



# Guide for Educators

*Empowering young people  
soft skills through peer  
mentoring*



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# Introduction

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The Stronger Youth Project aims to strengthen the mental health of young people through relationships with peers. Among young people, there are those who cope perfectly with the dynamically changing reality, while some cannot find their place in it. The project sets out a methodology for peer activities based on the idea of mentoring. Peer contact is based on the same forms and methods of communication as it is within the same generation. Who will reach a young person better, who will understand their needs and speak to them better than a peer?

In the Project, we propose a methodology for peer activities based on a scientific analysis of the real needs of young people, researched in the partner countries: Italy, Portugal, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania and Spain. An important feature of the Project is that mentoring takes place in the form of joint activities proposed in the project. These activities are selected so as to support the development of appropriate social competences, e.g.: communication, the ability to cope with conflict and stressful situations, but also on joint physical activities. All this in order to raise the level of health in accordance with its modern, holistic definition.

This Guide, which is intended for educators supervising the mentoring process, will guide you through the successive stages of the project: from research, through understanding the role of the teacher as an observer and a person intervening only in exceptional situations, to describing the activity and monitoring of the process. The guide is designed to help you understand the actual goals of the project, which is to implement the idea of inclusion through mutual peer support. The recipients are therefore both young people exposed to depressive factors and those who, thanks to their social openness and mental resilience, can get involved in the prevention of depression among young people. The activation assumed in the project is to concern both groups of young people; both sides must cooperate and create, nurture, share and disseminate common values in order to achieve the project's goals.

The project directly touches on what is very important in a world where a huge number of values from different cultures mix: it gives the opportunity to establish and strengthen relationships between people, starting with the young generation, which is particularly vulnerable to growing up with a sense of isolation and loneliness.

That is why we invite you to create mentoring groups among young people. How to do it? This is what our Guide will explain.



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a diverse group of young people, likely at a community event or sports game. They are all smiling and have their arms raised in the air, suggesting a moment of celebration or cheering. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark purple/maroon filter. In the foreground, a young man with curly red hair and a red shirt is looking up and smiling. Behind him, a young woman with dark hair and a light blue shirt is also smiling with her arms raised. To the left, another young woman in an orange shirt is visible, also with her arms raised. The overall mood is positive and energetic.

**Author(s):** Luísa Grácio & Maria João Carapeto (University of Évora)

# The Needs of Youth



# 1. The Needs of Youth

## 1.1 Introductory questions



1. Considering the risks that school can pose to adolescents' mental health, what can school do to eliminate, diminish or mitigate its possible negative impact on adolescents' mental health?
2. What roles do relationships with peers play in supporting or undermining an adolescent's mental health?
3. How important is it for teachers and students to develop greater mental health literacy?
4. How can adolescents be empowered to build resilience and coping skills for future mental health challenges?

Adolescence is an exciting phase of life in which there are many advances and achievements in development. At the same time, nowadays, adolescents face several challenges to their psychological and psychosocial adaptation that they can hardly overcome on their own. Stronger Youth Project identified adolescents' mental health challenges and resources they perceived in their lives in six European countries (Carapeto et al., 2024). Above we present some of the main results and its implications for promoting the mental health of adolescents in educational contexts such as schools, especially through peer mentoring programs.

## 1.2 What are the most common mental health challenges adolescents face today?

Adolescents reported more emotional than behavior challenges. Regarding emotional difficulties, adolescents mentioned issues such as anxiety, panic attacks, depression, feelings of anger, loneliness, feelings of being misunderstood, feelings of insecurity, lack of self-confidence, difficulties in self-acceptance, fatigue and gender-related concerns.

Adolescents reported also a range of problem behaviors such as self-harm; eating problems; various addictions (drugs, alcohol, tobacco and technology); social difficulties (isolation, relationships problems); misbehavior in general and aggressive behavior (dating violence, bullying); rebelliousness and impulsivity/lack of self-control; and suicidal thoughts.

Nevertheless, some adolescents revealed a lack of knowledge about mental health issues. For instance, some of them ignored and/or denied the very existence of psychological and



psychosocial difficulties in adolescence or the presence of risk factors for adolescents' mental health and well-being. It is therefore important that educators and young people develop greater mental health literacy. This will improve the awareness of possible signs that suggest that adolescents are in need of help, including the referral to mental health specialists.

### 1.3 What factors contribute negatively to the mental health of adolescents in their main life contexts?

Family as source of risk was perceived by adolescents as lack of understanding and support (lack of attention, trust, emotional support, availability, time, interest for teenagers' problems; non-acceptance and devaluation), abuse and neglect (conflicted intrafamily relationships, psychological and physical violence), inadequate educational practices and boundaries, parental pressure (excessive high expectations, criticism, demands), control (excessive, undue restrictions, overprotection) and financial instability.

