

Session 6

confidentiality and child protection

the fostering network
helping children to thrive



Session 6: confidentiality and child protection

Introduction

In a mentoring relationship it is vital that both mentor and mentee understand that confidentiality lies between the mentee and the project rather than between the mentee and their mentor. This is to ensure that child protection issues are not compromised and means that any potential misunderstandings about the passing on of information can be avoided.

Purpose

To assist mentors to clarify what information it is necessary to divulge to project staff and to reassure mentors that they are not expected to make decisions about confidentiality on their own.

Application

Issues of confidentiality are liable to arise on an ongoing basis throughout the mentoring relationship.

Overview

time

Total session running time:

3 Hours

objectives

By the end of this session you will:

- Be able to explain what confidentiality means within the mentoring scheme
- Be able to list and explain the Do's and Don'ts of Confidentiality
- Have identified your own response to situations involving boundary issues and confidentiality
- Have identified & discussed situations where you should seek support
- Be clear about child protection issues which require to be disclosed to project staff

key issues

It is important that volunteers are clear at the end of this session who they approach regarding any concerns they might have about information shared by their mentee and that they have a clear understanding of child protection guidelines.

The training session should allow volunteers ample opportunity to explore and discuss any worries they might have about confidentiality with regard to mentoring. A clearly set out confidentiality policy helps project staff, volunteers and mentees know their rights and responsibilities regarding the sharing of information.

materials

Flipchart stand, pad and marker pens, Blu-Tack

Paper and pens for note taking

OHP slides:

1. Session objectives
2. Do's and don'ts of confidentiality

handouts:

1. Session objectives
2. Do's and don'ts of confidentiality
3. Case studies [John; Jane; Brian]
4. Confidentiality policy (not included)
5. Home task
6. Evaluation sheet

Training session

1. Session objectives

5 minutes

This exercise is designed to let everyone know what is going to be covered in this session.

What to do

- Show slide ①. Reveal and talk about each objective, one at a time.
- Ask if anyone has any questions or is unclear about anything.

2. Ice breaker: mirroring actions

10 minutes

This exercise is designed to show how difficult accurate communication really is.

What to do

- Ask trainees to stand in two lines.
- Explain that a mimed communication will be passed down each line.
- The mime can only be relayed once by each person to the next in line.
- The person at the head of each line mimes a series of movements to the next in line.
- The others in the line all face forward so that they cannot see what is being passed on.
- Having received the mimed communication this person now asks the next in line to turn and face him/her and repeats the series of movements.
- This continues until the last person in the line receives the mimed communication and repeats it back to the whole group.
- The end result invariably barely resembles the original mime

Trainers' notes:

Make the point that this exercise highlights how we often unknowingly delete or distort information. Information being distorted as it is passed between workers and agencies is an experience commonly reported by young people.

3. Confidentiality exercise

30 minutes

This exercise gets people to talk about what confidentiality really means and to talk about potential difficulties to do with confidentiality.

What to do

- Divide the group up into small groups of 3 or 4 people.
- Give each group a flip sheet and a pen.
- Ask each group to choose a note-taker.
- Ask each group to discuss these two questions and note their concerns:
 - What do we mean by confidentiality?
 - What difficulties may arise over confidentiality within the mentoring relationship?
- After 15 minutes, tell the small groups to return to the large group.
- Get each group to stick their flip sheets up on the wall.
- Then ask one person from each group to feed back on their discussion.
- Allow up to 15 minutes for feedback from the small groups and for discussion.

Trainers' notes:

It is important to explain the project's procedures for dealing with disclosure so that people clearly know what information must be passed on to project staff.

Clarify that confidentiality is between the mentee and the project rather than between the mentee and the mentor.

4. Do's and don'ts of confidentiality **10 minutes**

Here you give practical guidance to help volunteers respect confidentiality.

What to do

- Show slide ②
- Go through each point, one at a time.
- Give everyone a copy of the project's Confidentiality Policy.
- Ask everyone to read it over at home.
- Emphasise that volunteers can discuss confidentiality with project staff at any time.

5. Child Protection **45 minutes**

Here a training input on Child Protection issues is facilitated by an experienced Child Protection trainer so that volunteers know what is legally required of them regarding disclosure of information. Time should be built in for questions and discussion.

It is important that this input is tailored to the task to be undertaken and takes into account the likely knowledge base of mentors and acknowledges their volunteer status. An inappropriate presentation may leave participants feeling overwhelmed.

Participants need to be reminded that any information shared by them which gives rise to concerns about Child Protection will need to be passed on to the relevant Social Work Department personnel for investigation and assessment.

