

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE PACK

The aim of this pack is to assist you, as a mentor, to get to know and work with your students.

Enclosed you will find a collection of exercises, gathered from a range of sources, which are there to help you support your students to:

- Think about themselves in the context of a complex and competitive world
- Develop their skills, qualities and values so that they can participate more confidently in that world
- Take full advantage of the services, employers and places of interest in their local areas

The exercises are wide ranging and it is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the pack early on, so that you can pick and choose appropriate exercises according to how your group is developing. Although there is a considered structure to the pack, it is important that you remain responsive to both the interests of your students and your own views as to what might interest them or help them to develop a specific skill. Above all, remember that sessions are supposed to be fun, so if an exercise seems too much like schoolwork to them, leave it and move on to something else.

The following section summaries should help you plan your year - but please do be flexible.

Section One – Mentor training booklet

Everything covered in our mentor training sessions is here: Qualities of a good mentor, a mentor's job description, objectives of mentoring, the year in brief, general tips and advice for mentors, the first few sessions, important programme guidelines, overcoming common problems and difficulties, and a schools contact list.

Section Two - Getting to know each other

This is full of exercises that help you get to know your students, what makes them tick, their interests, ambitions etc and is a good starting point for your first few meetings. It is also intended to help the students understand themselves a little better, which will be useful for when you help them to start considering what career they would like to pursue.

Section Three - General games and exercises

This is full of general exercises and games with the main emphasis being on fun. Many of the exercises in here are good if you feel a bit stuck on how to get them stimulated. We suggest you dip in and out as you feel appropriate.

Section Four - Presentation skills

This is a useful section to work with if you want your students to start thinking about presenting an argument or preparing a formal presentation. A mentoring group could be an ideal place for a student to try public speaking in a non-threatening environment.

Section Five - The world of work

The nitty-gritty of finding a job! This is split into different exercises on writing a C.V., application letters, interviews and choosing a career. There is a handy careers index, which can be a useful reference and a brief guide to work experience. There are also details about Connexions, a very useful service for 14-19 year olds that gives guidance on careers and future learning.

Section Six - Taking your students out

This section gives you some ideas on where to take your students if you need a break from working in the office. Some mentors have used these trips as an incentive/reward for completing an area of work. It is split into general places of interest but also gives some ideas on workplaces that you may want to visit.

Section Seven - Other resources

This is a very useful section full of different websites, many of which may be useful if you want to find out more about the current school syllabus and want to help your students with their homework. There's also a summary of common terms in education, a list of library opening times and places to do dance and drama in Hackney.

Section Eight - Mentoring feedback

Finally, if you'd like to get some feedback on how the students feel the sessions are going - this is a good section to use. As well as being useful at the end of your mentoring year, it can be a good "pulse-check" once you have had a few sessions.

Some of the exercises take longer than the recommended hour and may require more people than are in your group. This does not mean the exercises should be ignored; perhaps you could run the exercise over two sessions or invite colleagues to join in! You may also consider working with the other mentors to form larger groups for the exercises from time to time.

It is important to build into any exercise that you adapt or develop yourselves, time for sufficient de-briefing at the end: the students will gain more from an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned.

Well, we hope you enjoy your mentoring experience and we look forward to seeing you at the support sessions.

GOOD LUCK!

Section One:

Mentor Training Booklet

Qualities of a good mentor	1.5
Mentors' job description	1.6
Objectives of mentoring	1.7
The year in brief	1.8
Examples of student letters & objectives	1.9
First few sessions	1.13
Important programme guidelines	1.17
Common problems and difficulties	1.19
Child Protection Guidelines	1.20
Students with personal problems/ at risk	1.22
What do I do if things go wrong?	1.24
If your student/s sometimes seem bored...	1.27
Handy hints for communicating with your students	1.28
School contact details	1.30

QUALITIES OF A GOOD MENTOR

- A positive, flexible, non-judgemental and patient attitude towards young people.
- An ability to empathise and be responsive to a young person's individual needs.
- A desire to help in the educational and personal development of young people.
- Good communication skills –particularly listening and motivation.
- High levels of enthusiasm, commitment and perseverance and an ability to commit the required amount of time.
- An appreciation of the fact that however well you're doing you probably won't receive much positive feedback!
- A respectful attitude towards people of different educational, economic, cultural and racial backgrounds.
- An ability to handle personal information sensitively.
- A good sense of humour!

