



YOUTH NEXUS

MENTORING HANDBOOK

2021

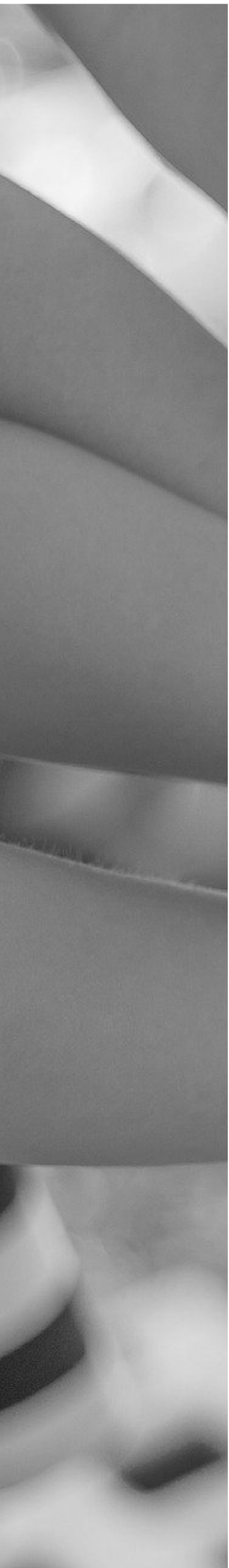
What is the YN mentoring program?

Mentoring can be defined as “a mutually beneficial relationship which involves a more experienced person helping a less experienced person to identify and achieve their goals”. Youth nexus mentoring program is designed to bring together future mentors and mentees in a safe environment where mutual personal development is encouraged and fostered. We provide the means through which young generations can find the role models, inspiration, and advice they require while transitioning to adulthood. Both the mentors and mentees have the opportunity to learn from one other and develop long lasting bonds.

Purpose of this document

The Youth Nexus Mentor handbook offers an overview of what successful mentoring entails and how to foster a successful mentor-mentee relationship. This handbook offers information, guidance and strategies to build healthy mentoring relationships. Further, the YN mentor handbook offers a code of conduct for all its members, volunteers, and mentors to adhere to. This will allow the employees, volunteers, mentors, and mentees to navigate their roles and responsibilities within this framework and refer to this handbook throughout their engagement with YN. The mentors need to be familiar with the below-outlined information and policies to ensure a safe and efficient relationship with their mentees.

This handbook aims to reflect and contribute to the mission and vision of Youth Nexus. In doing so, it aims to create a safe and open space for all of its people.





WHY MENTOR WITH US?

There are many benefits to participating in our mentoring program including:

- Contribution to the development of competent and inspired future generations.
- Transfer of skills and knowledge.
- Expand professional networks.
- Improvement in leadership and communication skills.
- Personal satisfaction from contributing to the community.
- Reflection on personal development, career, and experiences.

How we ensure our mentors are prepared and developed?

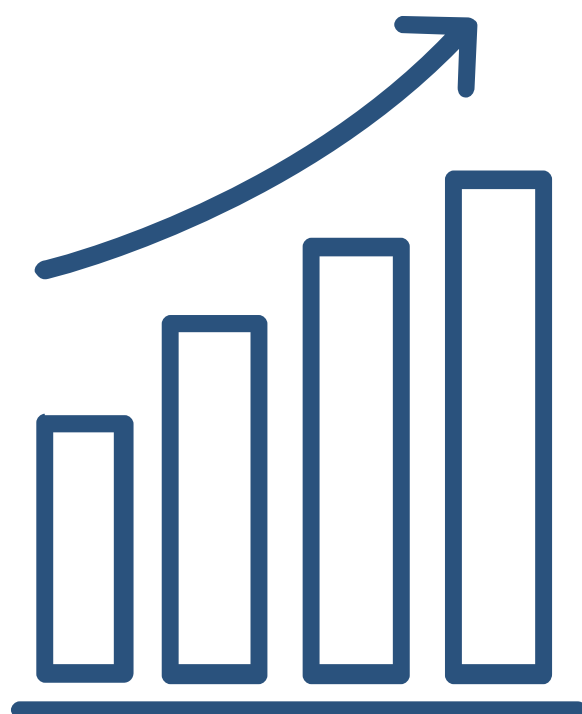
Youth nexus has organised several programs to ensure our mentors are properly trained and competent as well as to enhance their effectiveness as mentors.