Trainers' notes:

Be aware that this input may well arouse feelings of distress and or discomfort. This should be acknowledged with the group

Coffee break

15 minutes

6. Case studies

45 minutes

Case studies highlighting issues of boundaries and confidentiality: The case studies let everyone consider their responses to real situations, which staff in projects come across.

What to do

- Divide the group up into small groups of 3 or 4 people.
- Give each group a different case study to discuss.
- Ask each group to use a flip sheet to make notes.
- After 20 minutes bring people back together into the large group.
- Ask someone from each group to say what their situation is and say how the group would deal with it. Discuss and clarify the issues that are raised with the whole group.

Trainers' notes:

This exercise is likely to work best if a facilitator could sit in with each group.

7. Recap of session

5 minutes

This helps people reflect on what they have learned and recaps on the session objectives.

What to do

- Show slide ① again.
- Check that everyone is happy that each objective has been met.

8. Home task: 5 minutes

Explain that this session's home task involves completing a worksheet about confidentiality.

What to do

Give out the home task handout and allow people to read through it. Check that everyone is clear about what is being asked. Ask people to take 15 mins at home to complete the task of reflecting on personal experience of dealing with issues of confidentiality

9. Looking ahead

Link forward to next session.

What to do

- Tell the group what the next training session will be about.

10. Evaluation of session 10 minutes

What to do

- Give out evaluation sheets and allow 10 minutes for everyone to fill them in. Make sure you get them all back before everyone leaves!

11. Handouts

Give out session handouts.

Objectives

Slide 1

By the end of this session you will:

- Be able to explain what confidentiality means within the mentoring scheme
- Be able to list and explain the Do's and Don'ts of Confidentiality
- Have identified your own response to situations involving boundary issues and confidentiality
- Have identified & discussed situations where you should seek support
- Be clear about child protection issues which require to be disclosed to project staff

DO

- Share with project staff any concerns you might have about anything your mentee has disclosed
- Be very careful what you talk about so that you don't break any confidentiality
- Ensure that any information about your work as a mentor, which you share with family, friends or colleagues, is restricted to general information only
- Maintain a safe system for recording confidential information about your mentee
- Be aware of your own needs and limits about what you disclose to your mentee

DON'T

- Promise your mentee to keep a secret
- Reveal personal information about your mentee to anyone outside the project
- Disclose confidential information about your mentee to anyone without his/her consent

Case study: john

Your mentee, John, who is 16, tells you that he is going to start a work placement at a youth club where he will be helping to coach the junior football team and going on a couple of residential youth camps with under 14's.

He has boasted to you about what a hard man he is and how he spends his Saturday nights getting high on drink and drugs and going "Paki bashing"

What are the limits of your boundaries and confidentiality within this relationship?

Case study: jane

Your mentee, Jane, is 17 years old and tells you that she has just applied to get a job in a children's nursery and is being supported by her careers adviser in this. She has confided in you that her own childhood was brutal and that she suffers from bouts of depression and sometimes self-harms.

She has just begun a sexual relationship with a young man of 19 who is living in a hostel having just come out of prison. When she tells you the name of the hostel you flinch as you know that the hostel offers accommodation and rehabilitation only to convicted sex offenders.

What are the limits of your boundaries and confidentiality within this relationship?

Case study: brian

Your mentee, Brian, aged 16, has a fascination with cars and has several convictions for joyriding. You have been working with him for a few months seeking to motivate him to find challenge and excitement elsewhere. You have built up quite a bit of trust and succeeded in encouraging Brian to take part in a 12 week personal development programme with the Prince's Trust which he is about to complete successfully.

He turns up for his mentoring meeting visibly shaken and confides in you that last night he was out joyriding with his pals when one of them, who was driving the car, hit a cyclist, panicked and didn't stop.

The story of a hit and run accident which left a cyclist in hospital was in today's daily paper – Brian is very scared and begs you not to tell anyone

What are the limits of your boundaries and confidentiality within this relationship?

Home Task for Session 6: Confidentiality in action

Think of a time when you were involved in having to make a decision about sharing information. This could be either in a personal or professional situation.

How did you handle any difficulties or breach of trust issues that emerged? What skills did you use? Can you transfer the learning to the mentoring situation?

Make a few notes below:

EVALUATION SHEET

1. Rate today's training session by circling one number

Not interesting

Very interesting

1

2

3

4

5

2. How will today's training session help you carry out your role as a mentor?

3. What did you enjoy most about today's training session?

4. Anything you didn't enjoy or didn't feel was useful?

5. Any suggestions to improve this training session when it is next run?

6. Any other comments?

Thank you for completing this form