MENTOR'S JOB DESCRIPTION

- To meet individually or in small groups on a regular basis with student/s for a period of one academic year.
- To develop a supportive, non-judgemental relationship with each young person involved, in which they can explore their aspirations concerning their education, work, social and leisure interests.
- To prepare discussion topics, learning activities and/or action points for each meeting.
- To help each student to find ways of improving school performance, and where necessary, setting targets to be regularly reviewed during mentoring sessions.
- To assist each young person to investigate future careers and college requirements, with the emphasis on encouraging them to gather information for themselves.
- To help provide opportunities for each young person to improve their understanding of the world of work, through visits and discussions.
- To provide general support and constructive feedback to each student regarding their expectations, performance and behaviour.

OBJECTIVES OF MENTORING

To establish trust

The mentor conveys trust through active, empathetic listening and genuine understanding and acceptance of the students' feelings. This creates a psychological climate of trust, which allows students (who perceive mentors as listening and not judging) to honestly share and reflect upon their personal experiences (positive and negative) as learners.

To offer tailored advice

The mentor directly requests detailed information from and offers specific suggestions to students about their current plans and progress in achieving personal, educational, and career goals. This ensures that the advice offered is based on accurate information of the student's needs.

To introduce alternatives

Mentors guide students through ideas and beliefs relevant to education or the world of work.

To challenge

The mentor respectfully challenges students' explanations for avoidance of decisions and actions relevant to their development. This helps students overcome unproductive strategies and behaviours, and to evaluate their needs and capacity to change.

To motivate

Mentor share appropriate life experiences and feelings as a role models in order to personalise and enrich the relationship. Students are motivated to take necessary risks, make decisions without certainty of successful results, and continue to overcome difficulties in their own journey towards educational and career goals.

To encourage initiative

The mentor facilitates critical thinking to develop personal and professional potential. This encourages students to be independent, and take the initiative to manage change, negotiate transition, and take events at school / college in their stride.

THE YEAR IN BRIEF

- Mentors will be paper matched to students by us, either in groups or 1:1. You will be working with students aged 14 and 15 (Year 10)
- The first meeting (the icebreaking event) will be at the school in September/ October, mentors will travel to the school in a group.
- For the first session students will be taken up to the company by mentoring programme staff and teachers. This will take place in September / October.
- Meetings take place fortnightly anytime between 3.45 and 4:30 pm depending on the time school finishes and generally last an hour.
- Mentoring relationships last one academic year (September through to July). The Mentoring Programme holds regular feedback sessions each term at the company.
- We will offer several organised trips and visits this year. Past trips have included a DJ workshop in Hackney, a bowling evening, a visit to Hackney Empire (a local theatre) and an ice skating trip. Emails about group trips will be sent out nearer the time.
- We will hold a recognition event at the end of the year to celebrate the achievements of mentors and students – this will be held early July.
- School term dates for Hackney can be found at www.learningtrust.co.uk.

EXAMPLE LETTER TO MENTOR

Dear Mentor

Hi!! My name is Rubina Amad and I am 14 years old. I am really interested in the mentoring programme and can't wait to get started!

I enjoy a lot of things like watching tv; going to see ~~the~~ visit my cousins who live in the country-side; spending time with my family; listening to music; reading magazines surfing the net; doing sports like ice-skating and lots of other things.

I don't always read but occasionally I get hooked. I am currently reading "Angels and Demons" by Dan Brown it's a fab book and I can't stop reading it!

I have a mum, dad, older sister and younger brother. I come from India but we moved here when I was only 3 years old.

I really enjoy maths, science, P.E. and citizenship. I hate english and R.S. To be honest, I find them quite boring.

When a grow-up, I would really like to be an accountant or something in that field. To be honest, since I was small, I have always wanted to work in an office and wear a suit! Whenever we pass the city, I have always admired people in suits and I hope to be just like them when I grow-up.

¶

I am REALLY looking forward to meeting you!!

Rubina Amad...

EXAMPLE LIST OF OBJECTIVES

NAME: Janiece Headley-Walker

FORM: IOA

YOUR TARGETS

Write here all the things you want to achieve in mentoring. Feel free to write anything-try and think of at least five. Make sure you write your name and form at the top of the page.

1. More confidence when approaching new people
2. C.V writing.
3. How to ~~write~~ ^{do} and ^{well} in an interview
4. Writing an effective job application
5. researching careers on the Internet
6. researching colleges/courses
7. talking to people in different jobs
8. Good interview techniques.
- 9.
- 10.

AT THE FIRST FEW SESSIONS

Swap phone numbers / email addresses at an early stage, and help them get to grips with technology!

Swap home phone numbers/email addresses at the earliest opportunity. Many of the students have mobile phones and it is far easier to contact them directly rather than through the school. Urgent messages sent through the school will often not reach the students until the following day. Ask your student about their mobiles – do you know how to use all the functions? They probably will! You could set up an alarm on both your phones the day / 2 hours before your next meeting as a reminder.

