



# “Community Mentoring for Social Inclusion”

Lifelong Learning Project,  
Grundtvig Parteneriate,  
GRU-13-P-LP-102-TR-UK

## COMMUNITY MENTORING: GOOD TRAINING PRACTICE GUIDE

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## Guide Overview

This “Community Mentoring Good Training Practice Guide” is the culmination of the experience, knowledge, thoughts and discussions of the Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Community Mentoring for Social Inclusion Partnership (COME 4 Inclusion) 2013 - 2015. It brings together three essential elements to guide future practitioners’ and partners’ actions when designing and developing a community-based approach to mentoring socially excluded individuals: Firstly, the principles and ethics behind community mentoring; secondly proposed training content for developing community mentors and thirdly; devising community mentoring schemes. Part A defines what is meant by **Community** mentoring.

This guide builds on the “Initial Cultural Context Report” produced by the partnership previously especially with regards to identifying the socially excluded groups and communities we work with locally but also an international level. We feel cultural preconceptions of socially excluded people have been challenged thanks to the project mobilities (meetings). The transnational meetings facilitated visits to local services and projects achieving incredible things in partnership with disadvantaged women, men and children but which mainly go unrecognised by national-political administrations.

The Guide is written from the point of view of individuals already active in the community and voluntary field wishing to set up a community mentoring scheme and appreciating they must train their volunteers first to think and behave like Community Mentors.

It is challenging enough to try and retain the linguistic style of contributors when they share a common mother tongue, let alone when some contributors are (albeit admirably) writing in their second or even third language of English. On the other hand, this diversity adds to the richness and depth and authenticity of the learning process we experienced and are promoting.

All quotes where not directly attributed are from „Community Mentoring Toolkit” Durham University

All partners are very committed to being of assistance to the socially disadvantaged communities in which they are based be this in Hatfield-Hertfordshire in England, Bangor/Belfast, Northern Ireland, Alexandria, Romania, Suceava/Bucharest in Romania, Spisska Nova Ves/Lecova in Slovakia or Sivas, Turkey. Each brought their perspectives to bear on our joint project in various different ways and the journey undertaken together has been one of deep discovery for the learners, staff, volunteers and organisations, so much so the same partners wish to continue to work together under the Erasmus+ initiatives to take forward the work already accomplished.

The collective key is the continuous recruitment, development and accreditation of committed Community Mentors, the subject of any future collaboration.

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## PART A. THE COMMUNITY MENTOR'S CODE OF ETHICS

### 1. Introduction

***It is recommended that the partnership's earlier Report "Community Mentoring: Cultural Context, Social Exclusion and Adult Engagement" be read prior to this Guide however, this is not essential.***

It has been a revelation to discover how colleagues and learners from such diverse institutional and cultural backgrounds can co-operate for mutual benefit and yet also be constrained by their socio-political and economic environments from implementing identical strategies and solutions no matter how innovative or radical. It is for this reason this Guide does not stipulate or prescribe but provides information that the partnership has put together to be considered or applied in any cultural context or at least provoke better practice in the interests of those who are socially excluded.

As the partnership project mobilities progressed, it soon became clear that as a few partners had never worked with volunteers or in the non formal sector before, that any preconceptions had to be re-examined and the planned output of creating a Training Guide had to be more than that and provide more of a „total" framework for producing training and mentoring schemes. Thus the Guide starts with the principles and assumptions behind community mentoring – The Code of Ethics.

#### 1.1 Definitions

The mentor is a person that promotes values which define human dignity, whose behaviour is based on respect for diversity and ensuring equality of chances.

The mentor acts with responsibility and self-sufficiency in providing services meant to satisfy the mentees' needs.

The mentor is '*the individual who helps another person to achieve his goals*' (Montreal CEGEP, 1988), '*a person from whom to receive guidance and advice.*' (Webster Dictionary).

The person to whom the mentor addresses is 'the one that learns' or is the 'mentee' (learner). ***In addition, the Community Mentor has a direct connection with the community of the mentee - be this geographic or personal.***

**Mentoring** represents a group of activities whose progress is based upon trust between mentor and mentee, upon the development of a long term relationship of collaboration between mentor and mentee.

**The process of mentoring** is the subject that has as its' general objectives, personal development and professional excelling of those that are mentees, the evolution of the mentor role and researching new methods / mentoring techniques.

"Community mentoring involves volunteers within a given community (this may be a local neighbourhood or a community of interest or identity) providing mentor support to people from the same community. This may be regarded as a form of '**peer support**' as it involves

volunteer mentors from backgrounds or community settings that are similar to those of participating mentees.

Mentor sessions (one-to-one or group meetings between mentors and mentees) may happen in community settings, mentees' homes or via the Internet or phone. The aim is to facilitate mentees' self-development, contribute to improving their social networks and motivate them to achieve their goals."

Community Mentoring is not a substitute for counselling, medication, schooling, social work, improved parenting or social justice or any of the other interventions that can take place in a "socially excluded" person's life. Rather, through mentoring we seek to work alongside the person, their families and professionals, while remaining independent with a clear community focus, after all individuals are "members" of communities.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Code of Ethics**

The Code of Ethics is a group of assumptions and values which seek to ensure, through their accomplishment, the understanding and efficient fulfilment of the community mentor's mission in their interaction with the persons that need them and that are asking for their support.

### **1.3 Main Objective of the Code of Ethics**

The Code offers guidance in designing, organising, developing, and evaluating the mentoring activity.

### **1.4 The Community Mentor's (CM) mission**

The CM offers support to a member of a the community in overcoming new situations/coping with social/economic challenges, going through a transitional process from a lower state towards a better one, to accept a major change in personal circumstances, in his/her circumstances or in personal development, to accomplish with success a ***process of social inclusion***.

The CM encourages another person that has a certain need to go from a passive state to an active one at a professional, social, personal and ***community*** level.

The CM is at the same time a guide, partner, coach, a good listener, counsellor, visionary, and an accelerator in developing self-trust.

***The CM's motto is: 'I am here for you; I will help you to become who you want and make our community better!'***

## **2. Values and principles that form the basis of community mentoring**

Mentoring understood as a process is based upon the following values and principles:

- a. Acknowledgement and assumption that people have good intentions.
- b. People are willing to change and have the desire to develop.
- c. People are capable of solving their own problems and willing to learn.

- d. People are different and diverse and that is NOT a problem in itself.
- e. A 'successful' person represents the result of a personal, professional and social development process.
- f. People need encouragement and support to develop.
- g. Skills development is a continuous process.
- h. Collaboration is encouraged and preferred.
- j. The CM ensures confidentiality of their actions.
- k. Continuous searching for new ideas, theories and knowledge.
- l. Community mentoring/mentoring contributes to equality of opportunity for all mentees.
- m. Past experiences are reflected upon only if relevant to creating awareness of the self.
- n. Thinking is directed towards the future.
- o. With every action is developed an ability to transfer into a new context, added value and personal analysis.
- p. The meaning of the mentoring activity is created by the mentor and mentee.

