

# Australian Youth Mentoring Benchmarks

Fostering the growth of high quality  
youth mentoring programs





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The Australian Youth Mentoring Benchmarks are proudly brought to you by the Australian Youth Mentoring Network (AYMN).  
The AYMN is supported by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

# Overview

A series of overlapping, wavy blue lines in various shades of blue, creating a dynamic, flowing background element that spans the width of the slide.

Mentoring can take many forms, but at its heart lies an affirmation of human relationships. Mentoring has the capacity to enable those involved—both young people and their mentors—to learn and to grow.

At the same time mentoring is no soft option.

Like any relationship, the development of a mentoring relationship takes time and commitment. Quality mentoring programs require hard work and tough decisions. They require firm undertakings from all involved.

Structured mentoring programs need to be developed and implemented using consistent standards. The effort is worth it. These programs operate with purpose and deliver real outcomes; from raising self-esteem, encouraging healthier behaviours and improving school attendance, to enabling better informed career choices and a more secure place in education or the workforce.

The first set of benchmarks for *Effective and Responsible Mentoring Programs* were developed in June 2000 when mentoring was a reasonably new strategy in Australia. The benchmarks were updated in 2007 as *National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks*. This latest edition of the benchmarks incorporates what we have learnt over the past decade from Australia and overseas. The benchmarks are the result of collaboration between a representative group of Australian practitioners and researchers.

**These benchmarks serve as the standard that all mentoring programs must achieve in order to have a strong, successful and sustainable program.** The Australian Youth Mentoring Network encourages all mentoring programs to achieve these standards through the sharing of resources, professional development and collegial networking.

The benchmarks will continue to evolve with our collective knowledge and experience. They are offered by the Australian Youth Mentoring Network as a further contribution to the development of a collaborative youth mentoring community in Australia.

# How to use the benchmarks

The benchmarks document has three sections:

## 1 Benchmark

Each benchmark indicator is an essential feature of a quality mentoring program. Together they provide a model of quality practice. Not all benchmark indicators will apply to all programs. For example if your program works with young people aged over 18 years Working with Children Checks may not apply. Common sense is required when applying the benchmarks.

## 2 Guidance

The guidance section provides an explanation of what may be required to achieve the particular benchmark indicator.

## 3 Checklist

The checklist is a list of possible resources, forms or policies you could have in place as evidence of meeting the benchmark indicators.

## New programs

The benchmarks document can be used as a step-by-step process for planning a quality mentoring program. Between 3 and 12 months is common for the planning phase.

Taking adequate time to consult, design and plan is essential for an effective and achievable mentoring program.

## Existing programs

Existing programs should use the benchmarks as a target to further improve their program.

The Australian Youth Mentoring Network has developed the Online Self Assessment Tool (OSAT) to help those running an existing program review their program against the benchmarks. Using OSAT allows users to anonymously assess how well their program is meeting each benchmark indicator and to determine a program's weaknesses and strengths. OSAT also provides links to specific online resources to help further improve the quality of these programs.

The Australian Youth Mentoring Network recommends programs in the development phase should be reviewed every six months to ensure they still meet the benchmarks. Once a program is established it should be evaluated and reviewed annually.

The outcomes of these reviews may affect strategic plans, action plans, forms, policies and/or procedures.

# 10 elements of mentoring

## Element 1 **Planning and Design**

Thorough program planning that clearly articulates the target group, aims, criteria and model of the program.

## Element 2 **Management and Governance**

A management and governance structure underpinned by well developed and targeted organisational policies and procedures.

## Element 3 **Evaluation**

Evaluation to assess the impact and effectiveness of the program to improve its operation and promote its outcomes.

## Element 4 **Staff**

High quality program staff with sufficient resources and support.

## Element 5 **Recruitment**

Suitable mentors and young people recruited from the program's target groups.

## Element 6 **Screening and Selection**

A clear selection process to assess the suitability of mentors and young people.

## Element 7 **Orientation and Training**

Comprehensive orientation and training for mentors and young people to assist them in building an effective mentoring relationship.

## Element 8 **Making the Match**

A consistent matching process that links the young person with the most appropriate mentor.

## Element 9 **Monitoring and Support**

Ongoing match support including regular monitoring and feedback to manage risk and create opportunities to celebrate the relationship.

## Element 10 **Closing the Match**

A planned end to the formal relationship that is clearly agreed and adhered to by all stakeholders.