Set up an e-mail address for your student(s) and get them into the habit of using it. Text / E-mail them regularly to keep in touch.

Take the initiative at the beginning

Many students will have had limited contact with adults other than teachers or their parents and will be very shy during your first few meetings. Take the lead when it comes to arranging sessions. You will often find that when asked, students are not very forthcoming about their availability. This is not a sign of reluctance to attend but is often a symptom of their shyness. They may be reluctant to suggest a date in case they feel they are imposing upon their mentor.

Consider holding weekly meetings at the beginning to establish rapport

If possible, it might be a good idea to hold the first three sessions or so on a weekly basis. This enables you to establish rapport quickly and students will relax far earlier on in your relationship. Generally we recommend meeting every two weeks thereafter. In the long term regularity of meetings should be mutually acceptable.

Confirm the date and time of your next meeting at the end of each session

At the end of each mentoring session confirm the date and time of your next session. Encourage your student/s to make a note of this. It may be a good idea to provide them with a diary to help keep track of their sessions.

Phone students in advance

It is always a good idea to phone students the day before an arranged meeting to confirm their attendance, especially at the beginning of the relationship. Students are not used to organising appointments – remember that in school everything is organised for them. Many a mentoring session has been missed because the students have simply forgotten the arrangement!

Arrange meetings for a particular day

Leading on from the above, it may be a good idea to try and arrange your meetings for the same day each fortnight e.g. every second Wednesday so that students can get into a routine. Discuss which day is best for your group and schedule meetings accordingly. If you are mentoring one student it might be a good idea to speak to other mentors and arrange to meet your student the same day to enable the students to travel together.

If you have to cancel at the last minute

If you have to cancel a session at the last minute and cannot get through to your students, arrange for a colleague to meet them in reception and explain the situation. Simply leaving a message at reception will make them feel rejected and they may feel that you have lost interest in them.

Encourage students to phone you to suggest meetings

As the relationship progresses, it is a good idea to get your students to phone you to arrange/confirm sessions. Although students are more than happy to talk on their mobile phones to their friends it is an entirely different matter when they are asked to phone an office. Encourage them to phone you and to leave messages on your voicemail. This is a great confidence builder and helps them to develop a skill they will need in the future.

Make full use of who you know

Your students may be interested in meeting other people in different professions. This often helps to break the monotony of meeting in the same place and gives students the opportunity to visit other companies in the City. Give us a call if you need some advice for contacts and we'll see if we can help you.

Discuss the students objectives sheets and letters at some point

Students may need support in different areas and it can sometimes be hard to know which activities will work best. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to approach mentoring. The student objective sheets can be invaluable in the early stages of mentoring and can act as a starting point for planning sessions. Make sure you discuss the sheet with your students at an early stage. Talk about what they want to get out of mentoring and ask them to help you plan what you can do together to achieve their objectives.

If necessary brief students on their behaviour at the office

Sometimes, students will not behave properly in your office. If this happens – it's a good idea to explain to them calmly that they are putting you in a difficult situation. You don't need to be heavy handed – simply explain the consequences of misbehaviour. Tell them what the standards of behaviour are in the office and that your company will ask them to stop coming if they are disruptive.

Ensure reception knows you are expecting your students

Make sure that reception know that your students are expected. It may be a good idea to ring them with the names of your students and the approximate time of their arrival. Students should ask for you when they arrive – for this reason it is essential that they know your full name.

Give students a tour of your company and introduce them to colleagues in different departments

Show your students around your company and introduce them to the various people working in the different departments. They may be interested in talking to receptionists, security guards, kitchen staff, press officers, secretaries, etc. Many students assume that a company employs one type of staff e.g. A law firm only employs lawyers! It is really useful for them to understand how all types of employees contribute to the success of a company.

Plan your meetings in advance

Always take 10 minutes or so to prepare for your mentoring meetings. Get together any exercises or materials you may need so that you are fully prepared when your student/s arrive. This is particularly important for those mentors in group: group style relationships. Arrange to meet the other mentors in your group, beforehand, so you are all clear on the content of the session.

Balance ‘serious’ sessions with fun activities

Keep your first few sessions as relaxed and light hearted as possible – spend time building the relationship by just chatting and asking questions. For example, bring in some pictures of your friends/ family / a recent holiday and tell your students all about them. They may feel confident / comfortable enough to the same at the next meeting.

Achieving a balance between work oriented and fun activities is essential to the success of your relationship. If students are constantly asked to fill in worksheets and complete tasks they may feel that mentoring is just an extension of school. Use this Resource Pack for ideas on how to combine practical learning with fun activities. If you have time, please consider taking the students out of the office to visit places of interest such as Museums, Art Galleries etc. This will break up your sessions a bit and keep things more interesting for everyone.