### **3. Concepts of the Community Mentor's Activity**

#### **3.1 Anti discriminatory practice**

The CM performs their activity regardless of the mentee's nationality, origin, language, religion, sex, opinion, politics, wealth or social origins. They develop the mentoring relationship based on an intellectual and cooperative partnership. They as a member of a mentoring community models dignity and respect and ensures an atmosphere without any manifestation and harassment, exploitation, humiliation, threats or intimidation.

#### **3.2 The Community Mentor's Independence in Context**

The CM shows independence in the relationship set during mentoring activities, however In the organisation/community where she/he works, collaborative relations and accountability are developed and are expected.

#### **3.3 Confidentiality**

The CM has to respect the principle of confidentiality for all the received information from the mentees during their mentoring relations; he has to show engagement and responsibility towards them. The CM has to avoid making public, personal information. They ensure a level of confidentiality set at the beginning of the mentoring relation.

#### **3.4 Competence:**

- Ensures their level of experience and knowledge is sufficient to meet the needs of the client.
- Ensures their capability is sufficient to enable them to operate according to this Code of Ethics and any standards that may subsequently be produced.
- Develops and then enhances their level of competence by participating in relevant training and appropriate Continuing professional development activities.
- Is preoccupied with self-evaluation and permanent evaluation of his actions.

Community Mentoring for Social Inclusion Gruntvig Partnership 2013 – 2015:

Community Mentoring: Good Training Practice Guide p6

### **3.5 Boundary management**

The CM acts in the limits of personal and professional competences. The CM recognises where their competence has the potential to be exceeded and where necessary refers the client either to a more experienced coach/mentor or supervisor, or supports the client in seeking the help of another professional help. The CM acts efficiently in conflict of interest situations which might occur during the mentoring relation.

### **3.6 Integrity**

The CM acts within applicable law and does not encourage, assist or collude with others engaged in conduct which is dishonest, unlawful, unprofessional or discriminatory. The CM will ensure that the duration of the mentoring contract is only as long as is necessary for the client. The CM will avoid any exploitation of the former relationship. The CM ensures the safe and secure maintenance of all related records and data.

## **4. Summary**

1. The CM is compelled to respect the Code of Ethics through the entire period of their mentoring activities.
2. The mentoring relationship must respect professional and standard ethics.
3. The mentor is legally responsible for any violation of professional obligations.
4. The current Code of Ethics is subject to modification when appropriate and in keeping with its spirit as agreed by those responsible for recruiting and developing Community Mentors

In Part B of this Guide, the four essential training topics are covered: Role of the Community Mentor, Communication and Listening Skills, Personal and Professional Boundaries and Key Techniques and Approaches. The subject of Safeguarding was also deemed essential as a topic to be covered in the development of Community Mentors, but it proved difficult to develop a pan European module which could take into account all cultural contexts, legal and social service governance systems. The subject is covered generally in this Guide in terms of the Code of Ethics and in the guidance for devising community mentoring schemes, but each individual national partner would need to investigate the scope for incorporating the training on this subject as befits the rules and legalities of their own country.

The “Module” on Communication and Listening Skills is the most detailed as this reflects its central significance in the development of an effective Community Mentor.

## PART B. COMMUNITY MENTORING TRAINING MODULES

### Module One: ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY MENTOR

**Objectives – provide opportunities for learners to:**

- 1 Define community mentoring as a regional and European partnership concept
- 2 Explore role and responsibilities of the Community Mentor (and the Role of Mentee)
- 3 Understand who their mentees are/will be
- 4 Identify how effective mentors work

Community Mentoring is a powerful tool for personal and community development, an effective way to help people to progress, a partnership between two people who usually work in a similar field and/or reside in the same community or belong to the same community of interest/ share similar experiences. It is a relationship based on trust and mutual respect. Through the partnership mobilities, we also discovered that community mentoring also occurs between organisations and their communities through the way that organisation structures and delivers its services and makes itself accessible to their socially excluded communities.

### What is Community Mentoring?

“Community mentoring involves volunteers within a given community (this may be a local neighbourhood or a community of interest or identity) providing mentor support to people from the same community. This may be regarded as a form of **‘peer support’** as it involves volunteer mentors from backgrounds or community settings that are similar to those of participating mentees.

Mentor sessions (one-to-one or group meetings between mentors and mentees) may happen in community settings, mentees’ homes or via the Internet or phone. The aim is to facilitate mentees’ self-development, contribute to improving their social networks and motivate them to achieve their goals.”<sup>1</sup>

Community Mentoring is not a substitute for counselling, medication, schooling, social work, improved parenting or social justice or any of the other interventions that can take place in a “socially excluded” person’s life. Rather, through mentoring we seek to work alongside the person, their families and professionals, while remaining independent with a clear community focus, after all individuals are “members” of communities.

## Why Community Mentoring?

The value of mentoring lies within the person/personality of the mentor coupled with advanced interpersonal skills and their ability to convey a totally focused interest in their mentee, their needs, hopes and aspirations. The potential outcomes from an effective mentoring relationship are tremendous.

Community mentoring has no statutory or hidden agenda in conflict with the mentee's own progression. Community mentors are only concerned to provide confidential, non-judgemental, positive and motivating time and space for people. The value lies within the diversity and equality of the mentors with their mentees, their base in the community and their desire to address social issues.

