



# SSaMs

Sports Students as Mentors for Boys and Young Men

STUDENTS MATERIALS



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



**Students Materials**

# Acknowledgements

The SSaMs module has been developed via the EU Erasmus + programme and a collaboration of five European universities and one NGO.

## SSaMs contributors

### **United Kingdom, University of Gloucestershire:**

Colin Baker, Paul Hopkins, Anna Newell, Andrew Parker

### **Greece, University of Thessaly:**

Alexandra Chioti, Marios Goudas, Athanasios Kolovelonis

### **Czech Republic, Palacký University:**

Ladislav Baloun, Jana Sklenaříková, Tomas Vyhlidal

### **Spain, Universidad De Murcia:**

Alba Aparicio, Maria Jesus Bazaco, Maria de los Angeles Martinez Cegarra, Olga Rodríguez, Pilar Sainz de Baranda, Antonio Joaquin Garcia Velez

### **Republic of Ireland, Institute of Technology Carlow:**

Shane O'Donnell, Noel Richardson

### **Italy, CESIE:**

Catarina Impastato, Jelena Mazaj

### **Additional input - Mengage Ltd\*:**

Liam Kernan (advisory capacity)

*\*The SSaMs learning materials have been adapted, with consent, from Mentoring Male: A guide to mentoring work with boys and young men, developed by a UK-based not-for-profit company, Mengage Ltd who work on male health and social concerns. Further information can be found on the Mengage website at [www.mengage.co.uk](http://www.mengage.co.uk) .*



# Foreword

It is my great pleasure to warmly welcome and endorse the publication of this Erasmus+ Sports Students as Mentors for Boys and Young Men (SSaMs) training resource. The SSaMs programme originated against a backdrop of increasing interest at a research and policy level on gender issues with boys and young men, including boys' and young men's health, educational attainment and links to early school leaving. We know that, across the EU, boys have lower rates of educational attainment than girls, are much more likely to leave school earlier and less likely to go onto higher education. Furthermore, early school leaving also has more far-reaching detrimental impacts, including criminality, and social exclusion.

Early intervention for groups at risk of early school leaving is critically important. This SSaMs training resource addresses this need by providing sports students with practical skills in mentoring work with boys and young men. Importantly, the SSaMs programme utilises a strengths-based mentoring methodology, to provide sports students with the knowledge and skills required to effectively mentor boys and young men. These are skills that will be highly applicable to sports-based work with young people on graduation when students enter the sports workplace.

I commend all the Erasmus+ partners for their sterling work in developing and piloting this important training resource. I urge sports programme leaders everywhere to use the resource and to enhance sports students mentoring skills in working with boys and young men.

**Noel Richardson PhD**  
Director National Centre for Men's Health  
Institute of Technology Carlow  
Ireland



# Table of content

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Section 1.</b> A context for work with young men (Student text; PPT; Section plan)	<b>10</b>
<b>Section 2.</b> The role of the mentor: What a mentor is and what a mentor is not; Primary tasks of a mentor; Qualities desirable in a mentor (Student text; PPT; Section plan)	<b>16</b>
<b>Section 3.</b> Setting boundaries; building mentor-mentee relationships; Safeguarding (Student text; PPT; Section plan)	<b>22</b>
<b>Section 4.</b> A model for mentoring: Positive Youth Development and the 5Cs (Student text; PPT; Section plan)	<b>26</b>
<b>Section 5.</b> Life skills and goal setting (Student text; PPT; Section plan)	<b>32</b>
<b>Section 6.</b> Supporting the emotional and mental health of boys and young men (Student text; PPT; Section plan)	<b>38</b>
<b>Mentor Reflection Workbook</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Mentor Reflection Workbook completed example</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Case Studies</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>5C Indicator Cards</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Examples of Ground Rules</b>	<b>92</b>

# Introduction

The Sports Students as Mentors for Boys and Young Men Erasmus+ programme has developed as a result of increasing interest in work on gender issues and work with boys and men, including male health and its links to boys' educational attainment and early school leaving.

In 2008 the Republic of Ireland became the first country in the world to implement a national men's health policy, a commitment that extends to 2021 (1). In 2018, in a wider European context, the World Health Organization European Region launched a strategy on the health and wellbeing of European men, with a commitment to engage with males via gender-sensitive services (2). The WHO strategy recognises a need to address boys' early school leaving and its link to poor health outcomes, a need also recognised by the EU in its Europe 2020 strategy (3).

We know that education is a social determinant of health. It is a determining factor influencing employment, income, housing, and a healthy lifestyle. Across the EU boys have lower rates of educational attainment than girls, are much more likely to leave school earlier (Table 1.) and less likely to go onto higher education. Further, early school leaving also has an affect on wider society, impacting on economic growth and is a factor in poverty, criminality, and social exclusion. Recommendations for action includes early intervention for groups identified as being at risk of early school leaving (4).

European Country	Male	Female
Czech Republic	6.4 %	6.0 %
Greece	9.4 %	6.4 %
Italy	17.5 %	11.8 %
Republic of Ireland	8.4 %	5.4 %
Spain	24.0 %	15.8 %
UK	11.7 %	9.8 %

Table 1. Rates of schools leaving male and female (countries involved in SSaMs programme), EU 2016.

Whilst concerns about boys' early school leaving are common to countries across Europe, where some countries have enacted policy or strategies that include work with males, in other countries these may be concerns that have not yet seen demonstrable action. The SSaMs programme is a cross-European endeavour that seeks to act on the EU 2020 strategy and the WHO health and wellbeing of European men strategy by furnishing undergraduate sports students with practical skills in mentoring work with boys and young men. These are skills that can be applied in later sports workplace and education settings, with an aim of assisting boys with their educational and vocational choices and preventing early school leaving.

## Sport and mentoring work with males

Mentoring is a well documented method of providing young people with support and developing their strengths; supporting them with their education and providing direction towards vocational and further education opportunities, and a socially responsible adulthood. The SSaMs programme seeks to utilise a strengths-based mentoring methodology, Positive Youth Development (PYD) that is linked to sports coaching methodology, to provide sports students with the knowledge and skills required to effectively mentor boys and young men.

Sports use as a means of imparting information on health and social concerns extends from the enjoyment of physical activity and the health benefits this brings to the 'badging' of schemes by professional sports clubs. In the Republic of Ireland and the UK, professional sports clubs have made use of their club badge to attract and involve boys and men in schemes addressing health and social problems in the communities the sports clubs serve. Across Europe, professional sport has a role to play in work with young males.

Professional sports club schemes are to be commended for the work they do, however whilst sports personnel are well placed to work with boys and young men in terms of male affiliation with sport, a criticism of existing community sports work is that sports personnel lack the knowledge and skills required to work effectively in supportive education, health, and social contexts (5). The SSaMs programme is the first in a cross European context to provide sports students with an undergraduate module specifically aimed at work on boys' education and related work around mental health. The programme provides students with knowledge and skills that are applicable to sports-based work with young people on graduation when students enter the sports workplace.

## About the SSaMs programme content

The SSaMs programme provides a clear context and rationale for mentoring work with young males, before moving onto explore mentoring and Positive Youth Development methodology, the role of the mentor, qualities, tasks, boundary setting and safeguarding, life skills, setting goals and outcomes. We also explore young males' mental health and the work of the mentor in reinforcing positive mental health through building resilience, and signposting to services providing support on mental health concerns beyond the remit of the mentors role.

## Using the SSaMs materials

The SSaMs resource provides materials for six theory-based sessions. On completion of the theory-based work, we advise that students should be prepared to carry out a further six\* practical mentoring sessions with young males in schools or in an informal education setting. Guidance for practical work is provided. Sessions should be arranged by the Higher Education Institute with local schools and other appropriate educational settings. Safeguarding arrangements should be in place before any practical mentoring work is undertaken (*\*we recognise that this advice may not be applicable in all countries, hence the exact number of practical mentoring sessions should be agreed by individual Higher Education Institutes*).

Each theory-based session provides a text for students on the session topic and for lecturers a PowerPoint presentation corresponding to the session topic and the guidance and resources required to deliver the session.

The theory-based sessions are designed to be delivered on a weekly basis, however we recognise that this is not always practical. Where this is not possible the materials can be used flexibly according to need. If appropriate, the materials can also be used to complement part of another academic programme.

Lecturers are recommended to familiarise themselves with the SSaMs materials prior to commencing the SSaMs programme, to follow the Section Plans provided for each PowerPoint presentation, and to ensure that the materials recommended for each session are available to deliver the session.

### **The contents of the SSaMs programme are:**

- **Section 1.** *A context for work with young men*  
(Student text; PPT; Section plan)
  - **Section 2.** *The role of the mentor: What a mentor is and what a mentor is not; Primary tasks of a mentor; Qualities desirable in a mentor*  
(Student text; PPT; Section plan)
  - **Section 3.** *Setting boundaries; building mentor-mentee relationships; Safeguarding*  
(Student text; PPT; Section plan)
  - **Section 4.** *A model for mentoring: Positive Youth Development and the 5Cs*  
(Student text; PPT; Section plan)
  - **Section 5.** *Life skills and goal setting*  
(Student text; PPT; Section plan)
  - **Section 6.** *Supporting the emotional and mental health of boys and young men*  
(Student text; PPT; Section plan)
  - **Sessions 7 to 12\*.** *Guiding principles and support for practical mentoring sessions*  
(guidance for lecturer only)
- **Mentor Reflection Workbook & Mentor Reflection Workbook completed example**
  - **Case Studies**
  - **5C Indicator Cards**
  - **Examples of Ground Rules**

## **Gendered work concerns**

Whilst there is a strong rationale for work concerning the education and mental health of boys and young men this focus on work with males should not be construed as anti-female. Work with boys should not be in competition with work with girls, nor detract in any way from the equal importance of female education and health.

There is always a case for work involving both males and females, but where gender-specific work can be demonstrated to address an issue that clearly disadvantages one gender then evidence-based practical work should be undertaken, with a proviso that this is not harmful or to the disadvantage of the other gender.

# References:

1. Department of Health (2017). National Men's Health Action Plan 2017-2021: Working with men in Ireland to achieve optimum health and wellbeing.

Available from:

<https://www.mhfi.org/HI-M.pdf>

2. World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (2018). Strategy on the health and well-being of men in the WHO European Region.

Available from:

[http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/378165/68wd12e\\_MensHealthStrategy\\_180480.pdf?ua=1](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/378165/68wd12e_MensHealthStrategy_180480.pdf?ua=1)

3. European Commission (2010). EUROPE 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Available from:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

4. European Commission (2016). European Semester Thematic Factsheet: Early School Leavers.

Available from:

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester\\_thematic-factsheet\\_early-school-leavers\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_early-school-leavers_en.pdf)

5. Parnell, D., Stratton, G., Drust, B. and Richardson, D. (2013). Football in the community schemes: Exploring the effectiveness of an intervention in promoting healthful behaviour change. *Soccer and Society*, 14 (1).

Available from:

<http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/202/1/DP%20%28DRBDGS%29%202011%20Soccer%20and%20Society%20Paper.pdf>



# Section 1.

# A CONTEXT FOR WORK WITH BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

In this section we take a look at work with boys and young men and consider their engagement with education, the impact of poor engagement and the need for mentoring work with some boys and young men.

## *Why work with boys and young men: boys and young men as a problem?*

Work on male health, social and educational issues, including the educational attainment of boys and young men is a concern of policy makers, educationalists and health academics, and to school teachers, health staff, and practitioners involved in youth work settings.

Research on young males engagement with education and a lack of, or poor academic attainment by some young males has been implicated in:

- reduced occupational opportunities and social mobility across the lifespan,
- poor health outcomes in later life,
- a correlation with criminality

---

## Education and 'the boy problem': too cool for school?

Gender influences educational attainment. Girls outperform boys in most countries. In the UK for example, boys outnumber girls as low achievers by three to two; nearly half of all low achievers are White British males, but there is also a gender gap for males of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and African origin.

The majority of low achievers come from disadvantaged backgrounds and poor urban areas; however disadvantage is not a necessarily a defining factor in low educational achievement. Girls from the same disadvantaged families attending the same schools do much better than boys. It has been proposed that early experience of schooling may produce a loss of self-esteem; if boys are unable to keep pace with lessons in reading or writing and this continues unchecked into secondary school they are unlikely to achieve; it has been noted that some methods for assessment favour girls.

Research debates on boys and young men's engagement with education include consideration of an anti-education 'too cool

for school' culture amongst some groups of young men who place value and self-esteem on other aspects of life experience than those offered by education. Other sociology-based research considers that working class children may view the school experience as middle class and rebel against this.

There is an acknowledgement that there is a 'boy problem' with literacy. Boys may develop later than girls or have issues regarding attention span that affect reading and concentration; reading may also be regarded by some boys as a feminine pursuit. Type of reading material is also an issue – with indications that boys prefer informational and comic-book type texts; girls prefer fiction.

Gendered learning styles that may be advantageous to girls may be a disadvantage to boys. Some educationalists have expressed concerns that boys' preferences for 'reading humour and violence' in literature is viewed as supporting anti-social ways of being so that it needs to be modified towards more socially responsible preferences, or even banned; that this is a form of cultural suppression that further alienates boys involvement in literacy and the school culture (1, 2, 3).

## Social mobility and occupational opportunities

Social mobility can be defined as the movement of individuals across the income or social class structures over a period of time. This mobility may take generations (intergenerational mobility) or it may happen within a generation (intragenerational mobility). Education is known to be a driver of social mobility.

Educational attainment can determine job or career prospects, directly correlating with a man's financial or socioeconomic status, shaping future occupational opportunities and earning potential. Higher level qualifications enhance an individual's earning potential and hence their social mobility and opportunities to move into a higher socioeconomic class. Socioeconomic class influences other lifestyle factors and life-choices including health and the factors that can affect our health (4,5).

## Health

Education is also one of the social determinants of health. Research demonstrates that higher educational attainment is linked to better health outcomes; people with higher levels of educational attainment have lower death rates from both common chronic and acute conditions. A higher standard of education is linked to increased financial income\*.

Housing quality is affected by income; men with a higher income are likely to live in housing stock that is safe, well-maintained and insulated, energy efficient and provides a healthy environment within socially similar neighbourhoods with access to good quality schools and facilities.

Men who are lower down the income scale

---

*\*Note: it is generally accepted that a higher standard of education is linked to better health outcomes. However the research on this is sourced from countries with robust economies and relatively low unemployment levels. For countries with economic difficulties where graduates face the same unemployment concerns as the general population the statistics may differ, therefore it is recommended that this information is considered and presented as per the nationality using these materials.*

are more likely to live in substandard housing with poor living conditions or in unsafe neighbourhoods. They may lack access to shops that sell healthy foods or lack the income to buy healthier foods, or they may not have the knowledge to differentiate between foodstuffs and their affect on health. They may also lack access to both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.

Children who grow up in poverty are known to do less well in school and have fewer years of education than children from families with higher incomes, hence the importance of good early education schemes. Early child development and educational attainment are noted as being crucial for future health and wellbeing, for improving job opportunities and a route out of poverty.

People with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to act on information and resources that promote health. Research suggests that the relationship between level of educational attainment and health risk behaviours such as smoking, drinking, diet and physical exercise, substance use, household safety, access to preventive health services are linked, that people who have a higher level of education have healthier behaviours. Lifelong learning is also noted as being an important factor in keeping people healthy. (6,7).

## Criminality, brain development and risk-taking

Social profiles of young offenders are broadly similar; usually young men, often from ethnic minority groups, unemployed or in low-paid or casual work, with difficult family relationships and a poor education.

Some of the reasons for this profile can be attributed to socioeconomic development and a decline in the manufacturing industries that traditionally provided work for males with resultant diminished career opportunities and alongside this the emergence of a changing and more technological, labour-saving workplace that has reduced career opportunities for young men with few or no qualifications.

Involvement in criminal activity may, for some young men, appear to offer a route out of financial and social difficulty. A lack of opportunity or reduced access to legitimate outlets for excitement or stimulation may also act as a driver for young males to become involved in criminal sensation seeking behaviour (8).

A lack of educational attainment is a common feature of a young offender's profile; a poor school experience, truancy, exclusion from school and a lack of basic skills and qualifications is demonstrated to have a correlation with criminality. Examples; a report for the European Commission evidenced 53% of the Irish prison population having literacy levels of level 1 (the lowest literacy level) or below in Ireland's National Qualifications Framework, in comparison with 23% of the general population. In the same report, 27% of early school leavers in the Netherlands were suspected of a criminal offence in comparison to 7% of non-school leavers. Involvement in criminal activities at an early age can have a negative impact on opportunities in later life, hence the importance of continuing engagement with education (9).

The transition from primary through secondary school to employment or further education occurs in a relatively short period of time. Mentors will be aware that adolescence is a time of change for young men. Developmental changes in adolescence are often commented on as the physical changes experienced during puberty, however the human brain is also developing during adolescence and into early adulthood, a critical time when young men are at school and considering future career prospects, hence for mentors an awareness of brain development may be useful when considering the behaviours of young men.

The most fundamental changes in intellectual development are known to occur between birth and later adolescence; it is accepted that an individual's intellectual ability will have matured before the age of 18. However, neuroscience research shows that development of those parts of the brain relating

to control of impulses and the regulation and interpretation of emotions do not mature at the same rate but continue to develop into our early to mid-twenties. Brain development therefore influences the behaviour of young people, including a greater propensity for taking risks and sensation seeking (10).

Risk-taking by young people is not a recent phenomenon; it has historically, consistently remained a feature of adolescence and early adulthood. Popular assertions that young people take risks due to their own belief that they are invulnerable, or that they are irrational, or that they cannot or do not calculate risk have been found to be incorrect; in terms of calculating risk, the average 16 year old is as capable as an older adult and as aware of their vulnerability when doing so, yet the frequency of risk-taking and sensation seeking is much greater in the age group discussed.

Risk-taking behaviours peak from the late teens to early twenties; long-term substance and alcohol use often begins in adolescence, casual and risk-taking sex and assault and violence against the person are more likely to occur in people under the age of 25; for example, in the UK dangerous driving and speeding with resultant road traffic accidents account for 25% of deaths in the 15 -19 age group (statistics for 2009 for young males in this cohort are 28%) – almost double the risk in comparison to the general population. Males are three times more likely to die in a road traffic accident than females (11,12).

Neuroscience offers an explanation that risk-taking, or sensation or novelty seeking is an evolutionary adaptation. This perspective considers that the balance between 'cost versus reward' is different for the young person to that of adults because the maturing brain of a young person weighs the cost differently; young people place greater value on the reward they gain from taking a risk than an adult would.

Taking risks can include social rewards, particularly amongst peer groups. Young people have a tendency to gravitate towards other young people. Being socially included by

peers is important to young people; exclusion by peers including bullying behaviour is known to be detrimental to mental health and wellbeing and in developing relationships.

A young person being observed by peers is more likely to indulge in risk-taking behaviour. Considering road traffic accidents, the presence of passengers of a similar age in a vehicle driven by a young driver significantly increases the risk of a serious accident. Both observational research and MRI scan-based tests point to activation of 'reward circuitry' in the brain when young people are observed by their peers. A tentative conclusion is that they may take greater risks to gain social acceptance amongst peers (12).

Our physiological development shapes our adolescence; it is also shaped by culture and

the subcultures young men may gravitate towards that offer easier and seemingly more glamorous rewards than those offered by educational routes. Young men may aspire to risk-behaviour lifestyles including criminal ones that may have risk-taking as part of their make-up presented to them via the media, social media and online, and video games.

Failure to understand the world-view of the audience and the glamour of risk-taking when developing interventions designed to address issues can result in failure to have an impact on risky behaviour (13).