The school risk factors identified by adolescents were academic pressure (demands, too much homework, multiple tasks, too much technology, due dates, assessments, focus on grades; too many lessons and hours at school, lack of practical or useful knowledge for future life); lack of diversified activities/ extracurricular activities,; hostile environment; unsupportive teachers (lack of personal interest); abusive teachers (making fun, shouting, humiliating, being disrespectful, unfair, judging and discriminating students); financial barriers (discriminatory practices against students on the basis of their economic status, disparities in the quality of education between schools, inadequate school facilities) and the unavailability of psychologists.

Peers who are unreliable, unsupportive, competitive and who bully or pressure others into undesirable behaviors were also seen as a risk. So are personal factors such as fear of failure or lack of understanding of the subject.

Digital technologies were perceived as a potential source of risk, including the erosion of self-esteem, the promotion of the need for online validation, addiction, cyberbullying, exposure to harassment, the distortion of reality and of life, and the cause of sleep and eating problems, fatigue, agitation and impatience.



## 1.4 Which of the main factors in adolescents' life context contribute positively to their mental health and well-being?

Adolescents perceive as promoting factors of mental health and well-being the support from family, friends, peers and teachers, including in relation to school achievement and decisions about their futures, and whether they have good relationships with the people around them. In an educational, school setting, feeling safe, and having supportive services and caring teachers that offer different learning opportunities, help students to learn and to develop them personally (self-knowledge, self-concept, self-esteem, relational skills), were identified as key factors in promoting well-being and mental health. Furthermore, a positive outlook on life, supportive family, school and peers' relationships, effective communication, emotional support, development of personal resilience, and healthy lifestyle choices, including regular physical activity, engaging in leisure activities, were identified as significant factors that contribute to the enhancement of adolescent's mental health and well-being. Digital technologies were also seen as a source of mental health promotion, allowing for the acquisition of new ideas and people, obtaining social support, and the opportunity for sharing new experiences.

## 1.5 What barriers make it difficult for adolescents to seek help for their mental health challenges? How can these barriers be overcome?

One of the difficulties adolescents face is due to the barriers they perceive in seeking help, such as mental health stigma (judgmental society, self-image problems), gender norms; individual barriers (withdrawal, shyness, lack of self-esteem, feelings of inferiority and loneliness); interpersonal barriers (wrong friends at school, exclusion, marginalization, feeling unimportant or not understood, lack of communication for fear of being judged, social pressure to conform). Despite the perceived difficulties in asking for help, teenagers were more likely to ask an intimate partner (e.g., boyfriend/girlfriend), and their mothers and friends. Peers and teachers were mentioned as unlikely people to ask for help, and face-to-face meetings were the preferred channel for adolescents to disclose their own problems. It's important to make sure that interventions in school context contain some relational and communicational elements to increase the likelihood that adolescents will seek assistance. Such factors could include reliability, open communication, accessibility to discuss issues, understanding, non-judgement, taking their views seriously, helping, availability and time, reducing pressure, appreciation and implementing activities that



could help them cope better with mental health challenges. Although adolescents reported using both adaptive individual and interpersonal strategies to cope with mental health challenges and get help, some of these strategies, such as distraction, fun, and avoid thinking about problems may be concerning.

## 1.6 Reflection and Implications for Practice

The promotion of adolescent mental health and well-being hinges on the elimination or reduction of risk factors and the fostering of promotion and protective factors within their life contexts. These reflections aim to inspire educators in moving from theory to practice, ensuring that the school becomes fundamentally a source of promoting and protective factors, especially in the context of implementing peer mentoring programs.

Is crucial to raise the awareness that peer mentoring programs in school context should be perceived as a preventive approach to mental health issues and that preferential mentees candidates should be adolescents facing risk factors but with no significant mental health concerns. Adolescents with mental health conditions must be followed by mental health specialists; peer mentoring could possibly play a supporting role but, in this case, it should be framed by these professionals.

The availability to offer continuous support and positive regard on the other, the ability to listen and understand others, and empathy, are some desirable characteristics that can be considered in the selection of adolescent peer mentors. Findings also suggest the importance of structuring the peer mentor role in the mentor-mentee relationship (he/she is not a friend nor just a peer) and a face-to-face interaction seems to be preferable.

Adolescents' peer mentoring programs have been consensually considered an important approach to promote adolescents' mental health and well-being and help seeking and reducing stigma. Their ecological (e.g., embedded in the adolescents' school environment) and holistic (e.g., can involve different life domains, such as academic achievement, personal skills, social networks, psychological and/or psychosocial maladjustment, etc., and their relationships) nature have been highlighted in literature.