One idea for this may be to link up with another mentoring group within your office. However, please be aware that if all your early sessions are trips out then you will raise expectations- they may start expecting this all the time!

Should my sessions be weekly or fortnightly?

This is entirely up to you and your student. It will depend on the amount of time you can give – do not be pressurised into meeting weekly if you have other commitments.

Should we meet during school holidays?

Again this is entirely up to you and your students. Some groups carry on meetings throughout the holidays, while others prefer to have a break and resume sessions in the new term. Holidays and other commitments will often make mentoring meetings impossible during these times. Mentors often find that interest from the student's wanes after a long break. If you do not plan to meet during holidays make sure that you have a definite session booked in for the new term and contact your students the day before to remind them.

Try and be as relaxed and friendly as possible.

Both you and your student(s) may feel shy and nervous at first- don't worry! Give it time and your relationship will develop and you'll soon be getting on well.

IMPORTANT PROGRAMME GUIDELINES

- Always ensure that mentoring sessions are held in a public place where other people can see you, for example an open plan meeting area or staff canteen.
- Some students may want to confide sensitive personal information to you. Mentors are not counsellors and do not receive the necessary training to offer advice to young people. If you learn that your student is in any situation where they or others may come to harm, you are **duty bound** to inform the school or the programme. This will apply to situations such as drug misuse, underage sex, teenage pregnancy, and bullying. If you are unsure as to the seriousness of the situation then the programme staff are always on hand to give advice.
- The students may say things in mentor meetings that they would not want the mentor to repeat to anyone. Some of these things could include the names of individual students or teachers with whom the student may have temporarily fallen out. The student may also reveal details of his or her family circumstances that it would serve no purpose to repeat.
- However, in cases of illegality or abuse, the mentor must make clear to the student that confidentiality cannot be kept. The school will have a policy on physical or sexual abuse and a named person on the staff who will deal with the matter. Crime and drug taking are also issues that the school will have procedures to deal with. The mentor will need to handle skilfully any such revelations by the student and to explain why confidentiality cannot be kept.
- In the case of bullying, the mentor will need to use sensitivity. Once again, schools have a policy for dealing with this issue, and the mentor should be guided by the school / mentoring programme. Talking the matter through with a student and encouraging the student to report any incidents to the school may prove best.
- Should the student raise sensitive issues with the mentor, he/she will need to have thought about a response. Such issues could include: homosexuality, abortion, race-relations, drug taking, drinking, smoking, religious beliefs, and political views. In any of these cases, the mentor may not agree with the students or their parent's views. One aim of the mentoring process is to help young people come to their own opinions in a balanced and adult way, and refusing to discuss such issues may lead to a breakdown in the communication between student and mentor. The mentor will need to find out what the student really thinks and why they have come to those views. Encouraging them to explain their viewpoint is a good way of helping them to develop critical skills. They should also be encouraged to be rational. Occasionally a young person may try to shock a mentor and he/she should be aware of and sensitive to this.

- A mentor should never criticise a student's parents or family. The parents will have agreed to the mentoring in the first place, and it would seriously undermine the scheme if a mentor suggested or implied that they thought a parent had behaved badly. If a young person discusses an incident, which occurred at home, the mentor should listen, ask the young person to give their views on the incident, but remain non-committal.
- If you intend to hold your mentoring session somewhere other than your place of work you must ensure that the school and the students' parents are informed in advance. Always encourage your students to let their parent or guardian know when they have a mentoring session.

Remember – the mentoring programme trains all students before they are allowed onto the scheme. At this training we cover all of the above points about confidentiality and what happens if they do disclose information to you which you consider serious enough to inform the school / HSMP about.

All students take part in the scheme with the full consent and knowledge of their parents / guardians who receive a letter from the programme outlining what the scheme is and how it operates.

Only when we have received a parental permission slip is the student allowed to participate in the programme.

COMMON PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES

Uncommunicative Students

It can sometimes be the case that students in one to one relationships can be quiet and uncommunicative, and that you find it hard to know which exercises to do with them to 'break the ice'. Generally this may be because they are a little overawed by their surroundings, and the fact they are in a one to one with an adult they are unfamiliar with.

Possible solutions to this include:

- Giving them time to adapt to the situation – you'll probably find that they get over any shyness after a few sessions.
- You may find that initially you are doing a lot of the talking. This is normal – rest assured that in school and with their friends your students are chatty and energetic.
- Try and find topics that you can both talk about, this will bring them out of themselves – talking about things they can relate to – music, television, films, and sport are all good topics.
- We generally find that any shyness disappears after the first few sessions – if you feel that you are still getting nowhere please tell us - we can speak to the schools co-ordinator about possible reasons and solutions.

