

Mentor's Handbook



A Justice Action Mentoring Group Project

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Acknowledgments

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Foreword

The battle for the acceptance of mentoring as a necessary social response to offending has been immense. But the more unreasonable the resistance by the criminal justice system, steeped in attitudes of vengeance, the more certain is our victory. We need only the right of communication — a democratic pillar — to succeed. Our success is measured by the results we have achieved, compared to the expensive failure of imprisonment. This handbook documents some of the

lessons we have learnt by treating the most vilified ‘criminals’ as real people, adopting them as family and creating a safer community as a result.

As of March 2008, the US Senate has acknowledged the importance of mentoring in its passing of the Second Chance Act 2007. This legislation is designed to ease the re-entry process for individuals leaving prison in the US by providing funding for mentoring programs.



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Introduction

This book provides an outline of the work of Justice Action (JA) and the setting up of the Justice Action Mentoring Group. We hope it will provide a useful guide for individuals and other groups who may be contemplating setting up their own community mentoring program.

JA's specific focus is on issues relating to:

- ❖ a safer, more compassionate community.
- ❖ human rights, prisoners' and victims' rights.
- ❖ improved mental health for our community.
- ❖ the system of social control involving police and courts.

- ❖ the needs of ex-prisoners, their families and loved ones.
- ❖ methods for cutting rates of recidivism.

Much of the book's content is directed towards providing similarly-focused community mentors with a background on how JA set out to establish its group and become accredited. However groups with a different focus should decide whether JA's methods can be adapted to their own special needs.

Details of some of JA's practical mentoring strategies and resources are included. We examine the setting up of the Breakfree half-way house. The work of the Action Break Theatre Group is outlined as an example of a creative project that aims to implement an innovative and practical mentoring program.



Background on Justice Action

Justice Action is a community-based organisation of criminal justice activists. We are prisoners, academics, lawyers, ex-prisoners, victims of crime and general community members. We believe that meaningful change depends upon the free exchange of information and community responsibility.

Founding Principles

Justice Action and the prisoner movement trace their history back to the penal colony with its slavery and degradation of human beings. From that moment, the spirit of Justice Action has existed.

Justice Action promotes awareness of the inadequacies and failures of the criminal justice system and actively involves and empowers those who suffer. We maintain ongoing communication with offenders, victims, and the general community, and monitor their complaints. These complaints form the basis of our campaigns. We encourage partnerships among people affected by the criminal justice system to create a fairer and safer community.

Relationships

Justice Action links internationally to the activist and academic organisations targeting abuse of authority. Locally we are linked to the union movement and community groups working for peace, the environment, and respect for human rights generally.

Structure

Justice Action is a loosely structured unincorporated organisation. There are no fees for membership, no titles or office holders. JA receives no government funding and relies on volunteers to maintain its activities and run its campaigns. For over 23 years members have continued to act vigorously in concert in the role of a rigorous, independent watchdog.

Sponsorship

Breakout DesignPrintWeb has been the primary sponsor since 1984. Its clients include unions, corporations and community groups who support the social enterprise by giving it the chance to underquote on their work. See its brochure on the back cover.

Justice Action declines any funding that could compromise its independence. It relies on its primary sponsor, advertising and donations to fund campaigns, and the work of volunteers to initiate and implement projects.

Membership

Membership is open to all people who are interested in working to create a more just society, promote prisoners' and victims rights and assist prisoners, ex-prisoners, victims, their families and loved ones.

Meetings

Meetings are held every Tuesday from 5 to 7 p.m. at our premises at Trades Hall, suite 204, 4 Goulburn Street, Haymarket.

Campaigns – the vehicle for change

Justice Action proposes and agitates for change in social justice policies. To achieve change, we focus, analyse and publish our views as the basis for intervention. A major theme in many of our campaigns is that restorative justice and, in particular, those ideas expressed through our mentoring program are the solution to many of the problems facing the criminal justice system. By acknowledging the humanity and dignity of all people we make a safer society. Our current campaigns include:

1. Youth Crime – JA/Mission Australia Partnership

JA is working with Mission Australia to conduct a series of mentoring workshops for 500 young people in the Campbelltown/Hornsby area of Sydney, who have been identified as being at risk of becoming offenders.