## 1.7 Reflective questions for the teacher

1. As a teacher, what are the key aspects you can invest in to contribute to your students' wellbeing and mental health?
2. What strategies can you have in place to prevent the impact of academic demands on young people's mental health?





3. How important is it to offer your students different learning opportunities?
4. What do you think you could do to increase the chances of a student in difficulty asking you for help?





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- Alessia Vinci (PRISM)

# Screening for mentors



## 2. Screening for mentors: a contribution

### 2.1 Introductory questions

1. What characteristics should have an adolescent to be a mentor?
2. How to screen adolescents to the mentor role?
3. What is the On-line Skill Assessment Tool?









Keywords: mentor screening; mentor selection; adolescent peer mentoring

### 2.2 Selection of mentors – an overview

**Maria João Carapeto & Luísa Grácio**  
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An important step in building a peer mentoring program is defining the criteria for accepting (and disqualifying) mentor's candidates, in order to assure effective and save mentoring relationships. Kupersmidt et al. (2020) recommended that the screening of adolescents to be mentors provide information about several important dimensions of a successful peer mentoring program:







-  positive attitude towards other youth;
-  how comfortable they feel in initiating conversations with peers;
-  history of helping others (e.g., experiences of volunteering in the community or other, even informal);
-  ideally, being two years older than the mentee/s;
-  having non-conflicting schedules with the mentoring activities (in order to be available); and
-  the potential of the candidate to benefit him/herself from the mentoring relationship in his/her own personal and social development.

In addition, authors claim the benefits of selecting mentors with a diversity of profiles, not only overachiever adolescents. Indeed, sometimes extremely successful youngsters



in academics or other life domains, can have more difficulties in scheduling mentoring activities, providing full attention to mentees, empathizing with vulnerable peers in areas where they excel, and/or even they can be perceived as attainable models by the mentees. When this extremely competent adolescents are selected to be mentors, is crucial to work with them towards clear commitments to the mentoring program and relationships. Moreover, as the authors argue, sometimes even “youth who may be disconnected from school” (Kupersmidt et al., 2020, p. 27) can invest in the mentoring relationship, provide effective help to the mentee, and have important opportunities to promote him/herselves a stronger identity.

As part of the process to select the mentors, the mentor candidates should fill a written application form and participate in an individual interview (following a standardized protocol) to ascertain its safety and suitability for mentoring another youth. The interview is important to assess candidate's:

-  experience and skills in managing possible challenges in the mentoring relationship (e.g., uncooperative or disinterested mentees);
-  willingness to ask for help and support, if needed;
-  motivation/s for volunteering to be a mentor;
-  expectations about the mentoring program.
-  managing the time dedicated to the mentoring programme, in order to effectively balance it with other personal responsibilities and the relationship with other mentors in the programme
-  other possible questions and concerns about the program.

More advanced recommendations to mentor selection include interviews and checking reference from others who better know the applicant to be a mentor. Issues such as criminal background and the interest in maintaining contact with the mentee/s during holidays periods, can also be checked.

In addition to the application form and individual interview, other evidence-based instruments can also be used to assess particular skills crucial in peer mentoring relationships.





## 2.3 The Online Skills Assessment Tool (OSAT)








**Maria João Carapeto & Luísa Grácio**

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The OSAT is an instrument developed in the context of the Stronger Youth Project and nested in the project website (<https://strongeryouth.eu>). It was intended to provide a brief assessment of some key skills an adolescent mentor needs to be effective in his/her role of supporting peer mentees to strengthen their socioemotional skills and mental health. Thus, the OSAT goals are:

-  To provide information about relevant socioemotional skills of adolescents' candidates to be mentors, that could help the process of mentors selection;
-  To provide adolescents with a tool for self-exploration and the promotion of self-knowledge.

The preparation of this experimental version of the instrument was led by the University of Évora (Portugal) team, with the collaboration of all other Stronger Youth partners, and was informed by:

-  Evidence-based recommendations for screening adolescent peer mentor candidates (e.g., Kupersmidt et al., 2020);
-  Conclusions of Stronger Youth project's previous bibliographic review and empirical research on adolescents' mental health issues and resources, conducted in six European countries (Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Spain; Carapeto et al., 2024), that suggested the relevance of consider adolescent mentor candidates:
  -  knowledge (and empathy) about adolescents' problems and socioemotional skills, and mental health literacy;
  -  availability to offer continuous, face-to-face support and a positive regard on the other, and the abilities to listen and understand others;
  -  ability to self-assertion and structuring the mentor-mentee relationship.
-  All Stronger Youth project partners expertize, along a Delphi process for the selection of dimensions to address and items to include in the OSAT; and
-  Already validated instruments to assess a diversity of adolescents' socioemotional skills.



