

Why does mentoring matter?

Take a moment to consider what is going on in our communities in England...

- Drug and alcohol misuse is generally on the increase among young people
- Family structures are more changeable and transitory with divorce rates increasing
- Unintended and unplanned pregnancies to teenagers continues to be a problem
- Most sexually transmitted infections (STI's) continue to increase in the 15-24 age group
- More children are born to parents who don't stay together
- Young people face not only more risks as they grow up, but more severe risks too
- Technology (mobile phones and the internet) has shifted the way young people interact with each other and adults. Emotional literacy skills have declined
- The influence of 'airbrushed' TV and magazine adverts has increased the pressure on young people to make their bodies look a certain way. Self harm and eating disorders are becoming more common among both girls and boys

But the need for young people to...

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|---------------------------------|----------------|---|
| → be listened to | → feel valued | → make a contribution to where they live |
| → ask questions | → feel safe | → use their abilities and talents |
| → learn to solve their problems | | → become resilient |
| → deal with loss | → feel hopeful | → understand the world of work |
| → overcome disappointments | | → learn from their mistakes, safely |
| → have a positive role models | | → know that some things are not their fault |
| → think about their goals | | → put right what they've got wrong |
| → experience new things | | → be stretched in their skills |
| → develop empathy | | → motivate themselves |

...all these and more remain essential to getting on in life and doing well.

It is precisely these things that a mentor can help with.

What is mentoring?

Mentoring is:

- **a trusting relationship...** between a young person and (usually) an older more experienced person
- **a regular safe place...** for a young person to tell their story and work out how they can move forward
- **an unpredictable process...** there is no magic wand or quick fix, change and hope take time and trust and skill
- **an unconditional chance** for a new start... to learn and notice new things
- **a solution-focused approach...** rather than digging up and looking at past problems
- **a proven method...** because it has been around for thousands of years, existed in cultures across the world, worked in businesses, schools, colleges, universities, faith communities, between genders and generations

Mentoring is:

"a process by which an older and more experienced person takes a younger person under his or her wing, freely offering advice, support and encouragement.

The older person (the mentor) becomes among other things, a role model who inspires the younger person (the mentee)"

(North London College)

Here are some additional **definitions** below of what mentoring is and what a mentor does:

"a safe time and space for young people to tell their story to someone who listens and start to work out together how they want to change things so life is better" (Paul Fenton MA, Principal, Oasis College)

"A mentor is someone who helps another person on a one to one basis, usually younger, through an important transition" (The DIVERT Trust)

"A mentor is someone who through their actions and work, help others to achieve their potential" (Shea)

"A mentor is many things - a positive role model, an adviser, an experienced friend. Somebody from outside a person's immediate circle taking a special interest can make an enormous difference." (Excellence in Schools, 1997)

"a one-to-one, non-judgemental relationship in which an individual gives time to support and encourage another. This is typically developed at a time of transition in the mentee's life, and lasts for a significant and sustained period of time." (Active Community Unit, Home Office)

"support, assistance, advocacy or guidance given by one person to another in order to achieve an objective or several objectives over a period of time" (SOVA)

"an adult who can provide a pupil with the benefit of their life, school or work experience with a view to encouraging them to move confidently through a range of new experiences" (Salford Business Education Partnership)

Mentoring involves a **core number of skills** including:

- **active listening** - to feelings, facts, verbal and non-verbal language
- self-awareness to be **flexible** in how you communicate to others
- ability to **connect easily with different people** (rapport)
- **ask questions** with good intentions

- ability to be **reflective** and summarise
- assistance to **set goals** and work towards specific outcomes
- **good problem solving, idea generation** and brainstorming
- operate within agreed **safe boundaries** and **follow safe practice**
- willingness to receive **constructive feedback**
- willingness to **challenge behaviour sensitively**

Who are Lifespace and how is it run?

The main purpose of Lifespace Trust is to provide mentoring support to young people (aged 10-19) across South Warwickshire. The charity also provides education to young people, housing to adults with mental health needs, and training to organisations across the UK.

Lifespace Trust is a charity registered with the Charity Commission (Registered Charity No. 1122170).

The charity is governed by a group of people called ‘trustees’ who look after the resources and staff of the charity and make sure everything runs safely, effectively and legally.

Lifespace operates with a small team of trained staff (1 full time and 3 part time) and over a dozen trained volunteers. Everyone who works with and for Lifespace has completed all the necessary safeguarding checks, such as Criminal Record Bureau checks (CRB).

As you would expect, Lifespace Trust has in place all the necessary policies and procedures to ensure that all mentors involved in Lifespace are people appropriate to the task by way of skill, training and attitude. Lifespace carries the national safety and quality standard backed by The Home Office and awarded to us by The Mentoring & Befriending Foundation, known as **The Approved Provider Standard**, and this includes governance of our recruitment and training procedures.

Where does Lifespace deliver mentoring?

Across South Warwickshire, and specifically in:

- secondary schools in Stratford, Henley-in-Arden, Alcester, Studley and elsewhere
- primary schools in Alcester and Studley
- F.E. colleges in Stratford and elsewhere
- community settings (e.g. cafés, exhibitions, organised sports / art activities)

How does mentoring work?

