

INTANDEM EVALUATION

Introduction

Many groups of people are interested in understanding the impact of intandem mentoring. They include the children and young people themselves, the volunteer mentors, the charity providing the service, key stakeholders (such as the referring partners), and those involved in funding the intandem programme.

The requirement to evaluate the intandem programme demands a consistency of approach across all the charities being funded to deliver intandem mentoring. This means that there is a common set of data being collected, and that the data is to be collected in the same manner across all the charities.

This does not stop charities collecting other evaluation data that they require for their own organisational purposes, but we know that charities will be aware of the need to avoid over-loading the mentoring relationship with too much information gathering.

This document is intended as a brief introduction to the evaluation framework for intandem. Detailed guidance on using the Viewpoint system is provided in separate documents which are available on the website.

Data collection system

Inspiring Scotland commissioned Viewpoint to develop a system that provides the following:

1. a child-friendly interface for the collection of data;
2. easy access for data collection (e.g. web-based);
3. secure recording of data;
4. the ability to report impact for each child
5. the ability to analyse and report on impact achieved by each charity individually and for the programme as a whole.

Core Outcomes

The wellbeing indicators against which progress will be measured for children with an intandem mentor are primarily:

- Healthy: increased confidence and improved self-esteem, improved social relationships and reduced isolation
- Achieving: educational attainment
- Included: more engaged with the local community and school

Five core outcomes have been identified for the intandem programme, and these are monitored on the Viewpoint system:

1. children have increased confidence;
2. children have improved self-esteem;
3. children are more engaged with the local community;
4. children have improved social relationships;
5. children experience reduced isolation.

Case Studies of the impact of mentoring on a young person are developed or updated on at least a quarterly basis. A case study template has been produced.

We are considering how to gather data on the child or young person's attendance at school, experiences of being excluded, and their attainment levels.

intandem also recognises that volunteers develop as a result of being mentors, and that siblings and the young person's family can also experience beneficial impacts. We hope to measure the impacts of intandem on mentors and the young person's family in the future.

Capturing Baseline Data

Baseline data should be taken as early in the relationship with the referred child as appropriate, and will generally be collected by the volunteer co-ordinator. The timing should be chosen sympathetically and should take into account the need to avoid damaging the potential relationship between the child and the mentoring service.

Baseline data should be collected within four weeks of the mentee/mentor match being agreed.

Measuring the Progress

The expectation in all mentee matches is that the relationship will be long-term. Given this, progress against the core outcomes should be measured at 3 monthly intervals from the date of the collection of the baseline data.

Supporting the Young Person's Self-Assessment

The self-assessment data can be collected by the volunteer mentor or the co-ordinator alongside the young person. The self-assessment should take around 20 minutes the first time and less thereafter. The technical guidance for collecting the self-assessment data is in a document written for volunteer mentors but can be used by those mentor co-ordinators who are gathering impact data themselves.

Details of the Evaluation Data

There is a questionnaire in three parts with a total of 15 questions to be completed. Each of confidence, self-esteem, and engagement with the local community is measured through five questions. This can be completed on paper or via the online system directly.

Information about the young person's social relationships is always captured on a social circles diagram on paper. Typically, the mentor co-ordinator will enter this data onto the Viewpoint system after the self-assessment meeting.

Guidance on How the Questionnaires should be Completed

The questionnaires are to be completed by the child or young person, and this will generally be done through conversation with their mentor/mentor co-ordinator. In some circumstances, depending on their age and ability, some children and young people will prefer to complete the questions on their own.

The self-assessment is an opportunity for the mentor/mentor co-ordinator to explore the young person's feelings, and to discuss with the young person any significant changes in how they are feeling, how much they engage within the community and who they have in their social relationships.

Overcoming difficulties

Exceptionally, there may be times where a child or young person does not want to answer a particular question as it relates to something difficult in the young person's life or s/he does not want to engage with the evaluation process at all on that day. This is not likely to happen often.

In such circumstances a specific question can be left for another day (ideally returning to it within 2 weeks for consistency) or the whole session can be postponed (again ideally being carried out no more than 2 weeks later).

In either case, it should be made clear that the question(s) don't need to be answered that day but will be postponed rather than abandoned. Where a question is always going to be an issue for an individual young person, it can be left (but that young person's data may not be able to be included within the wider evaluation).

All information that can be collected for the individual should be done in the normal timescale so progress for that young person can still be measured. Consideration should also be given to developing a case study based on the young person so their experience still contributes to the wider evaluation.

The Indicators

1. Increased Confidence:

Five confidence questions are asked:

1. I know the things I am good at and enjoy doing them
2. I enjoy trying to do new things
3. I am good at asking for help
4. I can cope well in new and unexpected situations
5. I am comfortable meeting new people

2. Improved Self-esteem:

Five self-esteem questions are asked. *Please note that two use negative statements.*

6. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
7. At times, I think I am no good at all.
8. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
9. Sometimes I feel I can't do anything well.
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

3. Engagement with the Local Community

This section will measure how engaged the young person is with the Local Community and will be measured through a child's progression through a number of stages of engagement:

- No awareness
- Awareness
- Access (at the suggestion of the mentor or other adult)
- Participation (with support of mentor or other adult)
- Ownership (doing it themselves without direction) or leadership (taking the initiative and arranging activities)

The stages of engagement will be measured across five areas of a community's local facilities and amenities:

- Sports facilities
- In school (out of hours) activities
- Community centres/youth club/libraries
- Local facilities - shops
- Other local facilities - e.g. cafes and cinema

4. Improved Social Relationships and Reduced Social Isolation:

We measure the number and depth of social relationships. The relationships to be measured are:

- people who care about me
- people I can talk about anything with
- people I really like being with
- people I talk to and play games with

This will be recorded on paper using a social circles diagram with the child at the centre. There are four concentric circles, representing the four levels of relationship described above with the strongest relationships closest to the child in the centre. Measurement of social isolation will be based on movements over time in the total number of people in the social circles described above.

The young person places the names of people who fit each of the relationship descriptions in the appropriate circles. The young person may want to place the same name in more than one circle, particularly if their social network is small. It may help if you explain that each outer ring is covered by the inner ones but if the young person wants to put the same name in more than one circle, that is fine; however, when the information is formally recorded, the name will only be placed in the circle of relationship closest to the child.

Some children might choose to draw the people - if so, you should keep a note of the name of each person - ideally writing it next to the drawing if the young person agrees.

A relationship score will be created from these circles, by counting the number of people in each circle, and multiplying the number by

- 4 for "people who care about me",
- 3 for "people I can talk about anything with",
- 2 for "people I really like being with"
- 1 for "people I talk to and play games with".

Monitoring Mentoring Goals and Progress Towards Achieving Them

A key aim of intandem mentoring is to support young people to work towards a goal that they have identified together with their mentor. The goals should be recorded and progress against each goal should be reviewed regularly until the goal is achieved or the mentee and mentor agree to move on to a different goal.

An initial goal should be agreed as early as possible. In some instances, building sufficient trust between mentor and mentee may take several meetings and a focus on goals too soon may be counterproductive. In those instances, it may be helpful to agree a short-term or informal goal which is relatively easily achieved as a first step. Mentees may have more than one goal at a time

Viewpoint will enable young people, mentors or co-ordinators to record the objectives and progress towards their achievement, or, where appropriate, a decision that the goal is no longer relevant.