

NOTES

Module 3

Making and Supporting the Match



Handouts

Handout #1: Session Goals and Basics

Handout #2: Agenda

Handout #3: Match Game Cards

Handout #4: What are your Matching Criteria?

Handout #5: Sample Form: Potential Mentee Interests

Handout #6: Sample Form: Potential Mentor Interests

Handout #7: What is Your Matching Process?

Handout #8: The First Meeting

Handout #9: Youth Orientation: A Sample Agenda

Handout #10: Parent/Guardian Orientation or Line Manager/Supervisor: A Sample
Agenda

Handout #11: How Do You Support and monitor the Match?

Handout #12: Ideas for Supporting and Monitoring the Match

Handout #13: Web Reference for supporting the match

Handout #14: Same-Race vs. Cross-Race



Handout #1: *Session Goals and Basics*

Session Goals

- To identify the matching criteria that are important within the context of your particular program
- To define steps in the process of making the match, including the first meeting between the mentor and mentee
- To understand 'good practices' for staff supervision and support of matches
- To be able to identify strengths and weaknesses in your current matching and match-support systems

The Basics

- 1 Match from the point of view of the young person and then take into account the volunteer's preferences.
- 2 The first goal of supervision is to make sure the pairs are meeting.
- 3 Training over an extended period before matching can be an effective way to test future regular commitment.
- 4 Active supervision and support from program staff are also key for helping the relationships flourish.
- 5 A mentoring relationship that fails to develop, or closes quickly, may reinforce a child or young person's negative self-image.



Handout #2: Agenda

Activity #1 Match Game (25 minutes)

Pairs decide on the 'best' matches among a set of mentors and mentees.

Activity #2 Establishing Match Criteria (15 minutes)

Participants discuss match criteria and their relationship to program success.

Activity #3 What's the Process? (15 minutes)

Participants explore processes for collecting match-related information and making match decisions.

Activity #4 The First Meeting (25 minutes)

Pairs outline scenarios for a first mentor-mentee meeting that will help the relationship get off to a good start.

Activity #5 Supporting Mentors and Mentees (30 minutes)

Participants identify common challenges in one-to-one matches and explore strategies for preventing or addressing them.

Activity #6 Now What? (5 minutes)

The group discusses implications of insufficient program support for matches.



Handout #3: Match Game Cards

Potential Mentee #1:

Mohammad is 16 years old and a year 10 student at a K-12 Central School. Mohammad is repeating Year 10, his twin sister left school at the end of Year 10 last year. Mohammad's father is a truck driver and spends a lot of time away from home. His mother is supportive but doesn't have strong parenting skills. Mohammad is keen to find out how to become a diesel mechanic. He is a presentable young man with barely a basic numeracy and literary level. He has very poor communication skills, little or no eye contact and speaks in syllables rather than sentences. He enjoys sports, particularly football.

Potential Mentor A:

Lise is a French-Canadian who married and settled in Australia. She has two teenage children in the workforce. She worked in the fast food industry for some years, but no longer works. She is very keen to help young people realise their potential through increased self-confidence. She misses being needed by her growing family and became involved in the mentor training.

Potential Mentee # 2:

Lilly is a disengaged indigenous student who lives with her mother. Her father and brother live on the other side of the country. Lilly and her friends don't think it is 'cool' to appear enthusiastic about school activities. She was suspended in the first week of school for assaulting a fellow student.

Potential Mentor B:

Ray is a retired university professor. He likes to play golf daily if possible. He is very active in the community and is 'proactive' in a range of associations and support groups. He has always supported disadvantaged groups. He has a mischievous sense of humour. Ray enjoys the company of others and in particular misses the company of young people. He became a mentor to help young people move towards a successful career and because he thought it would be an avenue to become involved with young people during his retirement.

Potential Mentor C:

Dave is a 45 year old TAFE student. He has almost finished a Diploma of Welfare Studies and plans to study at university next year. He is married with a teenage son who works and a daughter in Year 11. He trained as a mentor as he felt he would have something to offer a young person. He is interested in sports and he works as a volunteer in a youth refuge.



Potential Mentee # 3:

Bonny is one of seven children. Her parents divorced 18 months ago after a violent relationship. She and four of her siblings live with her mother. The two older children have left home. Bonny is bright enough, but left school before completing year eleven. After a couple of years of being unemployed Bonnie is now undertaking volunteer work in a non-government community agency. Bonnie likes the people she is working with, but is unsure of her future and lacks direction. Bonny is a good communicator, very presentable and aware of her developing sexuality.