The JA mentoring presentation is designed to assist them to understand the consequences of their actions based on our experiences and work through ways to ensure they do not offend. We encourage them to develop personal and social skills so that they can move forward with their lives in positive and productive ways. We link them to local services and to training opportunities.

2. Youth Naming and Shaming Legislation in NSW

Currently before the NSW Parliament is a legislative proposal to discourage children from committing offences by publicly naming and shaming them if they offend. JA was invited to make written and personal submissions on the proposal to the Legislative Council Law and Justice Committee.

When we appeared before the committee our major submission was that the emphasis in dealing with juvenile offenders should

not be on naming and shaming but on restorative programs of which JA Mentoring is a prime example. The committee made up of representatives from all sides of politics showed considerable interest in our mentoring program and how it worked and its many successes.

3. Smoking rights for Mental Health Consumers and Prisoners

The NSW Department of Health has set up a taskforce with a view to 'the implementation of NSW smoke free policies in NSW mental health inpatient facilities'. Several mental health professionals and advocacy groups have contacted JA to seek our assistance in opposing this proposal.

JA very strongly believes that to impose such a ban on a particularly vulnerable section of society when the same ban is not imposed on the larger community, is not only undemocratic but also imposes a disproportionate level of suffering on those who are already suffering enough.

We support the right to choose and not be forced to lose the most important personal pleasure that 80% of patients enjoy and currently control. We have been provided with considerable evidence of the benefits for mental health patients of being allowed to continue smoking when combined with smoke free areas to protect the health of those who do not smoke.

In our submission, it would be far better for the Department to introduce smoking intervention education programs and tools such as nicorettes and patches for mental health patients in these institutions, than banning smoking altogether. In conjunction with the people and organizations that have contacted us, we have prepared a response in the form of a submission to the Taskforce.

4. Emu Plains – Problems Encountered by Children Visiting Mothers

Emu Plains Correctional Centre for women is a low security prison near Sydney. It became a women's prison in 1996, and until May 2007, had all day visits every weekend and public holidays.

This was a great incentive for women to be classified low risk and moved to Emu Plains so that they could spend time with their children, family and friends with the all day visits. The majority of women in prison are mothers and rely heavily on visits to maintain the bond and contact with their children.

In May 2007, the administration changed the visiting regime without consultation, by introducing 2 hour visiting blocks separated by a lunch break. The effect caused significant distress to mothers and their children yet the administration said that the mothers wanted it - a lie! JA received numerous letters of complaint from women prisoners. In addition many state and local parliamentarians, churches and community groups have been vocal in their criticism of the Department's actions and outraged by its insensitivity. Questions were asked in Parliamentary hearings, lies told and exposed and a representative of JA was even banned from visiting all NSW prisons for talking to and handing out leaflets to other visitors.

JA is working with families and prisoners to bring back all day visits.

5. Communication Rights For Prisoners

There has been a disturbing and growing trend for prison authorities to ban prisoners from having access to legitimate published materials that are freely available in the community. This isolates prisons from the community and extends the exclusion to ideas and civil interaction.

Recent examples include the banning of prisoners in some states from receiving 'How to Vote' cards at election times which is widely seen as unconstitutional and the banning of our nationally published newspaper Just Us from prisons in 3 states (5 states and territories allow it in). Our newspapers have been distributed nationally in all prisons in all states and territories and to all judges and politicians in Australia for many years (in fact, for 47 editions under the masthead, Framed).

In NSW legal proceedings were taken late last year by a former inmate in the Supreme Court seeking an order that a refusal by Corrective Services to allow our newspaper's distribution in NSW prisons be lifted. Although he was unsuccessful because of a technical problem with his legal standing, the Judge commented that she did not see anything in the publication 'that could be said to prejudice the good order of the prisons.' and had real doubts as to whether the Commissioner had considered the paper on its merits.

Some Past Campaigns:

- Forced the exposure and reform of the corrupt police practice of concocting confessions called the police "verbal".
- Assisted the successful High Court challenge to return the prisoner right to vote. Was asked to present the case for prisoners before the Senate Inquiry in 2006.
- Hosted the Eleventh International Conference on Penal Abolition ICOPA XI in Tasmania in 2006 and organised it for London in 2008.
- Hosted the defence of those accused of the Hilton Hotel bombing and employed the coordinator of the successful Anderson, Dunn and Alister campaign.