# Element 1 Planning and Design

Thorough program planning that clearly articulates the target group, aims, criteria and model of the program.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>a</b> Consultation with community stakeholders and young people where a need for mentoring has been identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a community needs assessment.</li> <li>Ensure young people are actively involved in the assessment process.</li> </ul>	Documentation of interviews/meetings/focus groups with young people and the community Program waiting lists
<b>b</b> Clear vision, mission and values statements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the vision, mission and values of the mentoring program is aligned with the host organisation's mission and vision.</li> <li>If the mentoring program is stand-alone:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop a vision statement that expresses a desired outcome for the young people involved</li> <li>develop a mission statement that outlines the purpose of the program</li> <li>develop value statements that outline the beliefs and principles which will guide the program.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Vision, mission and values statements
<b>c</b> A clear set of aims, objectives and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a strategic plan or similar document that outlines the program's:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aims (what the program hopes to achieve in the longer term)</li> <li>objectives (specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, time-based)</li> <li>Key Performance Indicators (measurable outcomes and outputs which the program is expected to achieve).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	A strategic plan or similar document outlining the aims, objectives and KPIs of the program
<b>d</b> Clear program criteria that identifies the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>young people the program will serve</li> <li>mentors that will be required</li> <li>focus, setting and mode of the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define the youth population the program will serve.</li> <li>Identify target mentors (e.g. senior citizens, corporate employees and university students).</li> </ul>	Documentation outlining how the program will operate (focus/setting/mode/duration/ frequency/ consistency)

# Element 1 Planning and Design

Thorough program planning that clearly articulates the target group, aims, criteria and model of the program.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- duration, frequency and consistency of the match.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the focus of the mentoring relationship (e.g. social emotional wellbeing, individual talents and leadership, youth justice and crime prevention, identity, culture and faith, and/or education, training and employment).<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Choose the setting where the mentoring will take place.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Select the mode for how the mentoring will be conducted.</li> <li>• Determine how long the mentoring matches should continue.</li> <li>• Determine how often mentors and mentees will meet.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Ensure mentors are aware of the need to be consistent and reliable in their approach with the young person even if the young person themselves is not.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>e</b> A detailed program budget and sustainability plan with sufficient income to ensure key elements of program operation are achievable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a fully costed budget that includes funds for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- program staff</li> <li>- professional development</li> <li>- operational costs</li> <li>- program activities</li> <li>- program evaluation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop a plan that ensures the sustainability of the program for its intended life cycle.<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>	<p>Annual budgets Financial statements Funding submissions Sustainability plans</p>

1. See page 28 for more information on focus, setting and mode options.

2. Ibid.

3. The Australian Youth Mentoring Network encourages a minimum one year commitment involving one hour a week. Exceptions to this are allowed where a program can demonstrate evidence that there would be a benefit to a relationship if the relationship is of shorter duration and contact is less frequent.

4. To ensure the cost effectiveness of a mentoring program the Australian Youth Mentoring Network recommends a 3-5 year funding period.

# Element 1 Planning and Design

Thorough program planning that clearly articulates the target group, aims, criteria and model of the program.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>f</b> An advisory group and/or external stakeholders who provide guidance on program design and the ongoing relevance of the mentoring program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure young people are actively involved in an advisory capacity.</li><li>• Develop the terms of reference for the advisory group that outlines:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- roles and responsibilities</li><li>- group membership</li><li>- tenure of members of the group</li><li>- grievance resolution and conflict of interest procedures.</li></ul></li><li>• Schedule regular consultations with the advisory group and/or external stakeholders.</li></ul>	Advisory group terms of reference Minutes of meetings with advisory group Notes from discussions with external stakeholders



“Week by week, hour by hour  
I saw small changes as little by little  
he opened his world up to me.”

Mentor, Department of Education  
and Children’s Services SA

## Element 2 Management and Governance

A management and governance structure underpinned by well developed and targeted organisational policies and procedures.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>GOVERNANCE</b> <b>a</b> A suitable governance structure that ensures the legal, ethical and financial accountability of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the governance structure meets the needs of the program. A governance structure can include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a board of directors</li> <li>management committee.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Terms of reference for the board of directors/ management committee
<b>b</b> Formalised Memorandums of Understanding/partnership agreements between the program and all major partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) that outline:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the roles and responsibilities of each party</li> <li>grievance procedures</li> <li>the time frame the MoU will operate in.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ensure any MoU is endorsed by decision makers in all organisations.</li> </ul>	Memorandums of Understanding/partnership agreements between the program and all major partners
<b>PLANNING</b> <b>c</b> An action plan that enacts the long term vision for the mentoring program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an action plan that outlines how the strategic plan (aims, objectives and KPIs) will be implemented on a day to day basis.</li> </ul>	Action plan, operations plan or similar document
<b>d</b> A program closure plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop in advance a program closure plan that includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a communications plan that informs all stakeholders of the closure (e.g. young people, mentors, parents/guardians, teachers and sponsors)</li> <li>options for current matches depending on the relationship length and the needs and wishes of the young person and mentor</li> <li>options for unmatched young people and mentors including referral to another program (if available) or another support service as appropriate.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Program closure plan and/or policy and procedures