Potential Mentor D:

Mia is a Yugoslavian immigrant who is a qualified pharmacist in her home country. In her earlier past Mia co-ordinated an adult organic food co-operative, an experience that enabled her to combine her other interests in biology and human relations. Mia is now employed as a part-time pharmaceutical assistance in a Chemist located in her culturally diverse neighbourhood. To her it is obvious that she has been employed more for her abilities to relate to the local customers rather than for her academic qualifications. Mia is actively pursuing Australian recognition for her Yugoslavian training in pharmacy, and recognizes that this may include some additional study. In the meantime Mia would like to mentor adults, perhaps other immigrants or refugees.

Potential Mentee #4:

Luke is a pleasant outgoing student who has poor school attendance and a reputation for being at the heart of any trouble. He wants to do the right thing but can't resist the temptation to get into mischief. He has a younger sister and supportive parents. He likes computers and has worked part time in a pinball arcade for 12 months. He uses his computer skills on the job.

Potential Mentee #5:

Dimitrius has a younger sister and lives with his mother and stepfather. His family is very supportive. Dimitrius's behavior at school has been aggressive and he has often been abusive to his teachers. He has settled somewhat over the last 12 months. His attendance could be better. He has a part time job at Hungry Jacks which has now been converted to a part time traineeship. He is interested in operating his own small business, but is unsure of what type of business that might be. Dimitrius is reserved with strangers and really has to get to know adults before he would offer much communication.



Handout #4: *What Are Your Matching Criteria?*

Based on its mission and its goals for the mentor-mentee pairs, each program will make its own decisions about the criteria that are important for making a match.

1 What are your program's mission and goals?

2 Given that mission and those goals, how important is each of the following criteria in deciding on a match?

Same Gender

- Similarity in the pair's racial and ethnic background
- Similarity in the pair's socioeconomic background
- Shared interests between the mentor and mentee
- The mentor's attitudes and temperament
- Special needs of the child/young person/adult matched with special talents of the mentor
- Other (specify):
- Other (specify):
- Other (specify):
- Other (specify):



Handout #5: Sample Form: Potential Mentee Interests

	Would Like to Learn	Do a Lot Now	Would Like to Do a Lot	Would Like to Do Sometimes	Am Not Interested In
Sports					
football					
cricket					
swimming					
bowling					
other:					
Games					
playing board games					
playing video games					
other:					
Trips					
going to movies, plays					
going to sports events					
going to museums					
other:					
Arts & crafts & other kinds of exploring					
drawing, painting					
writing stories, poems					
playing music					
sewing					
woodworking					
gardening					
reading books					
using computers					
taking photographs					
other:					



Handout #6: *Sample Form: Potential Mentor Interests*

1 **Interests**

a) **Playing Sports?**

If yes, which sports?

b) **Other outdoor activities?**

If yes, what activities?

c) **Games (board games, card games, video games, chess, etc)?**

If yes, what kinds of games?

d) **Arts and/or crafts?**

If yes, what are your specific interests and skills?

e) **Computers and other technology?**

If yes, what are your specific interests and skills?

f) **Other interests?**

Please describe them here.

g) **Other special skills and experience?** (For example, knowledge of sign language, experience working with adolescents, experience helping children learn to read.)

If yes, what activities?



2 Preferences

- a) Are there some types of children, young people or adults whom you would prefer to mentor, or for whom you feel you would be a particularly successful mentor? (For example, someone who is shy, someone who has trouble managing his or her anger, someone who loves to draw, someone who loves sports, someone with a learning disability, someone with a physical disability, someone with a marginalized cultural background?)

- b) Are there some types of children, young people or adults with whom you might have difficulty or would prefer not to mentor?

- c) What kinds of support and assistance can the program offer that will be most helpful to you?



Handout #7: *What is Your Matching Process?*

1 What criteria are used by your program for deciding on matches?

- Identification, prioritisation of potential mentees and self referral.
- Do the criteria grow logically from the goals of your program?
- Do you leave room for 'intuition'?
- Are your match decisions made by first focusing on the interests and needs of the particular child, youth or adult and then taking into account the mentor's skills and preferences.