- Initiated the Stop the Women's Jail Campaign after the government rejection of the 126 submissions against the prison and only Corrective Services for it. Employed Kerry Nettle (later Senator) as the Coordinator.
- In conjunction with TAFE, created a community mentoring course with special modules to address the needs of those in tension with the law. The 22 graduates were mainly ex-prisoners.
- As the only group invited to make an oral presentation to the Senate Inquiry into the Crimes (Forensic Procedures) Act in December 2000, we defended the privacy of human genetic material against the top four experts from the Attorney-General and the Federal Police.
- After the Nagle Royal Commission exposures and government inaction, ran a private prosecution against ten Grafton and Bathurst prison officers and a doctor for 4 months working with law students and thirty two prisoner witnesses.
- Distributed the only questionnaire to prisoners during the NSW Drug Summit 1999 and had six MP crossbenchers write "the participation of Justice Action is absolutely crucial to deliberations at the Summit".
- Supervised hundreds of people on community service orders since 1984.
- Worked with Women Behind Bars to successfully change the law on provocation in domestic violence murder cases, around the Bruce and Violet Roberts Blockade.
- Coordinated the NSW Criminal Justice Coalition for two and a half years.
- Facilitated the creation of the Australian Prisoners Union in 1999.
- Successfully defended the prisoners' right to vote nationally in 1997, giving the only oral evidence at the Senate Inquiry.
- Part of the initiating committee for the NSW Prisoners Legal Service following the Nagle Royal Commission.
- Took up a position as a foundation member on the Justice Health Consumer Council monitoring the health of all NSW prisoners.
- Lobbied for the Wood Royal Commission and brought evidence on numerous issues including wrongful convictions and followed for case reviews.
- Consistently pressured the government to control the spread of blood borne communicable diseases in prisons through the immediate availability of condoms, clean syringes and dental dams.
- Justice Action was acknowledged in Parliament by Liberal barrister Jeremy Kinross as "consistently standing for truth".
- Coordinated the Justice Action Mulawa Project which saw volunteer law students and solicitors visiting Mulawa Correctional Centre weekly and the circulation of plain English legal/prison issue booklets into Mulawa.
- Held the position as Australian Coordinator for International Prison Watch.
- Initiated recommendations made in the Prison Visitors Survey Report and worked with Corrective Services to propose changes.
- Initiated ex-prisoner Richard Lynott's case against the government for negligence due to their failure to supply clean needles and syringes in prison, causing his death.
- In conjunction with Pride, Justice Action succeeded in having the KM1 herbal trial available for HIV+ prisoners.
- Justice Action co-hosted the first national conference of Community-based Criminal Justice Activists.
- Initiated the computer project, which has had over 100 computers donated to prisons from the corporate and community sector.

Background on JA Mentoring

The following sections are excerpts from the original paper presented at the ICOPA X Conference in Canada in 2000. It outlines the original vision of the JA Mentoring project.

The suggested mentor program is to have a person trusted by the offender, in a one to one relationship on a daily basis, sometimes live-in, fully paid to give support and guidance. The mentor would be both a role model and a friend. Mentors would ideally have a background or personal experience as consumers of the criminal justice system.

The mentor program would act as an innovative and alternative crime-fighting option, which could be, in particular circumstances, more successful and efficient than re-imprisoning offenders.

It is important to define this particular mentor program and each role extremely carefully. There are a number of different terminologies used for various support groups. These include “big brother/big sister”, which is a YMCA/YWCA initiative, “carers” or “buddy” systems in schools. The terminology is important to indicate that there is not a power imbalance between mentor and criminal justice client.

The need for a relationship built on trust is vital to this initiative. Close friendship or a close relationship with at least one person, can act as a protective process or safeguard that enhances a young person’s ability to resist stressful life events. These can help act as a safeguard from risks such as association with peers engaged in risky behaviour or poor parental monitoring. The relationship between the mentor and the criminal justice client would be similar to a contractual agreement. That is, that both people have rights and responsibilities to the other person and both have a remedy if the other is not fulfilling their role.

It is important to have the mentor position recallable by the criminal justice client and

accountable to the client’s community, otherwise trust can be easily eroded and clients would be unwilling to participate.

The proposal is to provide a significant person from the offender’s network or the wider community (not employed by a government agency) who would be responsible for offering the offender intensive support and guidance on a fee for service basis.