## Element 2 Management and Governance

A management and governance structure underpinned by well developed and targeted organisational policies and procedures.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>INFORMATION MANAGEMENT</b> <b>e</b> An information management system that aligns with the host organisation's privacy and confidentiality policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a record keeping and information management policy and procedure that addresses the management and monitoring of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>financial records</li> <li>staff records</li> <li>program participant information.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The policy should stipulate:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what data will be collected</li> <li>the reason for collecting the data</li> <li>what information will be shared with other key stakeholders (e.g. parents, guardians, case managers and teachers) and under what circumstances it will be shared.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The policy should align with the organisation's privacy and confidentiality policies.</li> <li>Develop procedures for collecting, storing and analysing program evaluation data.</li> </ul>	Record keeping and information management policy and procedures
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b> <b>f</b> A communications plan that differentiates between internal and external stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an external communications/marketing plan that:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>responds to the different needs of the program (e.g. mentor recruitment, sponsorship, funding)</li> <li>publically recognises funders and other supporters.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Develop an internal communications plan that:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognises mentors, young people and other program participants</li> <li>communicates program successes, accomplishments and needs to participants and other stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	External communications/marketing plan Internal communications plan Certificates for funders, mentors, young people and other program participants Media coverage Newsletters Annual reports Brochures Website

## Element 2 Management and Governance


A management and governance structure underpinned by well developed and targeted organisational policies and procedures.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b> <b>g</b> A comprehensive set of program operations and organisational governance and management policies and procedures which are reviewed every two years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policies and procedures for program operations and organisational governance and management.</li> <li>Ensure that where a program operates within an existing organisation, existing organisational policies and procedures are modified to accommodate the specific requirements of the mentoring program.</li> </ul>	<p>Program operations policies and procedures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment</li> <li>- Responding to inquires</li> <li>- Eligibility</li> <li>- Mentor screening and selection</li> <li>- Young person referral and selection</li> <li>- Orientation and training</li> <li>- Matching</li> <li>- Monitoring and supporting</li> <li>- Resolution of match issues</li> <li>- Recognition</li> <li>- Crisis and after-hours support</li> <li>- Closing the match</li> <li>- Evaluation</li> <li>- Program closure.</li> </ul> <p>Organisational governance and management policies and procedures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child safety and duty of care</li> <li>- Code of conduct (staff and volunteers)</li> <li>- Critical incidents</li> <li>- Dealing with unacceptable mentor behaviour</li> <li>- Employment and industrial issues</li> <li>- Equal opportunity</li> <li>- Grievance</li> <li>- Legal obligations and liability</li> <li>- Insurance (including volunteer insurance)</li> <li>- Media policy</li> <li>- OH&amp;S (including risk assessment)</li> <li>- Overnight visits and out of town travel</li> <li>- Privacy and confidentiality</li> </ul>

## Element 2 Management and Governance

A management and governance structure underpinned by well developed and targeted organisational policies and procedures.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Record keeping and information management</li><li>- Reimbursement</li><li>- Responding to young people's issues and behaviours</li><li>- Rights and responsibilities of young people and mentors</li><li>- Sexual harassment</li><li>- Social media usage</li><li>- Staff training and development</li><li>- Transportation.</li></ul>

A photograph of a man and a young man standing outdoors on a paved path. The man on the left is wearing a blue and white striped button-down shirt and dark pants, looking towards the young man. The young man on the right is wearing a bright blue hoodie and black pants, holding a blue and white soccer ball with both hands and smiling. The background features green grass, trees, and a building in the distance. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

“His future prospects are now brighter, and he now looks forward to graduating and establishing a career.” Mentor, The Smith Family

## Element 3 Evaluation

Evaluation to assess the impact and effectiveness of the program to improve its operation and promote its outcomes.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>a</b> A dedicated budget for program evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a portion of the program operations budget is allocated to evaluation.</li> </ul>	A separate item for evaluation in the budget
<b>b</b> An ongoing evaluation strategy identifying outcomes at three levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- effectiveness of program processes</li> <li>- effectiveness of mentoring relationships</li> <li>- impact on young people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design the evaluation strategy before the program commences.</li> <li>Designate a team/person to oversee the evaluation strategy, process and timeframe.</li> <li>Design evaluation tools to collect data regarding program operations and outcomes at identified times.</li> <li>Design clear processes and procedures to effectively collate, analyse and interpret data.</li> </ul>	An evaluation strategy Evaluation tools Evaluation policy and procedure
<b>c</b> Communication with all stakeholders regarding evidence of program achievements and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report evaluation results to program participants, stakeholders and the community so that they are aware of program achievements.</li> </ul>	Communications strategy
<b>d</b> Process of continuous improvement based on evaluation data and feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the program and the day to day operations (e.g. the recruitment of mentors, screening, training and support procedures) are refined in response to the results of the evaluation.</li> </ul>	Minutes from the evaluation and review meeting Program improvement plans