Mentoring skills workshop series address a variety of topics including:

- Introduction to mentoring
- Developing positive relationships with a mentee
- Providing feedback in an effective way
- Relationship management
- Communication styles
- Resolving challenges

What do we aim to provide our mentors?

We aim to provide a safe and open space for all of our mentors to develop the skills required to support the youth through their transition to adulthood so they can exhibit behaviours, skills, and styles which the mentees wish to emulate.



Benefits of mentoring

Mentoring benefits the persons involved in many ways. Mentors will quickly develop skills such as communication, listening and giving feedback when interacting with mentees. They will also improve their time management and planning skills through brainstorming and planning their mentoring programs. Mentors will also develop their inter relational skills by constantly being involved with mentees, teachers, and other mentors. All these skills will help mentors in the future whether they are simply socialising at university with peers or when they enter the workforce.

Furthermore, mentors will:

- Learn more about the professional life
- Gain new perspective and become creative thinker
- Build on their cultural and emotional intelligence
- Develop communication, leadership, and interpersonal skills
- Gain counselling and advisory skills
- Develop strategies for dealing with both personal and academic issues
- Increase social and academic confidence
- Become more empowered to make decisions
- Increase their ability of self-reflection
- Develop patience and tolerance
- Improve their interpersonal, communication and leadership skills
- Contribute to their communities
- Have the opportunity to impart invaluable knowledge and resources to their fellow mentees in guiding their social, educational, and spiritual journey throughout the mentoring period
- Develop an improved understanding of the circumstances impacting their mentees' generations
- Increase chance of employment and professional networking

INTRODUCTION TO MENTORING

What is a mentor?

A mentor is a person with more knowledge and experience who guides and leads a less experienced individual through learning skills pertaining to a certain task or role. They lead by example and offer guidance and advice to support a mentee in developing these skills.

What is mentoring?

In the school context, mentoring involves university-aged mentors guiding school-aged mentees through the journey of life. With slightly more life experience, the mentees can relate to the mentor whose role is to inspire and lead them towards establishing a successful future. Therefore, mentoring requires leadership by example and by upholding strong values and character. They model a more mature version of a school student and provide them perspective into how a young person can carry themselves in order to succeed.

One of the most important components of the effectiveness of mentoring is that it is done in a spirit of altruism. Mentors give up their time on a voluntary basis and do not have salaried material expectations. Rather, they are rewarded with the friends they make, the network they build, the positive contribution they make and the valuable skills they earn. However, mentoring young people is not a light responsibility and should be taken very seriously. Therefore, Youth Nexus has certain minimum requirements from its mentors to ensure a quality and safe service.

At the core of the activity is the relationship between the mentor and the mentee. The focus of the activity is the development of the mentee as a result of their mentor's advice, guidance and knowledge. It can be a short or long-term relationship, where the goals may change but are always set by the learner i.e. the mentee.



Importance of mentoring

One of the main purposes of mentoring is to allow professional barriers between teachers and students to be bridged. In their professional role, mentors prioritise relationships, allowing them to invest more time than teachers can into students' personal development. Since teachers are responsible for managing the learning environment, mentors fill a gap in a mentee's school life in personal growth and development.

What makes an ideal mentor

An ideal mentor should be capable of finding a balance within their interactions with students and other mentor related individuals. From time to time, a mentor should be a friend, guide and teacher, because students' needs can vary, the role of the mentor is key in identifying the issues and overcoming them through different approaches. The ideal mentor needs to be effective and efficient in any given situation, for this reason whatever the mentor recommends or advocates should be something they practice and implement themselves. The mentor has to be extremely sensitive and careful when addressing any issue in any given situation, in order to protect the image and identity of mentoring.