It is the aim of such a program to reduce recidivism rates and increase community participation through the intensive support of adult offenders at all stages of interaction with the criminal justice system. Mentoring reintegrates them into an independent and financially secure setting, gaining full-time employment, suitable and long term shelter, and contact with a suitable and compassionate health care provider.

Aims of the Mentoring Program

To create a safer community and prevent crime by reducing recidivism rates amongst former prisoners and divert people from custodial settings.

To assist offenders in gaining affordable shelter, appropriate health care and counselling, and personally satisfying, positive activity.

Objectives of the Mentoring Program

To work with the criminal justice client to determine what unmet needs the clients have that will keep them from surviving on the outside. These needs include, but are not limited to, shelter, food, clothing, health care, drug counselling, a home, education and job search assistance.

To design a plan to make sure these needs are met. These plans will be formulated and negotiated with the ex-offender to ensure they meet all the objectives of his plan.

The program may involve the following five stages:

- ❖ Education and training.
- ❖ Correspondence training and assessment.
- ❖ Assessment and pre-release planning – introduction to a possible mentor.
- ❖ Community re-integration and financial stabilisation.
- ❖ Follow up and on-going support.

To involve Government, NGOs and the corporate sector as strategic partners.

To establish a policy and program think-tank to examine alternatives to custodial punishment in NSW with a focus on re-integration programs for adults.

Evaluation of the Mentoring Program

Funding of mentors' services will include independent evaluation of their services to demonstrate their capacity to increase public safety by reducing recidivism and by reduced public expenditure on a comparative basis with costs associated with incarceration

An independent body with specialisation in criminology and crime prevention strategies, preferably a tertiary institution, will evaluate mentors and their activities.

The Selection Criteria For Mentors

The suggested mentor program is to have a person trusted by the offender, in a one to one relationship on a daily basis (sometimes live-in), to give support and guidance.

The mentor would be both a role model and a friend. Mentors would ideally have a background or personal experience as clients of the criminal justice system.

The need for a relationship built on trust is

vital to this initiative. Close friends or a close relationship with at least one person can act as a protective process or safeguard and enhance a person's ability to resist stressful life events and promote adaptation and competence.

This places special challenges on potential mentors. This requires training and ongoing support for mentors in this regime.

It is clear that the appropriate selection and training of mentors is of crucial importance. NSW TAFE currently run mentoring courses in correctional centres, mainly for Aboriginal inmate committees. TAFE also runs a course for non-aboriginal inmates. The programs are flexible and the modules are accredited.

The Funding Of Mentor Activities

Appropriate and adequate support for mentors is vital to the success of crime prevention programs. Financial assistance is a vital element to the proposed mentoring system. The function is a frontline position requiring training and commitment replacing expensive failed alternatives. In current initiatives, the mentors are volunteers and the funding is directed at the body, which establishes and runs the programs. It is a key recommendation of this paper that the funding to the organising body is secondary compared to the financial assistance mentors receive, which would compensate and make it easier for the mentors to devote time and effort to the program.

In a research paper, *A Coordinated Risk Management Approach to Crime Prevention*, Carol O'Donnell, April 2002, Centre for Community Health Studies, Uni of Sydney concluded that appropriate and adequate support for mentors is vital to the success of crime prevention programs.

Alternatively, the fee-for-service arrangement would mirror the existing hourly rate, costed by NSW Juvenile Justice for its client load.

Justice Action Mentoring Group

The Mentoring Group is a project of Justice Action which was set up in response to a paper presented by Margaret Lamont at the First National Conference of Community Based Criminal Justice Activists hosted by Justice Action. In her presentation Margaret suggested some alternative approaches and reforms that should be initiated. Her paper was published in Justice Action's Newsletter Framed No. 32, under the title "Life in a Female Prison". Margaret herself served a four and a half year sentence for drug charges in Mulawa and Norma Parker jails. Among her suggestions was a call to:

“ liaise with prisoners after sentencing, provide counselling support and mentors, provide career training and advice and post release support. ”

Margaret's words were reinforced at the 2003 Kempsey Prison Conference where Dr. Tony Webb, a staff member at the UTS Centre for Popular Education, spoke on the need to include ex-prisoners in designing post-release programs. Tony was instrumental in promoting formalised training for ex-prisoners to be mentors for prisoners, released prisoners and people at-risk of being imprisoned.