## Element 4 Staff

High quality program staff with sufficient resources and support.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>a</b> A staffing and resourcing structure that is sufficient for the mentoring program model and size.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure staff are supported and resourced correctly by considering factors such as the number and length of matches, focus, setting and mode of program.</li> <li>For example a full time coordinator is often required for either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a community based program supporting 25 at risk young people for 12 months via fortnightly meetings with a mentor, or</li> <li>a school based program supporting 50 young people for 6 months via weekly meetings with a mentor.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Documentation of appropriate resourcing analysis Annual budget
<b>b</b> Recruitment of skilled and experienced staff to manage the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop clear selection criteria to recruit program management staff with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>appropriate qualifications</li> <li>strong organisational, written, verbal and interpersonal skills</li> <li>experience with young people and an understanding of youth issues</li> <li>experience in program planning and development and project management.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Staff position descriptions Resumes of staff
<b>c</b> Clearly defined staff roles and responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop clear staff position descriptions that outline the Key Performance Indicators for each role.</li> </ul>	Staff position descriptions Key Performance Indicators for each role
<b>d</b> Relevant induction, training, development, supervision and appraisals given to staff to support them in their roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a clear induction to new staff so that they are prepared for the role.</li> <li>Develop training and development plans for each staff member.</li> </ul>	Staff training and development policy Individual staff training and development plans Staff supervision notes Staff performance/feedback documents

## Element 4 Staff

High quality program staff with sufficient resources and support.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure staff professional development is built into the operating costs of the program.</li><li>• Provide regular supervision sessions for program staff.</li><li>• Undertake annual performance appraisals for staff with ongoing skill development opportunities based on appraisal outcomes.</li></ul>	

# Element 5 Recruitment

Suitable mentors and young people recruited from the program's target groups.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>a</b> A planned and targeted recruitment strategy that attracts appropriate mentors who meet the needs of the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a targeted mentor recruitment strategy that includes:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identification of targeted mentors</li> <li>a marketing plan that outlines a variety of promotional and recruitment methods encouraging diversity in recruitment</li> <li>clear linkages to the program purpose and the needs of young people</li> <li>program fact/information sheets that clearly state the:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>program's aims</li> <li>roles, responsibilities and requirements of mentors and young people in the mentoring relationship</li> <li>criteria regarding the experience, qualities and characteristics required from mentors.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	External communications strategy (including a marketing plan) Program fact/information sheets or similar marketing material Mentor role descriptions
<b>b</b> A targeted young person recruitment strategy that informs the young person of the opportunities provided by the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a marketing plan that outlines a variety of promotional and recruitment methods suitable for the target population of young people.</li> <li>Develop appropriate fact sheets or other promotional material that engage young people and provide relevant program information.</li> </ul>	External communications strategy (including a marketing plan) Program fact sheets or similar marketing material
<b>c</b> Provision of information for both mentors and young people that clearly outlines the expectations of the mentoring relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and provide clear information about what is required in the mentoring relationship (e.g. frequency and duration of contact, privacy and confidentiality and match closure procedure).</li> </ul>	Mentor position descriptions Young person role descriptions Code of conduct

## Element 5 Recruitment

Suitable mentors and young people recruited from the program's target groups.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>d</b> A process for the referral and/or application of young people to the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish a clear process for referral/application of young people that takes into account the young person's needs and suitability for the program.</li><li>• Develop a referral form and application form that collects information that assists:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- in assessing a young person's suitability for the program</li><li>- in understanding the young person's goals and interests</li><li>- with matching the young person with an appropriate mentor.</li></ul></li><li>• Ensure that only information that is relevant to the mentoring function is collected to avoid any breach of privacy.</li></ul>	Young person referral forms Young person application forms Health and medical consent forms Relevant notes from discussions between program staff and referring agencies

# Element 6 Selection and Screening

A clear selection process to assess the suitability of mentors and young people.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>SELECTION AND SCREENING OF MENTORS</b>		
<b>a</b> Formal selection criteria for determining a mentor's suitability for the role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop clear selection criteria on which to base decisions for assessing the suitability of potential mentors.</li> </ul>	Clear selection criteria for mentors
<b>b</b> A formal mentor application process including the applicant's response to the selection criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a clear application form that collects information that will assist in assessing an applicant's suitability for the program.</li> <li>Ensure only information that is relevant to the mentoring role is collected to avoid any breach of privacy.</li> </ul>	Mentor application form
<b>c</b> A well documented mentor selection process which involves more than one person in decision making and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an interview</li> <li>- two reference checks</li> <li>- 100 point ID check</li> <li>- national criminal history check</li> <li>- state and territory Working with Children Checks (where young people are under 18 years)</li> <li>- at least one instance of face to face contact with program staff, prior to final selection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the potential mentor's suitability against the selection criteria.</li> <li>Ensure face to face interviews occur for all mentors who may be working with at risk young people.</li> <li>Ensure a minimum of one instance of face to face contact with program staff (e.g. training sessions) where an interview cannot be conducted face to face.</li> </ul>	Criminal history check applications Reference check results Copies of the 100 point ID check State and territory child protection safety checks Mentor interview notes Notes from discussions between selection panel Documentation of reasons why applicant was unsuccessful—including potential 'red flags' or concerns
<b>d</b> Policies and procedures for determining and informing successful and unsuccessful mentor applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure clear verbal and written communication with applicants outlining whether or not they have been successful.</li> <li>Develop a process for referring unsuccessful applicants to other relevant volunteering opportunities (where appropriate).</li> </ul>	Eligibility policy outlining the procedure to be used for unsuccessful applicants Letter informing successful or unsuccessful applicants

