

Youth Mentoring Programme

(Concept Document)



What is in This Guide

What is Mentoring About?.....	2
What is a Mentor?	2
Why Does the GSTD support a Mentorship Programme?.....	3
Who Serves as Mentors?	4
What Will Mentoring Accomplish?	4
How Do I Become a Mentor?	5
About the GSDT Mentoring Programme	6
Who We Are	6
Our Mission and Goals.....	6
Our Services	7
Common Concerns.....	9
Community Resources for Parents	13
Appendix: Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines	13



What is Mentoring About?

What is a Mentor?

A mentor is a caring and responsible adult who takes time to be a friend to a young person. A mentor listens, supports, and guides a young person on a consistent basis over a specified period of time, usually at least one year. Mentors are volunteers who know that young people can make a positive difference in the world if given the chance.

A mentor develops this friendship with a young person—whom we call a “mentee”—in order to help him (or her) be successful at home, at school, and in the community. By developing this positive relationship, a mentor can:

- Help a young person define and achieve his own goals
- Help a young person improve in school
- Nurture a young person’s self-confidence and positive self-esteem
- Listen to a young person and help her solve problems
- Introduce the young person to new ideas, activities, and opportunities

Mentors are not meant to take the role of parent, guardian, or teacher. A mentor is not a disciplinarian or decision maker for a child. A mentor’s main role is to spend time with the child doing positive and fun activities that help the mentee become more self-confident. By doing this, the mentor becomes part of the team of caring adults who support the healthy development of a child: parents, relatives, teachers, coaches, faith leaders, and friends.

A mentor is a friend, coach, companion, supporter, advisor, role model, resource for new ideas and opportunities and someone your child can talk to.

A mentor is **not** a social worker, parent, teacher, counsellor, cool peer, nag, parole officer, baby-sitter, source of money and a disciplinarian.

Why Does The GSTD Support a Mentorship Programme?

All children need the support of caring adults in order to be successful, not only within their family but at school and in their communities. Growing up isn't easy, and there are many roadblocks along the way that can cause difficulties for children. Sometimes parents don't have all the answers, and sometimes children need someone outside the family with whom to share their thoughts. Having a variety of people positively involved in a child's life provides him/her with new opportunities and experiences that will help him/her grow and gain self-confidence.

You may be able to think of adults – a teacher, a coach, a pastor – who helped you out when you were a child, encouraging you through rough spots along your road to adulthood, or just showing you a new way to look at your world. Although this may not have been a formal mentoring relationship, this person was a mentor for you.

A mentor can give a child someone else to talk to – a safe, concerned, and responsible friend who can help sort out a problem or just listen and be supportive. A mentor can also help your child thrive in school by encouraging her in her studies and after-school activities, and by getting her to think about her future goals and dreams.

Who Serves as Mentors?

Mentors are as varied as the people in a community, but they all share in their desire to make a positive difference in the life of a young person. Mentors are professional people or students taking time out from their workday to spend with children of Khayamandi.

The GSTD Mentoring Programme includes mentors who are male and female, young and old, single and married, from diverse cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, and with a wide range of skills and interests. Mentors are carefully screened and selected, and they receive initial and on-going training so that they are ready to work with your child.

What Will Mentoring Accomplish?

Research shows that having positive and on-going support from several caring adults other than family members contributes to children's healthy development and can help them become more self-confident.* Mentoring can

* *Introduction to Assets* by the Search Institute. Online at: <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/>

help children improve their grades and attitudes about school. Mentoring may also help students improve their classroom behaviour, reduce absences, and increase self-confidence. And having a mentor can also help things go more smoothly at home as the child experiences more successes and becomes more confident.

Children who are part of the GSDT Mentoring Programme not only enjoy the companionship of their mentor and the passions they share, but also learn and grow from the experience. Our programme aims to help many children:

- Improve school grades
- Become more self-confident
- Get along better with family and friends
- Avoid problems like unexcused absences, alcohol, and drugs

Sometimes the benefits of mentoring aren't visible right away, but over time this friendship can help children gain new skills and experiences that will last a lifetime.

How Do I become a Mentor?

Everyone who wants to be a volunteer mentor begins by filling out an application and has at least one interview with a staff member. Candidates go through a screening process that includes a criminal history background check using local and international resources.

Candidates who pass these steps go to a programme orientation. This gives us a chance to know them better. And before volunteers are matched they attend a longer training session about working with young people that includes information about child safety.