Although JA had been providing informal mentoring services for years, members decided that the group and the people seeking assistance would benefit if there was a more formal, accredited system in place. On 29 July 2003 JA held the first meeting to form a group of potential mentors. In September 2003, in consultation with TAFE, JA offered a formal 12 week, TAFE-run Community Mentor Training course, to be run at its Glebe premises. Retention rates were high, and in December 2003 there were 22 Mentor Graduates.

Founding Principles

The basic belief underlying all other group principles is that ex-prisoners are probably the best people to offer support to other prisoners, ex-prisoners and people caught up in the justice system.

Aims of the Mentoring Group

- ❖ To provide a pool of accredited mentors to deliver practical mentoring to people whose lives have been disrupted by jail and the courts
- ❖ To work towards having the justice system acknowledge this mentoring as a critical part of the processes of rehabilitation/ reintegration of "offenders" and as a viable part of our campaign for alternatives to prison.

Objectives

- ❖ To develop a mentor training program that will build on the knowledge and experience of the group to formalise the skills needed to be mentors to ex-prisoners and others.
- ❖ To have these skills and competencies recognised through TAFE as part of the national training and accreditation system and extend the accreditation as registered JA Mentors.
- ❖ To develop the mentors' lobbying and campaigning skills to advance the project through building support from the government and non-government agencies for:
 - ◆ Referrals for ex-prisoners to the mentoring program – and eventually for young offenders in the juvenile justice system in need of mentoring support.
 - ◆ Funding for ongoing training of a pool of mentors.

- ◆ Accommodation and employment projects that meet ex-prisoners' needs for housing and jobs.
- ◆ Funding for paid mentor trainers – drawn from the pool of experienced mentors – who will develop and co-ordinate the running of the project.
- ◆ Public education campaigns to promote mentoring in the community as part of the alternatives to prison campaigns.

TAFE staff proved to be helpful consultants who were willing to be flexible in tailoring the course content and methods of delivery. Weekly classes were conducted at the Breakout Design and Print premises at 65 Bellevue Street, Glebe.

Membership

The JA Mentoring Group is made up of graduates and non-graduates of the Mentoring in the Community course, the majority of whom are ex-prisoners. Mentees have access to the group, and to group mentoring as well as one-on-one mentor support. They are encouraged to go through the formal training process and become peer educators and community mentors themselves.

Ongoing Education and Training

Apart from their practical work with ex-prisoners, the JA Mentors have continued to enhance their skills and training with regular meetings and education sessions at Justice Action. Group members have delivered presentations on subjects such as “Alcohol and Other Drugs”, “Diagnosing Mental Illness”, “Safe Sex & Safe Injecting”, “Legal Resources”, “Conflict Resolution”, etc.

Practical Mentoring Projects

Justice Action maintains ongoing communications with prisoners and monitors their complaints. Over the past 20 years Justice Action has had a mentoring relationship with thousands of criminal justice clients both in the prisons and the general community.

Since 1984 Justice Action has successfully collaborated in existing mentoring projects in NSW. Breakout, our community service wing works with the NSW Probation and Parole Service through the Community Service Order (CSO) scheme. We have had up to 17 people at a time on CSOs work with and be supervised by Breakout doing welfare, community and research work.

A notable example case of mentoring of ex-offenders has been that of Greg Kable. The NSW State Government was so concerned about the release of Mr. Kable that it led to the passing of the Community Protection Act, later overturned by the High Court. Justice Action was able to intercede on Mr. Kable's behalf and gain the support of the Minister for Police and the NSW Police Service to act as a mentor for Mr. Kable with the agreement that police would only approach Mr Kable through his JA mentor. Mr. Kable has now been working for Justice Action for ten years, on many levels, both professionally, and as a volunteer. Because of his personal experience with the corrections system, he is now able to be a mentor to current prisoners, family and community. He replies to letters from prisoners and responds to phone calls and queries from family and friends of prisoners who request advice on how to deal with the many difficult issues that arise in prison. He explores options for constructive personal expression of emotions arising from these circumstances. His efforts and goodwill are widely acknowledged and appreciated.

Breakfree Services

In 2003 JA rented a five bedroom home in Summer Hill to extend its accommodation and mentoring services to ex-prisoners. Affordable housing accommodation is a high priority for ex-prisoners as they try to re-establish themselves in life. There is also a need for a supportive environment where people can easily access information and feel encouraged to develop their skills. Known as Breakfree Services, the house was open to any person who had been embroiled in the criminal justice system, either pre or post-prison release. It offered mid to long-term accommodation, mentoring, training and various support services.