## Element 6 Selection and Screening

A clear selection process to assess the suitability of mentors and young people.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>SELECTION AND SCREENING OF YOUNG PEOPLE</b> <b>e</b> Clear selection criteria and process for program staff to determine the suitability of young people for the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop clear selection criteria on which to base decisions when assessing the young person's suitability for participation in the program.</li> <li>• Assess the young person's suitability for the program against the selection criteria.</li> <li>• Ensure the young person is keen to participate in the program.</li> </ul>	Young person selection criteria
<b>f</b> A process for informing young people of successful or unsuccessful referral into the mentoring program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure clear verbal and written communication with young people and referring bodies outlining why a specific decision was made.</li> <li>• Develop a process for referring young people to other relevant support agencies if unsuitable for the mentoring program (where appropriate).</li> </ul>	Case notes Minutes of meetings held with referring bodies Young person referral and selection policy and procedures

# Element 7 Orientation and Training

Comprehensive orientation and training for mentors and young people to assist them in building an effective mentoring relationship.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF MENTORS</b> <b>a</b> Mentors receive appropriate preparation for participation in mentoring, including training and resources to enable them to perform their role. Topics must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- definitions/understanding of mentoring</li> <li>- roles, responsibilities, expectations and boundaries of the relationship</li> <li>- communication skills, including conflict management</li> <li>- confidentiality and risk management issues relevant to participants</li> <li>- developing and implementing culturally appropriate practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide sufficient time for mentors to gain an adequate understanding of mentoring. Pre-match training should not be less than six hours.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• Ensure training is practical and goal-orientated, grounded in the learners' experiences and supportive, not competitive.</li> <li>• Ensure trained mentors demonstrate a clear understanding of mentoring and how to build an effective mentoring relationship. This could be demonstrated via assessing volunteers while they discuss likely scenarios during training or via pre and post training surveys or mini knowledge 'tests'.</li> </ul>	Training agendas Mentor pre and post training survey results Mentoring training course content Mentor training handbooks/handouts Attendance records at training sessions
<b>ORIENTATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE</b> <b>b</b> Young people receive appropriate preparation for participation in mentoring. Topics must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- definitions/understanding of mentoring</li> <li>- roles, responsibilities, expectations and boundaries of the relationship</li> <li>- confidentiality and other relevant issues</li> <li>- how the young person will communicate with other parties involved in the program including program staff and mentors</li> <li>- how program staff will communicate with mentors, teachers, case managers and parents/guardians about the young person involved in the program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the format of orientation is appropriate for the young people in the program. This may occur through a group orientation session or through an individual session with program staff.</li> <li>• Ensure young people are made aware of their rights in the mentoring relationship, including where they can go to seek support if there is an issue.</li> <li>• Confirm and discuss the goals and interests identified in the young person's referral and/or application form.</li> </ul>	Training/orientation manuals Handouts for the young person Attendance records at training sessions Resolution of match issues policy and procedures

## Element 7 Orientation and Training

Comprehensive orientation and training for mentors and young people to assist them in building an effective mentoring relationship.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>c</b> Orientation and training is evaluated and improvements made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage feedback from young people and mentors to ensure ongoing relevance of orientation and training.</li><li>• Revise training and resources in response to feedback and any changes to mentoring practice and/or legislation.</li></ul>	Copies of completed evaluation forms/surveys Notes from feedback discussions/focus groups with young people and mentors

5. As recommended by Rhodes, J. (2001) 'Youth Mentoring in Perspective', The Centre Summer.



“Amanda never judges me or makes me feel that my problems are silly. She is not just my mentor she is my friend.” Mentee, Sydney NSW