Development of a mentor - developing oneself

The mentor should attempt in having a consistent schedule which incorporates personal development. This can involve reading, listening, and taking courses. Fundamentally any mentor should have a self-driven thirst for developing and bettering themselves. Youth Nexus will provide individuals with opportunities for personal development. Enthusiasm and the following up of mentors will play a key role for both individual and institution.

What to expect as a mentor

The nature of mentoring and working with students means there will definitely be ups and down. Your programs will not always end up working out, teachers may have given work to students for them to complete and sometimes mentees will react in unexpected ways and the plans you made may not pan out as expected. Nevertheless, these small issues will quickly be overshadowed by the relationships you will develop with mentees and the fond memories you will form in the process of helping shape and develop your mentees lives.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles

From time to time, a mentor should be a friend, guide, and teacher, because students' needs can vary. The role of a mentor comes down to being a person that a mentee can look up to as a role model who upholds strong values and someone who can play a key role in the development of a mentee's life by helping with questions that might arise about school, friendships, family or even religion and faith.

Responsibilities

Allocating time throughout the week is a vital component of mentoring. As a mentor one of your responsibilities is to build a healthy relationship with your mentee. This can be done by having regular programs during or after school. It is important to keep in mind that as a mentor you must set clear boundaries with your mentee and that these boundaries are not crossed. You must be careful about sharing personal information such as phone numbers and social media to maintain respect and avoid mentees overstepping boundaries or misinterpreting the relationship.



Characteristics of a successful mentor

The mentors need to:

- o Be open-minded.
- o Have effective listening skills.
- o Have well-developed communication and interpersonal skills.
- o Be a team-player.
- o Have positive and open attitude.
- o Be respectful.
- o Be inclusive.
- o Have an understanding of cultural diversity.

Characteristics of a successful mentoring relationship

The following are at the heart of a successful mentoring relationship:

Boundaries

Recognising boundaries and ensuring mutual respect, professionalism, and trust in the relationship.

Consistency

Ensuring consistent engagement between the mentor and the mentee to build a secure and healthy relationship.

Structure and Support

Fostering an honest, constructive and open space for the mentor and the mentee to comfortably engage in mentoring.

Youth-centred

Maintaining a focus on the mentee's interests or circumstances affecting the mentee and, potentially, their performance

Transfer of Knowledge & Skills

Facilitating the reciprocal transfer of knowledge and skills between the mentor and the mentee

MENTORING SKILLS AND DEVELOPING THEM

Enthusiasm - Eagerness - Empathy

As a mentor with experience and valuable knowledge, you should adopt a genuine and enthusiastic stance in sharing your experiences and working towards benefitting your mentees.

Your mentees will be looking up to you as a role model, therefore, always be open and eager to connect with them.

As a mentor, be empathetic towards your mentees and actively support them in their given time.

Respectful Attitude

As a mentor, always try to maintain a respectful attitude towards your mentees, supervisors, and peers. Rather than treating individuals unconstructively, be kind, compassionate and mindful of your actions. If complicated situations arise, always work towards acknowledging and apologising for your behaviour.

Be Curious

As a mentor, never make assumptions about your mentee. Ask questions and believe in your mentee, as they are the expert of their own lives. Be curious to learn about their ambitions, goals and ideas.

Commitment & Punctuality

As a mentor, you are expected to commit to your weekly sessions and accept the weekly responsibilities. Always work towards honouring the scheduled events and sessions with your punctuality and be present with your utmost professional behaviour.

Listening Actively

The skill of active listening is the most crucial and basic skill you will implement throughout your relationship with your mentee. It does not only allow you to establish rapport but also creates a positive accepting environment for your mentee.

Be interested in what they are explaining, reflect back on what has been said to show that you have been attending.

