

Key Messages for Media

What is a key message?

Key messages are the core of writing and communicating. They deliver an argument backed up with reasons and evidence. They are simple, yet powerful statements which convey concepts, issues and values to intended audiences.

Key messages are meant to:

- Advocate - pushing for an outcome – a policy or action.
- Educate - supplying people with information.
- Provoke discussion - setting an agenda for debate.
- Promote – raising awareness of your topic (in our case mentoring).

Things to remember

- You should start off with your key message – don't waste time in getting to the point.
- Whenever possible, use evidence and facts to back up your argument to give credibility to your argument.
- Keep your key messages consistent across all channels of communication.

Framing a key message:

You need to frame your message in a way appropriate to your intended audience. So the way you would talk to a local paper is different from the way you would talk to the Financial Review or a radio interviewer.

Here are a few examples:

Framing in a personal way: 'Mentoring has helped me and could help other people'. Here you are explaining how mentoring is important to individuals – there is an emotional dimension to this type of message.

Framing in a communal way: 'Mentoring is good for society because it bring people together'. This is a broader message and it carries a feel-good sentiment.

Framing in a conceptual way: 'Mentoring is worth doing because it helps people'. Again this carries some emotional weight.

Framing in a factual way: 'Mentoring is currently helping 7000 young people across Victoria'. This is a statement of fact that helps deliver a rational argument.

Examples of key messaging:

- Youth mentoring is an effective way of providing young people with a supportive and enriching experience.
- Mentoring provides structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement.
- The young person and their mentor meet regularly to build a positive relationship that helps the young person realise their potential.
- The whole community benefits from youth mentoring. It creates positive links between generations and people who otherwise may not meet.
- The evidence shows that youth mentoring positively impacts on the lives of both young people and mentors
- Mentoring is many things but at its core lies an affirmation of human relationships and the capacity to enable both young people and mentors to learn and to grow.
- Mentoring programs require hard work and a commitment to quality practice.
- Quality mentoring programs require good planning, clear evaluation, strong governance and solid operating procedures.
- Coaching and tutoring are not mentoring. Mentoring focuses on the relationship while coaching and tutoring focus on skills, performance and targets.