## Element 8 Making the Match

A consistent matching process that links the young person with the most appropriate mentor.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<p><b>a</b> The matching process focuses on the needs of the young person and considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the relevant characteristics, skills and interests of the mentor</li> <li>- the relevant characteristics, skills and interests of the young person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailor matching criteria to prioritise the young person. Consider:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the preferences and goals of the young person, mentor and their parent or guardian (where appropriate)</li> <li>- the mentor's experience/skills/expertise</li> <li>- other shared interests between the mentor and young person</li> <li>- similarity of personalities and temperaments between the mentor and the young person</li> <li>- gender or ethnicity, if these are important to the young person</li> <li>- any special needs of the young person</li> <li>- geographic closeness and compatibility of meeting times.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Matching criteria</p> <p>Matching policy and procedures</p>
<p><b>b</b> An official agreement from the mentor and young person on the terms and conditions of the mentoring relationship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm and gain agreement on the roles, responsibilities and expectations of mentors, young people and program staff.</li> </ul>	<p>Match agreement</p> <p>Signed copies of the code of conduct</p>
<p><b>c</b> Key stakeholders are aware of and support the terms and conditions of the mentoring relationship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief key stakeholders (e.g. parents, guardians, case managers and teachers) to address their concerns and encourage their support of the mentoring relationship.</li> <li>• Ensure stakeholders are aware of the roles and responsibilities of program staff.</li> <li>• Ensure stakeholders are aware of their roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Match agreement</p> <p>Letter or other documentation outlining terms and conditions of the match and the role and responsibilities of the program and stakeholders</p>

## Element 9 Monitoring and Support

Ongoing match support including regular monitoring and feedback to manage risk and create opportunities to celebrate the relationship.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>MONITORING</b> <b>a</b> Program staff monitor the contact made between the young person and mentor and the progress of the mentoring relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a clear policy and procedure to monitor and respond to match developments.</li> <li>Ensure program staff contact both the young person and the mentor no less than fortnightly in the first three months of the relationship and monthly thereafter.</li> <li>Ensure arrangements are in place to monitor and support young people where the program model does not allow for direct contact with young people (e.g. when school staff are responsible for contact). Any issues that arise in the relationship must be communicated to the program staff.</li> </ul>	Match support policy and procedures Communication logs (record of contact between mentoring matches) Case notes
<b>b</b> Progress data is recorded to provide useful information about the ongoing development of the match.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure data is stored in a manageable recording system (e.g. database, progress log or case notes).</li> <li>Use the database to monitor the progress of the match in order to provide tailored support to the participants.</li> </ul>	Progress database Match progress log Case notes
<b>c</b> Progress of the match is communicated to stakeholders in accordance with information management and confidentiality policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly define with whom information is shared, what information is shared and for what purpose it is shared.</li> </ul>	Record keeping and information management policy and procedures Privacy and confidentiality policy and procedures Emails, letters and other documentation sharing information with stakeholders Notes from briefing meetings with key stakeholders

## Element 9 Monitoring and Support

Ongoing match support including regular monitoring and feedback to manage risk and create opportunities to celebrate the relationship.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>SUPPORT</b> <b>d</b> Mentors receive ongoing training and support in response to their identified needs and the evolving relationship with the young person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a range of opportunities to support mentors. These could include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- regular discussions with program staff</li> <li>- peer support</li> <li>- training in emerging issues/concerns</li> <li>- morning teas</li> <li>- online meetings</li> <li>- webinars.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Training agendas Training course content Mentor training handouts Attendance records at training sessions Notes from peer support sessions Case notes
<b>e</b> Mentors are acknowledged and receive regular performance feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide verbal acknowledgment of the contribution of mentors on a regular basis.</li> <li>Provide mentors with formal feedback after the first month, at the midpoint, and at the conclusion of the match. The feedback could take the form of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a one on one meeting with the program staff</li> <li>- a formal letter.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Minutes of meetings with mentors Copies of letters and emails
<b>f</b> Young people receive support in response to their identified needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the concerns and needs of young people via regular meetings, surveys and/or interviews.</li> <li>Refer young people to suitable support services (where appropriate).</li> </ul>	Records of contact between mentoring matches Minutes of meetings with young people Interview notes Copies of surveys
<b>g</b> Program staff ensure mentoring relationships are continually acknowledged and celebrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Present certificates at various milestones (e.g. one year anniversary, conclusion of relationship).</li> <li>Celebrate all mentoring relationships during Youth Mentoring Week and National Volunteer Week (where appropriate).</li> </ul>	Certificates for young people and mentors

# Element 10 Closing the match

A planned end to the formal relationship that is clearly agreed and adhered to by all stakeholders.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<p><b>a</b> A formal match closure policy and procedure with clear procedures for exiting the program and guidelines regarding future contact between the mentor and young person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the policy and procedure caters for when:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a relationship reaches the end of the set mentoring period</li> <li>- a relationship is terminated early by either the young person or mentor</li> <li>- a relationship must be terminated by the program due to a breach of program policy</li> <li>- a young person and/or mentor whose prior relationship has ended wishes to be rematched in the program</li> <li>- a young person and/or mentor is unavailable to complete exit interviews or final evaluations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ensure the mentor and young person agree upon and understand the nature and boundaries of any ongoing relationship outside of the program.</li> <li>• Conduct exit interviews or final evaluations with all mentors, young people and key stakeholders (e.g. parents, guardians, case managers and teachers) (where appropriate) regarding their experiences in the program.</li> <li>• Notify all key stakeholders of the closure of the match and any intention by the young person and the mentor of ongoing contact.</li> <li>• Provide a copy of the closing the match policy and procedure to all key stakeholders to ensure clarity around the ongoing role of the program.</li> </ul>	<p>Closing the match policy and procedure Minutes from exit interviews or debriefing sessions Final evaluation forms Letters to stakeholders regarding match closure</p>

## Element 10 Closing the match

A planned end to the formal relationship that is clearly agreed and adhered to by all stakeholders.