Safety doesn't stop when the mentor is matched with a child. In fact, our work is really just beginning. Our staff checks in with all mentors, mentees, and parents or guardians as long as the match is active. You can expect to hear from our staff at least once a month – more often in the first few months. These check-ins help us see how things are going and if there is anything we can do to help the relationship develop. We also encourage you to call your Match Coordinator any time you have a concern or question

About the GSDT Mentoring Programme



GSDT

The GSDT bridges cultural and material divides in Stellenbosch. It does so through cultural and design projects, as well as different projects to achieve educational excellence; to mentor entrepreneur initiatives; to strengthen existing community organisations; and to enable business leaders to volunteer time for assisting community organisations within a structured programme. The GSDT is the driving force that unites partner organisations such as SEED, INSPIREtoREAD, VisionAfriKa, SOS, AmaZink and the InZink amphitheatre.

Aims of Mentoring Programme

The mission of The GSDT Mentoring Programme is to enhance the lives of our youth by providing adult mentors to engage them in meaningful educational, recreational, and developmental activities.

The GSDT helps youth from the age of 2 till 22, succeed in education and in life by encouraging them to make good decisions and set positive goals. Our mentors help participating students:

- Improve their academic success and their attitudes toward school and education
- Avoid negative behaviours like using drugs or alcohol, delinquency, or gang involvement
- Get along better with family and friends
- Feel better about themselves

Our Services

The GSTD Mentoring Programme matches adult volunteer mentors from all over the world with our youth who are interested in participating. The programme is

provided free of cost to any student attending the participating at the 'Ikhaya Trust.

How are matches made?

Prior to being matched, all The GSMT mentors and youth go through an orientation and training that prepares them for the journey ahead. During this time, we get to know new participants and learn about their personality and values so that we can match them with someone they will enjoy spending time with.

Where does mentoring take place?

Once they have been matched, mentors meet via Skype at least twice a month with their assigned mentee. The mentoring meetings are held at the 'Ikhaya Trust.

All matches are one adult to one youth and last a full calendar year at minimum but it is advised that it last longer. Youth participating in the programme also receive after-school tutoring through the GSMT.

What do matches do when they meet?

Mentors and mentees begin by just getting to know one another, learning about each other's interests, likes, and dislikes, and talking about when they will meet and what they want to talk about. Once they have become acquainted and their relationship has developed, mentors begin helping mentees set some personal goals that they want to accomplish. Some youth want to improve grades, others want to explore careers, work on a special project, or simply talk about life when they meet with their mentor. Mentors and mentees will plan activities each week that will help mentees accomplish their goals, but the focus of their time together is one of friendship. Just having a friend to talk to about their goals can help young people gain confidence and develop new interests.



How do matches end?

Matches can end prematurely for a variety of reasons: a family moves away, a mentor's life circumstances change, even the reality that sometimes a match just doesn't "click." If a match ends early, and the child is interested in having another mentor, The GSDT keeps the child enrolled in the programme and participating in the group activities in an effort to rematch as soon as possible.

Matches may meet less often during the summer months when family vacations and other activities are underway and the school is closed.

Matches that run their full one-year course have the option of continuing until the youth finishes high school. Mentors, youth, and parents all meet at the time of renewal to discuss progress toward goals, talk about any relationship issues, and agree to continue for another year.

When matches do end, The GSDT offers a structured process that provides closure and positive feelings for all involved.

Common Concerns

Getting a mentoring relationship started can be stressful for everyone involved: the mentor worries about breaking the ice, the youth wonders what the experience will be like, and parents usually have a number of concerns about this new person in their child's life. It is important that parents be not only reassured about the programme but also the relationship between mentor and mentee.

What if I do not like the mentor or my child does not like the mentor?

Sometimes, unexpected issues crop up in new mentoring relationships as boundaries are set and personalities emerge. It is not uncommon for many mentoring relationships to have a slightly bumpy start.

Most issues are easily resolved by having the Match Coordinator set up a meeting where everyone can express their concerns and any misunderstandings can be corrected.

Youth in new mentoring relationships often need time to warm up to the idea. After all, a mentor is a different kind of friend than they have had before, and children can initially be uncomfortable or shy around adults they do not know.

Violations of programme rules or inappropriate behaviour by a mentor are serious and will have serious repercussions.

If all attempts to solve problems in a match are not successful, and if the child does not want the match to continue, GSMT can rematch a child with another mentor, if one is available. This is a rare occurrence and one that we try to avoid. Research indicates that keeping a mentoring relationship going for at least one year is most likely to benefit the child and that closing a match too early can actually have some negative consequences.[†] This is why we encourage all participants to be patient, honest, and do their best to work through any problems as their mentoring relationships develop.

