

WAM Youth's Mentoring Project

Impact Review Spring 2018



Since 2014 our mentoring service has provided over 45 children and young people with a trusted adult to spend time with, talk to and to help work through things. The role of our mentors is simply being there to support a child or young person consistently over a period of around 12 months; evidence shows this can help build a young person's resilience to adverse childhood experiences. Mentoring can take different forms depending on the age and needs of the children (e.g. hot chocolate and a chat, bike rides, sports, visit the cinema, go for dog walks, visit the park). Sometimes the mentoring occurs within school time & at school, other times it's outside of school.

Mentoring is child led and the emphasis is on building the relationship, not working through programmes or rigid targets, although we do regularly review progress to ensure the child's needs are being met. Feedback directly from the young person forms a crucial part of this review process. Reviews are carried out midway through a young person's mentoring programme and again at the end and young people are asked to give honest and constructive feedback on their experience of the mentoring programme. The information gathered from this enables us to make improvements to the programme for the benefit of current and subsequent mentees.

This review summarises the impact of this project on those young people it has supported and shows how successful it has been in providing young people with a valuable relationship that has been of benefit to them in many areas of their lives. All those who have been involved in this project from funders to mentors, from administrators to co-ordinators should be immensely proud of their involvement, not to mention the young people themselves for being willing to accept the support that has been offered and working towards the change they desired.

Well done!

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Gemma Madle".

Gemma Madle
Director of WAM Youth

Thanks to the following organisations for their support towards this project



**THE
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Breaking the cycle of crime

Winchcombe Youth Partnership

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XL-MENTORING

How Mentoring Helps: Themes Identified

This review shows that the mentoring project offers a great support to young people in a variety of areas. 28 young people responded to the review (some for both midway and end point, others only one of the two). Through this review we identified several themes, or areas in which young people found the mentoring process to be particularly helpful.

Confidence and Self-Esteem

Many young people reported that the mentoring programme had a positive impact on how they feel about themselves. When comparing the respondents' feedback at the midway and end reviews, it was clear this increase in self-esteem continued to develop throughout the year. At the midway review 61.9% of respondents stated mentoring had a positive impact on their self-esteem. This increased to 84.7% by the end of the year's programme, showing the value of continuing the mentoring programme for the entire year.

'It helped me with the way I feel about myself'

'I feel better about myself.'

'...how to control myself and my self-esteem is high because of it.'

Coping with Pressures (e.g. school)

Young people face many challenges and the pressures they experience can sometimes be hard to cope with. Mentoring offers young people an opportunity to talk about situations which they are finding difficult and consider solutions or strategies to support them. In this review, young people reported that mentoring helped them to cope with the pressures they faced and that they felt a greater motivation to face the situation (e.g. getting on with school/life). Again, this increased over the course of the mentoring year, from 58.1% at the midway review, to 71.5% at the end.

'Help coping with the things going on at school and general help.'

'Confidence and decreased stress levels.'

'How to cope when I'm angry and helps with peer pressure.'

'Because it helps me with problems at school.'

'Decreased stress from exams.'

'He helped me cope with school work and some of my behaviour issues.'

'I got much useful exam advice.'

Plans for the Future

Mentoring not only supported young people in coping with pressures, but many reported it helped them to set goals (65.9% at the midway point, 71.4% at the end) and to think about their futures, in terms of college courses, jobs etc. (62.3% at the midway point up to 83.3% at the end review).

'We talk about school and work so it can be helpful for me thinking about my future and education.'

'I get to talk about what I want to do in the future and school.'

The Overall Impact of Mentoring

Perhaps the clearest indicator of the transformative power of mentoring is the comments young people make when asked about the overall impact of the project. Many felt that the positive relationships nurtured during the mentoring process gave them a safe space to talk. It is through this safe and positive relationship and the opportunity for young people to talk about their worries or concerns that positive changes can be made.

'It's always beneficial to talk to people.'

'It's encouraging and good to have someone to talk to.'

'All you want to do is spit it out all the things that are holding you back.'

'The mentors are very friendly and understanding.'

'(The mentee) said mentoring had helped with his relationships with others. (The mentor) had advised him that when he gets angry he should try walking away. He's tried that and it works.'

'Because I'm a lot stressed free from not keeping everything bottled up.'

Young People's Views: How has the Mentoring Programme Helped You?

Every young person who responded to the survey stated that they would recommend the mentoring programme to other young people with many referencing the fact that it 'helped' them in a variety of ways. When asked *how* the programme has helped them and what they feel they get out of it, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive and clearly illustrates the impact the programme has on a young person's emotional wellbeing.

'It has helped me with the way I feel about myself and coping with my anger.'

'I'm a lot more happy and independent.'

'I feel better about myself.'

'I feel like I have someone that I trust.'

'They help you to think positively.'

Views of Others

The impact of mentoring is sometimes most obvious to the family and friends surrounding the young person. When asked at the end of the project 'Would others that know you say that meeting with your mentor was helpful?', 100% of mentees stated that yes, they would. When asked why, mentees overwhelmingly reported that others have noticed they are happier and many reported that their behaviour had improved as well:

'I think I showed a change in attitude and seemed a lot happier.'

'I haven't been getting into trouble.'

'Because every night me and (my brother) used to fight, we've stopped fighting. My mum says that I've helped her much more. Yesterday I helped mummy do lots of washing up. I did the drying up and putting away.'

'I'm not as stroppy or looking down all the time.'

'Because I'm happy.'

'I'm calmer and more relaxed.'

'My friends all say I have calmed down a lot. She calms me down (and my mum) and it helps to talk about things.'

'They say I'm happier and calmer.'

In the Long Term...?

The safe and positive relationships seem to not only impact on the young person's wellbeing now, but many report that they feel well equipped to face life and will continue seeing the benefits after the mentoring programme has finished. In some instances, the mentoring team, along with the young person and their families, decide that continuing the mentoring relationship is in the best interests of the young person. However, in this review, when young people reached the end of the programme, the vast majority of respondents felt they were ready for the mentoring to end, with a few utilising other means of support for the next stage of their lives, such as other WAM projects or counselling.

'Naaaaa I'm good.'

'No I'm a happy little bunny!'

'I have what I need now it's time to move on.'

'Nope. I'm happy with the support I received.'

In Summary

The statistics and comments gathered during this year's review of the mentoring programme shows the immensely positive impact a trusted mentor can have on a young person's life. As previously illustrated by the increased percentages for each theme, the mentoring programme is most effective when extended to an entire year. During this time, the development of this safe and nurturing relationship provides a young person with the opportunity to talk, support to face pressures and challenges in their lives, skills to develop relationships with others and overall, the confidence, selfbelief and resilience to continue to do so into adulthood. To finish in the words of a mentee, '***It gave me hope and showed me there was people who could help me and believed in me and were willing to give up their time and effort and go the extra mile.***'