Noisy and Disruptive Students

The flipside to the above are students who are disruptive and may have dominant personalities that disrupt group dynamics. Again, most of what has been said above applies in this situation - students may be excited by their surroundings, and need a bit of time to calm down. Here are a few suggestions:

- Try to take the initiative in sessions, plan out what you are going to do in advance.
- Allow everyone in the group to have an equal say – one suggestion that has been put forward is to have an object (a ball perhaps) that a person has to be holding when they speak – anyone not holding it has to remain silent.

Poor or Irregular Attendance

One of the main problems people encounter when mentoring are meeting times and arrangements. General problems may be:

- Students not turning up, or turning up late, and not informing you when they can't attend.
- Students showing up unexpectedly with no prior warning.

- School and religious holidays (Ramadan – 4th October- 3rd November depending on lunar calendar, Christmas, etc) causing disruption to mentoring.
- Having to cancel meetings at the last minute because of work commitments, such as secondments.

Firstly, if your student(s) are not attending it should not be taken as a personal reflection on your mentoring – in larger groups in particular there may be students whose commitment to the programme doesn't match that of their peers. However, you may eventually have to allow those who aren't committed to leave the programme, but try to encourage the ones who do show enthusiasm and who seem to be benefiting from the experience to carry on.

The students are not used to organising appointments – remember that in school everything is organised for them, and that part of the benefit of mentoring is for them to learn the ability to make and stick to meetings. It may take some time! We suggest that you firmly but gently encourage your student(s) to come to the sessions, and be patient while they get used to attending regular meetings.

- You could try giving them a meeting post it note for their diary or get them to set a reminder alarm on their mobile
- **If you don't hear from them please don't give up!** It is best to be gently persistent and keep phoning the students. Even though it is a voluntary scheme, its worth reminding your student(s) that you are keen to have a meeting. There have been many occasions where mentors and students have not met for some time but do eventually get a regular pattern of meetings established.
- If you can't contact them on the phone, then fax the school and cc the School Co-ordinator, or failing that contact any of us on the relevant numbers – we're here to help! See the contact list at the back of this section.

If your students are consistently not showing up for sessions then please let the programme staff know. We can contact the school and arrange a meeting with the students to find out the underlying reason. It is often the case that students will avoid attending sessions, if they have already missed a couple, simply because they feel that their mentor will be annoyed with them and they may get into trouble.

Cancelling Sessions

Should you for any reason need to cancel a mentoring session we would ask you to inform the students as soon as possible. Many schools do not permit students to use their mobile phones until the end of the school day, so if you have to cancel at the last minute, the best option is to fax the school in the morning for the attention of the student, mark it 'urgent', and it should be passed onto the student concerned.

Students bringing along their friends

This has happened in the past where students are enjoying their sessions so much that they decide to bring along their friends. Ascertain whether this is a problem (for yourself and for the group dynamic). Don't feel obliged to take on extra students but if you decide that it's ok then please let us know so that we can complete the necessary documentation and inform the parents.

Finishing Mentoring Early

Some mentors this year have been seconded, and are unable to continue mentoring:

- Several mentors have arranged for colleagues at the company, or other mentors returning from secondments, to pick up where they have left off.
- If you are going on a secondment, please explain the situation in advance to your students, and let us know so that we can discuss alternative arrangements for them.
- We would ask if you are going to be seconded that you fill in an assessment form on the Programme before you leave with any suggestions on how mentoring may be improved.

Students who drop out

Inevitably there will be some students who drop out. This could be due to a number of reasons: they may have other pressures in their lives – family problems for example. We have often found that persistence can help with some students. Again, they may feel uncomfortable in a new environment and situation, and require some time to adjust.

- The fact that your student has dropped out is no reflection on your mentoring abilities, or you as a person – please tell us if your student decides not to carry on with the programme, and we can match you with somebody else.

Students with exceptionally poor numeracy and literacy skills

Some student(s) may have certain learning difficulties – such as numeracy and literacy. The schools normally make provisions for students with these requirements through extra lessons and learning support. Remember that mentoring also provides them with valuable extra support, and that you are making a real contribution.

CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Child protection issues very rarely come up in business mentoring meetings. It is made clear to students in training that mentors are not trained counsellors or social workers. **It is also made very clear that if a student discloses any information that makes the mentor think that the student, or another young person, is in any danger of harm or abuse then the mentor HAS to report this back to the programme and/or the school.**

It is also the mentor's responsibility to look out for any physical/ behavioural indications that a student may be suffering from neglect or some form of abuse -this could be physical, emotional or sexual. Indicators may include:

- change in behaviour e.g. from normal/ outgoing to withdrawn, emotional or aggressive
- physical marks – e.g. cuts, bruises etc

If possible ask some open ended questions to the young person to check if they are alright. Be careful not to ask "leading" questions.