Use body language skills (e.g. eye contact, head nods).

Allow your mentee to speak and discuss their issue/question/concern before giving advice or sharing your own experience.

Building Trust

Trust can be built over time. As the mentor, work towards honouring weekly scheduled sessions, consistently showing interest and support, while being genuine and honest. With patience and regular commitment, you will build a trusting relationship with your mentee.

Setting Goals & Building Capacity

As the role model, you will have your own career and personal goals, which, when appropriate, can be shared with your mentee. Your mentee can consult you on their own academic, personal and career goals as well. You should work towards developing your mentee's capacity for learning and achieving their learning goals by:

- Assisting with resources, including people, books, articles
- Sharing your own knowledge and skills by giving examples, demonstrating the processes and asking questions
- Discussing different perspectives and possible actions that can be taken

Encouraging & Inspiring

Giving encouragement is one of the most valued mentoring skill. This includes giving your mentee the recognition and genuine positive verbal feedback when necessary. You should work towards encouraging your mentee by:

- Communicating your belief in their capacity to grow personally and professionally
- Respond to your mentee's frustration and challenges with words of support, understanding and accepting
- Comment on their favourable accomplishments, positive traits



Mentoring challenges

Keeping mentees engaged

Be patient throughout the relationship, as building a trusting mentoring relationship takes time. Focus on each mentee and try to build unique relationships with each. Be open to their different characteristics and work with them one by one.

Finding resources

Consult your supervisor and other mentors with experience in finding your resources.

Allocating weekly time

Although weekly commitments are expected, at times you may struggle with your mentoring sessions. Always be open to your supervisor and speak to them.

Assessing and identifying mentee's motivation, knowledge, and skills

Mentoring is a process, which requires commitment and patience. Focus on your mentee's goals and aspirations, while working to understand and support them throughout the journey.

Fostering mentee's independence

Always be supportive and do not dominate the relationship. Allow your mentee to explore their own options.

Setting limits and boundaries in the relationship

Be clear and set your boundaries from the start with your mentee. If uncomfortable situations arise, communicate your concerns to your supervisors.

Giving feedback to the mentee

Be genuine, honest, and maintain a positive attitude. You can ask for advice from your supervisors or peers.

Tips and strategies

- o Be a positive role model
- o Always encourage good behaviour
- o Approach issues with a positive attitude
- o Each mentee is unique, thus approach each mentorship differently
- o Always work to support your mentees
- o Be genuinely interested in your mentee and your relationship
- o Actively listen to your mentees
- o Be honest about what you can and cannot provide for your mentees
- o Be open to sharing your experiences
- o Do not be afraid to ask questions to your supervisors
- o Always reflect and work to improve

What can mentees gain from mentoring?

- o Mentees have further guidance in their social, educational, and spiritual journeys.
- o Mentees have the opportunity to connect with a mentor who may have an enhanced understanding of the mentee as opposed to mentees' teachers and/or parents.
- o Mentees are exposed to a range of educational, extracurricular, and work opportunities through the diverse experiences mentors and Youth Nexus can offer.
- o Mentees learn to recognise their personal strengths and capabilities.

POLICIES

Please familiarise yourself with the following Youth Nexus policies:

Recognition of Indigenous Peoples

Youth Nexus recognises that we live and work on the traditional lands of the First Nations peoples of Australia. Youth Nexus acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' connection to the land and its waterways and pays respect to its cultural heritage. Youth Nexus staff, members, volunteers, and mentors (and/or ambassadors) will respect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' culture and rights as it 'relates to Indigenous young people's self-esteem and sense of identity'.

Privacy, Confidentiality & Data Protection Policy

Principle:

Youth Nexus is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles contained in the Privacy Act 1988. The Act details how businesses and organisations must manage personal information of staff, members, and volunteers. It regulates what personal information can be kept, in addition to how organisations collect, use, secure, and disclose that information.