## Social Exclusion in the European Context

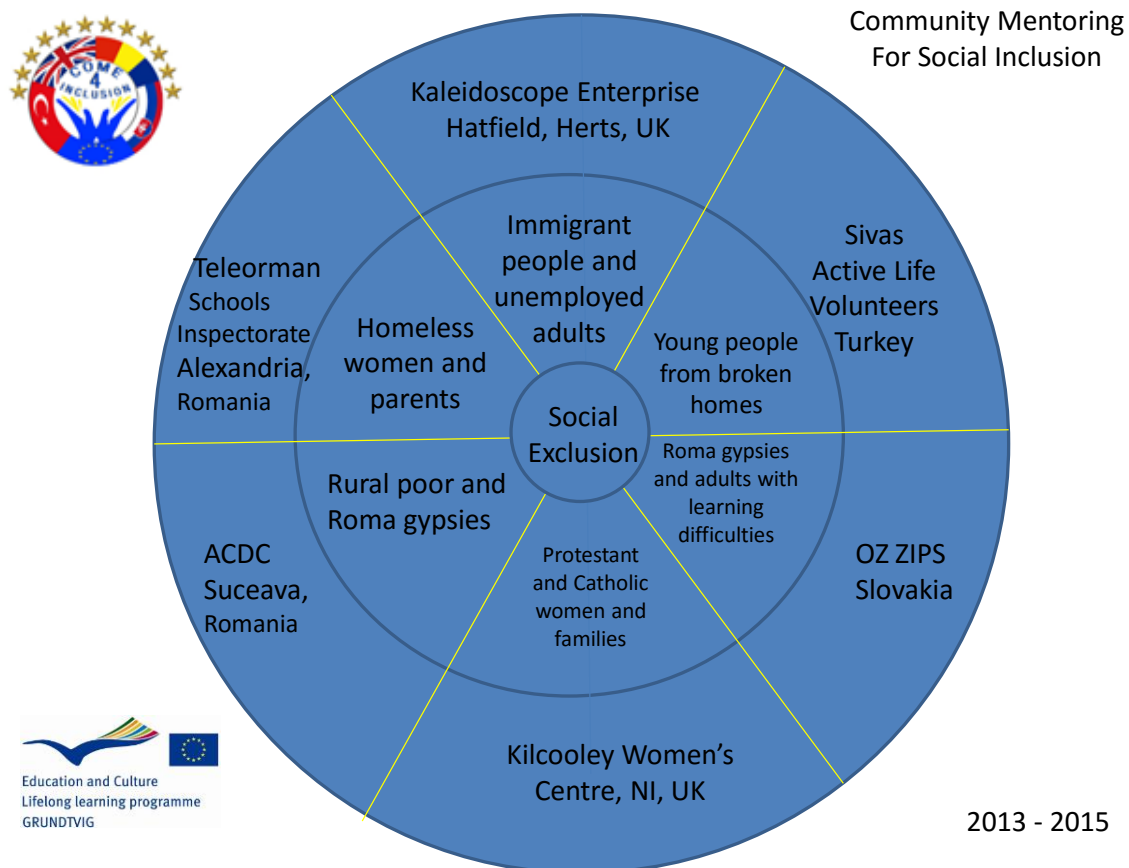
"In spite of the overall wealth of the European Union (EU), poverty in the EU is still at a relatively high level with 16.9% of the EU population, that is about 85 million people, at risk of relative income poverty and more than 124,2 million people or 24,8 % of the population **at risk of poverty and social exclusion** - whether being at risk of relative poverty, severely materially deprived or living in a household with very low work intensity."<sup>2</sup>

Social exclusion and vulnerability are terms closely associated with poverty, but not all people who are socially excluded or vulnerable are poor. However, since 2010 at the EU level, the composite notion of Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion, which brings together relative monetary poverty, material deprivation and exclusion from the labour market, is also used. "Defining poverty and social exclusion is a complex task. A multiplicity of approaches exist that try to define poverty."<sup>3</sup>

One approach defines social exclusion as the systematic blockage of an individual or community to various rights, opportunities and resources that would normally be available to members of a different community and which are crucial to social integration. These can be blockage or denial of full access to housing, employment, healthcare, democratic participation and use of services.

## Who are the Mentees?

The CM4SI Partnership's prospective mentees during the period 2013 – 2015 included the following:



## What attributes does an Effective Community Mentor have?

The following list of attributes and personal qualities that make an effective mentor can be assessed and rated by learners in a training session as essential (E), desirable (D), or unimportant (U)

- respects others;
- someone you respect;
- non-prejudiced
- who is interested and prepared to invest time and effort;
- engaging
- is calm
- encourages may be critical, but always in a positive and constructive manner;
- has a positive outlook and is realistic
- Tolerant
- Experienced enough to anticipate
- Challenging
- Stimulating
- No pre-conceptions about their mentee
- Cross-cultural awareness
- Sensitive to mentee's needs

*Ref: Attributes of an Effective Community Mentor, Workshop - Project Planning Meeting, Alexandria, Teleorman, Romania – 5 – 10 May 2015*

## What does the Community Mentor's do?

### *The Community Mentor:*

- actively listens to any presented subject, before commenting on it,
- presents a willing desire to offer guidance,
- waits for the mentee to make his decisions,
- analyses all subjects, to identify the real problems,
- always offers their opinions with respect,
- has connections with others that they can call upon for support,
- makes themselves available for people needing mentoring,
- knows the environment of the mentee,
- shows optimism and positive attitude,
- encourages the interacting person and to manifest approach to new,
- facilitates the mentee for sharing their feelings,
- knows when and how to propose solutions,
- shows patience towards mentees,
- accepts criticisms of personal opinions,
- knows very well the information for personal development,
- gives feedback to those that they work with,
- allows the mentee the freedom to make mistakes, to admit them and to find solutions,
- regards the mentee as their equal,
- shows objectivity towards the mentee and their problems,
- asks for ideas and knowledge from the mentee,
- appreciates the opinions of the mentees,
- acts just after they research the problem,
- believes in the personal development of each person,
- tells the mentee what they need to hear and not what they want to hear,
- steers discussions towards achievements,
- helps meet the needs of the mentee.
- informs and is open, ready to share their experiences;
- presents challenges and advice, but does **not** give advice;

*Ref: "Mentoring Practice" Workshop – Mobility Meeting, Sivas, Turkey - 7 – 11 October 214*

## **Module Two - COMMUNICATION AND LISTENING SKILLS**

### **Objectives - Provide Opportunities to:**

1. Increase awareness of diversity and cultural issues in communication
2. Identify the issues which may affect communication between mentor and mentee
3. Understand the Importance of effective communication in the mentoring process
4. Examine the skills of an effective communicator
5. Develop and practice effective listening and techniques
6. Develop and practice questioning techniques

### **Introduction**

Of all the module topics, “Communication and Listening Skills” requires context setting. In this Guide, we are aware that the way this topic is covered is very much driven by the Western tradition and cultural assumptions about Communication and behaviour. The partners who collaborated in this Guide are all “European”, with some individuals having an additional non-European cultural heritage.

We are all affected by culture, not just in an international sense but also nationally. Even in what may appear to be “mono-cultural” groups, there will be cultural differences e.g. Northerners and Southerners, urban and rural dwellers, age, sexuality and gender. Multicultural groups of learners will more than likely manifest these differences more profoundly. Learner community mentors with some social science, HR or group process training and background should be able to cope with a more intense approach to this module. In particular, “Trainers” who are genuinely fascinated by the diversity of people, speak other languages, have lived or worked abroad, or in a multicultural setting in their home country will deliver a more “sensitive” experience.

## **Definitions: What is Communication?**

To form a community or a society people must have shared goals, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge and- a common understanding. Communication provides emotional and intellectual provision for responding to expectations and requirements.

Communication has different meanings and different definitions depending on the nature of the work as well as different goal intentions and modes of expression and manifestation. There is no concrete definition of communication but one can say that it is the transmission and reception of data information in order to achieve understanding.