# Key references:

1. Cassen R. and Kingdon G. (2007) Tackling low educational achievement. Joseph Rowntree Foundation report.  
Available from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2063-education-schools-achievement.pdf>
2. Newkirk T. Misreading Masculinity: Speculations on the Great Gender Gap in Writing. *Language Arts*, Vol. 77, No. 4, March 2000.  
Available from: [http://www.csun.edu/~bashforth/305\\_PDF/305\\_ME2/305\\_Language%26Gender/MisreadingMasculinity\\_GenderGapInWriting\\_LA2000.pdf](http://www.csun.edu/~bashforth/305_PDF/305_ME2/305_Language%26Gender/MisreadingMasculinity_GenderGapInWriting_LA2000.pdf)
3. Hadjar, A., Krolak-Schwerdt, S., Priem, K. & Glock, S. (2014) Gender and educational achievement, *Educational Research*, 56:2, 117-125.  
Available from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00131881.2014.898908>
4. Eurostat. Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Children\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Children_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion)
5. Waltzinger, W., Crespo Cuaresma, J., Rumpmaier, B., Sauer, P. & Schneebaum, A. (2015) Education and Social Mobility in Europe: Levelling the Playing Field for Europe's Children and Fuelling its Economy. Available from: [https://epub.wu.ac.at/4720/1/WWWforEurope\\_WPS\\_no080\\_MS19.pdf](https://epub.wu.ac.at/4720/1/WWWforEurope_WPS_no080_MS19.pdf)
6. Telfair, J. and Shelton TL. Educational Attainment as a Social Determinant of Health (2012). *North Carolina Medical Journal* Vol. 73, No. 5., pp. 35- 365.  
Available from: [http://classic.ncmedicaljournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/NCMJ\\_73-5\\_FINAL.pdf](http://classic.ncmedicaljournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/NCMJ_73-5_FINAL.pdf)
7. Eurostat. Quality of life in Europe - facts and views – health.  
Available from: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Quality\\_of\\_life\\_in\\_Europe\\_-\\_facts\\_and\\_views\\_-\\_health](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Quality_of_life_in_Europe_-_facts_and_views_-_health)
8. White, R. and Cunneen, C. (2006) *Social Class, Youth Crime and Justice*. In *Youth crime and justice: critical issues*. Sage. Glodson B and Muncie J (eds).  
Available from: <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/stout/02-Muncie-YCJ-Ch%2002.pdf>
9. Hawley, J., Murphy, I., & Souto -Otero, M. (2013). *Prison education and training in Europe. Current state-of-play and challenges. A summary report authored for the European Commission by GHK Consulting. European Commission.*  
Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/library/study/2013/prison\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/study/2013/prison_en.pdf)
10. Prior, D., Farrow, K., Hughes, N., Kelly, G., Manders, G., White, S. & Wilkinson, B. (2011) *Maturity, young adults and criminal justice: A literature review.*  
Available from: <http://www.t2a.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Birmingham-University-Maturity-final-literature-review-report.pdf>
11. RAC Foundation (2011): *Mortality statistics and road traffic accidents in the UK.*  
Available from: [http://www.racfoundation.org/assets/rac\\_foundation/content/downloadables/road%20accident%20casualty%20comparisons%20-%20box%20-%20110511.pdf](http://www.racfoundation.org/assets/rac_foundation/content/downloadables/road%20accident%20casualty%20comparisons%20-%20box%20-%20110511.pdf)
12. Steinberg, L. (2008). *A Social Neuroscience Perspective on Adolescent Risk-Taking. Developmental Review : DR*, 28(1), pp 78–106.  
Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2396566/pdf/nihms33852.pdf>
13. Griffiths, S. (1999). *Men as risk takers*, in R.S. Kirby, M.G. Kirby, & R.N. Farah (eds), *Men's Health*, Isis Medical Media, Oxford.  
(Not available online)

# Section 2.



# THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR: what a mentor is and what a mentor is not

At the time of writing there is no statutory, authoritative body governing mentoring and no mandatory regulation of mentors\*. Codes of practice are provided by organisations and charities involved in delivery of mentoring work but these are largely provided for self-regulation purposes. Courses on mentoring vary from those of short duration to longer higher education programmes; there is no formal 'accredited mentor' professional qualification, rather you can receive accreditation via a training organisation who have met the criteria required by an external accreditation provider to deliver a course. The level of accreditation varies. To add to this confusing situation mentoring roles are influenced by where mentoring occurs and this can provide variations on what a mentor actually is; research commentates that it is an ill-defined concept. (1. 2.)

## What a mentor is

Mentoring takes place in many settings including business and industry, sport, community mentoring with socially excluded households, and with young people. There have been attempts at definitions and classification of mentoring including that of Philip and Hendry (1996). The mentor training provided by the Sports Students as Mentors module concerns practical work with boys and young men, therefore it is not intended to provide an academic analysis of mentoring and a breakdown of types of mentoring, however in terms of a simple definition of the work practitioners involved in work with young people are undertaking, Philip and Hendry's explanation of 'classic' mentoring provides a useful statement:

*'a one-to-one relationship between an adult and a young person where the older, experienced mentor provides support, advice and challenge'* Philip and Hendry, 1996 (3.)

Within this context the primary role of the mentor is to provide guidance and support to a mentee based on that person's specific developmental requirements; this will also necessitate taking on other roles:

## Coaching

- Providing advice and guidance, making suggestions on how things may be improved, and providing feedback to the mentee on how they are progressing.

## Providing encouragement and support

- Listening; the mentee will have a perspective on their future. The mentor not only provides advice but also acts as a sounding board for a mentee's ideas and concerns about school issues and their future academic and career choices. A mentor should be able to provide insights into potential opportunities to enable the mentee to constructively develop towards their goal, provide encouragement, and provide support when things don't go as planned.

- A mentee's personal situation may cause barriers to achieving their goal. If appropriate, the mentor may provide support or signposting on personal issues (see information on regarding 'what a mentor is not' and information on setting boundaries in Section 4.).

\* There is a European Mentoring and Coaching Council, however this is not a statutory authority with legislative abilities.

## Resource provider

- A mentor should be able to identify resources to help the mentee enhance their personal development and attain their goal. Resources can take many forms; these can include identifying learning aids such as textbooks or websites, visiting other organisations that may provide information or assist in achieving a goal, or it may be a source of funding to enable a mentee to go to university or enlist in a training programme.

- Where it can enable the mentee to achieve their goal, the mentor should expand the mentee's network of contacts.

## Mentee champion

- A mentor should be an advocate for their mentee whenever appropriate

- A mentor should seek opportunities to promote their mentee and their work whenever possible.

## Critical Friend

- The mentor should act as a critical friend to guide and assist their mentee through decisions that can impact on achieving their goal, providing constructive criticism as appropriate.

Becoming a successful mentor means that a relationship is developed between the mentor and mentee. Understanding the role of the mentor can assist in prevention of problems in the mentor-mentee relationship. The mentor is there to provide 'support, advice and challenge', however there may be occasions when personal issues may arise or be discussed. A mentor may feel that they should take on other roles rather than signposting to appropriate services or individuals who are professionally or legally designated to undertake those roles. A mentor cannot be all things to their mentee. It is therefore worth noting what a mentor is not.

## What a mentor is not

---

### A mentor is not a parent or legal/special guardian

The responsibilities of a parent or legal/special guardian are to provide food, shelter and clothing and ensure a young person attends school. It is not the role of a mentor to meet these responsibilities. However, should a mentor be concerned that their mentee's needs are not being met, the mentor should express their concerns to the school or organisation they are working with in accordance with their safeguarding policies and procedures rather than trying to meet the needs of the mentee alone.

### A mentor is not a social worker

Social workers are professionals who work with people and families providing support in difficult circumstances; a role of the social worker is to ensure that vulnerable people, including children and adults are safeguarded from harm. If a mentor is concerned about their mentee's home life, the mentor should express their concerns to the school or organisation they are working with in accordance with their safeguarding policies and procedures rather than trying to meet the needs of the mentee alone. The mentor should not assume the role of a social worker and attempt to solve problems.

### A mentor is not a psychologist, psychiatrist or psychotherapist

A mentor is there to provide guidance and advice for a young person; a mentor is not a formal counsellor or therapist; psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists are professionals skilled in providing help for people with mental illness or distress. As psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy are terms that are often confused with each other, it may be worth noting the professional roles of each:

- Psychiatry is a medical profession and concerned with the study of mental disorders and their diagnosis, management and prevention.

- Psychology is concerned with the study of how people think, act, react and interact, their behaviour and the thoughts and motivation for behaviours.

- Psychotherapists help individuals, groups, couples and families to address stress, emotional and relationship problems or habitual issues. A psychotherapist can be a psychiatrist, psychologist or other mental health professional, who has had further specialist training in psychotherapy.

If a mentor has concerns about the mental health or well-being of their mentee the young person should be signposted to their GP and concerns raised according to the policies and procedures of the organisation the mentor is working for.

## A mentor is not a health professional

Health professionals - doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and other allied professions are qualified professionals who have received training in the medical treatment and care of the person. If a mentor has concerns about the health of their mentee they should be signposted to their GP and concerns raised according to the policies and procedures of the organisation the mentor is working for. A mentee should not treat or recommend therapies based upon their own ideas and experience.

## A mentor is not a teacher

A teacher is a qualified education professional. It is not the role of the mentor to be their mentee's teacher; however, it is the role of the mentor to guide and assist their mentee to ensure that they get the best from the education that they are undertaking. If a mentor has concerns about a mentee's

education and progress is difficult then the mentor should liaise with the school or organisation providing education to address concerns, discuss further help and support for their mentee, and signposting to helpful resources where appropriate.

To reiterate, when concerned about their mentee's health or welfare, the mentor acts as a 'resource broker', signposting their mentee to services and resources and ensuring that they have access to them as required.

## Primary tasks of a mentor

---

So far we have considered the negative consequences of a lack of engagement by boys and young men with education, and looked at the primary role of the mentor and associated role factors. Being aware of these, the question can then be asked, what tasks must a mentor undertake to fulfil their role? We can consider four primary tasks a mentor must undertake:

### Establish a positive, personal relationship with your mentee:

- this requires, establishing mutual trust and respect;
- ensuring that the mentor has regular interaction and maintains consistent support;
- and trying to make your meetings and activities as enjoyable and fun as possible.

### Help your mentee to develop life skills:

- as a mentor you will need to work with your mentee to accomplish specific programme goals (e.g., improving academic performance, considering a future career and what needs to be put in place to get there);

## Qualities desirable in a mentor

---

- to accomplish this you may need to instil with your mentee the need for a framework for developing broader life-management skills, (e.g., decision-making skills, goal-setting skills, conflict resolution, money management etc).

### Help your mentee gain resources that can help them to develop:

- as a mentor you are your mentee's 'go to' person; you will provide awareness of educational, community, and economic resources available to young people, and how to access these resources. You will be acting as a resource broker rather than a resource provider – but there may be occasions when you need to provide for your mentee when they are unable to access resources themselves.

Enable your mentee to interact with people/groups/things from various backgrounds (cultural, racial, socio-economic, etc.):

- respecting and exploring differences among people/groups from various backgrounds can enable your mentee to appreciate and understand differences in views and diversity. Remember not to promote the values and beliefs of one group as superior to those of another;

- you can introduce your mentee to different environments, for example going into the workplace with them and making comparisons with a school environment; you may wish to discuss differences in behaviour, attitude and dress, and explore values such as teamwork and respect.

Each mentor-mentee relationship will be unique. Building trust and understanding are essential; good communication is intrinsic to this to ensure a working relationship. If communication and understanding are lacking then the relationship pairing between mentor and mentee will fail. A number of qualities are also considered desirable for a mentor in the development of a successful mentor-mentee pairing; these include:

- being a good role model
- possessing self-awareness and understanding
- being an advocate and having an interest in developing other people
- respecting diversity
- being well-organised and dependable
- being enthusiastic and encouraging
- being a challenger of assumptions
- possessing the ability to form professional relationships with young people.

Alongside the qualities desirable for a good mentor, there is also a skills set required to ensure a productive relationship; the mentor should be able to:

- build rapport (e.g. identify areas where the mentor and mentee have things in common)
- listen for meaning (e.g. active listening, analysing what is being said)
- question for understanding (e.g. open questions to allow discussion)
- prompt action (e.g. being decisive, not promising things that don't get done)
- move aims and objectives on (e.g. taking action to develop the situation).

This skills set is underpinned by the good communication skills essential for any mentor – mentee pairing to flourish. Good communication skills include:

- speaking (e.g. clear, concise, deliberate, announce)
- listening including active listening (e.g. look interested, listen with care)

- showing empathy (e.g. look interested; have you experienced a similar situation yourself? Listen with care and compassion).
- challenging (e.g. question appropriately, explore the situation and the rationale for actions)
- questioning (e.g. open questions to encourage discussion, both of you should question everything)
- paraphrasing (e.g. reframe the situation using their terms, clarity)
- summarising (e.g. continual summing up, establish that you understand their situation)
- focusing (e.g. showing you are interested and care for your mentee)
- providing information (e.g. IT sources or books, leaflets etc)
- advice and guidance (e.g. directing your mentee to the information they need and the goal they are trying to achieve).

Regardless of background not everyone will possess the skills to become a mentor; neither will any trained mentor be suitable for any mentee. Matching the mentor to the mentee has to be taken into consideration when implementing a mentoring programme. Personal qualities are as important as qualifications, age, gender or culture in this regard.

Personal qualities are subjective; what may appear to be a good mentor – mentee pairing will be subject to individual bias and not all relationships will work, however an understanding of what mentoring is and the qualities and skills required to become an effective mentor will provide a foundation for mentoring work to be undertaken.

## Key references:

1. Hall, JC. (2003) Mentoring and Young People. A literature review. Scottish Council for Research in Education. Research Report 114.  
Available from: <http://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/mentoring-and-young-people-hall.pdf>
2. Philip, K. and Hendry LB.(1996) Young people and mentoring—towards a typology? *Journal of Adolescence*. Vol 19, No 3, pp 189–201.  
Available from: [http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0140197196900196/1-s2.0-S0140197196900196-main.pdf?tid=13867b98-d636-11e4-a956-00000aacb35d&acdnat=1427649027\\_08cb00a3fb5b4d5111e97d8f1edfc63c](http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0140197196900196/1-s2.0-S0140197196900196-main.pdf?tid=13867b98-d636-11e4-a956-00000aacb35d&acdnat=1427649027_08cb00a3fb5b4d5111e97d8f1edfc63c)
3. Busse, H., Campbell, R., & Kippin, R. (2018) Developing a typology of mentoring programmes for young people attending secondary school in the United Kingdom using qualitative methods. *Children and Youth Services Review*, Volume 88, May 2018, pp 401-415.

# Activity:

## Qualities & Skills

### Section 3.



# BUILDING MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIPS; SETTING BOUNDARIES; SAFEGUARDING

In order to build rapport and a safe mentoring environment, setting rules around the mentoring room you are using, or any other environment you are in with your mentee is essential. This is to keep you both safe and allow you the space required to engage with the mentee. Remember, making sure they know you are not a teacher is probably the first hurdle.

Setting good rules around the mentoring session allows you to establish rules around safeguarding; for example you could say to your mentee, *"if you say anything that makes me feel scared for your safety I have to tell someone."* This is a skilful and gentle way of letting them know that although you are not a teacher, you still have their well-being as paramount.

Negotiating times of appointments, length of appointments, use of language, names and name calling, respect for personal space, and staying on topic are all reasonable rules and you will encounter more as you experience mentoring. You will need to agree and establish rules with your mentee in a friendly manner at the outset of your relationship with them. Once rules are established you need to stick to them. Establishing a boundary around your sessions will allow a relationship built on discipline (the rules around the room/environment) and a framework within which to work, allowing for a flourishing and positive mentor-mentee relationship.

---

## Feeling uncomfortable?

So far we have considered the negative consequences of a lack of engagement by boys and young men with education, and looked at the primary role of the mentor and associated role factors. Being aware of these, the question can then be asked, what tasks must a mentor undertake to fulfil their role? We can consider four primary tasks a mentor must undertake:

## Building and sustaining mentor-mentee relationships

---

Setting boundaries is one aspect of establishing a mentor-mentee relationship; you may also have explored other important aspects of building a relationship during discussions with your course leader and fellow students. The following provides a set of guidelines to enable you develop a good mentor – mentee relationship:

## Attend - be there!

Attending on time for every meeting and showing that you are doing your best to make things work demonstrates to your mentee that you care and that they are worth caring about.

## You are your mentee's friendly advocate - not a disciplinarian authority figure

You are the adult in your mentee's life who is just there for them – without having to tell them what to do. Spending time with your mentee and just talking can assist with a young person's development. Young people can learn more from having conversations with an adult than they do by just listening to them. They're curious and want to explore. Their parents may lecture at them or discipline them- just remember you are not their parent and that sometimes young people just like to have fun; you can utilise this aspect and develop your relationship with them by joking and having fun too. You're there to help and advise them,

but if you just provide non-stop advice the relationship may be a difficult one as you may be viewed as an authority figure.

## Act as a role model

Lead by example. By becoming a mentor you are demonstrating an important attribute of the 5Cs - caring about another person, your mentee. Other aspects of being a positive role model include:

- keeping your word: call when you say you will. Do what you say you will. Be there when you say you will;
- be prompt - return any phone calls and emails as soon as you can;
- have a positive outlook and disposition – don't encumber your mentee with your own concerns;
- if your mentoring programme involves group sessions, ensure that you fully participate;
- show fairness; if you enter a competitive activity with your mentee, keep it in perspective and do not help your mentee to win or gain an unfair advantage;
- make sure you let your mentee see you going out of your way to help others.

## Make suggestions about activities

From the outset, some mentees will have suggestions about what you can do together, but others may not, so a mentee may require some initial guidance on your part. If your mentee is not sure about what they want to do, you can start off by giving them a range of choices of activities, "Here are a few things we can do together. Which ones sound good to you?"

## Be ready to help.

As a mentor you are there to help your mentee when they are struggling with a problem; the following provides some useful things you can do to assist them:

- be there for your mentee when they need you and make it clear that you want to help them;
- do not fix problems for them, otherwise this may become a habit. Ask questions and help your mentee to solve their problem;
- role modelling; remember this also includes describing how you may have encountered and overcome a similar problem;
- make sure your mentee has a say. If your mentee comes up with a solution, do not try to come up with a better one yourself, but explore with your mentee all the possibilities and search for the best solution with them;
- check with your mentee to see how they are getting on and if their solution worked; if not, be there for them and help out again.

## Dealing with disclosure and other problems; safeguarding

Every public establishment (school, club, etc.) working with young people should have a safeguarding policy. In schools there will be a designated member of staff responsible for child protection/safeguarding. Sometimes there will be two or more staff designated depending on the size of the school or catchment area.

There will be rules set down by the establishment you are working with as to whom you speak to and how you record any disclosures that your mentee makes. There may also be training available for anybody working in a child-centred profession; this is often made available at a local level – you can check with your local authority as to what is available in your area. The following four point checklist is provided as a reminder of basic safeguarding principles:

1. check with the establishment you are working with;
2. do not offer confidentiality to any mentee;
3. anything that makes you concerned report it;
4. keep notes

A young man with dark hair, wearing a dark jacket, is sitting on a stone wall. He is looking out over a landscape that is mostly obscured by a teal-colored overlay. The background shows a hazy horizon and some distant structures. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

## **IMPORTANT:**

Anyone working with young people will require a criminal records or vetting check appropriate to the country they are practising mentoring in; you should not work with a young person until this is in place.

This information is not supposed to deter you from undertaking mentoring and work with young people. Disclosures by young people are relatively rare, but you do need to be aware that it can happen, hence you need to know what to do should a young person disclose information to you. Students contributing to the development of the SSaMs programme recognised this as an important factor for work with young people.