Breakfree Services was an old federation-style “mansion” with a huge front and back yard, four large double bedrooms, and a smaller single room at the back of the house. The sunroom at the back of the house was set up as a computer room. Several second-hand computers were donated and made operational. The residents could access these computers at any time.

The residents showed much enthusiasm for the project, and prepared for a veggie garden and completed several garden working bees.

As the project progressed, it became apparent that it required at least one full-time resident manager and a team of trained on-site workers, such as mentors and/or counsellors or social workers. Unfortunately JA did not have the money, and busy volunteers did not have the time or resources to fully man the service. It was regretfully closed after six months.

It would be unfair to say that the project was a failure. The need to provide ex-prisoners’ with affordable half-way housing close to health and employment services is an urgent necessity. JA addressed this need, and members went on a strong learning-curve as resources were stretched to the limit. Without funding and infrastructure, the organisation was unable to continue a service that should in any case be provided by a government that is sincere in its efforts to rehabilitate people and cut recidivism rates.

Action Break Theatre Incorporated

At a special meeting of the Mentoring Group in February 2004, Sharon Jacobsen, Co-ordinator of Off the Map’s Plan B Theatre Project (which is run in a Victorian prison with male prisoners) addressed the group and invited discussion. She indicated that her project was invited to participate in an experiential workshop at the upcoming University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Centre for Popular Education’s Education and Social Action Conference scheduled for December 2004 in Sydney. As Off the Map’s project was targeted towards male prisoners, some members of the Justice Action Mentoring Group expressed strong interest in setting up a similar group targeted at women ex-prisoners. A Committee of three was formed and Action Break Theatre Group was born on March 1st. The aims of the theatre group are:

- To empower and enable women ex-prisoners and women at risk to become de-institutionalised and positively re-establish themselves in the broader community.
- To promote self-confidence and self-esteem in these women through providing a non-judgemental, supportive and creative environment where they can learn to craft their stories for dramatic presentation.
- To impart skills in script development, public speaking, voice production, acting and networking through participation in Action Break Theatre Group workshops.
- To encourage women to go on to further education and training and improve their chances of employment and the development of healthy relationships.
- Help women break the cycle of poverty and recidivism.
- Support women to become independent and remain free of the justice system.

The following section covers some of the major points the group has discussed during the meetings. It is by no means comprehensive, and will be updated with more information as the group continues. Updates will be available from the JA website: www.justiceaction.org.au.

Getting Started

At one of the Mentoring Group's education sessions, one of the members outlined his experience of life in prison and proposed some achievable steps that could be taken to provide practical support and mentoring to prisoners. For example, it can take from seven to ten years for a person's name to arrive at the top of the list for public housing. Anyone in prison for a lengthy sentence should be advised to put their name on the list and be helped with completing the forms if necessary.

Mentors can organise themselves as part of a prison visitors scheme. They can inquire from prisoners about to be released whether they have transport and accommodation or what help they need to organise this. If people are to receive Centrelink payments on release, they will find they need to set up a bank account. To do that they must have evidence of their identity. Some of the questions a mentor might need to ask are:

"Do you have a birth certificate or do you need help to obtain one?"

"What will you list as your permanent address?"

"What is the address of your local Centrelink office?"

"Have you organised an appointment with them".

"Do you need help to get to your appointment?", etc.

As a mentor it must be remembered that a person who has been in jail for 18 months or

more may have become institutionalised. They have to take in, in one hit, the many changes in everyday living that they have learned to accept incrementally over time.

Ethics

Mentors face ethical issues in their role, particularly in regard to fair dealing and maintaining confidentiality. When consulting or negotiating with mentees, mentors should keep in mind ethical action which takes into consideration:

- ❖ whether the impact of an action or decision will be fair.
- ❖ whether the action is guided by responsiveness to the needs of the mentee and other interested parties.
- ❖ whether we would be happy if the action was made public, and
- ❖ whether we could easily justify the action if called on to do so.

Mentors need to be impartial and fair in dealings with mentees in the sense of decisions being based on equitable treatment. These principles provide the base from which the mentor establishes their standards and values.