Remember that teachers and support staff at school will always be on the look out for such signs but as a mentor you can also be alert to any situations that may not have been noted by school staff.

It's also worth noting that domestic violence can be considered as abusive and harmful (i.e. seeing or hearing someone being abused constitutes harm) even if the child is not physically harmed.

If you have any concerns at all regarding your mentee(s), then please contact a member of the HSMP team to discuss the issue further.

You can also phone your student's school and ask to speak to the nominated Child Protection Officer.

In the case of suspicion of abuse

- ❖ Remember it is your duty to report suspicion as well as certainty.
- ❖ Keep detailed notes on your suspicions and any details that you feel are relevant, sign and date them.
- ❖ If a young person is in immediate danger and you cannot contact the school then you can contact one of the HSMP team.
- ❖ Consider whether you need to explain to the young person what action you have taken. This can be discussed with HSMP staff.
- ❖ Remember your role is to report not to investigate.

In the case of a disclosure to a volunteer (which also includes disclosure regarding another young person)

- ❖ Always take them seriously; remember you may be the first person that they have confided in.
- ❖ Try not to look shocked or disgusted if a young person reports something to you that you feel uncomfortable with.
- ❖ Do reassure the young person that disclosure was the right thing to do.
- ❖ Explain to the young person that you will need to share this information with the School Child Protection Officer who may need to take further action. Explain what the process will be and reassure them that you will keep them informed.
- ❖ **Do not agree to keep secrets.** They will not want the abuse to continue and have chosen to tell you so that you can help them.
- ❖ Do be comforting and sympathetic and tell them they are not responsible for what is happening to them.
- ❖ Write down all of the details and make sure they are signed and dated.

In the case of a volunteer having some cause for concern without having any evidence or verbal report of abuse – e.g.

- unusual or unexpected behaviour by a student
- evidence that the student is upset, concerned or worried about an issue
- an ambiguous comment by a student that causes a mentor some concern
- ❖ Always take them seriously; remember you may be the first person who suspects that something is wrong
- ❖ Ask the student if something is wrong and ask if they would like to talk about the issue. If the student does not wish to elaborate then encourage the student to consider talking to another adult that they can trust as soon as possible.
- ❖ Do not agree to keep secrets. Explain to the student that if you are concerned about their welfare then you must inform the mentoring programme.
- ❖ Do be comforting and sympathetic.

REMEMBER - IF YOU ARE IN ANY DOUBT AT ALL PLEASE CONTACT HSMP STAFF TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE FURTHER

STUDENTS WITH PERSONAL PROBLEMS / AT RISK

If you feel your student is in need of counselling, or they confide something to you that you feel could be harmful to them, you can speak to your co-ordinator or to us here on the programme. Our training covers how you should deal with a situation whereby a student imparts something to you which you feel is a matter of concern for the school and / or their parents: you should not be placed in a situation whereby you feel you have become party to sensitive information that may place the student(s) in danger or harm.

The mentoring programme and / or the school needs to be made aware that you have a student you feel has special educational needs, or that they may need emotional support.

There are several resources available to both students and mentors needing advice and support:

Childline

A 24-hour service, providing a free national help line for children and young people in trouble or danger. They have a website at: www.childline.org.uk , or you can phone them on 0800 1111. They also have a freepost address at: Childline, Freepost 1111, London, N1 0BR. The website has a lot of resources for young people.

The Samaritans

This is a 24-hour service offering advice and someone to talk over problems with. The phone number is 08457 90 90 90, and they have an email address at: jo@samaritans.org or see their website www.samaritans.org.uk

Off Centre

This is a Hackney based counselling service, which offers support to young people they run sessions in schools, creative therapy, and a listening ear. The phone number is 020 8986 4016 / 0208 985 8566. You can email them at: info@offcentre.org.uk or see their website www.offcentre.org.uk. The address is: Off Centre, 25 – 27 Hackney Grove, London, E8 3NR.

Bullying

Based in Edinburgh, the Anti-bullying Network has a comprehensive website including short videos and lots of good advice <http://www.antibullying.net> Another new initiative is Beatbullying. Based in South London, they can be contacted on 020 8473 1321 <http://www.beatbullying.org>

Teenage Pregnancy

Brook provides free and confidential sexual health advice and contraception to young people up to the age of 25. Brook has 17 centres around the UK, the nearest one to the Hackney area is in Holloway Road, Islington. It's website www.brook.org.uk is very informative and easy to use with lots of contraception advice. It also has a "Defender" game that is fun and educational. Another useful website is www.ruthinking.co.uk. This provides useful links and a helpline: Sexwise 0800 28 29 30.