During your mentoring course you may look at some case studies that feature disclosure incidents and discussed with the tutor issues and outcomes relating to a case study; however, each disclosure incident will be unique.

Remember, if a mentee is making a disclosure to you, you should feel honoured. Of all the adults they come into contact with, they trust you enough to disclose personal information to. Keep to the principles of the four point checklist provided and should a disclosure be made act in accordance with the safeguarding policy and procedure of the organisation you are working with.

A group of young men are gathered around a table in a classroom, looking at papers. One man is pointing at a document. The scene is dimly lit with a blue tint. A semi-transparent dark blue banner is overlaid across the middle of the image.

# Section 4.

# A MODEL FOR MENTORING: POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND THE 5CS

The section considers a theoretical approach, the theory of Positive Youth Development (PYD) and the related concept of the 5Cs used in PYD; the concept of the 5Cs is also recognised in sports coaching. You may recognise the concept and how it can be applied.

Thus far we have looked at what might be considered negative aspects of a lack of engagement by some young men with education. The root causes for this can be debated; how to effectively engage young men with education and provide routes into employment and socially responsible adulthood is also a debatable concern.

Mentoring has been suggested as a method of addressing this. Mentoring, the pairing of a responsible adult guide with a young person transitioning through education into adulthood is a commonly used intervention and a key factor in strategies working with young people; mentoring offers an evidence-based approach to addressing concerns related to problematic behaviours in schools, linked potential criminality concerns and improving school performance.

As a concept, mentoring appears admirable, yet the notion of just pairing a responsible adult with a young person and trusting that the relationship will work may not be effective in itself. All work with young people makes use of theory to address issues and concerns and mentoring is no exception.

---

## Positive Youth Development

A theory providing an acknowledged and well-researched body of evidence that has been used as a basis for work with young people, including mentoring work is Positive Youth Development (PYD) and the concept of the 5Cs, a concept also applied in sports coaching.

PYD does not view young people via a focus on their deficits or as problems to be managed, rather it acknowledges the potential and strengths in all young people and their ability to change their behaviour and acquire new behavioural skills, cultivate new interests, develop their cognitive abilities and establish new social relationships. It moves from 'a problem to be fixed' approach to a 'resource to be built' approach.

PYD recognises that just preventing risk behaviours such as underage drinking and substance use, smoking, bullying and vandalism is not enough and that work on these and other concerns needs to be combined with work that promotes positive

youth behaviour so that young people can become contributing socially responsible adults.

PYD thus considers how the potential and strengths of young people can be utilised and aligned to the strengths of families, schools and communities to enable their own healthy development and that of others. In all settings, committed, capable and caring adults are recognised as the most important developmental asset associated with PYD and outcomes of lower levels of problem and risk-taking behaviours amongst young people. PYD aligns well conceptually with other strengths-based theory including the sociology of health concept of salutogenesis (what creates, supports, or enhances our health) and the positive developmental psychology concept of Flourishing (1., 2., 3., 4.,5.).

## The 5Cs of Positive Youth Development

Mentors are acknowledged as the most important asset for PYD in communities. PYD utilises a concept called the 5Cs. These 'C's provide a basis for work with young people, including mentoring work. The 5Cs are:

**Competence** – enabling and having a positive view of a person's actions in specific areas - social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational.

**Confidence** - a sense of self-worth and self-efficacy.

**Connection** – having positive bonds with people and institutions – peers, family, school and community.

**Character** – a respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviour, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity.

**Caring** - having sympathy and empathy for others.

A sixth 'C' emerges if the preceding 5Cs are realised:

**Contribution** - to self, family, community, and the institutions of society. (6., 7., 8.)

The 5Cs – or 6Cs can be utilised to develop work with your mentee and act as a focal point for discussion; as a mentor you can nurture a mentee's assets by working on the attributes and features of each 'C'. To demonstrate this the following text boxes, each of which refers to an individual 'C', provide examples of actions and activities that a mentor can undertake with their mentee to instil the 5/6 Cs\*.

\*A *Mentor Reflection Workbook* is provided for student mentors. Mentors can use this to record their conversations and activities with their mentee that encourage each of the Cs and to monitor and demonstrate progress.

### COMPETENCE

Ask your mentee about their interests. Engage in active listening and ask follow-up questions that demonstrate your understanding of and interest in the things that they are excited about.

Ask your mentee to discuss or list their strengths. Are they good at maths? Are they good at football? Are they a loyal friend or sibling? Think about what skills your mentee uses for these activities. Talk about ways to connect these strengths to other tasks that they may feel less confident about.

Engage your mentee in decision-making activities. Let them choose the activity you will do during your time together. Note: initially, you may need to gently assist them with this.

Talk to your mentee about their mistakes. Ask them what they would now do differently in the same situation. Suggest that he and you generate a list of ways to act differently in problem situations.

### CONFIDENCE

Be supportive of your mentee, recognising the difference between his behaviour and the person he is. Let him know that you may not always like the decisions he makes, but you still like him as a person.

Disclose any appropriate issues or challenges that have happened in your life and give your mentee an opportunity to share his thoughts with you. They will appreciate your openness. Note: be observant of boundaries between yourself and your mentee.

Engage in activities that your mentee likes to do. Ask them to show you how to do something that you have never done before.

Be perceptive about any obstacles your mentee faces in their confidence such as body image or intelligence. Let him know they are not alone in feeling this way and remind him that these features do not define him as a person. Ask him to list and discuss how these obstacles discourage him from reaching his goals or keep him from having solid relationships.

## **CONNECTION**

Be respectful of your mentee's privacy. However, be sure that he is safe and remind him that you are there for him if he needs you.

Ask your mentee about his friends, relationships, or what he likes to do outside of your time together.

Let your mentee know if he has done something you don't agree with. Make sure to do this in a constructive way—offering your explanation for how this behaviour may be in conflict with some important values.

Give your mentee an opportunity to be heard and to express himself freely and appropriately. Make sure he has the chance to tell you what he values and what is bothering him.

## **CHARACTER**

Practise what you preach. Be sure to role model the importance of character for your mentee. For example, ask your mentee about his experience with issues of peer or family pressure. Discuss with him how he makes his own decisions based on his own values and beliefs.

Keep a sense of humour when your mentee does something you may not agree with.

Let your mentee make decisions for your time together. Respect these decisions.

Discuss the importance of respect for yourself and respect for others with your mentee.

## **CARING**

Remember that when your mentee treats you badly, he may need you the most. Be clear that his behaviour or words are hurtful and that he needs to develop constructive ways to express his emotions. Continue to support him and make sure he knows you are there for him if he needs to talk about anything.

Model caring behaviour. Show your mentee that you treat others with respect. Because of your actions, your mentee will be more likely to do the same. Demonstrate "acts of kindness" with your mentee when you are out. For example, plan a volunteering

visit to a local hospital or community organisation or charity.

Encourage your mentee to demonstrate that he cares about the welfare of his community. This could mean helping him get involved with volunteering work such as helping out at the local furniture recycling project, assisting in classes run by local community groups, or helping run sports coaching lessons or activities.

## **CONTRIBUTION**

Encourage your mentee to get involved in a club at their school or in the community. Discuss with your mentee the strengths he has that he can use to make positive contributions in his school or community. Allow him to think about where his skills may be best put to use.

Write a letter together to an organisation to encourage them to welcome participation from young people. You and your mentee can brainstorm together about the specific strengths and skills young people like him could bring to the organisation.

Allow your mentee to experience failure and be sure to talk with him about how his failure can ultimately lead to success.

Act as a champion for your mentee; e.g. advocate for his involvement in community service and social change organisations. Discuss with him how small contributions of time and skills can promote positive change.

The actions described in the text boxes are based upon good mentoring practice using the 5Cs (14) and are provided as an example of activities and discussions a mentor can undertake with their mentee.

As a mentor you will have to listen to your mentee and discuss with them their own set of unique aims and objectives, adapting their strengths to meet their aims and nurture the attributes of the 5Cs. It may be useful for a mentor working with their mentee to create their own 5Cs (or 6Cs) text boxes based on the examples provided here.

## The 5Cs in sports coaching

The 5Cs provide a basis for strengths-based mentoring work and can be used by anyone undertaking mentoring regardless of their professional background.

A discipline that has embraced the 5Cs for work with young people is sports coaching. For sports coaches undertaking mentoring work with young people, the 5Cs provide a basis for work with an intended outcome of not only enhancing sporting achievement, but also enhancing other life skills such as teamwork, communication, and respect.

For sports coaches involved in mentoring work, it is of note that there is evidence that participation in sport is correlated with a number of positive developmental outcomes for young people. Research demonstrates that in comparison with their peer group, young

people who participate in sport report 'high levels of self-esteem, emotional regulation, problem-solving, goal attainment, and social skills'; participation in sport has also been linked 'to a lower likelihood of school drop-out, improved grades, and higher rates of attendance for low achieving and working class males'.

However, it is noted that the success of any PYD sports programme is dependent on the way a programme is delivered and experienced; an understanding of the role of the mentor, what is expected, and a demonstration of knowledge and skills required is therefore essential to the use of this concept (9.,10.).

# Key references:

1. Beier, SR., Rosenfeld, WD., Spitalny, KC., Zansky, SM. & Bontempo, AN. (2000) The Potential Role of an Adult Mentor in Influencing High-Risk Behaviors in Adolescents. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*. 2000; 154 (4): 327-331.  
Available from: <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=348966>
2. Goudas, M. & Giannoudis, G. (2008). A team-sports-based life-skills program in a physical education context. *Learning and Instruction*, Volume 18, Issue 6, Pages 528-536.  
Available from:  
[http://www.spectrumofteachingstyles.org/pdfs/literature/Goudas\\_Giannoudis.pdf](http://www.spectrumofteachingstyles.org/pdfs/literature/Goudas_Giannoudis.pdf)
3. Super, S., Verkooijen, K. & Koelen, M. (2018). The role of community sports coaches in creating optimal social conditions for life skill development and transferability – a salutogenic perspective, *Sport, Education and Society*, 23:2, 173-185.  
Available from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13573322.2016.1145109>
4. Antonovsky, A. (1996) The salutogenic model as a theory to guide health promotion. *Health Promotion International*, Vol 11, No 1, pp 11 – 18.  
Available from: <http://heapro.oxfordjournals.org/content/11/1/11.full.pdf>
5. Di Fabio, A. & Kenny, ME. (2018). Intrapreneurial Self-Capital: A Key Resource for Promoting Well-Being in a Shifting Work Landscape, *Sustainability*, 10, 3035.  
Available from: <http://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/9/3035>
6. Lerner, RM., Brittan, AS. and Fay, KE. (2007) Mentoring: A key resource for promoting Positive Youth Development. *Research in Action*. No 1.  
Available from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502223.pdf>
7. Lerner, RM. (2005) Positive Youth Development: Theoretical and Empirical Bases. White paper prepared for: Workshop on the Science of Adolescent Health and Development, National Research Council, Washington, DC. September 9, 2005. National Research Council/Institute of Medicine. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences.  
Available from: <https://ase.tufts.edu/iaryd/documents/pubPromotingPositive.pdf>
8. Zarrett, N., & Lerner, RM. (2008) Ways to promote the positive development of children and youth. Washington, DC: Child Trends.  
Available from: <https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/01/Youth-Positive-Development.pdf>
9. Holt, N., Neely, K., Slater, L., Camiré, M., Côté, J., Fraser-Thomas, J., & Tamminen, K. (2017). A grounded theory of positive youth development through sport based on results from a qualitative meta-study. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 10, 1-49.  
Available from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1750984X.2016.1180704>
10. Holt, NL., & Neely, KC. (2012). Positive youth development through sport: A review. *Ibero-American Journal of Sport Psychology*, No 6, pp299-316.  
Available from: <http://www.webs.ulpgc.es/ripped/docs/20110208.pdf>

A photograph of a classroom or computer lab. In the foreground, a young man with dark hair, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt, is looking towards the right. Behind him, several other students are seated at desks with computers. One student in a dark hoodie is looking down at papers. Another student in a blue and purple hoodie is looking at a computer monitor. The background features a white wall with a large yellow bulletin board on the left, several smaller notices and posters on the right, and a red fire extinguisher mounted on the wall. The lighting is somewhat dim, with a blueish tint from the computer screens.

# Section 5.

# LIFE SKILLS AND GOAL SETTING

## What are life skills?

Positive Youth Development provides a structure for mentoring work with boys and young men. It focusses on developing the strengths of a young person rather than fixing their perceived deficiencies. We can enhance our work with young people using the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development framework by incorporating a life skills approach to assist their development.

*Life skills are 'abilities for adaptive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life' (WHO, 1997). (1)*

A life skills approach refers to the personal qualities, behaviours, and skills that young people can use to cultivate the attributes of the 5Cs. In this context it is useful to consider what life skills can be developed through participation in sport and physical exercise.

Take a look at the life skills examples below; which of these examples are useful in sport?

### Life skills examples:

- Self-regulation
- Work ethic
- Social interactions
- Basic personal skills
- Emotional control
- Education on substance misuse
- Leadership
- Positive self-perception
- Perseverance
- Respect
- Independence
- Taking responsibility
- Problem-solving skills
- Teamwork
- Communication skills
- Social conscience

You would probably identify all of the life skills examples shown as useful for someone participating in sport.

Now think about the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development and where these life skills would fit under the 5Cs framework (e.g. life

skill = social conscience; 5C = Connection); some of them may fit more than one C, whilst others may be more obvious – e.g. 'taking responsibility' would fit under the C for Character. Each young person you will work with is a unique individual; if you use a life skills approach to cultivate the 5Cs, determine where each life skill would fit best to develop the C for the young person you are working with.

## Sport and life skills

Working with your mentee you will want to think about how to develop their life skills and how you might promote this to them.

Think of this in a sports-based context and how you might achieve this in a sports role; then consider what factors might influence the transfer of life skills from physical activity/sport to other aspects of a person's life and how you might apply this in a mentoring context to your work with young males. The list below provides some useful examples.

- Encouraging autonomy & decision making
- Offering roles of responsibility (e.g. team captain)
- Offering opportunities to demonstrate skills ("what are you good at?")
- Praising demonstrations of life skills & making use of 'teachable moments'
- Modelling good behaviour (e.g. respect for the referee)
- Linking between sport & life where possible (e.g. work ethic in sport and work ethic in life)
- Goal setting
- Team discussions

Each mentor – mentee pairing will be unique; how a life skills approach can be used to develop the 5Cs for a mentee will depend on the competencies of both the mentor and mentee. Factors influencing life skill transfer are:

- I perceived value of skill;
- II confidence in ability to transfer;
- III comprehension of transfer; and
- IV support of transfer.

The levels of influence a life skills approach can achieve are illustrated in the diagram below.

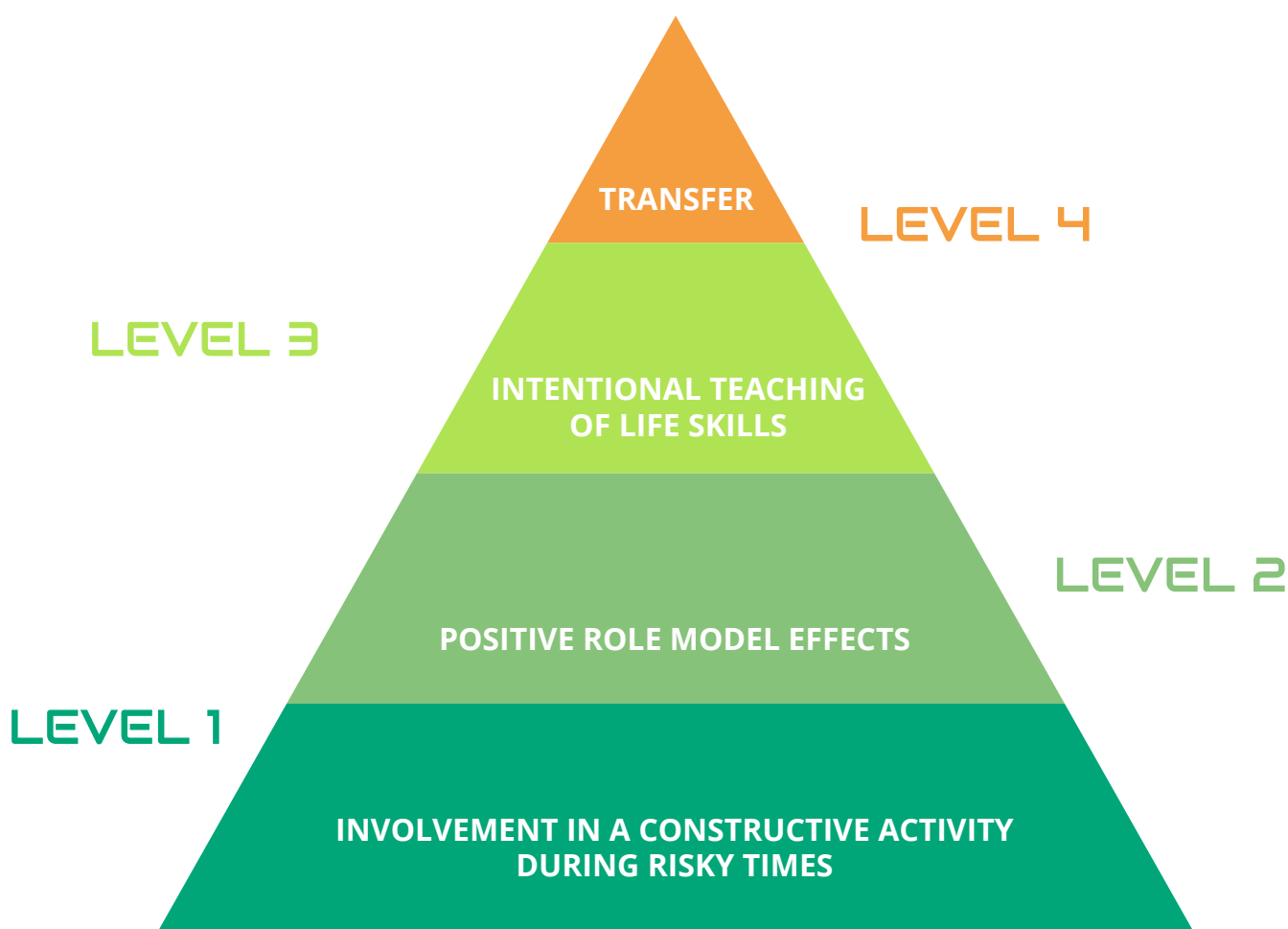


Diagram 1: Life skills competencies and levels

**LEVEL 1:** distraction from negative behaviours & engagement in constructive behaviours

**LEVEL 2:** Modelling of positive behaviour

**LEVEL 3:** Intentional teaching of life skills through sport (e.g. respect)

**LEVEL 4:** Teaching of transfer of life skills

## Goal setting

Applied to a Positive Youth Development framework, a life skills approach allows for mentors and mentees with different levels of competencies and confidence to address particular life skills. If we are developing a young person's skills and competencies then we must also ask what goals are we developing those skills and competencies towards.

A useful way of setting goals is to consider if they are:

- Specific - what is the goal and why achieve it?
- Measurable - how will you know you have achieved it?
- Achievable - what action plans have you made to ensure you achieve it?
- Realistic - is it achievable?; not too hard or too easy?
- Timely - when will you achieve it?

The above list provides a useful tool for when you and your mentee are action planning towards achieving their goals. Other factors you should consider are:

- Discuss and make sure that goals are determined by mentee; check that they agree with the goals set at each meeting
- Think about resources you may need to help them achieve their goals
- Consider any challenges and barriers and how these might be overcome
- Review and adjust if necessary (recommended to review at each mentor-mentee meeting)

There is no quick and simple solution to goal setting – each mentee is a unique individual with unique circumstances; all mentoring situations and therefore the goals you set with your mentees will be specific to their unique

situation and your ability to mentor them towards their goals.