Individuals will have the right to know why an organisation is collecting their personal information, what information it holds about them, how it will use the information, and who else will get the information. Individuals will also have the right to verify that personal information held by an organisation is accurate and may complain if they think their information is not being handled correctly.

Details:

Youth Nexus maintains information regarding mentors to monitor performance, development, and wellbeing. As mentioned above, mentors will have the right to know what, why, and how the organisation is collecting their information. Furthermore, mentors will likewise retain information about their mentees whereby they must comply with the Privacy Act 1988.

Anti-Oppressive Practice: Non-Discrimination, Equity & Self-Awareness Policy

Principle:

All persons engaged with Youth Nexus will work to ensure that equality of opportunity is upheld; and recognise that everyone has the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect regardless of race, gender, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. Youth Nexus believes that everyone has the right to a fair and equal opportunity without being discriminated, as everyone has the right to participate and engage without being excluded. We will strive to establish a non-discriminatory environment through promoting empowerment for all. We are committed to adhere by the best practices and procedures to enable a safe environment.

Details:

The practice of Youth Nexus' mentors will be non-discriminatory as per the following legislations:

- Age Discrimination Act 2004
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984.

Youth Nexus' mentors will work towards an inclusive society, respectful of the rule of law, human dignity, equality, and freedom. Our organisation will, particularly, recognise the special importance of human rights for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia and acknowledge their historic, cultural, and spiritual connection with their lands and its waterways.

Duty of Care, Health & Safety Policy

Principle:

Youth nexus is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all mentors and mentees. Through effective procedures and practices, hazards and risks will be eliminated where possible. The organisation and mentors will seek to provide and maintain a safe environment with the help of respective staff members, as the responsibility of delivering the work health and safety (WHS) laws is upon everyone involved.

Details:

- Risk Management
- The Risk Management Process
- Likelihood of Risk:
- Inherent Risk Rating
- Fire Safety
- Security Checking
- Emergency Management
- First Aid

Youth Nexus will provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment by:

- Ensuring that mentors comply with all procedures and legislation regarding health and safety.
- Eliminating and minimising all potential hazards and risks.
- Provide necessary information and instruction to enable a healthy and safe environment.
- Providing supervision to ensure health and safety measures are taken.
- Regularly carrying out risk assessments.

Our organisation aims to actively provide a safe and healthy environment for all mentors and mentees through the commitment and collaboration of everyone.

Safeguarding Policy

Principle:

Youth Nexus is committed to protect children who are directly or indirectly involved in mentor related programs. Youth Nexus mentors are provided with principles to ensure optimum measures are taken for safeguarding.

Details:

Youth Nexus is a strong advocate for child safety and protection. We believe that all young people have the right to a safe and just environment that flourishes welfare and equity. Children should not experience any elements of abuse and Youth Nexus are committed to deliver the responsibility of promoting well-being and protection.

- Working with children regulations 2016
- Education and training reform act 2006
- Department of Justice - WWC
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004

Youth Nexus will:

- Ensure child protection and safeguarding practices are adopted by all mentors.
- Develop and implement effective safeguarding procedures.
- Establish and develop a safe environment that eliminates any form of bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- Review safeguarding procedures and discourses regularly.

Recruitment Policy

Principle:

The Youth Nexus 'Recruitment Policy' outlines the principles and processes for recruitment, selection, and appointment of mentors for our Mentoring Program. Youth Nexus is committed to provide an effective process to engage new mentors to our organisation while clinging to our core values. The Recruitment Policy outlines a concise guideline for our recruiting officials to select candidates through integrity and equal opportunities.

Details:

The aims of Youth Nexus' 'Recruitment Policy' are as follows:

- To ensure that appropriately qualified, skilled, and motivated people are employed.
- To reinforce within the community the principles and practices that will guide recruitment, selection and to communicate a commitment to implementing these principles and practices.
- To demonstrate a commitment to equal employment opportunity and ensuring that appropriate communication, records, and human resource controls are maintained.



Contact Us

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