and then facilitate a group debrief with the mentors.
- Ensure you stay in touch with mentors during 'the danger period', when a mentor is at risk of dropping out of the program (between the completion of training and being matched with a young person). This can take a few months to make the *right* match.
- Send out a pack for new mentors that gives responses to common questions, concerns and minor issues.
- Remember that responding to the needs of your mentors is the most important thing to attend to.

For Mentees:

- Ensure that young people feel comfortable enough to voice their concerns, if they have any, with the program coordinator, but try to avoid mentees getting *too* attached to the coordinator.
- Make sure you are clear about what the difference is between being a case worker and a match supporter.
- Ensure there are clear expectations for the mentee (and mentor) at the initial match meeting such as trying to establish ongoing meeting days and/or times, methods of communication etc.
- Ensure that there is a formal agreement signed by both parties once they are both satisfied with the expectations, boundaries and guidelines of the relationship.

Overall Match Support:

- Make sure you have regular, consistent contact with mentors and mentees in the early stages of the match so that they feel supported in developing the relationship.
- Provide ongoing regular support for mentors and young people. Weekly contact at the beginning of the match, then moving to fortnightly and monthly as the match progresses.
- Establish an initial trial period of between 1 and 3 months to allow flexibility to rematch if the match isn't working.
- If possible and appropriate collect feedback from relevant third parties such as a school teachers, parents and/or case workers to monitor the match and provide feedback to the mentor.
- Run getting-to-know-you activities to ensure the matches are built on strong foundations.
- Ensure you have a program procedure to deal positively with unsuccessful matches.
- Host community events where all matches have the opportunity to get together.
- Ensure mentors and young people feel comfortable and engaged with the organisation as a whole.
- Encourage matches to create a storybook or scrapbook for their relationship including favourite activities, highlights, goals, what they want the match to be like etc.
- Praise the achievements and commitment of both the mentors and mentees.