Benchmark	Guidance	Checklist
<b>b</b> A process to assist young people to define the next steps to continue achieving personal goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss with the young person their current and future needs.</li><li>• Link young people to relevant supports in the community to assist with ongoing personal growth.</li></ul>	Closing the match policy and procedure Case notes Records of referrals to relevant supports
<b>c</b> Program staff acknowledge and celebrate the successes of the mentoring relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Present each young person and mentor with a certificate at the conclusion of the relationship.</li><li>• Arrange an individual match, or whole of program, celebration event.</li></ul>	Certificates for young people and mentors Event agendas/plans

# Definitions

## Focus Areas

### Social and emotional wellbeing

Mentoring to assist young people to increase their self-esteem, self-efficacy and resilience by actively supporting their social and emotional wellbeing. The focus includes improving both the young person's life skills and the positive connections they have with their community.

### Individual talents and leadership

Mentoring to assist young people to further develop their individual talents and/or leadership skills in a specific area (e.g. sports, photography, drama) in order for them to reach their full potential.

### Identity, culture and faith

Mentoring to assist young people to grow in their understanding of their faith and/or culture and cultural identity. The program actively supports young people to be proud and confident of their identity and culture and to be able to exercise this in their community.

### Youth justice and crime prevention

Mentoring to assist young people to avoid anti-social and offending behaviours by encouraging connectedness with positive elements in their community and increasing protective factors.

### Education, training and employment

Mentoring to assist young people to positively engage in and maintain their participation in education, training and employment. These programs assist young people to develop a vision for their future and provide support to achieve their education, training and career goals.

## Mode

### Method of delivery

#### FACE TO FACE

The mentoring sessions are held in person, face to face.

#### E-MENTORING

Electronic mentoring uses technology to connect the mentor with the young person. This can be text based or utilising Voice over IP (Internet Protocol) and video technology.

### Relationship

#### ONE TO ONE

One mentor matched with one young person.

#### GROUP

One mentor matched with up to four young people (If the ratio is greater than 1:4, this is no longer considered quality mentoring<sup>6</sup>).

#### TEAM

Two or more mentors matched with one young person.

## Settings

### School

Mentoring occurs on the school premises.

### Community

Mentoring occurs within the local community, utilising community spaces such as parks, cafés, libraries etc.

### Workplace

Mentoring occurs on the business premises.

### Other Site

Mentoring occurs in other site based locations including but not limited to universities, juvenile justice centres, youth centres, football clubs etc.

6 Rhodes, J.E. (2002). *Stand by me: The risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press  
Grossman, J.B and Bule, B.A (2006) *Review of what youth programs do to increase the connectedness of youth with adults*, Journal of Adolescent Health, Vol39, pg. 788-799  
Rhodes, J.E and Dubois, D.L (2006) *Understanding and facilitating the youth mentoring movement*; Social Policy Report v20, no.3

# Models

## There is no one size fits all model

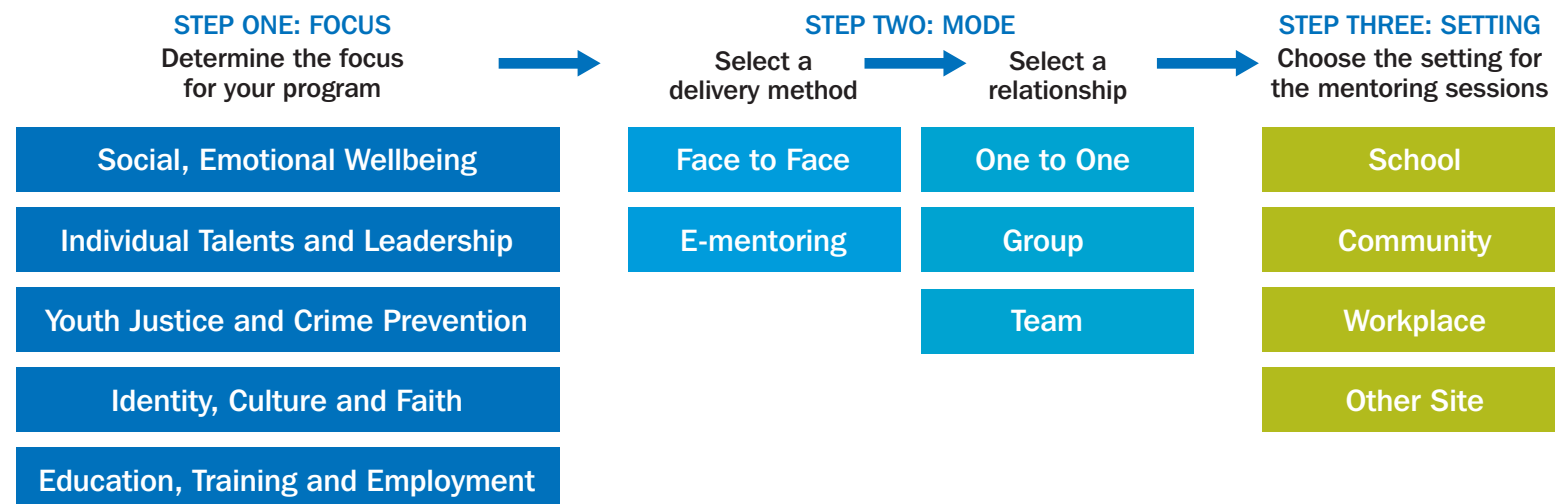
Mentoring is flexible and can and should be tailored to suit the individual needs of the young people who will be involved in the program. What works for one community may not work for the next and so an assessment of the community's needs must take place to ensure the program is what the young people want and that it can be supported by the community.