Drugs and Alcohol

More than half of all 16 –year-olds will have been offered or taken drugs at some time and many of the students on the scheme will probably have already started experimenting. Its important that they are informed and aware of the risks and effects of drugs and alcohol.

Here are some confidential help lines and websites that may well be useful:

Frank (National Drugs Helpline) 0800 776600
Family Drug support service 01981 251155
National Drink Helpline 0800 917 8282

www.drugscope.org.uk
www.talktofrank.com
www.thesite.org/info/drugs

WHAT DO I DO IF THINGS GO WRONG?

Here is some general advice and a few ideas of possible solutions- there are no right or wrong answers - give us a ring if you're stuck!

One to One mentoring

1. Your student is very quiet .You only get one word answers from him / her.

Many students will be very shy at first –this is normal! Be patient and try finding some common ground to bring them out – the resource pack may be useful for some ideas on how to get them to talk. You could suggest they prepare some questions to ask you, and you could do the same. Usually, after a while, you'll both become more comfortable and the conversation should begin to flow.

2. Your student reveals that he/ she has been bunking off school. What action should you take or how should you discuss the issue with them?

Try and avoid lecturing them. Its best if you can talk to them as an adult friend – not a parent, guardian or teacher. Try and discover why they may be doing this and see if there are any solutions. Its probably a good idea to contact us if you're not sure – the school will probably know anyway – so you won't be telling tales!

3. Your student appears very upset or troubled about a particular issue at home or school. You don't wish to pry, but there is clearly something wrong – how should you approach the issue?

This is very tricky – they should only talk about it if they feel like doing so – don't push them too hard. At the same time, let them know that you are there to listen should they want to discuss any issue. Remember to remind them that you are duty bound to report back to the school or us if you think the issue is serious and they are at risk. In that case, intervention from the school or another agency may be required.

4. Your student wants to find a work experience placement. You don't know of anyone in that particular field.

Please see the pages on work experience in Section 5 of the mentor resource pack.

Group Mentoring

1. One of your students is very quiet, and you normally only get one word answers from him / her. The other student(s) do not give them a chance to talk.

Try and give the quieter ones an equal chance by asking direct questions for each student, or taking turns to answer – without highlighting any particular student. Sometimes, it may be useful to have an object (pencil, ball or whatever) that each person must hold when they speak – no one else can speak while that person is holding it. This can help avoid shouting matches – but can be difficult to enforce! See notes under 1:1 mentoring, too.

2. Your group of students all have very different needs or levels of academic ability- its hard to run an exercise/ meeting that keeps all of them interested.

Have a look through the resource pack – you may be able to get one group member to do one task or exercise, then focus attention on their friend whilst doing this. Its also a good opportunity to get all students to respect each others' time and be aware that they may have take turns and to sit through other topics/ subjects that they are less interested in. If a helpful colleague is around nearby, you may be able to enlist their help for short periods.

3. Your group never achieves anything – you haven't managed to complete any exercises from the resource pack. Your conversations normally go off at a tangent and the group lacks focus.

Don't worry about doing loads of resource pack exercises- its important to respond to your students' own requirements. If they want to just come and sit and chat all the time that's fine- but ask them what they feel about it. If they are still coming to see you then they are still enjoying it and learning from the experience. You could try and mix fun with more serious sessions- so make an agreement, if they are keen, to complete a piece of work, then do something more fun at the next meeting

4. There is a clear clash of personalities between your students, which gives the meetings an unwanted tension.

We do try and ensure that groups selected are harmonious – but numbers and practicalities don't always make this possible. Also students often fall out and make up with alarming frequency – so this may just resolve itself! It may be a good idea to discuss how professional life involves working with colleagues who you may not necessarily choose as your friend -so it will be a good learning experience for them to cope with this situation. Let us know if it's a real issue – we can look at the groups overall and see if a solution is practical.

5. A new student suddenly appears as a part of the group, uninvited.

This will all depend on the dynamic of the group – if you are happy them turning up and your other students also seem the same then it shouldn't be a problem. However if the dynamic changes and takes a turn for the worse then you may want to ask them not to come again. The new student will need to join the programme officially by filling a profile form, getting a parental consent letter completed and speaking to the school co-ordinator. So you could let the student stay for this meeting, but tell them they need to go through the proper procedures before they can come again. Use your judgement, try and gauge/ find out how the rest of the group feel then consult us.

IF YOUR STUDENTS SOMETIMES SEEM BORED...

It may be worth noting that we have experienced before some examples of students who have attended mentoring sessions regularly but despite this apparent commitment, they seem to lack enthusiasm at their actual meetings. This can be very discouraging for a mentor. It is a common problem and one that we always have difficulty in tackling.