Communication is what allows any whole to work. As such, those who work on their ability to communicate can become "winners" - meaning that they can look confidently to the future and succeed.

It is the ability to communicate effectively, both as transmitter and receiver that improves the efficiency of that activity and positively includes the mentee in the mentoring process.

## **Categories of communication:**

There are three categories of communication:

- verbal communication,
- nonverbal communication
- written and possibly a fourth - para-communication.

They are always used together, combined in different ways.

Improving one's ability to communicate across culture, gender, ability, class etc. is a form of respect for yourself and others.

A good communicator - informs, inspires and motivates!

In communication we focus on:

- construction and communication of the message
- voice
- body language
- time management
- techniques of persuasion and influence
- listening skills

## Verbal Communication

Verbal communication means communication through spoken words.

The ability to: speak appropriately with a wide variety of people whilst maintaining good eye contact, demonstrate a varied vocabulary and tailor your language to your audience, listen effectively, present your ideas appropriately, write clearly and concisely and work well in a group all require good communication skills.

Effective verbal or spoken communication is dependant on a number of factors and cannot be fully isolated from other important interpersonal skills such as [non-verbal communication](#), [listening skills](#) and [clarification](#).

For the mentor finely-honed listening ability and skills are the most essential and upon which the magic of mentoring rests.

### Verbal Communication: Listening Skills

For efficient listening, the speaker must be offered feedback, he/she must be offered time to benefit from appropriate listening. The one who listens should focus on what they are being told and not on what they are going to respond. Listening does not involve only hearing sound signals, but it also means their decoding and interpretation, their integration in one's own thinking system.

Listening is an **active** activity; it is one of the most important skills among a set of rules, together with:

- ✓ Staying focused on the message presented;
- ✓ The use of key words as reference points, in order to judge the contents rather than the form of the presentation;
- ✓ Keeping an open spirit, in order to avoid prejudice;
- ✓ Ensuring feedback and encouraging the speaker, if needed.

The listener changes their listening style according to circumstances, opting for:

- ✓ Careful listening – good concentration and attention;
- ✓ Active listening – encouragement of the speaker and consolidation of understanding;
- ✓ Critical listening – checking and evaluation of the information received in order to identify those signals of concern.
- ✓ Speaking

## **Verbal Communication: Active Listening Skills**

**Active listening** involves:

- listening carefully to your conversation partner;
- never interrupting your conversation partner;
- asking questions regarding the explanation provided by your partner;
- not just listening to your partner, but also trying to understand what he/she wants to say, so that both participants in the conversation have the same perception over what is being said;
- offering information and finishing off by asking relevant questions to make sure the partner has understood and accepted the information;
- using what has already been said by the partner when presenting your own idea.

Active listening is the ability to concentrate so well on another person that you are able to understand correctly his/her thoughts.

This is what any community mentor should do!

## Non-verbal Communication

Nonverbal communication refers to communication through gestures, posture, look, mimicry etc. and so the following is typically ticked off, however caution must be taken when *interpreting* these same actions especially in a multi-cultural context even if these are all European!

### Elements of non-verbal communication:

#### **Body:**

- Orientation of the body (for example standing with the back to the people they want to avoid)
- Posture (postural signals for example showing relaxation or tension are related to a person's status, high status correlates with a relaxed posture, stiffness and tension with low-status, easily victimized people seem to conflict with themselves, and move in the most difficult way possible , etc.);
- Gestures (increased frequency of certain gestures show a state of tension and discomfort or dishonesty, eg. gestures through which they rub, collect, cross, touch one side of the body; these gestures are discouraged in public);
- Face and eyes (a figure with lip corners pointed down may indicate sadness, avoiding looking somebody in the eye may show insecurity, lack of confidence, etc.).

#### **Eyes:**

- Direct gaze: *possibly* honesty, intimacy, threat;
- Looking aside: *possibly* some lack of interest and cold;
- Avoiding the gaze: *possibly* hiding feelings, discomfort or guilt;
- Eye movement up: *possibly* trying to remember something;
- Eye movement down: *possibly* sadness, modesty, shyness, hiding emotions.

#### **Smile:**

- Can express complex information (pleasure, joy, satisfaction, promise, cynicism, embarrassment).

#### **Mimics:**

- frowned forehead : concern, anger, frustration;

- Raised eyebrows: surprise, awe;
- wrinkled nose: annoyance;
- tight lips: uncertainty, hesitation, hiding information.

### ***Gesture:***

- shrugged shoulders: misunderstanding;
- the gesture of covering the mouth reveals **possible** lack of sincerity;
- Gestures made with hands: a handshake: Domination (palm down), obedience (palm up), equality (palm perpendicular); rubbing hands: positive expectations; hands clenching: frustration, repression of negative attitudes;
- touching your nose: **possibly** insincerity; one hand to support the head boredom; drumming fingers on the table and stamping feet: impatience; chin rubbing : decision, arms crossing: defensive or negative attitude.
- Feet gestures - crossing legs, leg thrown over the other elegantly: nervous attitudes, **possibly** either reserved or defensive; foot resting on the knee and clutched by hand: rigid attitude in discussions or negotiations; crossing legs in standing position: uncertainty; crossing ankles: negative or defensive attitude; overlapping the seat: dominance.

### **Functions of nonverbal communication:**

- Reinforcing verbal messages via certain channels: "I cannot hear you", "Hello", "Goodbye!"
- Substitute verbal messages (items described above can replace verbal messages);
- Emphasize verbal messages;
- Adjusting verbal messages (regulates the flow of communication, for example, the unwritten rule is that when you start talking, you take a little tune up, then as you finish the voice becomes faded, having a lower intensity);
- contradicting verbal messages (in this way there are double messages).

Some non-verbal channels are more revealing than others e.g. the face is more controlled, but what is less controlled is body movements, and even less controlled is the voice; speech errors may occur. Those who hide the truth tend to speak louder and faster and answer questions because the answers are prepared and they not need time to think. If the answer was not prepared, thinking time is the longest and they respond harder than anyone else.

Nonverbal messages are ambiguous. People who can best convey non-verbal messages can interpret them best.

The decoding ability increases with age and experience, but there are still differences due to personality and occupation (extroverts and women can better decode these messages, but no one can do it 100% correctly).

**Para-Communication** means: tone, voice, rhythm, inflection, speed of speech.

It is said that people use communication types listed in the following proportions:

Verbal Communication	Non verbal Communication	Para- Communication
7%	55%	38%

## Warm-up Communication exercises:

### 1. String anniversaries:

Objective: to increase the focus on new forms of communication (nonverbal).

The task: to line up according to date of birth, without verbally communicating with each other. The time that you have available is 3 minutes.