## Outcomes

As a mentor you may ask why we are mentoring this particular student? This question will have different answers depending on the perspective it is considered from; this requires consideration before we start the mentoring process.

## What does your organisation want?

Valid considerations and questions include why does your organisation want you mentoring young people? Is it because they want to look good in the community, to meet a mandatory or statutory objective, or because they want to give something back and become recognised in the community as an organisation that supports and develops young people?

## Schools and other educational settings?

If you work for an organisation delivering mentoring work in schools or another educational service, what does the school or service want? Why have the school identified this young person as requiring a mentor? Do they want the young person 'fixed' - or supported with their exam revision? Do they think the young person has potential and want to see them achieve their academic best, or are they using mentoring only to address concerns about risk-taking behaviour or to remove a disruptive influence on other students?

## Yourself?

What do you want? Why are you there? Are you Curriculum Vitae building for yourself and have little interest – or are you passionate about work with young people? You need to be clear. "Because my boss sent me" is not a valid reason.

## The mentee?

Finally, and most importantly, what does the mentee want? Initially they may not know, hence the requirement for a mentor. They may be confused or concerned at the prospect of having an adult mentor them; this may require some sensitive discussion. Your job is to influence, negotiate and gently push towards an outcome that they may not yet have considered; you will need to explore this with them.

## Remember to:

- establish ground rules with your mentee;
- set goals for the next session (e.g. get here on time, bring a pen, complete a diary for next time);
- heed the 5Cs and things you can do to nurture these (consider the life skills approach to assist you with this);
- begin to plan and build with your mentee to set goals according to their situation and how these might be achieved;
- record and monitor progress; report to the organisation you are working with as appropriate;
- always remember safeguarding and maintain boundaries.

Each situation will be unique. It will be your role to ascertain what are the needs of your organisation, the school's needs, your own – and above all, the needs of your mentee. You will be your mentee's supporter, advocate, adviser and challenger, making use of their strengths and guiding them to where they want to be and helping them to do their best. In doing so you will not only be helping them to achieve, but also impacting on their life in other beneficial ways including enhancing their social mobility and improving their health.

## Finally – saying goodbye.

There will come a point when the mentor-mentee relationship ends. Sometimes this can happen prematurely because the relationship wasn't working or beneficial, but hopefully your mentee will have achieved their goal and you can be mutually satisfied with the relationship. For some boys and young men a mentor may be the only responsible adult that they know and trust; you have been in a privileged position working with your mentee and this should not be overlooked.

Whatever the situation, there are a number of things you can do or say to bring the relationship to a close. If you and your mentee enjoyed your time together, you might say something like "I am going to really miss our sessions – I've enjoyed our time together." Be honest. Do not expect the young man to reciprocate; you are modelling expressing emotion and hopefully your mentee will have learned from this, especially considering discussion of sensitive topics. Be aware that some young men might be reserved about sharing their emotions even though they may feel the same about the relationship ending.

Don't wait until your last meeting to say goodbye. Address this as soon as you know the relationship will be coming to a close. Remember you have been working towards the 5Cs and role modelling these, so explore options for saying goodbye in a healthy, respectful, and affirming way; your intention has to be to build a good relationship and you want to end it in a good manner. You might want to consider a celebratory final meeting as a way of closing the relationship.

You may feel a sense of loss at the end of the relationship – after all you have shared part of your life with your mentee. If you have developed a good relationship your mentee may wish to stay in touch with you, so you will need to address this. Check with the establishment you are working with and refer to policies and procedures before acting accordingly.

Not all mentor-mentee relationships are successful; there are times when relationships

fail and this is natural; don't be hard on yourself and find yourself wanting if a mentor-mentee relationship fails. An important aspect of mentoring is support for mentors themselves, so make sure that you seek support for yourself when things are not going to plan. The organisation supporting your mentoring work should supply support; mentoring schemes that do not have support for mentors in place are the ones most likely to fail, so make sure yours does.

You cannot be all things to your mentee, but with good training and support and an awareness of 'what works' you can make a difference to the lives of the young men you work with.

**Happy mentoring!**

## Key references:

1. World Health Organization, (1997). Life skill education in school. Program on mental health, division of mental health and prevention of substance abuse.  
Available from: [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/63552/WHO\\_MNH\\_PSF\\_93.7A\\_Rev.2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/63552/WHO_MNH_PSF_93.7A_Rev.2.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)



# Section 6.

# SUPPORTING THE EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

In this section we consider the emotional and mental health of boys and young men and the association between poor mental health and consequences of poor academic outcomes in relation to mental health. We look at how mentors can assist in improving boys and young men's mental health with a focus on developing resilience, and signposting to appropriate services if necessary.

As a mentor you may be asking what can you do to promote good mental health and to assist in preventing mental health crises? It is important to recall that in Section 2. we stated that a mentor is not a psychiatrist, psychologist or psychotherapist and not a formal health professional. You are not expected to take on roles that you are not qualified for.

In Section 4. we looked at safeguarding; safeguarding is part of a mentor's role. As a mentor you may come across to your mentee as more informal and less threatening than a formal health or social work professional. A mentee may have concerns that they feel they can discuss with you. However, there may be occasions when a mentee discloses information to you that may make you concerned about their mental well-being. In such circumstances it may be necessary for a mentor to act to ensure their mentee is safe and supported according to the circumstance described and the safeguarding policy of the organisation you are undertaking mentoring for.

As emphasised, as a mentor you are not expected to be a formal health professional or counsellor. However, it will be useful to consider some definitions of emotional and mental health before exploring the mentors role in providing support and promoting good mental health.

---

## What is emotional health?

A useful definition of emotional health is provided by Samaritans, an Irish and UK charity providing support on mental health issues:

*"Emotional health is about how we think and feel. It is about our sense of well-being, our ability to cope with life events and how we acknowledge our own emotions as well as those of others. It doesn't mean being happy all of the time".*

*Samaritans, 2016*

Our emotional health contributes towards our mental health.

## What is mental health?

*"Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community".*

*WHO (2001). Strengthening mental health promotion. Geneva, World Health Organization (Fact sheet, No. 220)*

## What are mental health disorders or mental illness?

The term 'mental health' can sometimes be confused with mental health disorders (you may also hear them described as mental illnesses). Mental health disorders refer to conditions such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. These are medical conditions that can have biological or genetic causes; people

who have these conditions can experience good mental and emotional health.

It is important that when we work with boys and young men that we are clear about what mental and emotional health are and that we work to reduce stigma around mental health, including mental health disorders.

## Gendered components of emotional and mental health:

Having identified what mental and emotional health are we can then consider if being male can affect emotional and mental health.

## What does research have to say about male emotional and mental health?

- Almost 8 in 10 suicides (77%) reported in the European Union in 2014 were completed by men. Men in Europe are almost five times more likely to complete suicide than women (1.) (2.).

- Research indicates that men are more likely to externalise emotions and express mental distress in antisocial behaviours (including aggression, alcohol and substance use). Both male socialisation and male physiology are implicated (3.) (4.) (5.).

- Men more likely to end up in the judicial system; 95% of the combined prison population of all EU member states are male (6.).

Data aggregated from: Council of Europe, Annual Penal Statistics. Space I – prison populations survey 2015. Updated on 25th April 2017.

- A lack of or limited qualifications are a feature of males in the judicial system. Examples; a 2013 report authored for the European Commission evidenced 53% of the Irish prison population having literacy levels of level 1 (the lowest literacy level) or

below in Ireland's National Qualifications Framework, in comparison with 23% of the general population. In the same report, 27% of early school leavers in the Netherlands were suspected of a criminal offence in comparison to 7% of non-school leavers; in Ireland the committal rate for males is considerably higher for early school leavers (46.6 out of 1,000) compared with those who achieve the Leaving Certificate (1.6 out of 1,000) (7.).

- Studies have consistently shown that the prevalence of poor mental health among prisoners is considerably higher than in the community. Death by suicide of male prisoners is about 3–6 times that of the general population (8.) (9.).

- Homelessness; in the European Union more than 400,000 individuals are homeless on any one night. In most European countries the majority - 75-85% - of homeless people are males; the predominant characteristic of homeless users of services in many EU countries is a middle-aged, single man. Homeless people have higher rates of premature mortality than the rest of the population, especially from suicide and unintentional injuries, and an increased prevalence of a range of infectious diseases, mental disorders, and substance misuse (10.) (11.) (12.).

- Low educational attainment and unemployment are factors influencing the vulnerability of people and increasing their risk of becoming homeless; poor educational attainment is a feature of young homeless people (12.) (13.).

- UK research describes boys performing less well than girls at all levels of education. "Loss of confidence or self-esteem" drives the association between poor mental health and exam results for boys (14.) (15.) (16.).

- Boys leave school at an earlier age than girls and are less likely to go into

higher education (17.).

- Young men seek health services, including mental health services, less than girls and young women (18).
- Young gay, bisexual and transgender people are significantly more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers (19.).
- Recommendations for addressing poor male mental health include developing services to meet specific male health needs. Although efforts to reduce stigma are thought to be helpful, male health needs could be met more strategically by tailoring services to increase their interest and engagement (20.).

## How can mentors assist in improving emotional and mental health?

Research and official statistics demonstrate a rationale for addressing male mental health. In acknowledging this, we can ask what is the role of the mentor working with a young male in improving male mental health and preventing mental health crises?

*“Training boys as mentors and campaigners to normalise the message and make it easier for boys and young men to seek help and speak about their difficulties is seen as an essential step in reversing the culture of boys staying silent.” (21.)*

*Robertson, S. et al (2015) Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing with Men and Boys: What Works? Centre for Men’s Health, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds.*

The statement emphasises the importance of young males being enabled to talk about concerns that they have and recognises mentoring as a means to do this. The above statement also reflects the views of male and female sports science students who participated in informing the development of Sports Students as Mentors. Some students indicated that they would prefer a mentor

to be someone of about the same age as themselves or slightly older. This does not rule out older people as mentors; each mentor-mentee pairing will be unique.

As a mentor you are in a unique position. You will be providing a ‘male friendly’ service helping your young male mentee with his education and other aspects of his life, including his emotional and mental health.

You will be doing this by building resilience through your work with your mentee: as a coach, through providing encouragement and support, as a resource provider, championing your mentee, and as a critical friend. As a reminder take a look at Section 2. ‘Primary tasks of a mentor’ and ‘Qualities desirable in a mentor’ and consider how these relate to work on emotional and mental health concerns.

## What is resilience?

An important role of the mentor in supporting a male mentee with their emotional and mental health is building resilience. There are a number of definitions of resilience. An understanding of resilience in the context of mental health is provided by the UK charity Mind:

*“There may be times or situations in our lives that are more difficult than others. The capacity to stay mentally well during those times is what we call ‘resilience’. Resilience is not simply a person’s ability to ‘bounce back’, but their capacity to adapt in the face of challenging circumstances, whilst maintaining a stable mental wellbeing.” (22.)*

## Positive Youth Development is about building resilience

In Section 3. we considered Positive Youth Development as a methodology for mentoring boys and young men. Positive Youth Development assists in building resilience by focussing on “*promoting the internal and external assets that can become the building blocks for healthy psychosocial development of children and youth*”. The term developmental

assets can be used when referring to combined internal and external assets (23.).

**Internal assets** refer to an individual's qualities or strengths that can assist in that individual making positive life choices.

**External assets** refer to the positive experiences an individual gains from the people and experiences they encounter.

A study of developmental assets describes boys reporting having fewer assets than girls. The study notes that the more developmental assets young people described, *"the more they were likely to report thriving outcomes, such as school success, good physical health, and overcoming adversity"*. (24.)

The following tables (1. & 2.) provide examples of external and internal assets; you will see that both external and internal assets are aligned with competencies and values you will be developing with your mentee using the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development (reminder - Table 3.). External and internal assets can be used or matched with the 5Cs as benchmark resilience factors you can aim to develop with your mentee:

**TABLE 1. External Assets**

<b>SUPPORT</b>	<b>Having a supportive family</b> A young male's family provides high levels of love and support.
	<b>There is good family communication</b> The young male and his parent(s) or carer(s) communicate positively; the young male is able to seek advice from them.
	<b>Relationships with other adults</b> The young male also receives support from other adults.
	<b>Caring community</b> The young male lives in a caring community.
	<b>Caring school</b> The young male's school provides a caring, encouraging environment.
	<b>Parental involvement in education</b> The young male's parents are actively involved in helping him succeed in school.
<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>	<b>A community that values young males</b> The young male perceives that the adult community values its young males.
	<b>Young males as resources</b> Young males are given useful roles in their community.
	<b>Service to others</b> The young male regularly participates in helping others in his community.
	<b>Safety</b> The young male feels safe at home, at school, and in his community.
<b>BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS</b>	<b>Family boundaries</b> The young male's family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young male's whereabouts.
	<b>School boundaries</b> The young male's school provides clear rules and consequences.
	<b>Community boundaries</b> The young male's community takes responsibility for monitoring young people's behaviour.
	<b>Adult role models</b> Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behaviour.
	<b>Positive peer influence</b> The young male's best friends model responsible behaviour.
	<b>High expectations</b> Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young male to do well.
<b>CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME</b>	<b>Creative activities</b> The young male regularly spends time in lessons or practising creative arts.
	<b>Youth programmes and events</b> The young male regularly spends time participating in sports, clubs, or school or community organisations and events.
	<b>Religious community</b> The young male regularly spends time in activities at a religious institution.
	<b>Time at home</b> The young male does not loiter in the community with friends and spends positive time at home.

*Adapted for work with young males from Leffert et al, 1998. (25.)*

**TABLE 2. Internal Assets**

<b>COMMITMENT TO LEARNING</b>	<b>Achievement motivation</b> The young male is motivated to do well in school.
	<b>School engagement</b> The young male is actively engaged in learning.
	<b>Homework</b> The young male reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
	<b>Bonding to school</b> The young male cares about his school.
	<b>Reading for pleasure</b> The young male regularly reads for pleasure.
<b>POSITIVE VALUES</b>	<b>Caring</b> The young male places high value on helping other people.
	<b>Equality and social justice</b> The young male understands and places high value on equality.
	<b>Integrity</b> The young male acts on their beliefs and stands up for them.
	<b>Honesty</b> The young male “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”
	<b>Responsibility</b> The young male accepts and takes personal responsibility.
	<b>Restraint</b> The young male understands and takes action to avoid the consequences of being sexually active, alcohol and substance use, and antisocial behaviours.
<b>SOCIAL COMPETENCIES</b>	<b>Planning and decision making</b> The young male knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
	<b>Interpersonal competence</b> The young male has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
	<b>Cultural competence</b> The young male has knowledge of and is comfortable with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
	<b>Resistance skills</b> The young male can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
	<b>Peaceful conflict resolution</b> The young male seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.
<b>POSITIVE IDENTITY</b>	<b>Personal power</b> The young male feels he has control over “things that happen to me.”
	<b>Self-esteem</b> The young male reports having a high self-esteem.
	<b>Sense of purpose</b> The young male reports that “my life has a purpose.”
	<b>Positive view of personal future</b> The young male is optimistic about his personal future.

*Adapted for work with young males from Leffert et al, 1998. (25.)*

**TABLE 3. 5-6 Cs of Positive Youth Development**

<b>COMPETENCE</b>	Enabling and having a positive view of a person's actions in specific areas - social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational.
<b>CONFIDENCE</b>	A sense of self-worth and self-efficacy.
<b>CONNECTION</b>	Having positive bonds with people and institutions – peers, family, school and community.
<b>CHARACTER</b>	A respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviour, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity.
<b>CARING</b>	Having sympathy and empathy for others.
<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>	To self, family, community, and the institutions of society.

The developmental assets tables (1. & 2.) refer to ideal situations and outcomes. A reality for some young males you will mentor is that their home or lifestyle situations may be challenging, both in terms of assisting them with their education and also their mental health.

Your focus will be on building resilience through a young male's strengths, developing their positive life skills - and if required signposting to other help and services. Again, remember Section 2.; you are not a social worker or health professional. You can signpost to other services, but do not take on roles you are not qualified to undertake. If you do have an interest in developing skills in these areas of study, you are encouraged to seek further training.

When using the 5Cs as a basis for mentoring work you will be helping to build resilience by focussing on the strengths a young male possesses. As stated earlier, there may be occasions when a mentee discloses information to you that may make you concerned about their mental well-being. You may also have a concern about your mentee's mental well-being that they find difficult to disclose and may require signposting for further support. In this instance how does a mentor begin a conversation about mental health?

## Discussing emotional and mental health with your mentee

Giving boys and young men a vocabulary to discuss mental health is important. Some research indicates that socialised masculine behaviours become embedded at an early age, creating 'machismo cultures' where males conform to roles that repress the expression of emotions, such as those associated with fear or sadness (26.). If you are a male mentor you will be helping to challenge the stereotypical view of males being emotionally unexpressive and demonstrating to your mentee that it is a strength to be able to openly discuss their concerns.

On the subject of mentor gender it is valuable to note that the gender of the mentor is considered to be unimportant (*during the development of Sports Students as Mentors, 84% of participating sports science students indicated that the gender of a mentor is unimportant*). For some young males they may find it more comfortable to discuss concerns with a female, and for others they may feel more comfortable with another male (27.). Regardless of gender, each mentor-mentee pairing and the interaction between them will be specific to that partnership.

As each mentor-mentee pairing and discussions will be different there is no one prescriptive method to getting a conversation about mentee concerns started. Practical recommendations from the *Irish Young Men and Suicide Project* report states that language used to engage with young males should be "positive and respectful" and should focus on strengths-based and solution-focussed activities (26.).

## Recommendations From practical work with males

Ireland's experience of developing work on male health and social concerns provides useful information on opening up a discussion with males about concerns. The '7 Questions' framework and strengths-based approach, developed by the Men's Development Network (Ireland) allows for informal discussion about male concerns. '7 Questions' was developed for use with older men, but it can also be used with younger males. The approach recognises that "*messages we pick up as boys may turn out to be damaging to us in adult life*". The incremental questions enable the male mentee to reflect on what is happening in their life, what their needs are, what needs to be done and the resources required to change a situation(28.).

### The 7 Questions are:

1. How are things?
2. What's going well?
3. What's not going well?
4. Is there anything you need to do?
5. Is there any support you need?
6. What's one step you might take?
7. What difference might it make?

The 7 Questions framework provides further best practice recommendations for work with males; these are (with adaptations with regard to work with younger males):

- Be welcoming and open to the mentee you are working with.
- Start where the young male is at.
- Spend time building trust, honesty and credibility.
- Listen for evidence of 'need' of where the mentee is at in relation to linking with relevant services and supports.
- Encourage your mentee to take on responsibility for themselves - if this is acceptable and safe for them to do so.
- Enable the mentee to take on a 'helping role' where and when appropriate.

- Value and respond to the experiences of the young male.
- Challenge stereotypes.
- Support your mentee to regularly review the process or programme.
- Allow your mentee to progress at his own pace.
- Make your mentee aware of other relevant services that can be a support for living a better and healthier life.

## Effective settings and styles of intervention for mental health work with young males

As a sports based mentor you may be working in a school, or you may have other options as to where you are able to work with boys and young men. Some effective settings and styles of intervention for working with boys and young men are:

- Schools & informal education (e.g. youth clubs)
- Physical activity and sports-based settings
- The natural world - there is good evidence that programmes based on engagement with nature are effective in improving self-esteem and mood
- Virtual and IT-based settings
- Activity based (art, music)
- Using male specific health promotion materials (Note: do not make assumptions about what male specific means. Many boys will be interested in sport for example - but others will not) (29.).