What if the mentor has values not shared with the mentee?

Disagreements about values and interests are common in any relationship. However, we should remember that two of the most valuable things a mentor provides are new experiences and different ideas. Mentors broaden horizons by introducing their mentee to worlds that would not have been available otherwise. Mentors open doors and provide perspective.

It is the right of the parent to inform the Match Coordinator when a child initially enrolls in the programme about any preferences around values such as religious preference. This helps staff find an appropriate volunteer to meet a child's needs.

What about gifts and money?

As a rule, mentors are not encouraged to give gifts or spend money on activities. A mentor may purchase a small token gift to acknowledge a special occasion such as a birthday or achievement, but shopping vouchers and regular gifts of items or cash are not allowed.

[†] *Stand by Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth* by Dr. Jean Rhodes. Available at: <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/RHOSTA.html>

In closing . . .

We hope that having a mentor is one of the most special and helpful things that the GSDT children will do. The GSDT is committed to supporting children academically, socially, and developmentally through all our services. We look forward to working with you as a volunteer mentor, and we appreciate your support and involvement. So welcome to the GSTD family! It should be a fun and rewarding experience.

APPENDIX

Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

Responsibilities of Mentors, Mentees, and Parents

Mentor Eligibility Requirements

- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Be willing to adhere to all GSTD Mentoring Programme policies and procedures.
- Agree to a one-year commitment to the programme.
- Commit to spending a minimum of 2 hours a month with the mentee on Skype.
- Be willing to communicate with the mentee over social media including Facebook, Skype emails, and letters.
- Complete the screening process.
- Agree to attend mentor trainings as required.
- Be willing to communicate regularly with the Programme Coordinator and submit monthly meeting and activity information.
- Have a clean criminal history.
- Have never been accused, arrested, charged, or convicted of child abuse or molestation.
- Not be a convicted felon. If the applicant has been convicted of a felony then he or she may be considered only after a period of seven years with demonstrated good behaviour and an appropriate and corrective attitude regarding past behaviours.
- Not be a user of illicit drugs.

- Not use alcohol or controlled substances in an excessive or inappropriate manner.
- Not be currently in treatment for substance abuse. If a substance abuse problem has occurred in the past, the applicant must have completed a non-addictive period of at least five years.
- Not have falsified information during the course of the screening process.

Mentee Eligibility Requirements

- Be a student at the 'Ikhaya Trust be it School Aftercare or Vision AfriKa.
- Demonstrate a desire to participate in the programme and be willing to abide by all GSDT Mentoring Programme policies and procedures.
- Be able to obtain parental/guardian permission and on-going support for participation in the programme.
- Agree to a one-year commitment to the programme.
- Commit to spending a minimum of 2 hours a month with the mentor over Skype.
- Be willing to communicate with the mentor over social media including Facebook, Skype emails, and letters.
- Agree to attend mentee trainings as required.
- Be willing to communicate regularly with the programme coordinator and discuss monthly meeting and activity information.

Visits

It is the policy of the GSDT Mentoring Programme to encourage mentor/mentee visits. Home visits are allowed if organized beforehand with the GSDT Mentoring Programme Coordinator. The Coordinator will ask the Parents/Guardian if a home visit is appropriate and allowed. As many mentors are not in the county this is not always possible.

Confidentiality & Mandatory Reporting Policy

It is the policy of the GSDT Mentoring Programme to protect the confidentiality of its participants and their families. With the exception of the limitations listed below, programme staff will only share information about mentors,

mentees, and their families with other GSDT professional staff and the Trustees of The GSDT. Further, all prospective mentors, mentees, and parents/ guardians should be informed of the scope and limitations of confidentiality by programme staff. Additionally, mentors are required to keep information about their mentee and his/her family confidential.

In order for The GSDT to provide a responsible and professional service to participants, it is necessary to ask mentors, mentees, parents/guardians, and other outside sources to divulge extensive personal information about the prospective participants and their families, such as:

- Information gained from mentors and mentees, written or otherwise, about themselves and/or their families, in application to and during programme participation
- Participant's names and images gained from participants themselves, programme meetings, training sessions, and other events
- Information gained about participants from outside sources including confidential references, school staff, employers

Records are, therefore, considered the property of the agency, not the agency workers, and are not available for review by mentors, mentees, or parents/guardians.

It is therefore the right of the GSDT to screen all emails, Skype communication, letters and any other social media contact between mentor and mentee.