Rating: Discuss the result. Identify non-verbal forms of communication used during exercise.

### 2. Dialogue with eyes closed

Objective: To stimulate alternative communication channels.

Task: Using eye contact only, players cannot speak or emit any sound. Pairs are formed blindly. Each pair is situated face to face. Between them, there is a piece of clay, soft and pretty big so they can shape it. Then participants take their hands and place on this piece and they are asked to model something together.

Assessment: How do you decide what to do? Who made the decision? How did the communication go?

### 3. Meetings

Objective: To develop communication through imitating various gestures

The game must be completed in absolute silence:

A. In small groups of 2 to 4 people (2 observers for each 4 persons) shall be implemented various ways to shake hands: fun, warm, aggressive, etc.

B. Small groups of up to 10-15 people gather in a room. For 1-2 minutes they think about the feeling they will express (to one person). Then, quietly, first person starts. He sits in front of the person and communicates the feeling either by looking or by touching the hands. Then goes back to his seat and the game continues until everybody willing to express their feelings does it.

Debrief: Everyone explains why they wanted to communicate that feeling to the other people or what he/she had been shown, explaining what he/she received from that person, what link was formed between them, what impressed them more. Then the impact of what was not said, but felt should have been discussed.

### **Issues and Barriers to Effective Communication:**

- *Blockage* – complete interruption of communication, due to strictly objective factors (technical problems which may appear in the channel of communication) or subjective ones (regarding the other person as unapproachable)
- *Hindrance/interference* – partial and transitory obstruction that can be voluntary or involuntary. It can have objective or subjective reasons.
- *Selection* – sending or receiving only certain information. Selection is always voluntary.
- *Distortion of information* – negatively affecting the message during its sending. The barrier appears when the information goes through several links.
- Differences of perception
- *Stereotypes* – not all are treated equally
- Lack of interest
- Difficulties in expressing oneself
- Hasty conclusions

There are at least two types of barriers:

**External barriers:**

- Physical: verbal or acoustic deficiencies, location, light, temperature, time of the day, duration of meeting, etc.
- Semantic: vocabulary, grammar, syntax, accent etc.

**Internal barriers:**

- Positive involvement: we are willing to listen longer to a pleasant person. Also, we may associate the sender with a person whom we cherish and consequently we may not carefully analyse the information received. In both cases, the message can be perceived positively, even when it is not the case.
- Negative involvement: these are situations in which we may judge the sender according to deeds or behaviour we have previously noticed or we may associate them with a person we dislike. In this case, we are negatively influenced in the interpretation of the message received.
- Stage fright: these are situations when we are so preoccupied by what we are going to say that we no longer hear what the sender wants to tell us. This happens especially when we are in a large group.
- Hidden agenda: these are situations when we are not paying attention, which hinders us from receiving the message sent to us.
- Imaginary worlds: *these are situations when we have our own interpretation of things and ideas which we then try to defend. That is why, sometimes, we are not willing to listen to messages that come in contraction with our interpretations.*

**All barriers to communication have negative effects.** In order to fight this, we need to know their causes, especially the subjective ones, because objective causes are easier to notice and to reduce.

**Common barriers belonging to the sender include:**

- The idea that wants to be communicated is badly or wrongly conceived;
- The message is weakly encoded or vital information is missing, perhaps since it is considered common knowledge;
- The poor use of the language or the inability to express something clearly;
- The loss of the message through irrelevant details.

**Common barriers belonging to the receiver include:**

- Insufficient “importance” paid to the message, or its inappropriate receiving;
- Not storing the message received, taking it for something else or forgetting it;
- Anticipation of the content and loss of the real message;
- Assumption that a message that surprises is automatically wrong, therefore it is ignored or distorted.

**Summary - Skills and Attributes involved in Communication:**

- Pedagogy;
- Negotiation;
- Inter-culturality;
- Active listening;
- High level of creativity;
- Ability to relate – build rapport
- Support;
- Analysis and synthesis;
- Guidance;
- Adaptability to concrete situations;
- Openness;
- Modesty;
- Seriousness;
- Commitment to Equality of chances;
- Respect;
- Encouragement;
- Sense of Fair play;
- Impartiality.

Cultural influences play a very important role in perceptions. People who are perceived as speaking well may be regarded as “superior,” from an intellectual point of view, by those who find it more difficult to express themselves.

## Communication and Listening Exercise 1:

The aim of this exercise is to support the **learner (volunteer mentor or mentee)** to identify and analyse possible solutions (there are 6 presented here) to problematic situations which may appear/be experienced, but also to become aware of the possible consequences of his/her choices.

The mentor makes a huge die/cube. The cube will have a piece of advice on each side (as an alternative, the mentor can use 6 cards or flashcards).

- a. Pack & GO! - pack and go to another place (take a trip, visit a friend...).
- b. Stay! - stay and deal with the situation, find solutions
- c. Sleep on it! - the night is a good adviser!
- d. Call a friend!
- e. Choose the 3<sup>rd</sup> way! - neither 'yes', nor 'no'
- f. Go home! - leave the project, abandon it/give it up, assume your failure!

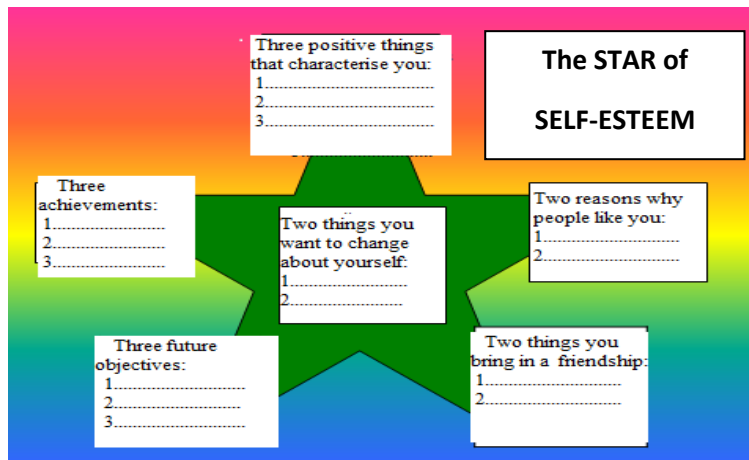
Each learner describes the situation they are in, emphasising the difficult parts, then they cast the dice (or picks a card/flashcard). The learner analyses the situation from the perspective of the advice written on the die – what if I went home, what are the advantages, what do I lose, what are the risks, etc. He/she can take or reject the advice written on the die.

The mentor can assume the role of “devil’s advocate” and can keep asking the same question again and again: “So, then what?” (meaning: “what will happen if you choose that?”). Through this question, the mentor forces the trainee to find all possible answers, to analyse the problem and the solution from multiple perspectives offered by the advice drawn.

