

This fact sheet will provide hints and tips to help you prepare you and your mentee in closing the match.



Preparing Youth for Closing of a Match

Many youth involved in mentoring programs have experienced loss or the ending of a significant relationship, so the closure of the mentoring relationship needs to be managed with a sensitive and thoughtful approach.

By providing a positive experience your mentee can grow and learn some new life skills. As the mentor it is imperative that you feel prepared, confident and supported to embark on the process of closure for your mentoring match. This fact sheet aims to provide information, tools and tips

in order to make you feel more at ease with the task and responsibility ahead.

A range of reasons may bring a mentoring match to an end; they include:

- the end of program cycle,
- **the natural end to the relationship,**
- change in circumstances for mentee or mentor,
- **breach of policy by mentee or mentor,**
- unsuitable match (incompatible) and
- **problems or issues with the match.**

Closure Purpose

The purpose of the formal closure to the match provides a number of benefits to the parties involved and the program:

- An opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the mentoring relationship.
- To provide the mentee with options for the future, whether that is transition to another program, support services, employment or other relevant pathways.
- An opportunity for the pair to discuss their learning from the relationship.
- Completion of an exit interview.
- Evaluation process; collection of information which may include: outcomes of the partnership and program, general feedback, possible program improvements, relevance of the program, ability for program to meet needs, etc.
- Specific questions for you, the mentor to reflect upon: what did you learn about your role, strengths and weakness as a mentor, and what would you do differently next time? Will there be a next time?
- To provide your mentee with an experience of a healthy relationship,

ideally closing in a thoughtful and sensitive way.

- To provide your mentee with a model of the behaviour and process required to appropriately bring a relationship to a close.
- As part of the closure process expect the following activities from your program:
 - ◇ Celebration and certificate of involvement.
 - ◇ Evaluation.
 - ◇ Exit interview, debrief.
 - ◇ Notification to all involved parties that the match is coming to an end and the specified dates and activities.
 - ◇ Closure policy details provided, along with a contract signed by mentees and mentors.
 - ◇ Exit process for those matches that end early for whatever reason.
 - ◇ Transition process for mentees in order for them to remain and move ahead on their chosen path.

Coming to an Early End

If the mentoring match comes to a premature close, whether due to change of circumstances of either party, a breach of program policy or another reason, it is imperative to ensure the mentee understands the situation.

If you need to end the relationship due to a change in circumstance, be very clear about the reasons for your withdrawal from the match and focus on the point that they did not have anything to do with your decision, maybe express your turmoil in closing the match early. Be honest and supportive through the process; provide your mentee with positive feedback about their strengths and your confidence in them for their future.

Allow your mentee to share their feelings, and acknowledge them, do not brush them off or discount them. Your mentee may be feeling a range of emotions; anger, sadness or rejection. If you decide to keep in contact, be sure to outline the type of communication method you will use, along with an expectation about the frequency of contact/communication.

If you have breached program policy be prepared for the consequences; for a more serious breach the program coordinator may have to take action against you or on a lesser scale some retraining and support may be provided.

Leading by Example

The mentoring relationship provides your mentee with an example and experience of a healthy relationship with an adult.

In your mentoring position you are a role model for your mentee, think about the relationship closure and the ways in which you can be a thoughtful and proactive mentor.

- Ensure you both know time frames and end dates.
- **Dependant on program policy, make some decisions together about the future of the relationship:**
 - ◇ Keep in contact.
 - ◇ Keep mentoring going.
 - ◇ End all communication.
 - ◇ Be friends.
- If goals have been set try and stay to time line; review and reassess along the way, towards the end of the match look to the future and discuss the path ahead, set new goals and seek or refer to other support required.
- **If continuing with the relationship, what if any boundaries or expectations do you need to put in place? Such as a regular meeting time, schedule, communication used (email, SMS, phone).**
- Offer positive feedback on your last meeting.
- **Attend and be involved with the program celebration.**
- If you are intending to be involved in the program for another cycle, tell your mentee.
- **Be positive about their future, highlight opportunities, pathways and their strengths.**
- Don't give the impression that you are a long term person in your mentees life, especially if your relationship is only for the length of the program, tread gently.
- **Agree to part on good terms.**
- Be aware of the closure policy and the role of the program for future contact.



Ongoing Closure

Closure does not only happen toward the end of the program cycle, it also occurs during the match, at every meeting. Every couple of weeks remind your mentee the number of weeks through the program you are and the number remaining.

Confirm details of the next meeting, have a calendar that you can both refer to with important dates and milestones, be prepared for the meeting, with questions, information, activities or whatever it is that is appropriate to your role in the match.

Provide your mentee with positive feedback and if any actions for either party need to be undertaken, clarify them at the end of your meeting, be sure to say 'goodbye'. Reflect on both mentee and relationship learning, goals achieved, and review goals or the plan of activities for the program.

The overall close of the relationship, along with the regular closure activities can help your mentee to grow and develop relationship skills in a supportive and guided manner.



Tips for Success

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- Agree to part on good terms.
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References & Further Information

- Australian Youth Mentoring Network—www.youthmentoring.org.au
- Mentor: National Mentoring Partnership, USA: *How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice*
http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_417.pdf
- Public/Private Ventures: Supporting Mentors
http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/31_publication.pdf
- National mentoring Center, USA; Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring
http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/180
- Terminating the Mentoring Relationship
<http://jw164.k12.sd.us/Ending%20Your%20Mentoring%20Relationship.doc>
- Dartmouth Mentor Exchange: Ending a Mentoring Relationship
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~hrs/prof/dev/mentor_exchange/Ending_Relationship.pdf