Limits of Confidentiality

Information from mentor and mentee records may be shared with individuals or organizations as specified below under the following conditions:

- Information may be gathered about programme participants and shared with other participants, individuals, or organizations only upon receipt of signed "release" forms from mentors, mentees, or parents/guardians.
- Identifying information (including names, photographs, videos, etc.) of programme participants may be used in agency publications or promotional materials only upon written consent of the mentor, mentee, and/or parent/guardian.
- Information may only be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts pursuant to a valid and enforceable subpoena.

- Information may be provided to legal counsel in the event of litigation or potential litigation involving the GSDT. Such information is considered privileged information, and its confidentiality is protected by law.
- If programme staff receives information at any point in the match process that a volunteer is using illegal substances, has a criminal history of any kind, or is inappropriately using alcohol or other controlled substances, the information will be shared with the parent and they will have the option to reject the prospective mentor or close the existing match.

Mandatory Abuse Reporting

It is the policy of the GSDT Mentoring Programme that all staff, mentors, and other representatives of the programme must report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Programme Coordinator immediately. All such suspected reports must be made to appropriate local authorities. Programme staff must follow the mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect procedure.

Violations of Confidentiality

A known violation of confidentiality by a programme participant may result in a written warning or disciplinary action such as suspension or termination from the programme.

Use of Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, and Firearms Policy

It is the policy of the GSDT Mentoring Programme to prohibit and discourage the use of drugs, alcohol, and firearms. Mentees and mentors are prohibited from using drugs or alcohol while engaged in the mentoring relationship. Any suspected violations should be reported to the programme coordinator.

Alcoholic Beverages: No participant of the GSDT Mentoring Programme will possess or consume beer, wine, or other alcoholic beverages while actively engaged or prior to actively engaging in mentoring, nor shall any participant endorse the use of alcohol.

Drugs: No participant of the GSDT Mentoring Programme will manufacture, possess, distribute, or use any illegal substance while engaged in mentoring or otherwise.

Tobacco: Smoking and the use of all tobacco products is prohibited during any visit or Skype engagement with mentee. The use of tobacco products includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, snuff, or other substances that contain tobacco.

Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

It is the policy of the GSTD Mentoring Programme that unacceptable behaviours will not be tolerated on the part of mentors or mentees while participating in the programme. This policy is in addition to behavioural requirements stipulated in other policies or procedures. This policy in no way is intended to replace or take precedence over other policies or procedures including, but not limited to, the following:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Use of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco Policy

A number of behaviours are regarded as incompatible with the GSTD Mentoring Programme goals, values, and programme standards and therefore are considered unacceptable and prohibited while participants are engaged in mentoring activities:

- Unwelcome physical contact, such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching, and physical assault
- Unwelcome physical, verbal, visual, or behavioural mannerisms or conduct that denigrates, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual
- Demeaning or exploitive behaviour of either a sexual or nonsexual nature, including threats of such behaviour
- Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material
- Known sexual abuse or neglect of a child
- Denigration, public or private, of any mentee parent/ guardian or family member
- Denigration, public or private, of political or religious institutions or their leaders
- Intentional violation of any local South African law or child law

Any unacceptable behaviour, as specified but not limited to the above, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension or termination from participation in the mentoring programme.

Closure Policy

It is the policy of the GSTD Mentoring Programme that all mentors and mentees must participate in closure procedures when their match ends. Closure is defined as the ending of a formal match relationship regardless of the circumstances of the match ending or whether they intend to have future contact informally beyond the match duration. While no party is expected to continue the relationship beyond the formal end of a match, matches may continue in the programme beyond the contract period and receive on-going support and supervision.

Closure can occur for any number of reasons, including the contracted match duration has ended, one or both participants do not want to continue the match, there are changes in life circumstances in one or both of the match partner's lives, or an individual no longer meets the requirements for programme participation. Hence, the match may end at the discretion of the mentor, mentee, parent/guardian, and/or Programme Coordinator. It is left to the discretion of the Programme Coordinator whether an individual will be reassigned to another match in the future based upon past participation performance and current goals and needs of the programme.

Future contact will be at the mutual and informal agreement of the mentor, the mentee, and parent/guardian. If future contact is agreed upon, the GSTD Mentoring Programme will not be responsible for monitoring and supporting the match after the match has ended. The Programme Coordinator will verbally and in writing inform all parties – the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian – that the formal match has ended and that the GSTD will not be liable for any incidents that occur after the match has closed.