### For example

Call a friend! - Who would you call? I’d call X who.... So what if you called X? What would happen if he/she told you that? What would happen if ...?

## Communication and Listening Exercise 2: The Star of Self-Esteem



The diagram is a five-pointed star with a green center and points colored in a rainbow gradient (red, orange, yellow, green, blue). Each point contains a text box with a specific prompt and three numbered lines for writing.

**The STAR of SELF-ESTEEM**

- Top point (red):** Three positive things that characterise you:  
1.....  
2.....  
3.....
- Top-right point (orange):** Two reasons why people like you:  
1.....  
2.....
- Bottom-right point (yellow):** Two things you bring in a friendship:  
1.....  
2.....
- Bottom point (green):** Two things you want to change about yourself:  
1.....  
2.....
- Bottom-left point (blue):** Three future objectives:  
1.....  
2.....  
3.....
- Top-left point (red):** Three achievements:  
1.....  
2.....  
3.....

## Questioning Skills and Techniques in Community Mentoring:

Questions can be of two types:

- ✓ Closed-ended questions
- ✓ Open-ended questions

**Closed-ended questions** – these are those questions that offer limited possibilities of answering (for example, “Would you like to take part in this meeting?”); they help to clarify certain information and focalise the discussion. This type of questions require specific, precise answers, relevant for the diagnosis of the problem. However, if they are used excessively, the conversation tends to resemble an interrogatory and communication can be interrupted.

**Open-ended questions** – they start with “what?”, “how much?”, “where?”, “how?”, “which?”, “when?”, and they require ample answers which offer a large amount of information (for example, “What can you say about your problem?”, “How would you describe the situation?”); this type of questions helps communication by informing the receiver that he is listened to and that there is interest from the speaker. Through these questions, the person is guided to offer more details about his/her experiences, behaviour, needs and feelings.

Other types of questions:

**Hypothetical questions** – they are useful when solutions are analysed, in order to identify possible consequences of each solution chosen (for example, “*What would happen if...?*”).

**Questions regarding facts** – they offer objective information (for example, “*Tell me, when did you notice the problem?*”).

**Questions regarding opinions** – they determine a rather subjective interpretation of the situation (for example, “*What is the cause of the problem?*”).

**Primary questions** – they offer information for the first stage (for example, “*What do you want to use this information for?*”).

**Secondary questions** – these are asked when the answer is incomplete, superficial, vague or irrelevant (for example, “*Can you tell me more about this?*”).

**Direct questions** – they generate clear, relevant answers (for example, “*Do you understand?*”). **Indirect questions** – they are useful to collect information in a more subtle way (for example, “*If you had to explain this to others, what would you say?*”).

**Multiple questions** – to ask about more things at the same time, it means to confuse the person you are talking with, and as a result they no longer know what to answer. Some questions will remain unanswered, and if they are relevant, they will need to be repeated.

**Questions that orientate the answer** – they contain the answers expected by the interrogator/questioner (for example, “*You don’t mind working late, do you?*”, “*Wouldn’t it be better if...?*”). These questions manipulate or give the feeling of being blocked/restrained.

**Justifying questions** – for example, “*Why...?*”

### **Suggestions for asking adequate questions:**

- use short or medium-length questions in order to be easily followed and remembered;
- use words that your interlocutor understands and prefers;
- do not simply repeat the questions your interlocutor has not understood, rephrase them;
- do not ask a question as soon as another one has just been answered; take time to use the information given, to paraphrase it.

## **Module Three: PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL BOUNDARIES**

### **Objectives - Provide Opportunities to:**

1. Explain what confidentiality means within the context of the project
2. Discuss issues and clarify courses of action regarding confidentiality and appropriate boundaries
3. Identify learner's own personal boundaries as a community mentor
4. Identify learner's own responses to situations involving boundary issues and confidentiality
5. Identify and discuss situations where help/support should be sought

### **Context**

As with communication and listening, discussions on personal and professional boundaries are susceptible to misunderstanding and misinterpretation practically and theoretically. This is where agreement to an Ethical Code outlines ultimately expectations in the arbitration of what is and what is not appropriate in a community mentoring relationship.

### **Food for thought**

"One feature of a healthy sense of self is the way we understand and work with our emotional boundaries. Personal boundaries are the limits we set in relationships that allow us to protect ourselves from being manipulated by, or enmeshed with, emotionally needy others. Such boundaries come from having a good sense of our own self-worth. They make it possible for us to separate our own thoughts and feelings from those of others and to take responsibility for what we think, feel and do. Boundaries are part of the biological imperative of maturation as we individuate and become adult people in our own right. We are, all of us unique, and boundaries allow us to rejoice in our own uniqueness. Healthy intact boundaries are flexible; they allow us to get close to others when it is appropriate and to maintain our distance when we might be harmed by getting too close. Good boundaries protect us from becoming engulfed in abusive relationships and pave the way to achieving true intimacy the flipside of independence, as we grow to interdependence the relationship of two mature individuals. They help us take care of ourselves and if we can receive it, to respect the selves of others."

**Ref: John Stibbs 2001**

## Maintaining boundaries in one-to-one relationships: Friendship Vs Professional relationship

The underlying dynamics are not the same and responsibilities are not equally-weighted and this would appear obvious, though community mentors are carrying out their roles in the capacity of volunteers, they are professionals if recruited and supervised by an organisational scheme

The issue here is the mentee or client may confuse friendship and the mentoring relationship and this is when clear guidelines are required.

### Categories of Entangled Relationships/ Boundaries crossed

- *Intimacy* – getting too close and personal
- *Emotional and dependency needs* – transference by client or mentor
- *Personal benefit* – receipt of gifts or favours
- *Altruism*
- *Unanticipated*

### Maintaining Personal Boundaries

**Soft-** Someone with a soft boundary is easily manipulated.

Exercise: What might be the implications for the mentoring relationship with such a person?

**Spongy** – They permit less emotional contagion than soft boundaries but more than rigid. People with spongy boundaries are unsure what to let in and what to keep out. Emotional Contagion is the tendency to catch and feel emotions that are similar to and influenced by those of others.

**Rigid-** A person with rigid boundaries is closed or walled off so nobody can get close to them either physically or emotionally

**Flexible-** This is the ideal. Similar to selective rigid boundaries but the person has more control. The person decides what to let in and what to keep out, are resistant to emotional contagion, manipulation and is difficult to exploit.