## Physical activity

As a sports science student you may wish to promote physical activity with the young males you are working with. Regular physical activity is known to have positive effects on mental well-being as well as physical health; the mechanisms thought to cause this include biochemical pathways, distraction from negative thoughts and feelings, and providing a structure to daily life (30)(31.).

Mentors utilising physical activity-based work to engage with boys and young men around mental health issues should be stating both the physical and mental benefits of exercise. As well as regular exercise, mentor should also promote healthy eating, encouraging fruit and vegetable consumption, and getting the right amount of sleep as ways of helping to improve and maintain good mental health.

Remember that promoting physical activity doesn't just mean organised team sports; walking, cycling, swimming or other physical activity pastimes can also provide an opportunity to relax and explore our emotional and mental health.

## Further advice for young males mentors can offer on improving their mental health:

- **Take one day at a time.**
- **Don't judge yourself.** Remember that those who genuinely care about you will not judge you.
- **Drink and drugs don't provide the answers** and can often make you feel worse. So try not to use them as a way of coping with your life.
- **Stay active** – going for a kick around in the park or a long walk can really help to clear your head.
- **Eating** regular meals provides the energy to help you cope with problems. Don't miss out on vital food to keep your mind and body functioning

- **Remember, you don't have to deal with it on your own.** Everyone feels low from time to time.
- **Avoid bottling it up** - it helps to talk, although it may not be easy at first.
- **Relax** - finding a way to relax may help. It will help to get your mind off things. Even if you have lost interest, persuade yourself to do something you usually enjoy. It could be a game of football, or jogging. Activity is a good way of releasing stress and tension.
- **Don't overdo it** - if you are feeling stressed don't take on too much; it will only make things worse.
- **Don't cut yourself off** - no matter how tempting. Contact with someone; a member of your family, a neighbour, or a friend is better than isolation.
- **Talk it through** – talk about it; and if you really can't find someone you know to talk to, or you feel you are not being listened to, you can talk to someone on a helpline.

## Finally; as a mentor you too need support!

Sports science students participating in the development of Sports Students as Mentors strongly indicated that support for mentors in the form of a 'mentor for the mentors' is a requirement for any mentoring programme.

As a mentor you may come across situations that you find challenging. The organisation you are working for should have policies in place to address these situations – you are not expected to cope alone. However, you may feel overwhelmed by situations you are exposed to and need to seek further advice or support. We all have mental health needs and if you find your mentor -mentee relationship is affecting you, talk to your course lead, or if working as a mentor in the sports workplace, talk to the person leading on mentoring work. It may be that you just want further advice on how to address a specific situation, but if you are taking on too much for you to cope with, you should not be expected to continue your mentor-mentee pairing. It is not good practise to do so and will not be assisting your mentee, or yourself. Talk it through with the experienced person leading on mentoring work for your organisation.

## Key references:

1. Eurostat. Almost 60 000 suicides in the EU. Available from: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20170517-1> [Accessed 10 August 2018]
2. World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. The European Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020. Available from: [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0020/280604/WHO-Europe-Mental-Health-Acion-Plan-2013-2020.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/280604/WHO-Europe-Mental-Health-Acion-Plan-2013-2020.pdf) [Accessed 26 August 2018]
3. Eaton NR, Keyes KM, Krueger RF, et al. An Invariant Dimensional Liability Model of Gender Differences in Mental Disorder Prevalence: Evidence from a National Sample. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*. 2012;121(1):282-288. doi:10.1037/a0024780.
4. Ridge, D., Emslie, C. and White, A. (2011) Understanding how men experience, express and cope with mental distress: where next? *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 33: 145-159. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9566.2010.01266.x
5. Ulla Danielsson & Eva E. Johansson (2005) Beyond weeping and crying: a gender analysis of expressions of depression, *Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care*, 23:3, 171-177, DOI: 10.1080/02813430510031315
6. Council of Europe. Annual Penal Statistics. Space I – prison populations survey 2015. Updated on 25th April 2017. Available from: [http://wp.unil.ch/space/files/2017/04/SPACE\\_I\\_2015\\_FinalReport\\_161215\\_REV170425.pdf](http://wp.unil.ch/space/files/2017/04/SPACE_I_2015_FinalReport_161215_REV170425.pdf) [Accessed 24 August 2018]
7. Hawley, J., Murphy, I., & Souto -Otero, M. (2013). Prison education and training in Europe. Current state-of-play and challenges. A summary report authored for the European Commission by GHK Consulting. European Commission. Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/library/study/2013/prison\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/study/2013/prison_en.pdf)

8. World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe. Prisons and health. Chapter 11. Mental health in prison. Available from: [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/249200/Prisons-and-Health,-11-Mental-health-in-prison.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/249200/Prisons-and-Health,-11-Mental-health-in-prison.pdf) [Accessed 24 August 2018]
9. Fazel S, Hayes AJ, Bartellas K, et al. Mental health of prisoners: prevalence, adverse outcomes, and interventions. *Lancet Psychiatry*. 2016;3(9):871–881 doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(16)30142-0
10. Busch-Geertsema, V., Benjaminsen, L., Filipovič Hrast, M., & Pleace, N. (2014). Extent and profile of homelessness in European Member States: A statistical update. Brussels: FEANTSA. Available from: [http://housingfirstguide.eu/website/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/feantsa-studies\\_04-web2.pdf](http://housingfirstguide.eu/website/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/feantsa-studies_04-web2.pdf)
11. Fazel, Seena et al. The health of homeless people in high-income countries: descriptive epidemiology, health consequences, and clinical and policy recommendations. *The Lancet*, Volume 384, Issue 9953, 1529 – 1540. DOI: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)61132-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)61132-6/fulltext)
12. Busch-Geertsema, V., Edgar, W., O’Sullivan, E. & Pleace, N. (2010) Homelessness and homeless policies in Europe: Lessons from research, European Consensus Conference on Homelessness, Brussels, FEANTSA.
13. Quilgars, D. (2010) ‘Youth Homelessness’, in O’Sullivan E., Busch-Geertsema V., Quilgars D. and Pleace N.(eds), *Homelessness Research in Europe*, Brussels, FEANTSA, pp. 143 – 62. Available from: <https://www.york.ac.uk/media/chp/documents/2010/Homeless%20Research%20in%20Europe.pdf> [Accessed 24 August 2018]
14. Hillman N. & Robinson, N. (2016) *Boys to Men: The underachievement of young men in higher education – and how to start tackling it*, Higher Education Policy Institute, HEPI Report 84 2016. Available from: <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Boys-to-Men.pdf> [Accessed 24 August 2018]
15. Cornaglia, F., Crivellaro, E. & McNally, S. Mental Health and Education Decisions. IZA Discussion Paper No. 6452. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2039638>
16. Ryan L., Lorinc M., D’Angelo, A., Kaye N., Araujo HC., Magalhaes A., Rocha C., Macedo E., Szalai J., & Kende A. Policies on Early School Leaving in nine European countries: a comparative analysis. Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policies\\_early\\_school\\_leaving.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policies_early_school_leaving.pdf) [Accessed on 24 August 2018]
17. European Commission 2013. “Progress in tackling early school leaving and raising higher education attainment - but males are increasingly left behind.” Brussels: European Commission. Available from: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-324\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-324_en.htm) [Accessed 24 August 2018]
18. Lynch L, Long M, & Moorhead A. Young Men, Help-Seeking, and Mental Health Services: Exploring Barriers and Solutions. *American Journal of Men’s Health*. 2018 Jan;12(1):138-149. doi: 10.1177/1557988315619469.
19. Warner, Nigel (2007). *Suicidality among lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: Report by ILGA-Europe to the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*. Available from: [https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/ilga-europe\\_lgbt\\_youth\\_suicide\\_final.pdf](https://www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/ilga-europe_lgbt_youth_suicide_final.pdf) [Accessed 24 August 2018]
20. Smith JA, Braunack-Mayer A, Wittert G. What do we know about men’s health seeking and health service use? *Medical Journal of Australia* 2006; 184: 81-83. Available from: <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2006/184/2/what-do-we-know-about-mens-help-seeking-and-health-service-use> [Accessed 24 August 2018]
21. Robertson, S. White, A. Gough, B. Robinson, M. Seims, A. Raine, G. Hanna, E. (2015) *Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing*

- with Men and Boys: What Works? Centre for Men's Health, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds. Available from: [http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/1508/1/Promoting\\_MentalHealth\\_Wellbeing\\_FINAL.pdf](http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/1508/1/Promoting_MentalHealth_Wellbeing_FINAL.pdf) [Accessed 24 August 2018]
22. Mind (2018). Resilience at Mind. Available at: <https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/local-minds/resilience> [Accessed 24 August 2018]
23. Norton, C.L. (2011). Innovative Interventions in Child and Adolescent Mental Health. London, Routledge.
24. Rose, H.A. (2006). Asset-based development for child and youth care. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 14(4), 236-240. Available from: [https://k12engagement.unl.edu/strategy-briefs/Developmental%20Assets%2010-3-14\\_3.pdf](https://k12engagement.unl.edu/strategy-briefs/Developmental%20Assets%2010-3-14_3.pdf) [Accessed 24 August 2018]
25. Leffert, N., Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Sharma, A. R., Drake, D. R., & Blyth, D. A. (1998). Developmental assets: Measurement and prediction of risk behaviors among adolescents. *Applied Developmental Science*, 2(4), 209-230. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads0204\\_4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads0204_4)
26. Richardson, N., Clarke, N., & Fowler, C. (2013). A Report on the All-Ireland Young Men and Suicide Project. Dublin: Men's Health Forum in Ireland. Available from: <https://www.mhfi.org/ymspfullreport.pdf>
27. Kanchewa, S.S., Rhodes, J.E., Schwartz, S. E.O., & Olsho, L. E. W. (2014). An Investigation of Same- Versus Cross-Gender Matching for Boys in Formal School-Based Mentoring Programs, *Applied Developmental Science*, 18:1, 31-45. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2014.876251>
28. The Men's Development Network Ltd (2015). A New Conversation for Men. 7 Key Questions towards Wellbeing & Better Health. Available from: <http://www.mens-network.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/How-7-Key-Questions-can-be-a-suppor.pdf>
29. Men's Health Forum (2015). How To Make Mental Health Services Work For Men. Available from: [https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/how\\_to\\_mh\\_v4.1\\_lrweb\\_0.pdf](https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/how_to_mh_v4.1_lrweb_0.pdf)
30. Blake H. Physical activity and exercise in the treatment of depression. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, December 2012, Vol 3, No 106. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3516810/pdf/fpsyt-03-00106.pdf>
31. Searle A, Calnan M, Lewis G, Campbell J, Taylor A, Turner K. Patients' views of physical activity as treatment for depression: a qualitative study. *British Journal of General Practice*. 2011 Apr;61(585):149-56. Available from: <http://bjgp.org/content/bjgp/61/585/e149.full.pdf>

# SSaMs Mentor Reflection Workbook



# Using the Workbook. Building Positive Youth Development

As a mentor, you play an essential role in supporting the positive development of your mentee. You can use this workbook to write down all the activities and conversations you have had with your mentee that fostered Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Caring, and Contribution. A table showing the 5Cs is provided as a reminder of each C.

For each C you are provided with examples of activities. You can use these examples as a guide and also develop new activities in accordance with the relationship you build with your mentee.

An important thing for you to remember; each activity you write down is an indication of how much progress your mentee has made and how far they have progressed towards achieving their goals.

It is also important for your mentee to reflect on how things have gone. Encourage your mentee to record their thoughts and opinions about mentoring sessions and what they want to achieve. The workbook provides space for this in the mentor's notes for each C and as a separate mentee reflection page.

The workbook also provides tables giving examples of external and internal assets you can use to benchmark factors in your mentee's life that may assist him.

Finally, the 7 Questions approach provides seven incremental questions you can ask that can help to identify what is happening in your mentee's life and steps to help him. A list of helpful hints that can help to maintain emotional and mental health is also provided for you to assist your mentee.

---

## A flexible approach to mentoring work?

As a sports mentor working with boys and young men you may be presented with different settings and scenarios in which to carry out mentoring work. Ideally you will be assigned a mentee in a school and work with them for a set period of time or until your own and the mentee's agreed aims have been achieved.

It may not always be possible to work in the ideal situation described above. You are trying to assist your mentee with their education and prevent them from leaving school too early, however mentoring with some young males may not take place in the school environment but in another agreed setting, for example a youth club or local sports centre. Boys who are excluded from school or who are frequent absentees may fall into this category.

Another scenario is that you may not have one mentee – you may have a number of mentees assigned to you; or you may only have the opportunity to mentor a young male for one or two sessions. As a sports mentor you will need to be aware of the sometimes chaotic nature of boys and young men's lives and be prepared to be flexible in your practical mentoring work.

If you only have one or two sessions with your mentee ask yourself what can you achieve? Consider the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development and establish what external and internal assets your mentee has. Whatever the setting or scenario your aim is to identify and build on the young male's strengths. In a long term mentor-mentee relationship it is possible to achieve much in terms of assisting a boy to achieve their educational or vocational potential; in a short term relationship you may have limited time to identify strengths,

resources required to help a young male, and to encourage them to move towards a goal. Be practical about what you can achieve.

By being a mentor and taking an interest in a young male's future you will be demonstrating aspects of the 5Cs to the mentee – for example 'Caring' for others and role-modelling 'Character', emphasising that males do not have to adopt personally and socially harmful behaviours that may have a negative impact on themselves and their communities. Remember that as a mentor you are also a role model for your mentee.

#### About mentee reflection

It is important that your mentee is able to reflect on the mentoring process. Encourage your mentee to write down what they want to get out of the mentor-mentee relationship. You may want to sign a joint agreement about what you want to achieve together; your mentee may also want to record their thoughts about each mentoring session and what they have achieved.

Remember that as a mentor that you need to be flexible in your practice. Be prepared that your mentee may not want to sign an agreement or write their thoughts down; some boys have difficulties with literacy, or they may initially be suspicious of you as their new mentor. If they do not wish to write down anything themselves they may be happy for you to record their thoughts.

Each mentor-mentee relationship will be unique. As a mentor it's up to you to be proactive and to develop a framework for each mentor-mentee relationship you undertake. Try to encourage your mentee to take the lead and consider are the aims set for mentoring sessions and overall goals able to meet the following criteria:

<b>Specific</b>	What is to be done in the session/overall?
<b>Measurable</b>	How will we know we have achieved our goals?
<b>Attainable</b>	Can the mentee do it?
<b>Realistic/ Relevant</b>	Should the mentee do it? What will it achieve?
<b>Time orientated</b>	When will it happen? What are the time constraints?

Initially you may have to take the lead in developing trust and building the mentor-mentee relationship, but the more you can do to encourage your mentee to set the pace and take ownership of their aims, the more successful the mentoring relationship and its achievements are likely to be.

***Happy mentoring!***

## The 5-6 Cs of Positive Youth Development

<b>COMPETENCE</b>	Enabling and having a positive view of a person's actions in specific areas - social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational.
<b>CONFIDENCE</b>	A sense of self-worth and self-efficacy.
<b>CONNECTION</b>	Having positive bonds with people and institutions – peers, family, school and community.
<b>CHARACTER</b>	A respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviour, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity.
<b>CARING</b>	Having sympathy and empathy for others.
<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>	To self, family, community, and the institutions of society.

5C examples adapted from Lerner, R. M., Brittan, A. S., & Fay, K. E. (2007). *Mentoring: A Key Resource for Promoting Positive Youth Development, Research in Action, Issue 1.*

External Assets that may assist your mentee		Yes/ No?
<b>SUPPORT</b>	<b>Having a supportive family</b> A young male's family provides high levels of love and support.	
	<b>There is good family communication</b> The young male and his parent(s) or carer(s) communicate positively; the young male is able to seek advice from them.	
	<b>Relationships with other adults</b> The young male also receives support from other adults.	
	<b>Caring community</b> The young male lives in a caring community.	
	<b>Caring school</b> The young male's school provides a caring, encouraging environment.	
	<b>Parental involvement in education</b> The young male's parents are actively involved in helping him succeed in school.	
<b>BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS</b>	<b>Family boundaries</b> The young male's family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young male's whereabouts.	
	<b>School boundaries</b> The young male's school provides clear rules and consequences.	
	<b>Community boundaries</b> The young male's community takes responsibility for monitoring young people's behaviour.	
	<b>Adult role models</b> Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behaviour.	
	<b>Positive peer influence</b> The young male's best friends model responsible behaviour.	
	<b>High expectations</b> Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young male to do well.	
<b>CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME</b>	<b>Creative activities</b> The young male regularly spends time in lessons or practising creative arts.	
	<b>Youth programmes and events</b> The young male regularly spends time participating in sports, clubs, or school or community organisations and events.	
	<b>Religious community</b> The young male regularly spends time in activities at a religious institution.	
	<b>Time at home</b> The young male does not loiter in the community with friends and spends positive time at home.	

Adapted for work with young males from Leffert et al, 1998.

External Assets that may assist your mentee		Yes/ No?
EMPOWERMENT	<b>A community that values young males</b> The young male perceives that the adult community values its young males.	
	<b>Young males as resources</b> Young males are given useful roles in their community.	
	<b>Service to others</b> The young male regularly participates in helping others in his community.	
	<b>Safety</b> The young male feels safe at home, at school, and in his community.	
BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS	<b>Family boundaries</b> The young male's family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young male's whereabouts.	
	<b>School boundaries</b> The young male's school provides clear rules and consequences.	
	<b>Community boundaries</b> The young male's community takes responsibility for monitoring young people's behaviour.	
	<b>Adult role models</b> Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behaviour.	
	<b>Positive peer influence</b> The young male's best friends model responsible behaviour.	
	<b>High expectations</b> Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young male to do well.	
CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME	<b>Creative activities</b> The young male regularly spends time in lessons or practising creative arts.	
	<b>Youth programmes and events</b> The young male regularly spends time participating in sports, clubs, or school or community organisations and events.	
	<b>Religious community</b> The young male regularly spends time in activities at a religious institution.	
	<b>Time at home</b> The young male does not loiter in the community with friends and spends positive time at home.	

*Adapted for work with young males from Leffert et al, 1998.*

Internal Assets that may assist your mentee		Yes/ No?
COMMITMENT TO LEARNING	<b>Achievement motivation</b> The young male is motivated to do well in school.	
	<b>School engagement</b> The young male is actively engaged in learning.	
	<b>Homework</b> The young male reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.	
	<b>Bonding to school</b> The young male cares about his school.	
	<b>Reading for pleasure</b> The young male regularly reads for pleasure.	
POSITIVE VALUES	<b>Caring</b> The young male places high value on helping other people.	
	<b>Equality and social justice</b> The young male understands and places high value on equality.	
	<b>Integrity</b> The young male acts on their beliefs and stands up for them.	
	<b>Honesty</b> The young male "tells the truth even when it is not easy."	
	<b>Responsibility</b> The young male accepts and takes personal responsibility.	
	<b>Restraint</b> The young male understands and takes action to avoid the consequences of being sexually active, alcohol and substance use, and antisocial behaviours.	
SOCIAL COMPETENCIES	<b>Planning and decision making</b> The young male knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	
	<b>Interpersonal competence</b> The young male has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.	
	<b>Cultural competence</b> The young male has knowledge of and is comfortable with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	
	<b>Resistance skills</b> The young male can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	
	<b>Peaceful conflict resolution</b> The young male seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.	
POSITIVE IDENTITY	<b>Personal power</b> The young male feels he has control over "things that happen to me."	
	<b>Self-esteem</b> The young male reports having a high self-esteem.	
	<b>Sense of purpose</b> The young male reports that "my life has a purpose."	
	<b>Positive view of personal future</b> The young male is optimistic about his personal future.	

*Adapted for work with young males from Leffert et al, 1998.*

## COMPETENCE EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** In a sports training session you will aim to develop skills so that a sports person is more competent at a skill than before the training session.