The ethical soundness of those standards and values is especially important because of the position of trust that mentors hold, and the obligation on them to maintain that trust. The trust relationship is protected by ethical behaviour. When mentor and mentee treat each other with respect as equals, it also supports their confidence in the democratic process.

We believe that high ethical standards also contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of a mentor. People prefer to work with an ethical rather than an unethical person. Mutual trust and respect are an important base for productive and high quality outcomes. Where an ethical culture prevails, both the mentor and mentee are more likely to make

a committed effort to make the relationship work. An ethical and efficient mentor can deliver a more productive service that is widely respected.

Personal values of integrity, impartiality and accountability that motivate mentors to observe correct behaviour need to be able to withstand public scrutiny. Effective mentors cannot be driven just by the need to avoid risk; they need to consider not only what is right conduct, but also how that conduct would be explained and defended if it came to light.

Concepts of delivering a quality service with a mentee focus underpin the JA Mentoring Group's approach. Set out below are some principles that outline our ethical stance and guide us in attaining our objectives as we try to maintain:

- ❖ The highest standards of probity, integrity and conduct.
- ❖ A strong commitment to the community.
- ❖ Responsiveness to the needs of mentees.
- ❖ A strong commitment to accountability.
- ❖ A close focus on results.
- ❖ Continuous improvement.

The following code of conduct is meant as a practical guide to assist mentors with implementing and applying the Mentoring Group's underlying values.

Code of Conduct

At all times in carrying out their role mentors shall:

- Conduct themselves with honesty and integrity when dealing with mentees, members of the community and other members of the JA Mentoring Group.
- Act in accordance with the underlying principles and values of probity that are applicable to the performance of their duties and take measures to enhance accountability.
- Perform their duties with care and diligence.

- Deliver services equitably, courteously and promptly.
- Treat other JA Mentoring Group members, mentees and community members with appropriate respect and courtesy, without coercion or harassment of any kind.
- Maintain the confidentiality of dealings with mentees and other relevant persons.
- Use mentees' information in a proper manner.
- Disclose and avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest.
- Avoid patronage, favouritism and unjustified discrimination.
- Behave in a manner that upholds the reputation and integrity of the JA Mentoring Group.

Boundaries

It is a good idea to set the boundaries of the relationship between mentor and mentee from the start. For example, it is a good idea to establish a friendly, business-like approach where the mentee is clear about the times when you are available for contact and the sorts of help you can offer.

Limitations

Keep in mind that your aim as a mentor is to help the mentee to become independent and remain free of the justice system. In this way you will avoid taking over tasks or speaking on their behalf rather than supporting them in their learning.

Developing a trust relationship

When we establish a harmonious, sympathetic relationship with another person we have created rapport. Successful educators, therapists, counsellors and mentors realise that empathy or rapport is essential if they want to establish an atmosphere of trust, confidence and participation. In that way communication can flow and people feel free to respond.

You do not have to like the other person to create rapport, you are simply building a bridge to understand them better.

What do we do to gain rapport with people? Words are only 7% of the communication. Body language and voice tonality are more important. As you look around in restaurants, offices or other places where people meet and talk, notice which people seem to have rapport and which do not. You may have noticed that people who are in rapport tend to mirror and match each other in posture, gesture and eye contact. Their body language is complimentary. It is like a dance, where partners respond and mirror each other's movements with movements of their own. When people are not in rapport their bodies reflect it – whatever they are saying their bodies will not be matching. They are not engaged in the dance and you can see it immediately.

You can create rapport with whomever you wish by consciously refining the natural rapport skills that you use every day. By matching and mirroring body language and tonality you can very quickly gain rapport with almost anyone. However matching is not mimicry, which is a noticeable copying of another person's movements and can be considered offensive. To join in the other person's dance, match their body language sensitively and with respect.

Matching eye contact is an obvious rapport skill. You can match arm movements by small hand movements, body movements by your head movements. You can match distribution of the body weight, and basic posture. This is called "cross over mirroring". Matching breathing is a very powerful way of gaining rapport. When two people are in deep rapport they breathe in unison.

Voice matching is another way you can gain rapport. You can match tonality, speed, volume and rhythm of speech. This is like joining another person's song or music, as you blend in and harmonise. You can gain rapport in a telephone conversation by using voice matching.

These are the basic elements of rapport. You can refine your skill by noticing what people do when they are in rapport. Start to be conscious of what you do naturally so you can develop your skill and choose when to use it.

