

Quality Practice Checklists

8. Mentor Screening

This list comes from a full set that was originally printed in 'A Guide to Effective Practice for Mentoring Young People', 2007, Office for Youth, Department of Planning & Community Development'

Key Points

- Reinforces that the young person's safety is paramount at all times
- Needs to include several methods for assessing suitability
- Minimises the risk of non-compliance with Victoria's legislation on Working with Children Check
- Aims to highlight potential mentors who are committed and skilled as opposed to those whose influence may be harmful to the mentee or program

Checklist

- A well-structured, application process with clear documentation, including criteria for the selection of mentors.
- Reference checks for mentors by trained staff, which may include:
 - Character references
 - Working with Children Checks
 - Driving record checks
 - Criminal record checks where legally permissible
- A face-to-face interview. Questions could include:
 - Why do you want to become a mentor?
 - Previous volunteering background? With young people?
 - What are your three most worthy and three least worthy attributes?
 - What do you believe you can offer a young person?
 - Are you able to commit to meeting your mentee regularly for the agreed length of your mentor/mentee match?
 - Are you willing to commit to the program requirements including initial and ongoing training, reporting systems and feedback sessions?
 - Do you have any questions to ask me?
- Suitability criteria based on the program's statement of purpose and needs of the target population. Could include some or all of the following:
 - Character references
 - Personality profile
 - Skills identification
 - Gender/age
 - Language and cultural requirements
 - Level of education/academic standing
 - Career interests

- Motivation for volunteering
- Submitting the mentor application pack, including:
 - Personal references
 - Employment history
- Criteria for screening out unsuitable applicant mentors that could include:
 - The obvious reasons: a relevant criminal record, history of child abuse etc.
 - Questionable motives: to increase status, gain reward, sort own problems
 - Inappropriate skills
 - Lack of availability
- A process for informing inappropriate volunteers that they will not be selected for the program. This could include:
 - Offering other volunteer opportunities within the organisation
 - Explaining “We have no suitable mentee match for you at this time.”