Ask your mentee about their interests. Engage in active listening and ask follow-up questions that demonstrate your understanding of and interest in the things about which they are excited about.

Ask your mentee to discuss or list their strengths. Do they excel at maths? Are they good at football? Are they a loyal friend or brother? Think about what skills your mentee uses for these activities. Talk about ways to connect these strengths to other tasks about which they may feel less confident about.

Engage your mentee in decision-making activities. Let them choose the activity you will do during your time together.

Talk to your mentee about their mistakes. Ask them what they would now do differently in the same situation. Suggest that he and you generate a list of ways to act differently in problem situations.

## NOTES OF COMPETENCE WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

*Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Competence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.*

## CONFIDENCE EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** Providing sports students with evaluative feedback and an understanding of failure and learning from failure, strengths and weaknesses, and areas to develop – “*what are you good at?*”; “*where can you improve?*” Helping athletes to develop their skills in a learning environment where they can build self reliance and their understanding of themselves.

Be supportive of your mentee, recognising the difference between his behaviour and the person he is. Let him know that you may not always like the decisions he makes, but you still like him as a person.

Disclose any appropriate issues or challenges that have happened in your life and give your mentee an opportunity to share her thoughts with you. They will appreciate your openness. Note: be observant of boundaries between yourself and your mentee.

Engage in activities that your mentee likes to do. Ask them to show you how to do something that you have never done before.

Be perceptive about any obstacles your mentee faces in their confidence such as body image or intelligence. Let them know they are not alone in feeling this way and remind them that these features do not define them as a person. Ask them to list and discuss how these obstacles discourage him from reaching his goals or keep him from having solid relationships.

## NOTES OF CONFIDENCE WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

*Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Confidence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.*

## CONNECTION EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** Team players need to relate to their team mates to understand what they need from you and what you need from them to form an effective team and meet sporting goals, aims and objectives. Building strong connections helps to develop other Cs such as Confidence and Competence.

Be respectful of your mentee's privacy. However, be sure that he is safe and remind him that you are there for him if he needs you.

Ask your mentee about his friends, relationships, or what he likes to do outside of your time together.

Let your mentee know if he has done something you don't agree with. Make sure to do this in a constructive way—offering your explanation for how this behaviour may be in conflict with some important values.

Give your mentee an opportunity to be heard and to express himself freely and appropriately. Make sure he has the chance to tell you what he values and what is bothering him.

## NOTES OF CONNECTION WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

*Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Competence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.*

## CHARACTER EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** Young athletes' personalities should be nurtured and developed through sport with the principles of fair play and equality reinforced. Athletes should also be encouraged to explore and understand how their personal characteristics affect their team mates and their own sports performance.

Practise what you preach. Be sure to role model the importance of character for your mentee. For example, ask your mentee about his experience with issues of peer or family pressure. Discuss with him how he makes his own decisions based on his own values and beliefs.

Keep a sense of humour when your mentee does something you may not agree with.

Let your mentee make decisions for your time together. Respect these decisions.

Discuss the importance of respect for yourself and respect for others with your mentee.

## NOTES OF CHARACTER WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

*Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Competence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.*

## CARING EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** Encouraging teammates to consider each other's emotions and well being and how these can affect performance. Developing an environment where team mates look out for each other and can recognise where stress and other factors affect performance and feel enabled to take action to help colleagues.

Remember that when your mentee treats you badly, he may need you the most. Be clear that his behaviour or words are hurtful and that he needs to develop constructive ways to express his emotions. Continue to support him and make sure he knows you are there for him if he needs to talk about anything.

Model caring behaviour. Show your mentee that you treat others with respect. Because of your actions, your mentee will be more likely to do the same. Demonstrate "acts of kindness" with your mentee when you are out. For example, plan a volunteering visit to a local hospital or community organisation.

Encourage your mentee to demonstrate that he cares about the welfare of his community. This could mean helping him get involved with volunteering work such as helping out at the local furniture recycling project, assisting in art classes run by local community groups, or helping run sports coaching lessons.

## NOTES OF CARING WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

*Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Competence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.*

As your mentee begins to develop each C indicator, he may begin to achieve the indicators of the sixth C. Take a look at the Contribution Examples table below; are you and your mentee doing any of these – or finding similar examples? Write them down in the Contribution notes section.

### CONTRIBUTION EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** Encouraging teammates to consider each other's emotions and well being and how these can affect performance. Developing an environment where team mates look out for each other and can recognise where stress and other factors affect performance and feel enabled to take action to help colleagues.

Remember that when your mentee treats you badly, he may need you the most. Be clear that his behaviour or words are hurtful and that he needs to develop constructive ways to express his emotions. Continue to support him and make sure he knows you are there for him if he needs to talk about anything.

Model caring behaviour. Show your mentee that you treat others with respect. Because of your actions, your mentee will be more likely to do the same. Demonstrate "acts of kindness" with your mentee when you are out. For example, plan a volunteering visit to a local hospital or community organisation.

Encourage your mentee to demonstrate that he cares about the welfare of his community. This could mean helping him get involved with volunteering work such as helping out at the local furniture recycling project, assisting in art classes run by local community groups, or helping run sports coaching lessons.

### WORK TOWARDS CONTRIBUTION WITH MENTEE

*Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Contribution aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.*

## MENTEE REFLECTION

*The mentee can record their thoughts and reflections here. You can also use this space to write down and sign a mentor-mentee agreement. If you need more space or you have multiple mentees, please use additional sheets of paper. Please remember to keep all your notes in a safe place.*

# Support For young male emotional and mental health

The 7 Questions framework's incremental solution-focussed questions enable the male mentee to reflect on what is happening in their life, what their needs are, what needs to be done and the resources required to change a situation.

## The 7 Questions are:

1. How are things?
2. What's going well?
3. What's not going well?
4. Is there anything you need to do?
5. Is there any support you need?
6. What's one step you might take?
7. What difference might it make?

*Acknowledgement. 7 Questions developed by Men's Development Network (Ireland): <http://www.mens-network.net/>*

Further advice for mentors talking to mentees about improving mentee mental health:

- **Take one day at a time.**
- **Don't judge yourself.** Remember that those who genuinely care about you will not judge you.
- **Drink and drugs don't provide the answers** and can often make you feel worse. So try not to use them as a way of coping with your life.
- **Stay active** – going for a kick around in the park or a long walk can really help to clear your head.
- **Eating** regular meals provides the energy to help you cope with problems. Don't miss out on vital food to keep your mind and body functioning.
- **Remember, you don't have to deal with it on your own.** Everyone feels low from time to time.

- **Avoid bottling it up** - it helps to talk, although it may not be easy at first.

- **Relax** - finding a way to relax may help. It will help to get your mind off things. Even if you have lost interest, persuade yourself to do something you usually enjoy. It could be a game of football, or jogging. Activity is a good way of releasing stress and tension.

- **Don't overdo it** - if you are feeling stressed don't take on too much; it will only make things worse.

- **Don't cut yourself off** - no matter how tempting. Contact with someone; a member of your family, a neighbour, or a friend is better than isolation.

- **Talk it through** – talk about it; and if you really can't find someone you know to talk to, or you feel you are not being listened to, you can talk to someone on a helpline.

# SSaMs Mentor Reflection Workbook - example



# Using the Workbook. Building Positive Youth Development

As a mentor, you play an essential role in supporting the positive development of your mentee. You can use this workbook to write down all the activities and conversations you have had with your mentee that fostered Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Caring, and Contribution. A table showing the 5Cs is provided as a reminder of each C.

For each C you are provided with examples of activities. You can use these examples as a guide and also develop new activities in accordance with the relationship you build with your mentee.

An important thing for you to remember; each activity you write down is an indication of how much progress your mentee has made and how far they have progressed towards achieving their goals.

It is also important for your mentee to reflect on how things have gone. Encourage your mentee to record their thoughts and opinions about mentoring sessions and what they want to achieve. The workbook provides space for this in the mentor's notes for each C and as a separate mentee reflection page.

The workbook also provides tables giving examples of external and internal assets you can use to benchmark factors in your mentee's life that may assist him.

Finally, the 7 Questions approach provides seven incremental questions you can ask that can help to identify what is happening in your mentee's life and steps to help him. A list of helpful hints that can help to maintain emotional and mental health is also provided for you to assist your mentee.

---

## A flexible approach to mentoring work?

As a sports mentor working with boys and young men you may be presented with different settings and scenarios in which to carry out mentoring work. Ideally you will be assigned a mentee in a school and work with them for a set period of time or until your own and the mentee's agreed aims have been achieved.

It may not always be possible to work in the ideal situation described above. You are trying to assist your mentee with their education and prevent them from leaving school too early, however mentoring with some young males may not take place in the school environment but in another agreed setting, for example a youth club or local sports centre. Boys who are excluded from school or who are frequent absentees may fall into this category.

Another scenario is that you may not have one mentee – you may have a number of mentees assigned to you; or you may only have the opportunity to mentor a young male for one or two sessions. As a sports mentor you will need to be aware of the sometimes chaotic nature of boys and young men's lives and be prepared to be flexible in your practical mentoring work.

If you only have one or two sessions with your mentee ask yourself what can you achieve? Consider the 5Cs of Positive Youth Development and establish what external and internal assets your mentee has. Whatever the setting or scenario your aim is to identify and build on the young male's strengths. In a long term mentor-mentee relationship it is possible to achieve much in terms of assisting a boy to achieve their educational or vocational potential; in a short term relationship you may have limited time to identify strengths,

resources required to help a young male, and to encourage them to move towards a goal. Be practical about what you can achieve.

By being a mentor and taking an interest in a young male's future you will be demonstrating aspects of the 5Cs to the mentee – for example 'Caring' for others and role-modelling 'Character', emphasising that males do not have to adopt personally and socially harmful behaviours that may have a negative impact on themselves and their communities. Remember that as a mentor you are also a role model for your mentee.

#### About mentee reflection

It is important that your mentee is able to reflect on the mentoring process. Encourage your mentee to write down what they want to get out of the mentor-mentee relationship. You may want to sign a joint agreement about what you want to achieve together; your mentee may also want to record their thoughts about each mentoring session and what they have achieved.

Remember that as a mentor that you need to be flexible in your practice. Be prepared that your mentee may not want to sign an agreement or write their thoughts down; some boys have difficulties with literacy, or they may initially be suspicious of you as their new mentor. If they do not wish to write down anything themselves they may be happy for you to record their thoughts.

Each mentor-mentee relationship will be unique. As a mentor it's up to you to be proactive and to develop a framework for each mentor-mentee relationship you undertake.

Try to encourage your mentee to take the lead and consider are the aims set for mentoring sessions and overall goals able to meet the following criteria:

<b>Specific</b>	What is to be done in the session/overall?
<b>Measurable</b>	How will we know we have achieved our goals?
<b>Attainable</b>	Can the mentee do it?
<b>Realistic/ Relevant</b>	Should the mentee do it? What will it achieve?
<b>Time orientated</b>	When will it happen? What are the time constraints?

Initially you may have to take the lead in developing trust and building the mentor-mentee relationship, but the more you can do to encourage your mentee to set the pace and take ownership of their aims, the more successful the mentoring relationship and its achievements are likely to be.

***Happy mentoring!***

<b>COMPETENCE</b>	Enabling and having a positive view of a person's actions in specific areas - social, academic, cognitive, health, and vocational.
<b>CONFIDENCE</b>	A sense of self-worth and self-efficacy.
<b>CONNECTION</b>	Having positive bonds with people and institutions – peers, family, school and community.
<b>CHARACTER</b>	A respect for societal and cultural norms, possession of standards for correct behaviour, a sense of right and wrong, and integrity.
<b>CARING</b>	Having sympathy and empathy for others.
<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>	To self, family, community, and the institutions of society.

5C examples adapted from Lerner, R. M., Brittian, A. S., & Fay, K. E. (2007). *Mentoring: A Key Resource for Promoting Positive Youth Development, Research in Action, Issue 1.*

## First meeting assets = 1 / Final meeting assets = 2

External Assets that may assist your mentee		Yes/ No?
<b>SUPPORT</b>	<b>Having a supportive family</b> A young male's family provides high levels of love and support.	<b>1</b>
	<b>There is good family communication</b> The young male and his parent(s) or carer(s) communicate positively; the young male is able to seek advice from them.	
	<b>Relationships with other adults</b> The young male also receives support from other adults.	
	<b>Caring community</b> The young male lives in a caring community.	
	<b>Caring school</b> The young male's school provides a caring, encouraging environment.	<b>1</b>
	<b>Parental involvement in education</b> The young male's parents are actively involved in helping him succeed in school.	<b>2</b>
<b>BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS</b>	<b>Family boundaries</b> The young male's family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young male's whereabouts.	
	<b>School boundaries</b> The young male's school provides clear rules and consequences.	<b>1</b>
	<b>Community boundaries</b> The young male's community takes responsibility for monitoring young people's behaviour.	
	<b>Adult role models</b> Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behaviour.	
	<b>Positive peer influence</b> The young male's best friends model responsible behaviour.	
	<b>High expectations</b> Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young male to do well.	
<b>CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME</b>	<b>Creative activities</b> The young male regularly spends time in lessons or practising creative arts.	
	<b>Youth programmes and events</b> The young male regularly spends time participating in sports, clubs, or school or community organisations and events.	<b>2</b>
	<b>Religious community</b> The young male regularly spends time in activities at a religious institution.	
	<b>Time at home</b> The young male does not loiter in the community with friends and spends positive time at home.	<b>2</b>

Adapted for work with young males from Leffert et al, 1998.

External Assets that may assist your mentee		Yes/ No?
<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>	<b>A community that values young males</b> The young male perceives that the adult community values its young males.	
	<b>Young males as resources</b> Young males are given useful roles in their community.	
	<b>Service to others</b> The young male regularly participates in helping others in his community.	<b>2</b>
	<b>Safety</b> The young male feels safe at home, at school, and in his community.	
<b>BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS</b>	<b>Family boundaries</b> The young male's family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young male's whereabouts.	
	<b>School boundaries</b> The young male's school provides clear rules and consequences.	<b>1</b>
	<b>Community boundaries</b> The young male's community takes responsibility for monitoring young people's behaviour.	
	<b>Adult role models</b> Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behaviour.	
	<b>Positive peer influence</b> The young male's best friends model responsible behaviour.	
	<b>High expectations</b> Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young male to do well.	
	<b>Creative activities</b> The young male regularly spends time in lessons or practising creative arts.	
<b>CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME</b>	<b>Youth programmes and events</b> The young male regularly spends time participating in sports, clubs, or school or community organisations and events.	<b>2</b>
	<b>Religious community</b> The young male regularly spends time in activities at a religious institution.	
	<b>Time at home</b> The young male does not loiter in the community with friends and spends positive time at home.	<b>2</b>

*Adapted for work with young males from Leffert et al, 1998.*

**First meeting assets = 1 / Final meeting assets = 2**

Internal Assets that may assist your mentee		Yes/ No?
COMMITMENT TO LEARNING	<b>Achievement motivation</b> The young male is motivated to do well in school.	<b>2</b>
	<b>School engagement</b> The young male is actively engaged in learning.	<b>2</b>
	<b>Homework</b> The young male reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.	
	<b>Bonding to school</b> The young male cares about his school.	
	<b>Reading for pleasure</b> The young male regularly reads for pleasure.	
POSITIVE VALUES	<b>Caring</b> The young male places high value on helping other people.	<b>2</b>
	<b>Equality and social justice</b> The young male understands and places high value on equality.	
	<b>Integrity</b> The young male acts on their beliefs and stands up for them.	<b>1</b>
	<b>Honesty</b> The young male "tells the truth even when it is not easy."	
	<b>Responsibility</b> The young male accepts and takes personal responsibility.	<b>2</b>
	<b>Restraint</b> The young male understands and takes action to avoid the consequences of being sexually active, alcohol and substance use, and antisocial behaviours.	<b>2</b>
SOCIAL COMPETENCIES	<b>Planning and decision making</b> The young male knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	
	<b>Interpersonal competence</b> The young male has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.	<b>1</b>
	<b>Cultural competence</b> The young male has knowledge of and is comfortable with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	
	<b>Resistance skills</b> The young male can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	
	<b>Peaceful conflict resolution</b> The young male seeks to resolve conflict non-violently.	
POSITIVE IDENTITY	<b>Personal power</b> The young male feels he has control over "things that happen to me."	
	<b>Self-esteem</b> The young male reports having a high self-esteem.	<b>2</b>
	<b>Sense of purpose</b> The young male reports that "my life has a purpose."	<b>2</b>
	<b>Positive view of personal future</b> The young male is optimistic about his personal future.	

*Adapted for work with young males from Leffert et al, 1998.*

## COMPETENCE EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** In a sports training session you will aim to develop skills so that a sports person is more competent at a skill than before the training session.

Ask your mentee about their interests. Engage in active listening and ask follow-up questions that demonstrate your understanding of and interest in the things about which they are excited about.

Ask your mentee to discuss or list their strengths. Do they excel at maths? Are they good at football? Are they a loyal friend or brother? Think about what skills your mentee uses for these activities. Talk about ways to connect these strengths to other tasks about which they may feel less confident about.

Engage your mentee in decision-making activities. Let them choose the activity you will do during your time together.

Talk to your mentee about their mistakes. Ask them what they would now do differently in the same situation. Suggest that he and you generate a list of ways to act differently in problem situations.

## NOTES OF COMPETENCE WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Competence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.

### **Meeting 1. 7<sup>th</sup> February First 'get to know each other' meeting with my mentee - David, 15 years old.**

We talked about our interests. We both like football. David is a supporter of a rival team so we were able to make jokes about that. He is also a talented football player – but is not involved in school sports teams. He has been in trouble at school because of disciplinary issues and tends to get led on by others. He lacks confidence with school subjects and admits he is easily distracted. He thinks that he is not good at anything (except chess and X Box). States he doesn't get on with his dad and feels angry about their relationship, but mum is supportive.

#### **Assets**

David's current external assets are: a caring school environment providing clear rules and consequences which David is aware of; David has a supportive mother.

David's current internal assets are: David will stand up for what he believes in; he is likeable and able to make friends.

**Plan.** Next meeting. Try to build David's self esteem through his competence in football. We will look at how we can get David involved in school sports teams to further develop skills and also to start to build connections with other young people and improve his confidence.

Agreed to meet @ 15.00 on 13th February

### **Meeting 2. 13th February**

Met with David. We agreed I will accompany David to talk to the sports teaching staff about David's inclusion in a sports team and after-school involvement in football training sessions.

### **David 13<sup>th</sup> February**

I agree that I like football and would like to become part of the school sports team to help me become a better player. I think this will help me to improve my behaviour and also give me confidence that I am good at something.

Meet @ 15.00 28/02

### **Meeting 3. February 20<sup>th</sup>**

David is now taking part in after-school training sessions. I have talked with the sports teacher about David - who may be good enough with further input for inclusion in the school team. We have agreed to work together with David to address his discipline issues both on the pitch and in the classroom.

The sports teacher has discussed David with other teaching staff. David does have interests in some subjects - he is quite good at mathematics when he concentrates, but states that his dad wants him to become part of his carpet fitting business rather than concentrate on educational subjects. David does not know how to negotiate this with his dad.

### **Plan.**

1. To continue building David's competence at football and regularly attend training sessions.
2. To discuss with David's mathematics teacher how we can further develop David's competence at mathematics and how we can address the disciplinary issues affecting David's classroom performance. David admits he sits with a group of boys who lead each other into bad behaviour. Consider how to develop resistance skills and restraint (team work/discipline).
3. David's dad. Mathematics is a competence skill that would be useful in carpet fitting. David isn't sure he wants to do this, but measuring skills would be useful in this trade. Explore possibility of after school meeting with parents / mother to talk about David's potential and how we can all support him.

Next meeting at 15.00 07/03.