2 What approaches do you use for collecting information that will help in deciding on the match?

- Do you get information directly from the potential mentee, as well as through a third party such as a parent/guardian/teacher or line manager/supervisor (supervisor of adult mentee *not* your mentor program supervisor)?
- Do you use the mentor screening process as an opportunity to collect information that will help decide on the match?
- Do you try to develop a sense of the potential mentor's attitudes (possibly by attending mentor training) and temperament, as well as collecting information about his or her preferences and interests?



3 Who is responsible for deciding on the match?

- Is one staff person responsible for making the decision? Are two people responsible – one who knows the potential mentors and one familiar with the needs of the potential mentee?
- Do program staff meet with other people who are involved, such as school staff, line managers / supervisors to share information about the children/youth/adult and eligible mentors?
- What checks and balances are in place to contribute to matching objectivity? For example, does another staff person review the decisions?

4 Once you have decided on a potential match, how do you go about sharing that information with the mentor, mentees and parent/guardian of young mentee, or line manager/supervisor of adult mentee?

- Do you have a joint meeting with the mentor and parent/guardian – or mentor, parent/guardian, and young person – to discuss the potential match?

Mentee application

Mentor application

Parent and Guardian permission – some written and some verbal

Or

Line Manager / Supervisor of adult mentee – some written and some verbal (if need be)

Match request form: Preferences

Male

Female

No preference



Cultural(Please describe)

Religious(Please describe)

Coordinator attends training

Coordinator and school facilitator discuss matches that involve mentors from previous programs in the school

Or

Coordinator and supervisor of community organization or line manager of private industry where adult mentee provides labor, discuss matches that involve mentors from previous programs in their organization.



Handout #8: *The First Meeting*

1 What are your program's goals for the first meeting between the pair?

2 How do you organise the meeting to help achieve those goals?

Who is present?

Where does it take place?

What takes place?

3 How do you prepare the mentor and mentee for the first meeting?



Handout #9: *Mentee-Orientation: A Sample Agenda*

Length: Try to limit the session to an hour.

Number of participants: Limit it to about ten potential mentees. However, if the number is larger, organise participants into smaller groups for the activity on communicating with mentors.

1 **Welcome/introduction to the program**

Include a panel of mentees who are in your program (or if your mentoring initiative is just beginning, mentees in another local mentoring program) to talk about their experiences.

2 **Beginning communication with your mentor**

- Ask the mentee to talk about:
 - The kind of things they would like to know about their mentor when they first meet.
 - The kinds of things they would like their mentor to know about them.
 - The discomfort people often feel when they meet someone for the first time.
 - Examples of things they don't want their mentor to ask during their first meeting.
 - Examples of things they think their mentor will ask during their first meeting.
 - Examples of things they feel like they shouldn't ask their mentor during their first meeting.

During the discussion, write the mentees' responses on a flipchart.

Have participants role-play a scene from their first meeting with their mentor. Organise them into pairs. One participant plays the mentor; the other, the mentee.



Module #3 Making and Supporting the Match HANDOUTS

The pair should have a brief (about three-minute) conversation. They should switch roles. Afterward, ask the mentees how they felt during the role-plays. What was awkward? What did the other person do to help them feel more at ease?

3 Reminders

Provide suggestions about appearance and behavior for their first meeting or have the mentees create the list of suggestions.

4 Snacks

Use this as an informal time for the mentees to ask questions.



Handout #10: *Parent/Guardian or Line Manager / Supervisor Orientation: A Sample Agenda*

The modules in this program lend themselves to both young people and adults as mentees. However, you may indeed wish to have different orientation sessions for parents and guardians, and line managers / supervisors.

Length:

Number of participants:

1 Welcome/introduction

2 Program overview, mission and goals

3 Who could benefit from a mentor?

Discuss what the program can and cannot help mentees accomplish.

4 Selection and matching process for participants and for mentors

Include a discussion of the screening process for mentors.

5 Program activities

Have current mentors (and perhaps their mentees) discuss their activities and the rewards for both parties.

6 Role of parent/guardian

Include a discussion of program ground rules for mentors, mentees, parents/guardians, line managers / supervisors.



For example if an employer is sponsoring a mentoring program for their employees it is important to specify what information exchanged between the mentor and mentee will be shared with the employer. The employer may expect to gain reports from the mentor; however the mentor may find a conflict of interest in sharing information about the mentee they are supporting, with the employer or supervisor.

7 Questions and answers

Allow ample time for questions.