## **Maintaining Professional Boundaries or Standards – include:**

1. Behaviours that are prohibited
2. Management assessed behaviours
3. Professional judgement behaviours

The responsibility for maintaining boundaries in the mentoring relationship - is the mentor's:

- Appearance matters, so dressing appropriately is advised and as discussed with the scheme manager.
- Maintaining professional competence at all times
- Training
- Supervision
- Confidentiality, unless there are safeguarding concerns

## **Boundary Problems - Community Mentor's Courses of Action:**

### **Personal**

1. See the person not the behaviour
2. Maintain your respect for the other person even when they choose not to follow what you believe to be the best course of action
3. Follow what you believe to be the best course of action only if it fits within the project guidelines
4. Do not feel that you have failed if the relationship does not work out.

### **Emotional**

1. Try to understand the other person's thoughts and feelings
2. Remember, you may not understand a situation when you see only a part of it
3. Even if you have similar problem, you may not fully understand the other person's difficulties
4. Everyone has different ways of coping. Your way of coping may be right for another person

### **Organisational/Professional**

1. It is the CM's right to ask what the project does to maintain its boundaries and if they are consistent with the project's expectations of mentors
2. It is the CM's responsibility to maintain contact with the project
3. It is both your right and your responsibility to accept support in your role as a community mentor

## Module Four – KEY PRACTICES AND TECHNIQUES IN MENTORING

This module has a double agenda:

The community mentor's continuing self-awareness and fostering of a life-long learning attitude AND

Seeks to provide the mentor with tools and tips when working with a mentee, especially if the relationship falters.

### Objectives – Provide Opportunities to:

1. Discuss the effect that assumptions can have on others
2. Develop an awareness of diversity and equality issues.
3. Respond to case studies/role-plays that demonstrate difficult mentoring and befriending situations
4. Rehearse behaviours, practices and techniques for preparing to deliver the first few mentoring sessions

### Mentoring Principles and Techniques Review

Rather than simply give the answers, the mentor's role should be to **help the 'mentee' find the answer for him/herself**. While giving the answer is usually better than giving no help at all, helping the mentee to find the answer for him/herself provides far more effective mentoring, because the process enables so much more for the mentee in terms of **experience of learning**. Give someone the answer and they learn only the answers; instead mentors need to facilitate the experience of discovery and learning. The mentor should therefore focus mentoring effort and expectations (of the person being mentored especially, and the organisation) on helping and guiding the mentee to find the answers and develop solutions of his/her own.

Mentors need to be **facilitators** and **coaches**, not tutor or trainers. Mentees need simply to open their minds to the guidance and facilitative methods of the mentor. The mentor should not normally (unless in the case of emergency) provide the answers for the mentee; instead a mentor should ask the right questions (facilitative, guiding, interpretive, non-judgemental) that guide the mentee towards finding his/her own true self.

**The mentor's role is to help the mentee to find his/ her own true self; to experience their own attempts, failures and successes, and by so doing, to develop his/her own natural strengths and potential.**

When we mentor people, or when we raise children, we should try to **help them develop as individuals** according to their **natural selves**, and **their own wishes**, not ours.

## Basic Stages in the Mentoring Cycle:

Introduce Mentors to the following stages or phases in the mentoring cycle that underpins the mentoring meeting or session together.

- Exploration Stage
- Understanding Stage
- Action Plan Stage
- Review Stage

Techniques can be introduced into each of these stages according to the mentor's confidence, previous personal development experience and ability to keep on learning.

An essential parallel process is the continuous development of the mentor's self-awareness.

## Exercise:

Using a prospective or actual referral to the mentoring service work through what a mentor might be doing in each of the stages below.

Exploration	Understanding	Action Plan	Review

## Ice-breaking/Warm-up Exercise

To the person next to you, share your name, something positive from your week, something you've been pleased to notice about your work/volunteering/studying etc. recently. Repeat with someone new...

## Uncovering Mentor's Attitudes and Values

### Objectives:

1. Draw out where there is consensus and why and where there are differences of opinion, to observe how learners listen to others, express their opinions, make or avoid assumptions.
2. Apply these insights to mentoring others who may be complete strangers at the start of the mentoring relationship

The list of statements below can be adapted according to the relevance or hot topic of the day.

### Exercise:

Indicate whether you agree / disagree with each of the statements below:

- ☐ Rich people should pay more tax
- ☐ This country should welcome immigrants
- ☐ The parents of re-offending children should be given compulsory sentences
- ☐ Gay couples should be able to adopt children
- ☐ People who are late for appointments should be put to the back of the queue
- ☐ The retirement age should be raised
- ☐ Fox hunting should be legalised
- ☐ All faith schools should be banned
- ☐ People should be given the vote at 16

## Avoiding Stereotyping Others

The process follows this pattern:

### 1. Forming First Impressions:

- The initial impact people make e.g.
- Are they female/male?
- Accents, manner of speech, tone
- Background noises

### 2. Labelling:

- We use the first impressions to label or categorise the other person as a certain type or belonging to a certain group or class

### 3. Qualities/Attributes:

- Following on from the labelling, we then recall our experiences with other people of the same “type” and move towards filling in their background, habits, feelings, and attitudes etc.

### 4. Predicting Behaviour:

- Having labelled someone as a certain type and attributed certain qualities, we start to predict their behaviour.
- For example, if you expected a person to be aggressive you may approach them in an aggressive way, or perhaps adopt a superior attitude to protect yourself from perceived aggression
- This can lead to us being inflexible towards other people. The prophecy becomes self-fulfilling as people respond to our reactions to them

### 5. Reacting Accordingly:

- We then react to other people according to the behaviour predicted. The prophecy becomes self-fulfilling as people respond to our reactions to them.

### 6. Confirming the Stereotype:

- Acting as though the stereotype is true confirms the experience

We all stereotype, but people do not always conform to the stereotype.

We can avoid the stereotype becoming a prejudice by checking our assumptions with others and not acting solely on our assumptions.

Stereotyping is sub-conscious and unavoidable. Prejudice is conscious and can lead to discrimination which is not acceptable. (Refer back to section on Ethics).

## Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is often understood to refer to a person's ethnicity, nationality and 'race'. However, we all inhabit a range of different 'cultures', often simultaneously. We negotiate a mix of values, norms and lifestyles associated with the different groups that we belong to or spend time with. We decide which of these we most strongly identify with, although the emphasis may change over time or in different circumstances.

For the purpose of this exercise, consider the following to be potential aspects of the Community Mentor's cultural identity.

**Age, gender, disability, religion, class, ethnicity, 'race', nationality, regional background, educational back ground, health status and any others that are important to you.**

### Exercise:

Discuss the topics below with your partner:

- ❑ Name some of the 'cultures' that you belong to
- ❑ Do some influence your sense of identity more than others?
- ❑ When you were a young person, did the predominant cultures surrounding you, for example at school, correspond closely to your culture at home?
- ❑ Have aspects of your cultural identity changed, as you have grown older?
- ❑ Do you feel very different to your peers, for example at work, in certain aspects of cultural identity?
- ❑ How does your awareness of your own cultural identity influence your role as a volunteer or community worker?