### **David 28<sup>th</sup> February**

*I am enjoying my football training sessions and am pleased that I might be able to join the school football team. I've made some new friends. I would like to be able to do better in maths and think it might be good if I had to sit in another part of the classroom. It would be good if I am good enough to be moved to a higher level class.*

*I am a bit worried about my dad but would like to talk about what I really want to do when I leave school.*

### **Meeting 4. 7<sup>th</sup> February**

*I have met with David's mathematics teacher. Teacher agrees David's group are problematic in class. He will (try to) segregate group and ensure David is placed with the quieter, studious students. He will also speak to other mathematics teachers about moving David into a higher attainment mathematics class – teacher thinks David is capable of more than he is showing in class. David happy with this.*

*I am meeting with the Youth Club coordinator tomorrow (08/03 – 16.00) to discuss David and wider peer group problems.*

*Meeting arranged with David's parents for next week .*

*David continues to attend and progress with football training.*

### **Plan**

1. Continue with football training and liaison with coaching staff.
2. Await actions of mathematics teachers.
3. Youth Club coordinator – set up group work with David's peer group?
3. Meet with David's parents - and David (meeting at 18.00 12/03).

Next mentoring meeting with David at 15.00 14/03.

### **David 7<sup>th</sup> March**

*This sounds ok to me but I do not want to lose any friends. I am a bit worried about what my dad might say at the meeting. I would like dad to back off about his work.*

### **Meeting 5. 14<sup>th</sup> March**

David and I agree that the meeting with David's parents on 12/03 went well. Dad does appreciate David needs to make full use of his skills and supports him in gaining further mathematics competence. I informed parents about trying to get David moved into a higher attainment mathematics class – to pursue this.

David's dad is concerned about David and his peer group – hence his disciplinarian attitude towards David at home and trying to instil a work ethic into David via assisting him with his business. Both mum and dad appreciate that David may want to do other things when he leaves school or that he may wish to go into higher education. They want to support him with whatever he chooses to do.

David's involvement in football training (continues to impress) and new friends from this and chess club mean he is spending less time (at the moment!) on Xbox. Group work with David and his peer group with the Youth Club coordinator confirmed for early next week following my meeting with him.

#### **Plan**

1. Continue with football training and chess club.
2. Youth Club coordinator group work.
3. Liaise with David's mathematics teacher about classroom disruption issues and David's placement in a higher mathematics class.

### **David 14<sup>th</sup> March**

*Very pleased about how the meeting with mum and dad went. Chess club was great.*

Next mentor meeting 21/03 @ 15.00.

### **Meeting 6. 21<sup>st</sup> March**

Youth Club coordinator group work feedback: David's peer group is dominated by one boy whom David and the other boys pay attention to (David states this boy is often in trouble – needs a mentor!). David and the other boys are a little afraid of this boy? The discussion was a little subdued at first, but David and the other boys' were honest about their behaviour and understood that it has a negative impact on themselves and other students and how in the long term this may affect their education and employment options. The boys understand that they will not gain skills and competence if their bad behaviour in class continues. The boys have agreed to meet with the Youth Work coordinator again.

Mathematics teacher feedback: Good result! Segregation in class of disruptive group of boys. David will be moved to a higher mathematics class at the start of next term!

David to play for school team. Result!

David beat me at chess yet again.

### **David 21<sup>st</sup> March**

*Playing for the school team! Maths class! Beating Mr Mentor at chess! I am great! Final meeting next week. Nooooooooooooo!*

#### **David's Plan**

1. Play for school team. Score goals.
2. Do well at maths. Pass exams.
3. Become the chess champion!!!

Final meeting next week - 29/03 @ 15.00.

### **Meeting 7. 29<sup>th</sup> March**

*Our final meeting. Celebratory game of chess. I allowed David to beat me again! I brought some cakes and drinks. David ate most of the cake!*

#### **Competence achievements:**

- 1. David has demonstrated competence in football – he regularly attends training; the sports coaches report he has good skills and knowledge of tactics and is due to play for the school team.*
- 2. Chess. David now attends chess club – he is very competent in this (beats me regularly!). The facilitator is considering him to represent the school in a chess tournament.*
- 3. Mathematics. David has shown ability with this and will be moving to a higher level class next school term.*

***Really pleased about David's progress! Keep it going!***

## CONFIDENCE EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** Providing sports students with evaluative feedback and an understanding of failure and learning from failure, strengths and weaknesses, and areas to develop – “*what are you good at?*”; “*where can you improve?*” Helping athletes to develop their skills in a learning environment where they can build self reliance and their understanding of themselves.

Be supportive of your mentee, recognising the difference between his behaviour and the person he is. Let him know that you may not always like the decisions he makes, but you still like him as a person.

Disclose any appropriate issues or challenges that have happened in your life and give your mentee an opportunity to share her thoughts with you. They will appreciate your openness. Note: be observant of boundaries between yourself and your mentee.

Engage in activities that your mentee likes to do. Ask them to show you how to do something that you have never done before.

Be perceptive about any obstacles your mentee faces in their confidence such as body image or intelligence. Let them know they are not alone in feeling this way and remind them that these features do not define them as a person. Ask them to list and discuss how these obstacles discourage him from reaching his goals or keep him from having solid relationships.

## NOTES OF CONFIDENCE WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Confidence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.

### **Meeting 1. 7th February**

David's outlet for expression is his ability at football. He is a confident player, but lacks discipline. David needs to understand that discipline will help him to improve as a team player.

I have disclosed to David that I also used to get into trouble at school but that being a team player helped me to improve my discipline and concentrate at school and hence my confidence.

David likes to play on his X Box rather than do homework. He also said he likes to play chess but is embarrassed to tell the group of boys he hangs around with.

#### **Plan**

1. As per Competence example– encourage David's involvement in football training and school sports to build confidence in an ability.

2. Discuss time spent on X Box (diversionary activities? Why so much time?); discuss after school chess club; discuss friendship group and positive/negative aspects and how they affect David's confidence.

3. Play chess with David at our meetings!

### **Meeting 2. 13th February**

As per competence example. Agreed to bring a chess set to next meeting. David certain he'll win.

### **David 13th February**

*I agree with my mentor's plan. I think I can beat him at chess.*

### **Meeting 3. 28th February**

David now taking part in school sport. Discussed time spent on X Box and homework problem. David states that X Box activity is a. because he enjoys it and feels he is good at gaming; b. it stops him thinking about having to do school homework. The household he lives in can be disruptive at times and dad wants him to help with chores. He can't concentrate on school work at home.

Discussed relationship between mathematics and chess. Agreed to accompany David to discuss chess club with chess club facilitator. Played chess - David won.

David said he feels like he has to go along with what his friends want to do and that he can't talk about some of the things he likes because they may laugh at him. He lacks the confidence yet to challenge them.

#### **Plan**

1. Continue to support sports activities.
2. David will join the school chess club.
3. Continue to explore friendship group and disruption issues with David and teacher (consider addressing this in group work with friends? Involve local Youth Club coordinator to facilitate a group? Discuss with school).
4. As per Competence example, explore possibility of after school meeting with parents / mother to discuss support for David at home.

#### **David 28th February**

*I beat my mentor at chess!!! ö*

#### **Meeting 4. 7<sup>th</sup> March**

David has joined chess club. Football is going well – David enjoying this. Coaches pleased with progress. David acknowledges that both of these are giving him greater confidence! Pleased about mathematics discussion (see Competence entry) – hoping that this will give David more confidence in his abilities. David beat me again at chess.

**Plan** – as per Competence plan (demonstrating competence = more confidence).

#### **David 7<sup>th</sup> March**

*My mentor is great but he is rubbish at chess. Beat you again ha ha!!!*

#### **Meeting 5. 14<sup>th</sup> March**

See Competence notes regarding meeting with David's parents and David – concentrating on David's mathematics ability should give him more confidence? Continues to demonstrate skill in football. Good enough for school team if form continues.

**Plan** – as per Competence and work on David's abilities in football, mathematics - and chess enjoyment to boost confidence.

#### **David 14<sup>th</sup> March**

*School football team. Yes!*

#### **Meeting 6. 21<sup>st</sup> March**

David states that the group work with the Youth Club coordinator has given him (and the other boys) more confidence to challenge the bad behaviours in his peer group. Will play for the school team! As per Competence, David's increased skills and appreciation of his abilities by teachers and coaches have given him greater confidence. As has David's ability to thrash me at chess!

## David 21<sup>st</sup> March

*I am great!!!*

### Meeting 7. 29<sup>th</sup> March

#### Confidence achievements:

David has demonstrated competence skill in football, chess and mathematics; these abilities have given him more confidence that he can achieve set aims with support, discipline and determination to succeed. He has also shown confidence in exploring issues with his peer group and is starting to challenge negative behaviours.

Well done David!

## CONNECTION EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy: Team players need to relate to their team mates to understand what they need from you and what you need from them to form an effective team and meet sporting goals, aims and objectives. Building strong connections helps to develop other Cs such as Confidence and Competence.**

Be respectful of your mentee's privacy. However, be sure that he is safe and remind him that you are there for him if he needs you.

Ask your mentee about his friends, relationships, or what he likes to do outside of your time together.

Let your mentee know if he has done something you don't agree with. Make sure to do this in a constructive way—offering your explanation for how this behaviour may be in conflict with some important values.

Give your mentee an opportunity to be heard and to express himself freely and appropriately. Make sure he has the chance to tell you what he values and what is bothering him.

## NOTES OF CONNECTION WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Competence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.

### Meeting 1. 7<sup>th</sup> February

As per previous (Competence and Confidence) to try to develop David's interest in football and how to be a team player. David has not played football in an organised team before. He generally has a kickabout with his friends. He is known by his friends for his skills at football. Can be a bit of a loner playing on his X Box. Played chess with his cousins and older brother, who has since left home. Dad gives him lots of chores to help him with his carpet fitting business which he dislikes.

#### Plan

1. Involvement in schools sports will help David to connect to team mates and coaches. Useful to emphasise values of teamwork.

2. Explore David's interest in chess (chess club?) and X Box.

3. Explore David's group of friends/family and other connections he has that may be assets (or not!).

### Meeting 2. 13<sup>th</sup> February

As per previous entries on Competence and Confidence. Agreed to work towards involvement in school sports.

Discussed David's interest in chess and suggested chess club. David will think about this (concerns about what his friends might say or that they may make fun of him).

## David 13<sup>th</sup> February

*I agree.*

### Meeting 3. 28<sup>th</sup> February

David is enjoying sports team participation. The sports coaches report that David is able to understand his role in team games and is beginning to understand where his football skills are useful and how to cooperate with team mates to be effective.

Chess club – arrange to join.

Discussed David's friends again. Explored their influence on David's choices and activities. He values his friends. Implied that there is one boy who is influential in what the group chooses to do (a controlling/negative influence?). Discussed family dynamics again – issues with David's dad.

#### Plan

1. Continue with Connection plan of 07/02
2. Plus as per 06/03 plan in Confidence (group meeting with David's friends? - see Confidence plan). What is good about David's friends/what is bad about them? What does David think his friendship group likes about him? How can we improve communication between David and his dad.
3. To explore David's wider community and consider other connections he can make to expand his worldview beyond his immediate friendship group and his family. Volunteering?

## David 28<sup>th</sup> February

*I like my friends but sometimes we can get into trouble for messing about in class. I don't want to lose any friends.*

### Meeting 4. 7<sup>th</sup> March

Connection. David has now joined chess club. Integrating well in football training. Still hanging around with disruptive peer group - await group work intervention by Youth Club coordinator – meeting with him tomorrow. Meeting 12/03 @18.00 with David's parents to discuss other connection concerns David has regarding relationship with his dad.

Plan – as above.

## David 7<sup>th</sup> March

*Nothing to add. Thanks.*

### Meeting 5. 14<sup>th</sup> March

Met with David and his parents. Mum thinks it will be OK for David to become a volunteer at the hospital. She will find out and let David know. David aware that this will look good on a curriculum vitae for both future employment purposes or if he wants to go to university.

Football and chess club – making new friends at both.

David's peer group – Youth Club coordinator has arranged group work with David and friends next week (19/03).

## **Plan**

1. Maintain football training and chess club.
2. Group work exploring peer group Connections.
3. Volunteering opportunity.

## **David 14<sup>th</sup> March**

*I am not sure I will enjoy volunteering but will give it a go. A bit worried about what one of my friends might say.*

## **Meeting 6. 21<sup>st</sup> March**

*David did some volunteering work at the hospital with his mum at the weekend. Not as bad as he thought!*

*Further peer group work with Youth Club coordinator. David states ringleader of peer group did not attend, but the boys who turned up enjoyed this (note – to speak to school staff about providing a mentor for ringleader of group? Needs help?).*

*Football and chess club firmly established.*

## **David 21<sup>st</sup> March**

*The volunteering at the hospital was actually ok! I helped to give patients their meals. Will continue to do this on a Sunday when mum asks me.*

## **Meeting 7. 29<sup>th</sup> March**

### **Connection achievements:**

*David has started to make positive new connections/ friendships through his involvement in school sports and chess club.*

*He is exploring his relationships with his current friendship group and considering challenging negative values held by some of this group.*

*He has an understanding of his father's concerns for him and thinks his relationship with him will be better now that they have spoken about their concerns.*

*He has taken up a volunteering opportunity at a local hospital to broaden his connections and interact with different people.*

*Very positive David!*

## CHARACTER EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** Young athletes' personalities should be nurtured and developed through sport with the principles of fair play and equality reinforced. Athletes should also be encouraged to explore and understand how their personal characteristics affect their team mates and their own sports performance.

Practise what you preach. Be sure to role model the importance of character for your mentee. For example, ask your mentee about his experience with issues of peer or family pressure. Discuss with him how he makes his own decisions based on his own values and beliefs.

Keep a sense of humour when your mentee does something you may not agree with.

Let your mentee make decisions for your time together. Respect these decisions.

Discuss the importance of respect for yourself and respect for others with your mentee.

## NOTES OF CHARACTER WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

*Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Competence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.*

### **Meeting 1. 7<sup>th</sup> February**

*David likes football, both watching and playing (doesn't play for a team). He has a good sense of humour. Discussed fair play on the football pitch, which he agrees with, but admits he lacks discipline himself and gets into trouble – usually with a group of other boys. Not violent, usually mucking about. States dad is strict with him and gets him to help him with dad's carpet fitting work tasks which he doesn't like. Prefers to play on X box at home.*

*David understands that some of his activities are detrimental to his personal progress. He has a sense of right and wrong and understands when his activities are 'wrong' and get him into trouble – but continues to do so!*

*Plan. As per previous entries. To cultivate David's football talents (training and school team?) and to build character via sports coaching and discipline necessary to become a team player.*

### **Meeting 2. 13<sup>th</sup> February**

*Continue as above.*

### **David 13<sup>th</sup> February**

*I agree with my mentor.*

### **Meeting 3. 28<sup>th</sup> February**

*David now taking part in school sports. Coaches report a good attitude to training and regular attendance. David mixing well with other boys and keeping to assigned roles on the pitch (most of the time). BUT teaching staff state David continues to mix with a group of disruptive boys in the classroom (see [Connection](#) notes 06/03).*

#### **Plan**

*1. Continue as previous.*

*2. Have suggested to David that he might want to think about making decisions about what he would like to do if he wasn't being influenced by his peer group and dad. Start exploring this at next meeting. David to lead!*

### **David 28<sup>th</sup> February**

*I agree I will think about what I would like to do.*

#### **Meeting 4. 7<sup>th</sup> March**

David's thoughts on personal development (continue plan as above):

#### **David 7th March**

*Having a mentor has made me think about what I want to do and how to improve things for me. I do like my friends but we do get into trouble, so I think football training has helped me with this. My mentor and I have talked about volunteering. He thinks it will help me to develop my character and to think about people other than myself and my friends.*

#### **Meeting 5. 14<sup>th</sup> March**

David's thoughts (continue plan):

#### **David 14<sup>th</sup> March**

*Mum is finding out about volunteering at the hospital. She will let me know. Not sure about this!!*

#### **Meeting 6. 21<sup>st</sup> March**

See Connection entry about volunteering.

David's involvement in new activities is helping him to appreciate the qualities and skill he possesses.

#### **David 21<sup>st</sup> March**

*I am starting to think more about how I can improve myself. I think that being given the chance to show that I am good at football and mathematics and chess has helped me to appreciate myself more.*

David continues to play X Box – and beat me at chess!

#### **Meeting 7. 29<sup>th</sup> March**

#### **Character achievements:**

*David is developing his character. At the start of the mentoring process David was involved with a group of disruptive boys. He maintains his friendship with this group - but is starting to consider his own personal characteristics and that he does not have to be led by the decisions of his peer group. David understands that in order to achieve what he wants to do in life that he has to take responsibility for his own decisions.*

*He is now concentrating on developing things that he is good at – football, maths, chess, and has also taken up a volunteering opportunity.*

## CARING EXAMPLES

Sports analogy: Encouraging teammates to consider each other's emotions and well being and how these can affect performance. Developing an environment where team mates look out for each other and can recognise where stress and other factors affect performance and feel enabled to take action to help colleagues.

Remember that when your mentee treats you badly, he may need you the most. Be clear that his behaviour or words are hurtful and that he needs to develop constructive ways to express his emotions. Continue to support him and make sure he knows you are there for him if he needs to talk about anything.

Model caring behaviour. Show your mentee that you treat others with respect. Because of your actions, your mentee will be more likely to do the same. Demonstrate "acts of kindness" with your mentee when you are out. For example, plan a volunteering visit to a local hospital or community organisation.

Encourage your mentee to demonstrate that he cares about the welfare of his community. This could mean helping him get involved with volunteering work such as helping out at the local furniture recycling project, assisting in art classes run by local community groups, or helping run sports coaching lessons.

## NOTES OF CARING WORK UNDERTAKEN WITH MENTEE

Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Competence aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.

### **Meeting 1. 7<sup>th</sup> February**

David lives with his mum and dad. He has an older brother who has since left home. David got on well with his brother and enjoyed activities together such as chess. Doesn't see him much any more. Indicated he misses him. Mum is kind towards him. David thinks his dad is too strict (dad trying to be disciplinarian? Dad has concerns about David?). Helps dad out.

#### **Plan**

To explore potential ways David can demonstrate concern for the welfare of others.

### **Meeting 2. 13<sup>th</sup> February**

Current focus of mentoring work with David is to explore options regarding other 5C indicators via sport. Discussion with David about home life and friends. Mentioned that mum works at a local hospital – explore possibility that David could get involved in volunteering there?

### **David 13<sup>th</sup> February**

*not sure about hospital – old ladies work.*

### **Meeting 3. 28<sup>th</sup> February**

Discussion with David. As per Confidence and Competence sections, arrange to meet with David's parents – explore volunteering options at hospital with David's mum. (David mostly concerned about reaction of peer group!)

### **David 28<sup>th</sup> February**

*Yikes!!!*

### **Meeting 4. 07<sup>th</sup> March**

Discussion about volunteering and also thinking about his wider friendship group and his family.

## David 7<sup>th</sup> March

*Volunteering will help me to think about others. My mentor thinks it is a good idea to help other people who are different from me and to hear about their lives. It's a good idea although I think some of my friends won't understand why I am doing it.*

## **Meeting 5. 14<sup>th</sup> March**

Await volunteering opportunity. David's thoughts:

## David 14<sup>th</sup> March

*Nothing to say!!! ö*

## **Meeting 6. 21<sup>st</sup> March**

David's thoughts:

## David 21<sup>st</sup> March

*I enjoyed volunteering and serving meals to patients at the Children's Hospital. It made me think about how lucky I am to be healthy. I enjoyed talking to the staff and joking with the patients. Will go again!*

## **Meeting 7. 29<sup>th</sup> March**

**Caring achievements:**

*David has commenced volunteering at the local hospital – and will continue to do this. I have suggested to David that he should think about helping others with the skills he has demonstrated – perhaps helping younger students with mathematics or even teaching chess (David has taught me a few lessons!).*

As your mentee begins to develop each C indicator, he may begin to achieve the indicators of the sixth C. Take a look at the Contribution Examples table below; are you and your mentee doing any of these – or finding similar examples? Write them down in the Contribution notes section.