PLEASE REMEMBER - Mentoring is a long-term process. Long after you have gone out of your student's lives they will recall something that you have said to them or helped them with which they will appreciate as an adult.

Do you remember any teachers, for instance, who had a large effect on your life, but you may not have fully realised this until you were much older? Generally, there are a number of things that should be taken into consideration - This may not make things any easier, but it may help to put things in perspective!

1. Teenagers, as we all know are notoriously easy to bore - many things for a lot of them are a constant drag. The most talented mentor in the world would often have trouble making them animated!
2. 15 year olds are often very undemonstrative and lack the social skills to say a 'thank you' or to feedback effectively- this is a part of the learning experience.
3. The students are arriving at the end of the school day and will therefore often be tired and not on their best form after their journey, which can sometimes be long and tedious.
4. In their own, personal worlds teenagers will often lack the wherewithal to see outside their own experience, (particularly if they have had a bad day or have issues going on in their lives) and will be less able to deal with these moods / feelings than an adult.
5. Mentoring is a new type of learning for them - they need to be more interactive than they would be in lessons, where they tend to be "spoon fed" all day. The two way process that is mentoring is a hard concept for many of them to grasp.
6. Remember that all the students are volunteers and are not forced to visit you at all. If they weren't getting anything out of the scheme, the chances are they would leave the programme. Attendance means interest - even if that's not expressed.

Please do persevere and remember - you may be making a massive impact on your students' lives!

HANDY HINTS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR STUDENTS

COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY!!!

Poor communication by students tends to be the main reason that mentors don't meet students regularly. Please be aware of the following -

- Students are often very poor at communicating to fix up meetings.
- Some students can be very unreliable.
- Students are easily influenced and distracted.
- Students are generally inexperienced with leaving messages and can be intimidated by having to phone up companies.
- Students often lose mentor's phone numbers.
- Student mobile numbers often change and they often don't have credit.
- Groups can sometimes be disorganised in agreeing a date when they can all visit a mentor.
- **Mobile phones are SWITCHED OFF 90% of the time during the normal school day.**

The mentoring team and the co-ordinators will do as much as possible to alleviate any problems, but please be prepared for some frustration! Perseverance on the mentor's part will be rewarded.

COMMUNICATION TIPS

- Always arrange your next meetings in advance when you are face to face with the group. It is often a good idea to encourage your student(s) to keep a mentoring diary for appointments.
- Take the initiative early on – be gently persistent.
- Get as many contact routes as possible and try and agree the best way to reach your student(s) – try and get a mobile AND home number, an email address etc. Although email can be unreliable – (e.g. hotmail accounts will expire if not used regularly), it is worth giving it a try. Setting up an email account is a good exercise to do in a session, and it can give you another possible communication option.
- A reminder call to your student(s) the NIGHT BEFORE a meeting is a very good idea.

- If you can agree a regular day to meet each fortnight, then students will likely fall into a pattern and remember to come and see you.
- Please try not to get frustrated with your students – this is a new learning experience that for some of them may take time to grasp.
- Practicing leaving messages is a good exercise for students.
- Briefing your colleagues at work that they may get a call from a young person (and introducing them to the students) may help the students to leave a clear message effectively.

SCHOOL CONTACT LIST

<p>Cardinal Pole School</p> <p>Kenworthy Road London E9 5RB</p> <p>T 0208 985 5150 F 0208 533 73</p>	<p>Clapton Girls Technology College</p> <p>Laura Place Lower Clapton Road London E5 ORB</p> <p>T 020 8985 6641 F 020 8986 4686</p>
<p>Hackney Free & Parochial CE School</p> <p>Paragon Road Mare Street London E9 6NR</p> <p>T 020 8985 2430 ext 139 M 07885 906 806 F 020 8533 5441</p>	<p>Haggerston School</p> <p>Weymouth Terrace Hackney London E2 8LS</p> <p>T 020 7739 7324 F 020 7739 8603</p>
<p>Our Lady's Convent School</p> <p>6 – 16 Amhurst Park Stamford Hill London N16 5AF</p> <p>T 020 8800 2158 F 020 8809 8898</p>	<p>Stoke Newington School</p> <p>Clissold Road Stoke Newington London N16 9EU</p> <p>T 020 7241 9600 F 020 7923 2451</p>
<p>Skidders Company School for Girls</p> <p>117 Stamford Hill London N16 5RS</p> <p>T 020 8800 7411 F 020 8809 1382</p>	<p>Mossbourne Community Academy</p> <p>100 Downs Park Road London E5 8JY</p> <p>T 020 8525 5200 F 020 8525 5222</p>