## Tips for choosing the right model for your community

Focus – Your program can have more than one focus. The focus areas you choose should align with the outcomes you are trying to achieve.

Mode – Some programs may choose to use a combination of Face to Face and E-mentoring for their matches.

Setting – Complete a separate risk assessment for each setting that you choose as they may impact on operational aspects of the program such as screening, monitoring and support. They may also have further implications on policies and procedures.





# Glossary

**Vision:** an ideal or a desired outcome for the young people involved in the program.

**Mission statement:** a short statement that outlines the overall purpose of the program – what the program does and for whom.

**Values:** a statement that outlines the beliefs and principles which will guide the program.

**Aims:** what the program hopes to achieve in the longer term.

**Objectives:** the specific targets that need to be achieved to realise the mission. Objectives should be SMART (specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, time-based).

**Action Plan:** a prioritised list of tasks designed to achieve the aims and objectives of the program. An action plan includes responsibilities, timeframes and performance indicators.

**Key Performance Indicators:** measurable outcomes and outputs which the program and/ or staff are expected to achieve.

**Stakeholders:** the people or groups who have an interest in the program (e.g. parents, guardians, case managers, teachers, community partners and funders).

**Advisory group:** a collection of individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills which complement the knowledge and skills of the formal governance group members and/or staff in order to more effectively support the program. The advisory group is generally limited to making recommendations and/or providing background for governance group decisions. The advisory group may also play a public relations role by bringing in contacts to support the program.

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Youth Futures WA

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# Complete the AYMN Online Self Assessment Tool (OSAT)

OSAT is designed to assist youth mentoring programs to identify how well they are meeting the Australian Youth Mentoring Benchmarks and help understand where the program's strengths and weaknesses lie.

By completing this tool you will be able to see:

- 1 How healthy your program is and what makes a quality mentoring program
- 2 Areas in your program that are tracking well or need improvement
- 3 How your program rates against the average of all other programs that have completed the tool
- 4 Useful links and resources for continuous improvement

This is an anonymous process and only the program staff completing the tool will be able to see their individual results.

## How to use OSAT

### STEP 1

Login at [youthmentoring.org.au](http://youthmentoring.org.au) using your AYMN user name and password

- If your program is not yet registered simply add your program to the National Youth Mentoring Database on the AYMN website

### STEP 2

#### Complete the Assessment

- Answer the questions in each section using a simple 0-5 rating; 0 being not applicable, 1 being rarely and 5 being always.
- The complete assessment takes at most 60 minutes but...if you need to stop and save your work, click *Save and Continue Later* and when you next login the system will pick up where you left off.
- When you have answered all the questions, click *Submit Assessment* to automatically generate your reports.

### STEP 3

#### View Your Reports

There are four different types of reports generated:

- 1 *Quick View Status Report* – provides your program's average score for each benchmark element.
- 2 *Report Against all Indicators* – provides you with your individual scores for each benchmark indicators.
- 3 *Your rating against average rating of all programs registered* – shows your rating against the average of all programs that have registered and completed their assessment (anonymity preserved).
- 4 *Your Program's Strengths and Weaknesses* - a priority list that shows your program's strengths and weaknesses, by gathering all the indicators under whichever rating you've given them from 0 – 5.

You can return and do the assessment as many times as you wish.

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and password

Upgrade your *free* membership to a *paid* membership  
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#### THE TOOLBOX

Access sample forms, policies, procedures and  
many resources to help set up your program.



#### THE EVIDENCE BANK

Looking for mentoring research on specific topic?  
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#### Online Self Assessment Tool

Check to see how well your  
program is meeting the  
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#### AYMN Online Community

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and communicate.

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