8 Packs of materials

Have packets of materials available for parents/guardians to pick up and take home. Decide what you want to include in each packet: for example, an application form for the potential mentee; information on program policies; an outline of screening requirements for mentors.



Handout # 11: *How Do You Support and Monitor the Match?*

To facilitate the success of matches, programs will want to establish regular debriefing sessions between program, staff members and mentors. The form and content of these debriefing sessions are likely to vary from program to program, depending upon its available resources and the population of young people it serves.

1 How do you make sure the pair is meeting?

- Is there a suitable time and place for the pair to meet regularly?
- Is there appropriate support for the organisation of excursions and availability of resources such as computer/phone/books?

2 How do you monitor the quality of the match relationship, assess whether it is making progress toward its goals and help address problems that may be arising between the pair?

- What questions does the supervisor (or program coordinator or school liaison) ask to assess the progress of the match?
- What questions does the supervisor ask to assess whether the mentor, mentee and parents/guardians are adhering to the program's ground rules?
- What steps do you take to make sure that mentors and mentees feel comfortable raising issues with the supervisor?
- Does your program provide ongoing training and/or support groups for mentors?
- What guidance do mentors receive so they know when to contact the program about problems with their mentee that are outside the scope of their relationship?



– for example, suspected child abuse or neglect? (Child protection training, state or federal.)

- Is there a referral system in place for dealing with problems that are outside the scope of the program? (Child protection training)
- What process do you use for closing a match? (End of formal program/renegotiations of program guidelines.)

3 What records does the supervisor maintain about each of the matches?

- How is information recorded to ensure that there is follow-up on potential or actual problems? (Record minimal information to protect confidentiality.)
- How is information recorded so that, if there is staff turnover, new staff can easily learn the history and characteristics of a current match, one or two school staff and district coordinator.
- What systems are in place to ensure that information remains confidential? Does your organisation have a Privacy Policy? Is there a need for one?



Handout #12: *Ideas for Supporting and Monitoring the Match*

During Activity #5 Supporting Mentors and Youth, participants will be discussing strategies for supporting and monitoring the mentor-mentee pairs. As a starting point for the discussion, they will use the questions in Handout #11: 'How Do you Support and Monitor the Match?' While you want the participants to do most of the talking during this discussion, be sure that the following points are covered:

1 Schedules

Each program needs to establish a schedule of contacts with mentors and mentees to allow for additional meetings and excursions.

Debriefing sessions should allow time for each mentor to explain what discussion has taken place, what their assessments of the mentee's needs are and what if any assistance and support they require.

2 Forms of contact between the program and the mentor

3 Ground Rules

Some discussion of ground rules was likely to have taken place during Activity #4 'The First Meeting'. If these points were not discussed, then note here that ground rules generally cover such areas as requirements for the frequency and length of the pair's meetings and establish general behavioral expectations for mentors, parents/guardians and mentees. For the mentor, these expectations might include types of activities. For the parent/guardian, they might include not using the mentor as a babysitter and for the young person they could include punctuality and turning up.

4 Problem solving



5 Red flags

6 Closure

There are a number of reasons why program staff might decide to begin the closure process. These include:

- Problems with the match relationship – the relationship between the mentor and young person may not have 'jelled' into a friendship; the mentor might not be following through on his or her commitment to meet regularly with the young person; the young person may be disinterested; or the parent/guardian may be uncomfortable with the match.
- Circumstances beyond the control of the mentor and young person – the mentor or young person may move or the mentor might have increased work commitments.

It is important that every program develop a procedure for closing matches, when necessary, so that young people do not feel they have been deserted by their mentor. They should also decide under what circumstances they will attempt to re-match a young person or a mentor who has been in a match that closed.



Handout #13: Web reference for Supporting the Match

Making the match and providing ongoing programmatic support for it are issues that are unique to mentoring programs. Despite the growing recognition that strategic matching and match support are important contributors to successful mentor-young people relationships, there are, as yet, almost no resources that directly address these issues.

One useful resource, however, is the National Mentoring Partnership (NMP). Its Website (www.mentoring.org) includes a list of 'good practices' for matching as well as for other program elements.



Handout 14: Same-Race vs. Cross-Race

Evaluations of volunteer mentoring programs provide evidence that mentoring relationships can have positive influences on adolescent developmental outcomes, including improvements in peer and parental relationships, academic achievement, self-concept, lower recidivism rates among juvenile delinquents, and reductions in substance abuse.