Mismatching is another useful skill.

For example if closing a telephone conversation naturally is proving difficult, mismatch by changing the speed and tonality of your voice to end the conversation. If you wish to end a meeting or an interview where everyone is seated, mismatch by changing your posture or by standing up.

Encouraging Self-Organisation

A person who has become institutionalised may find it is difficult at first to become self-directed. Rather than being directed by others they find they have to negotiate with the people around them. They have to re-learn how to take responsibility for their actions and manage their lives. Whereas previously the day was completely structured, it may now be unstructured to the extent that time slips away as the person tries to decide what to do next and feels more and more incompetent. Or they may go to the opposite extreme and try and cram into a day all the things they feel they should be doing, thus adding to their burden of stress.

Time management is learning how to decide what activities are important and how to go about doing them. It is also about deciding what not to do. Completing some desired tasks and setting aside time for relaxation and enjoyment is a good outcome of balanced time management. It also allows people to schedule new and interesting activities into their lives.

A mentor can assist by helping the mentee to set realistic goals in areas of home management, budgeting, employment, health and fitness, family and relationships, leisure, community activities.

Conflict Resolution

Assertive Behaviour

Many people confuse assertiveness with aggressiveness. To be assertive means firstly that you do not communicate aggressively. To be assertive means that you are able to listen and hear what the other person says, choose your involvement and respond in an honest and respectful way. It means that you are able to confront a situation without blame or aggression. In other words, you apply

techniques for attacking the problem, and not the person.

Expressing Feelings

Use “I” statements to express feelings of hurt, anger, frustration, etc. For example “I feel angry when I walk in and the place is a mess”, is a simple expression of feelings. There is no suggestion that the other person is being attacked, and there is no reason for them to become defensive or aggressive. From this start, it becomes possible to negotiate a solution that is approved by both parties, and where both feel like winners.

Disarming Anger

The following was contributed by JA’s Case Worker, Gregory Kable, in a presentation he gave to the JA Mentoring Group:

If you give people space then their thinking level rises and their emotional level decreases. Shifting gears in conflict resolution is an example. If you’re approached by a person who is enraged then the best thing you can do is listen to what that person has to say and give them feedback in order to calm them down. For example:

Angry person: “I am angry because you didn’t put the garbage out this morning.”

Calm person: “You’re angry because I didn’t put the garbage out this morning?”

Angry person: “Yes!”

So what happened? The angry person noticed you were listening and heard what it was you had to say because you gave them feedback in their own words. As a result, the person’s emotional level went down and their thinking level went up because they heard you repeat their words. When you’re thinking level is up solutions are more readily available. Listening and feeding back what an enraged person is saying is like shifting gears; it helps to get them out of “high” and back to neutral.

Extending Networks

We mentioned above the idea of helping people to schedule new and interesting

activities into their lives. When we are involved in a project or activity that interests us, our minds are engaged with positive plans and thoughts. We find it easier to relate to others when we feel we have a common interest and something to contribute. Research has shown that people who have social support from family, friends, colleagues or acquaintances are happier. Becoming involved in any community activity is the easiest and cheapest way to get to know new people.

The experience of Action Break Theatre committee and members is a good example of how the ripple effect works in community organisations. In the course of promoting the ABT project, members of the Executive Committee contacted a local community radio station, 2RSR. They were looking for broadcasters and the committee members were invited to present a weekly show. As well as being an opportunity to promote the group and the work of JA, it sounded like fun. The invitation was accepted. As a result, ABT committee members were able to invite members of the group to broadcast with them. ABT participants met other volunteer broadcasters, organisers and management, and two of the young women were offered their own weekly show. It was a joy to witness their delight and excitement as they seized on the offer. The ripples widened as the group were asked to assist with setting up a radio station at Yasmar, the juvenile detention centre, and the group seized on the opportunity it afforded everyone for skills development and interaction with the staff and young people there.

The link between the chosen activity and mentoring may not be immediately obvious. As the above examples show, however, when a very few committed people set out to create a project and invite others to join them, the outcomes can be unexpected and delightful. The self-esteem of ABT members has risen as media have sought their opinions and listened to their stories in radio interviews that were broadcast to a wider public. They can see that their skills and knowledge are valued by others, and feel they are making a positive contribution to the community.

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