### CONTRIBUTION EXAMPLES

**Sports analogy:** Encouraging teammates to consider each other's emotions and well being and how these can affect performance. Developing an environment where team mates look out for each other and can recognise where stress and other factors affect performance and feel enabled to take action to help colleagues.

Remember that when your mentee treats you badly, he may need you the most. Be clear that his behaviour or words are hurtful and that he needs to develop constructive ways to express his emotions. Continue to support him and make sure he knows you are there for him if he needs to talk about anything.

Model caring behaviour. Show your mentee that you treat others with respect. Because of your actions, your mentee will be more likely to do the same. Demonstrate "acts of kindness" with your mentee when you are out. For example, plan a volunteering visit to a local hospital or community organisation.

Encourage your mentee to demonstrate that he cares about the welfare of his community. This could mean helping him get involved with volunteering work such as helping out at the local furniture recycling project, assisting in art classes run by local community groups, or helping run sports coaching lessons.

### WORK TOWARDS CONTRIBUTION WITH MENTEE:

*Record your mentee's achievements and steps towards his goal and meeting Contribution aims here. Your mentee may also want to add their reflections here.*

#### **Meeting 7. 29<sup>th</sup> March**

*David is now achieving in all five C examples ( Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, and Caring).*

*This has happened during the course of our mentoring relationship. He is now starting to demonstrate Contribution – giving back to his school and wider community through his membership of the school team, and participation in activities such as chess club and volunteering.*

*He has done this by being enabled to demonstrate his strengths and skills, giving him the confidence to further develop.*

*David has developed additional internal and external assets:*

#### **Internal**

*Is now motivated to do well at school  
Is actively engaged in learning  
David places value on helping others  
He accepts personal responsibility  
Is learning to avoid antisocial behaviours  
Has higher self esteem  
Believes life has a purpose.*

#### **External**

*Has a supportive family  
Parental involvement in education  
Is starting to participate helping others  
Understands that there are consequences for his behaviour  
Constructive use of time in sport and other interest clubs.*

*I've really enjoyed our mentoring time together – even being beaten at chess on every occasion! I wish David well and I am confident he will go on to achieve his aims if he continues with his current form! Thanks for being my mentee!*

The mentee can record their thoughts and reflections here. You can also use this space to write down and sign a mentor-mentee agreement. If you need more space or you have multiple mentees, please use additional sheets of paper. Please remember to keep all your notes in a safe place.

### David 7<sup>th</sup> February

*David's ground rules.*

*I agree to turn up at the meeting time and place I have agreed with my mentor*

*I agree to concentrate and listen when I am with my mentor*

*I will respect my mentor and he will respect me*

*I will not use my phone when I am with my mentor*

*I will not mess about when I am with my mentor*

*I will try my best to do what we agree.*

*I am not sure what to expect from having a mentor. Hope it is good! ö*

### David 14<sup>th</sup> March

*Big thanks to my mentor. I didn't know what a mentor was before and thought it was a funny thing to do, but I now understand what a mentor is and think that some of my friends need one too.*

*I am really pleased that I am now a member of the school football team and I am going to be in a higher mathematics class next term. Even the volunteering is ok. My mentor has given me the confidence to make use of what I am good at and I know that I can do better. I will continue to try my best. My mentor is still rubbish at chess though ha ha!!!*

*Thanks Mr Mentor!*

# Support For young male emotional and mental health

The 7 Questions framework's incremental solution-focussed questions enable the male mentee to reflect on what is happening in their life, what their needs are, what needs to be done and the resources required to change a situation.

## The 7 Questions are:

1. How are things?
2. What's going well?
3. What's not going well?
4. Is there anything you need to do?
5. Is there any support you need?
6. What's one step you might take?
7. What difference might it make?

*Acknowledgement. 7 Questions developed by Men's Development Network (Ireland): <http://www.mens-network.net/>*

Further advice for mentors talking to mentees about improving mentee mental health:

- **Take one day at a time.**
- **Don't judge yourself.** Remember that those who genuinely care about you will not judge you.
- **Drink and drugs don't provide the answers** and can often make you feel worse. So try not to use them as a way of coping with your life.
- **Stay active** – going for a kick around in the park or a long walk can really help to clear your head.
- **Eating** regular meals provides the energy to help you cope with problems. Don't miss out on vital food to keep your mind and body functioning.

- **Remember, you don't have to deal with it on your own.** Everyone feels low from time to time.

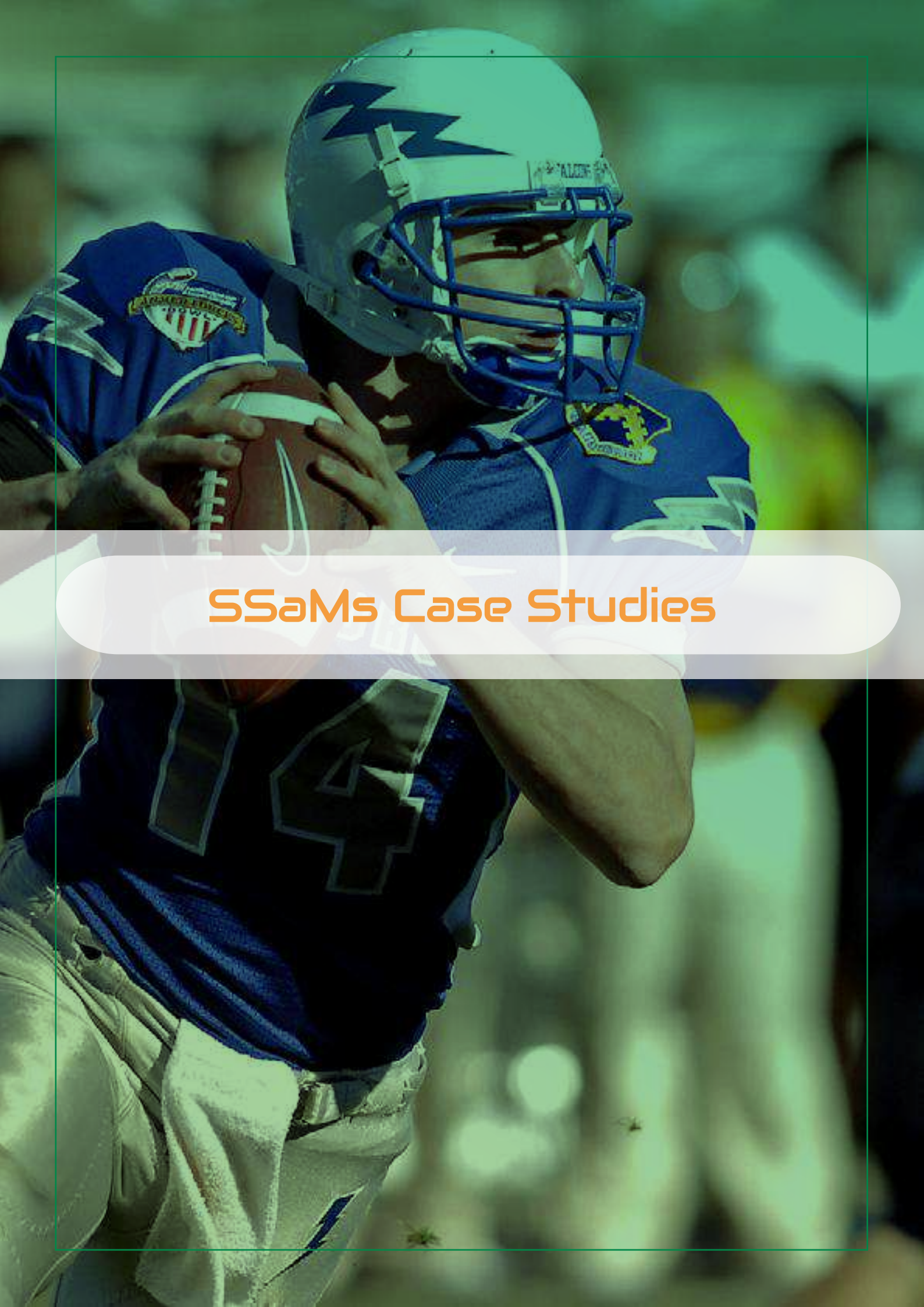
- **Avoid bottling it up** - it helps to talk, although it may not be easy at first.

- **Relax** - finding a way to relax may help. It will help to get your mind off things. Even if you have lost interest, persuade yourself to do something you usually enjoy. It could be a game of football, or jogging. Activity is a good way of releasing stress and tension.

- **Don't overdo it** - if you are feeling stressed don't take on too much; it will only make things worse.

- **Don't cut yourself off** - no matter how tempting. Contact with someone; a member of your family, a neighbour, or a friend is better than isolation.

- **Talk it through** – talk about it; and if you really can't find someone you know to talk to, or you feel you are not being listened to, you can talk to someone on a helpline.



## SSaMs Case Studies

## SSaMs Case Studies For use with sessions 4. and session 6.

The following case studies are to be used with SSaMs sessions 4. and 6. are provided as examples of situations that may be encountered. The case studies enable students to discuss what actions they will take to enable mentees to achieve 5C indicators and address mental health concerns.

- 1.** **David** is 15 years old. He likes Xbox and playing football. He seems quite a friendly young man. No problems are reported from his home. He appears concerned about his future and he has cuts on his arms.
- 2.** **Adam** is a 16 year old boy. He is 'into girls' and talks about little else. He has sexist ideas around what girls want and makes a point of regularly asserting his masculinity. He is not concentrating on his school work. His parents are concerned about him and have discussed their concerns with school staff.
- 3.** **Alexander** is a talented 15 year old boy. He has very high predicted exam grades and has been a delight in and around school. However, just lately he has become withdrawn and mischievous to the point where he has served two temporary exclusions.
- 4.** **Muhammed** is a 12 year old boy who moved to Europe with his mother several years ago. He is a very disruptive student; he cannot settle in class and is always being thrown out of lessons, having stand-up confrontations with teachers or walking out of the school and defying the school authorities. He lives with mother and two older brothers and attends the local mosque.
- 5.** **Samuel** is a 14 year old boy and small for his age. He is pale, has red hair and gets picked on by his peers for being a 'wimp'. He is questioning his sexuality and wants to disclose how he feels. He tries to keep himself to himself, listens to 'emo' music and never speaks up. He doesn't have aspirations for the future.
- 6.** **Sebastian** is a big lad. He is 6'2" (188cm) tall, and weighs 19 stone (121 kg). His presence is quite threatening and coupled with his attitude, he exhibits some challenging behaviours. He is a bully but doesn't see it himself. He has little interest in school but has shown some skill in carpentry. He is known to loiter with older youths after school and has been in trouble with the police.

7. **Michael** is usually a happy boy. He is 15 years old. He enjoys sport and likes motorbikes and working on them. His parents are both academics who work for the local university. He is struggling with his education, especially mathematics. He doesn't like reading. There is pressure from his family to aim for a university education which he does not want to do.

8. **Thomas** is 15 years old and is talented academically. He lives in a deprived area of town. He wants to go to university but his parents want him to leave school early and work with his father as a labourer. His father has a violent temper and there have been incidents of domestic violence in the family home. Thomas is aware of his own academic potential but does not know what he needs to do to go to university and negotiate this with his parents.  
For use with session 6.

1. **David** reports that he is concerned about taking his exams as he finds it difficult to concentrate. He would rather use his Xbox or play football with some close friends Michael and Thomas. He also reports he is being bullied by Sebastian, another boy at the school who has threatened to beat him up if he doesn't hang around with a gang of older youths after school.  
How can you help him?

2. **Adam** talks a lot about girls he likes at school. He is a good looking boy and the girls seem to like him too. He shows off a lot and makes sexist jokes. He tells you that liking girls is just a pretence and that he actually likes boys and thinks he is gay. He says that this is preventing him from concentrating on his school work.  
How can you help him?

3. **Alexander** tells you that he finds school boring and that the lessons are too easy; he's certain he'll do well without much help. He tells you that he has been offered drugs by a gang of older youths and that one of the boys involved attends the school but he is scared to say who it is. He is scared of the consequences and has begun to act out in lessons to gain attention. His parents are angry with him about the exclusions.  
How can you help him?

4. **Muhammed** reports to you that he is happy with his home life but misses his father who he hasn't seen since he came to Europe. Lately one of the older men at the mosque he attends has started to talk to him about religion in a way that makes him feel uncomfortable. He feels he can't say anything to anyone at the mosque, nor report it to his mother. It is having an affect on his school work and the older man's words are making him question the school authorities.  
How can you help him?

5. **Samuel** tells you that he gets called names for having red hair and being small. He says he likes the words in the 'emo' songs he listens to. He says he is scared about the future and feels that no one cares about what happens to him. He says his parents ask him "what's wrong?" but he doesn't want them to know he is being picked on. Can you help him?

6. **Sebastian** lets you know that he doesn't really like school and would like to be a carpenter but doesn't know how to go about being one. He says he hangs around with a group of older youths who use him to do things he doesn't really want to do. Although he is a big lad he is scared about some of the older youths and some of the things they do. Can you help him?

7. **Michael** lets you know that he doesn't want to go to university but wants to do a vocational qualification. He is not enjoying school and says he feels like absconding. He doesn't know how to broach the subject with his parents. He says he has two older siblings who have gone to university and it is expected of him too. Can you help him?

8. **Thomas** tells you that he is frightened of his father. He enjoys being at school and wants to do well. He says he cries at night because he thinks he will have to do as his father says and leave school early. He has thought about running away from home. He says he has tried to talk about his concerns with two friends Michael and Adam. Can you help him?

# SC indicator Cards

## COMPETENCE

- Ask your mentee about their interests. Engage in active listening and ask follow-up questions that demonstrate your understanding of and interest in the things about which they are excited about.
- Ask your mentee to discuss or list their strengths. Do they excel at maths? Are they good at football? Are they a loyal friend or brother? Think about what skills your mentee uses for these activities. Talk about ways to connect these strengths to other tasks about which they may feel less confident about.
- Engage your mentee in decision-making activities. Let them choose the activity you will do during your time together.
- Talk to your mentee about their mistakes. Ask them what they would now do differently in the same situation. Suggest that he and you generate a list of ways to act differently in problem situations.

## CONFIDENCE

- Be supportive of your mentee, recognising the difference between his behaviour and the person he is. Let him know that you may not always like the decisions he makes, but you still like him as a person.
- Disclose any appropriate issues or challenges that have happened in your life and give your mentee an opportunity to share her thoughts with you. They will appreciate your openness. Note: be observant of boundaries between yourself and your mentee.
- Engage in activities that your mentee likes to do. Ask them to show you how to do something that you have never done before.
- Be perceptive about any obstacles your mentee faces in their confidence such as body image or intelligence. Let them know they are not alone in feeling this way and remind them that these features do not define them as a person. Ask them to list and discuss how these obstacles discourage him from reaching his goals or keep him from having solid relationships.

## CONNECTION

- Be respectful of your mentee's privacy. However, be sure that he is safe and remind him that you are there for him if he needs you.
- Ask your mentee about his friends, relationships, or what he likes to do outside of your time together.
- Let your mentee know if he has done something you don't agree with. Make sure to do this in a constructive way—offering your explanation for how this behaviour may be in conflict with some important values.
- Give your mentee an opportunity to be heard and to express himself freely and appropriately. Make sure he has the chance to tell you what he values and what is bothering him.

## CHARACTER

- Practice what you preach. Be sure to role model the importance of character for your mentee. For example, ask your mentee about his experience with issues of peer or family pressure. Discuss with him how he makes his own decisions based on his own values and beliefs.
- Keep a sense of humour when your mentee does something you may not agree with.
- Let your mentee make decisions for your time together. Respect these decisions.
- Discuss the importance of respect for yourself and respect for others with your mentee.

## CARING

- Remember that when your mentee treats you badly, he may need you the most. Be clear that his behaviour or words are hurtful and that he needs to develop constructive ways to express his emotions. Continue to support him and make sure he knows you are there for him if he needs to talk about anything.
- Model caring behaviour. Show your mentee that you treat others with respect. Because of your actions, your mentee will be more likely to do the same. Demonstrate “acts of kindness” with your mentee when you are out. For example, plan a volunteering visit to a local hospital or community organisation.
- Encourage your mentee to demonstrate that he cares about the welfare of his community. This could mean helping him get involved with volunteering work such as helping out at the local furniture recycling project, assisting in art classes run by local community groups, or helping run sports coaching lessons.

## CONTRIBUTION

- Encourage your mentee to get involved in a club at their school or in the community. Discuss with your mentee the strengths he has that he can use to make positive contributions in his school or community. Allow him to think about where his skills may be best put to use.
- Write a letter together to an organisation to encourage them to welcome participation from young people. You and your mentee can brainstorm together about the specific strengths and skills young people like him could bring to the organisation.
- Allow your mentee to experience failure and be sure to talk with him about how his failure can ultimately lead to success.
- Act as a champion for your mentee, advocating for his involvement in community service and social change organisations. Discuss with him how small contributions of time and skills can promote positive change.

# SSaMs. Examples of Ground Rules

- We will agree meeting times and keep to the meeting times we have agreed
- We will agree to concentrate on the mentoring session and not allow distractions to interrupt this
- We will actively listen to each other and respect the other person when they are talking; we will not interrupt the other person
- We will respect the views and beliefs of the other person
- We will not be afraid to challenge the other person, but we will do so in a respectful way
- When we agree to do something we will both do so to the best of our ability
- It is okay to say no
- No question is a stupid question (unless it really is!)
- Antisocial behaviours/language will not be tolerated
- We will revisit these ground rules if one or the other person breaks them and change or add to them as required.

You may wish to establish other ground rules according to the unique relationship you have with your mentee; e.g.:

- No eating or drinking during mentoring sessions
- Mobile phones will be switched off during a mentoring session unless necessary

## NOTE

You can also refer to the ground rules when they are not broken as positive endorsement of good behaviour.

# PARTNERS



**UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE** (United Kingdom)

Contact Person: Paul Hopkins

[phopkins1@glos.ac.uk](mailto:phopkins1@glos.ac.uk)

[www.glos.ac.uk](http://www.glos.ac.uk)



**UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY** (Greece)

Contact Person: Professor Marios Goudas

[mgoudas@pe.uth.gr](mailto:mgoudas@pe.uth.gr)

[www.uth.gr](http://www.uth.gr)



Palacký University  
Olomouc

**UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI** (Czech Republic)

Contact Person: Ladislav Baloun

[ladislav.baloun@upol.cz](mailto:ladislav.baloun@upol.cz)

[www.upol.cz](http://www.upol.cz)

UNIVERSIDAD DE  
MURCIA



**UNIVERSITY OF MURCIA** (Spain)

Contact Persons: Pilar Sainz de Baranda

[psainzdebaranda@um.es](mailto:psainzdebaranda@um.es)

Maria Jesus Bazaco / [mjbazaco@um.es](mailto:mjbazaco@um.es)

[www.um.es](http://www.um.es)



**I.T. Carlow** (Ireland)

Contact Persons: Dr Noel Richardson

[noel.richardson@itcarlow.ie](mailto:noel.richardson@itcarlow.ie)

[www.itcarlow.ie](http://www.itcarlow.ie)



**CESIE** (Italy)

Contact Person: Caterina Impastato

[caterina.impastato@cesie.org](mailto:caterina.impastato@cesie.org)

[www.cesie.org](http://www.cesie.org)



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.