1. NEED IDENTIFIED

A need for mentoring is identified by School / Family / Agency / Young Person. This might be due to issues around school attendance; achievement; lifestyle issues and risky behaviours; recurring friendship problems; issues of significant loss / change within the home or family.

2. REQUEST FOR SERVICES MADE

School / Family / Agency / Young Person (if 18 or above) completes our 'One to One Mentoring Intervention Request Form' available from our website, via email or post. This requires: contact details; reasons for mentoring; suggested outcomes; consent from parent/guardian; consideration of risks; authorising signature.

3. LIFESPACE PROCESS REQUEST

Referrals to Lifespace are managed by our Mentoring Co-ordinator and discussed as a team. A Waiting List operates with a maximum of 20 places at any one time. Lifespace retains the right to decline requests.

4. DECISION MADE

Lifespace is usually able to make a decision within a week of receipt. If a suitable mentor is available and the request is appropriate for mentoring, a mentor is usually able to begin working with a young person within 1 - 3 weeks. This is dependent on the mentor allocated, the time of year (e.g. the new school year is incredibly busy for Lifespace), the presenting needs of the young person, their geographical location, young person's age, involvement of other agencies e.g. Police, Youth Offending Service.

5. MENTOR ALLOCATED

All our mentors are trained, CRB checked and individually supervised. They are trained on a wide range of issues that young people are faced with. However, our mentors are not professionally registered to diagnose specific learning difficulties, mental health issues (e.g. ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome) and are not clinically trained.

6. MENTORING SET UP

The School / Family / Agency / Young Person (if 18 or above) making the request for mentoring is contacted by either the Mentoring Co-ordinator or Mentor directly to agree and arrange a suitable date/time/venue for the mentoring to take place. This is not usually in a young person's home unless prior authorisation is given by the Director. This is more usually in an educational or community setting.

7. BASELINE INFORMATION

Our mentors use a specific resource to gauge a young person's perceived needs and aspirations. This provides a structured starting point for the mentoring conversations that will take place, focused around the needs of the young person and the intended outcomes. Mentors have other resources available to help explain mentoring to young people and to establish an agreement for working together and to clarify expectations.

8. MENTORING UNDERTAKEN

Mentoring can continue for just a few weeks to a couple of years. It can operate on a weekly, fortnightly or more ad hoc basis. The mentoring relationship between a mentor and mentee is unique.

9. REVIEW(S)

Mentoring is monitored through our well established supervision framework. Regular reviews are encouraged to ensure mentoring stays on track with the outcomes that are being worked towards.

10. EXIT INTERVIEW AND CLOSURE

Following the Mentoring Life Cycle, a mentor will establish and agree with the young person the appropriate timeframe and manner of closing the relationship. Young people

complete an Exit Interview which provides them with an opportunity to express how they have been treated, the impact of the mentoring, what they have learned or would want to have been different.

11. OPEN DOOR

Lifespace recognises that young people's lives are full of transitions - whether linked to home, family, friends, school, work. Sometimes mentoring can come to a close and then weeks or months later something 'kicks off' in the young person's life. A need for mentoring may present itself again. As far as possible Lifespace provides a person of continuity for a young person through the transitions they face. After closure, it is usual that a mentor will explain that a young person can resume mentoring if it is required at another point in the future. There is no obligation or expectation for this, and the 'door is open' if the need arises. In some cases, this may not be appropriate.

What happens next?

If you know of a young person, family, school or college who may benefit from the input of Lifespace then please get in contact.

Lifespace works actively and effectively with many other organisations both across South Warwickshire as well as more widely across England.

You might be interested in training with us to become a mentor... what would that be like? Would you like to use your skills and experience to make a positive impact with and for young people?

The process for becoming a mentor with Lifespace is:

1. Make an enquiry and arrange for a **personal interview**
2. Complete a Mentor Application Form to undertake **introductory training** - the minimum requirement is three full days on the Associate Mentor Training programme that Lifespace delivers in partnership with Oasis College and accredited by Staffordshire University.
3. Completion of a check with the **Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)** as to the applicant's criminal record history
4. Obtain two **professional references**
5. Commit to regular **individual supervision** (every 6 weeks), the **Mentor Code of Good Practice** (including MBF Personal Safety Guidelines) and all other relevant guidance for doing the role well.

We ask for a minimum commitment of **availability of one hour per week** over the course of an academic year (from September).

You might work in a school or college and understand the escalating need to engage young people in effective ways that switch them on to life, not off. You have seen for yourself the damage done to young people's learning and attainment when issues from outside the classroom are not resolved. Lifespace delivers training for school staff. You can get in touch with us.

You could be a business owner who is keen to make a positive contribution to your community... you can partner with us to make good changes happen.

You may be a young person - bored or uncertain of your future. You might just want someone to chat to who won't judge you or lecture you. Our team are there to listen.

understand, encourage you and help you get away from what you don't want and get a hold of what you do want.

Because you matter.

Because you are amazing.

Because sometimes life is tricky and confusing...

...and there are other people around who can give you a safe place to get back on track and get back on your feet, and get on with your life.

Chat more: 01789 297400

Ask more: info@lifespace.org.uk

See more: www.lifespace.org.uk