Source: The Trust for the study of Adolescence, UK

## Developing Reflective Practice in Mentors - Group Case Study

### Exercise:

Choose a case or prospective case that a learner may or has been involved in and keeping anonymity, work through the mentoring process above and discuss some of the difficulties or fears you experienced or think you will have (or things that went well) in undertaking this case. Prepare to feedback to the other learners.

Exploration	Understanding	Action Plan	Review

## **Conducting the Meetings – Questions for success**

New community mentors should have the opportunity to discuss and be guided and practice how to address the following:

1. How will s/he open the first session?
2. How will s/he they draw out the mentees needs?
3. How will s/he develop the relationship?
4. How are s/he clarify their understanding?
5. How will s/he know that the mentee is progressing?
6. How will s/he know when to finish?

### **Before:**

1. Check information from Coordinator and establish preferred mode of contact with mentee
2. Establish rapport (introductions, logistics for first meeting)
3. Report back to supervisor

### **First meeting - Start:**

1. Break ice
2. Establish exepctations and professional limits and boundaries
3. Structure and Agree agenda

### **Example: Planning first meeting agenda**

- Setting goals
- Reviewing progress with mentee
- Ending the session
- Arrangements for next session

## **First meeting – During**

1. Listen and be yourself
2. Test understanding – summarise/paraphrase, ask questions
3. Be positive and encouraging

## **First meeting – Closing/End**

1. Review/evaluate session
2. Establish what will happen next
3. Confirm mode of communication between sessions

## **Reviewing Learning**

We can learn from what goes right as well as from what goes wrong. Community mentors need to appreciate and learn this. What (for example) will be the balance in your own practice? How will you provide opportunities for people to learn from success? And how well will you do this?

In community mentoring, challenge the 'post –mortem' style of debriefing that skips over positive and successful experiences and dwells on the causes of failure. 'Learning from experience' is not the same as learning from 'mistakes'. We can learn from success too!

Here are some ideas and techniques that will help you find, appreciate, understand and build up on your experience.

As a learner, learning facilitator (someone who makes learning easy for others) or mentor it is important to extend the range of experiences from which people can learn and benefit. This includes 'positive experiences', 'negative experiences' and 'other experiences' not the same as 'from mistakes'.

**Everyone Deserves Success!**

The ideas in this module are suitable for working with people of all ages. You will of course need to know how to present and adapt these methods to suit your own style, purpose and situation. Everyone, however 'serious' your work maybe, can create the time and opportunity of success as a source of learning.

## PART C. DEVISING COMMUNITY MENTORING SCHEMES

### Introduction

The community mentoring ethical assumptions and training topics have now been established. The next section sketches out key steps in creating the wider community mentoring scheme in which community mentors would operate. It draws on the experience of implementing the Reaching Up Community Mentoring project (Kaleidoscope Enterprise, 2008-2013). It is NOT prescriptive but hopefully directs thoughts and actions where there might otherwise be a gap and complements the work that partners and colleagues are already doing with socially excluded individuals and communities.

**1 Decide who your target community is and the aim or purpose of the mentoring scheme.** In Community Mentoring for Social Inclusion (CM4SI), these are the socially excluded beneficiaries of the project objectives. This will ensure that you:

- a) Focus on those in greater need within the target group
- b) Be clear on the mentoring content and boundaries
- c) Establish the rules of process within the scheme
- d) Agree what success of the CMS will 'look like' – "start with the end in sight"

**2 Agree the method of mentoring that is most appropriate for your project.** In CM4SI or other projects this could be a combination of all types:

- a) One to one or Group Mentoring
- b) Peer or non-peer group mentoring
- c) Face to face or electronic/digital mentoring
- d) Volunteer or paid mentoring

### 3 Recruiting your Mentors

- a) How many do you need – how big is your project and what are the target number of mentees?
- b) Advertise and set up processes to attract volunteers/applicants – use community newsletters, media sites, noticeboards and meeting centers
- c) Use formal processes that request personal data, listing of skills, experience and qualifications (if required)
- d) Interview and assess applicants/volunteers for suitability and understanding of role and responsibilities
- e) *Any offer to be subject to attendance of training and assessment following training for continued suitability to be a mentor*

**4 Training your Mentors.** Identify suitably qualified Trainers first! In this Guide, we have focused on developing training materials

- a) Be clear on the importance of attending training and what will happen if it is decided that following training a mentor is no longer considered suitable.
- b) Have a group introduction session that covers the CMS aims and objectives; the boundaries within the mentor/mentee relationship; any relevant policies or processes applying in particular covering security for both parties, equality or cultural issues, confidentiality, recording of sessions and assessment of effectiveness.
- c) **Explain the role of the Coordinator of the Mentors** – *who will be doing this, its purpose and activity to oversee and manage the project and to provide ongoing support to the Mentors individually.*
- d) Develop a training programme that covers the skills and practices of the Community Mentoring Role to include:
  - Communication and Listening skills
  - Relationship Boundaries
  - Best practice – starting and maintaining sessions
  - Recording and monitoring Progress
  - How to end the mentoring relationship
  - Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults!

## 5 Recruitment and Identification of Mentees in the CMS

- a) Decide on how to identify mentees to join the scheme – what is your eligibility criteria for a mentee to be a recipient of the CMS
- b) Be clear on numbers (this may be determined by your available mentors)
- c) Have a clear process to match mentors to mentees
- d) Be prepared for drop outs; have a waiting list or a scheme for bringing in new mentees (this also applies to your mentors)
- e) Be prepared to change the mentor/mentee partnering if its 'not working' (role of the Coordinator critical here); this may also be triggered by feedback from Mentor or Mentee during lifecycle of the CMS project.

## 6 Getting Started – You've done all the preparation and have your CMS ready to go - so what's next?

- a) Have an open session to bring the Mentors & Mentees together
- b) Agree the ground rules and have a Q & A opportunity in the session
- c) Distribute assessment paperwork and agree how sessions will be recorded ensuring confidentiality and rights and responsibilities on both parties
- d) Agree locations, length of time and initial number of meetings between Mentor & Mentee (some flexibility and personal preference to be allowed)
- e) Get the diary out and book in your meetings and get started

## 7 Monitoring & Evaluation - This involves:

- a) Assessing progress
- b) Bringing the scheme to a close
- c) Evaluating effectiveness of the scheme including costs and resources required
- d) Follow up action and any revision of the scheme if it is to be on-going
- e) Project Report, evaluation paperwork and how results will be shared to interested parties

# **“Community Mentoring for Social Inclusion”**

Lifelong Learning Project, Grundtvig Parteneriate, GRU-13-P-LP-102-TR-UK

## **COMMUNITY MENTORING: GOOD TRAINING PRACTICE GUIDE**

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