Only a few studies, however, have focused on the role of the mentors' and mentees' cultural background in shaping the course and outcomes of the relationship. As a result, critical questions remain regarding the role of race and ethnicity in matches and the relative importance of making matches on the basis of shared racial background. Because of the absence of systematic knowledge, considerable controversy surrounds this issue; and many programs act on implicit assumptions regarding the importance of forming matches on the basis of racial similarity between mentors and young people. One consequence of programs' decisions to make only same-race or same ethnicity matches is that thousands of minority young people will miss out on being involved in the program. Is a cross cultural match better than no match at all?

Based on beliefs rather than research, the arguments for and against cultural matching are deeply rooted in ideology concerning racial and ethnic relations. The two sides of the cultural matching argument are summarized below.

In Defense of Cultural Matching

Proponents of cultural matching firmly believe that one's racial and ethnic background plays a critical role in establishing effective mentor-mentee relationships. This shared background is emphasized over differences in social class or geographical location because it is assumed that problems transcend class and geographical boundaries. Without a similar racial background, the match is believed to be unable to fulfill its potential.

The arguments for cultural matching are deeply embedded in minority groups' historical experience in the United States, cultural legacies, customs and values regarding self-protection. Proponents of racial matching often base their belief on one or more of the following assumptions:



- 1 An adult of a different racial and ethnic background cannot teach a young person how to cope in society since he or she cannot understand what it feels like to be a minority in Australia. Because minority young people internalise the racial and ethnic attitudes of the larger society, they are vulnerable to low self-esteem and have restricted views of their possibilities in life. Only a mentor with a similar racial and ethnic background can really understand these social and psychological conflicts and help frame realistic solutions.
- 2 Deep levels of trust, sharing and cooperation will never be realised unless there is a common bond of race or ethnicity.
- 3 Cross-race matches, where white adults mentor minority children, are an intrusion upon the community and a danger to the child's cultural identity. Culture is deeply internalised, providing racial and ethnic groups with a sense of history, heritage and continuity. Any mentor who is not representative of a child's racial or ethnic background will subconsciously and inevitably impose his or her cultural values and customs on that child.
- 4 White, middle-class mentors' primary goal might be to 'save' at-risk young people from the hazards of their environments by engaging them in 'mainstream' activities, thus impeding the development of a mentoring relationship that is built on trust and support.
- 5 Racial and ethnic communities should help their own and foster a sense of solidarity. Mentoring is an important mechanism for forging these ties.
- 6 Providing minority young people with mentors from a different culture will send the wrong message. It will convey to them that the people they should model themselves after are not of their own group, or that there are not enough adults from their own community who can serve as positive role models.



In defense of Cross-Cultural Matching

Most proponents of cross-cultural matching do not deny the existence and potential effects of culture on the mentoring relationship. While some proponents do believe that people should live in a 'colour-blind' society, this is by no means the majority opinion today. Rather, many who defend cross-cultural matching believe that effective relationships can develop despite racial and ethnic differences.

Proponents of cross-racial matching often base their belief on one or more of the following assumptions:

- 1 The qualities of the mentor are what matters the most. While racially and ethnically homogenous matching may expedite the development of trust, it does not guarantee a successful mentoring match. What is more important is the mentor's personal skills, experience, common interests with young people, capacity to provide sensitive support and openness to the nuances of cultural differences.
- 2 As long as mentors encourage their mentees to feel secure with their own cultural identity and remain constantly aware of their own cultural baggage and how it may affect their treatment of young people, then racial or ethnic similarity becomes less consequential. People who possess the characteristics of a good mentor can receive training that will help them develop this kind of cultural sensitivity.
- 3 Differences in socioeconomic status may be a more important concern than differences in race or ethnicity. Social distance may cause the mentor to misunderstand the young person's problems, needs and thoughts. Yet, skilled and sensitive mentors have succeeded in bridging these social distances and they can bridge racial and ethnic differences as well.
- 4 Rather than a liability, cross-cultural matching can be beneficial to young people by breaking down racial and ethnic barriers. By matching people of different backgrounds, it permits exposure to cultures that previously might have aroused negative or uncomfortable feelings.



- 5 Beyond the potential benefits to young individuals, cross-cultural matching can also contribute to the dismantling of societal barriers. It symbolizes people working together, trying to improve the life chances of young people and fostering a sense of community among historically separated people.

Supporters of these matches also emphasise that it is essential for the child's or young person's parent to give approval for the cross-race match.