This OSAT's first version collect information about adolescent skills in five domains crucial for a mentor to be effective:



- **Focus on the other**, or the ability to be empathic in a relationship: understand, feel like the other and willingness to help others in need;



- **Self-knowledge (My Self)**, especially the awareness of abilities such as reflexivity and problem solving, and of how much one is perceived by friends as a helping person.



- **Communication skills**, concerning core abilities of active listening and assertiveness.



- **Mental health literacy**, in particular general believes and attitudes about psychological problems.



- **Social responsibility**, in terms of personal understanding of having a role in helping others in need.

Therefore, OSAT comprises 15 items, three by domain, to be scored by the adolescents from 1-never to 6-always. A score from 3 to 18 is obtained in each dimension by summing the scores of the respective items, such that higher the score, better the skills. After the adolescent answers each of the items and based on the obtained scores, the platform provides qualitative feedback according to the level (lower, average or higher) of skills in each of the five domains. This feedback, that mentions areas of improvement too, can be used by the educator to complete his/her own assessment of the mentor candidate suitability. Table 1 displays the feedback content by socioemotional domain and skill level.



Table 1

The feedback to adolescents after filling the OSAT, by socioemotional domain and skill level

Domain	Score level	Feedback
Focus on the other	Low	You may need to try harder to understand other people's emotions. This is very important for your personal development and for improving your relationships with other people.
	Average	Sometimes you can already understand other people's emotions. Improving even more is very important for your personal development and for relating well to others and being able to help them.
	High	You seem to have a strong tendency to understand others, to help them and make them feel better when they're not feeling well. It's a good quality that helps you build a good relationship with others.
My self	Low	You may need to improve others' trust in you, realize better that problems have solutions and think first before acting. Developing these skills is very beneficial for you and your relationships with others.
	Average	You already have some confidence from your friends, some ability to solve problems and to think before you act. Developing these skills further is very beneficial for you and your relationships with others.
	High	You seem to be a person who can be trusted, with focus on solving problems and that can think before acting. These characteristics are very beneficial to you and your relationships with others.
Communication skills	Low	It might be helpful to listen more to others and try to understand them without judging them. It's good to learn more on how to express your needs and opinions without feeling anxious or angry, even when others have different opinions from yours. By developing these communication skills, you can improve your relationship with yourself and others.
	Average	You already have some ability to listen to others and understand them without passing judgement. Sometimes you are able to express your needs and opinions with respect, even if others have different opinions to yours. Keep developing these skills and you'll be able to improve your relationship with yourself and others.
	High	From what you say, you know how to listen and understand others without judging them, and how to express your needs and opinions while respecting others. These are very important skills that help you establish good relationships with others and with yourself.



Mental health literacy	Low	It might be useful for you to learn more about psychological health and understand the importance of asking for help.
	Average	You're well on the way to realizing that having psychological problems is something that can happen to anyone and that it's important to ask for help to resolve them. However, there are still many important things to learn.
	High	You seem to realize that having psychological problems is something that can happen to anyone and that it's important to ask for help to resolve them. However, there are still many important things to learn.
Social responsibility	Low	Perhaps you need to become more aware that your behavior has an effect on the behavior of others, and that it's important to be sensitive to others by trying to help them when they need it. This is something you can do.
	Average	You already have some understanding that your behavior has an effect on the behavior of others, that it's important to act responsibly and are sensitive to others and try to help them when they need it. Keep improving these aspects.
	High	You seem to understand that your behavior has an effect on the behavior of others, that you act responsibly and are sensitive to others, trying to help them when they need it. You already show some maturity, values and social responsibility.

In sum, the OSAT can be useful in collecting and aggregating information about important socioemotional skills for the role of peer mentor. In the mentor selection process, this information should be considered together with other information as mentioned above, such as information obtained through: (a) initial application form; (b) individual interview (standardized protocol) conducted by the educator responsible for the peer mentoring program. These screening steps should be conducted once obtained the written informed consent of the adolescent and their legal guardians to participate in the Stronger Youth program.

Simultaneously, OSAT can be used by any adolescent as a means to improve self-exploration and self-knowledge.

This version of the instrument and its feasibility will first be evaluated in the context of the Stronger Youth mentoring program.



## 2.4 Selection of mentors – practical steps

Alessia Vinci  
*PRISM*

The selection process can be implemented by adapting all the steps according to each unique and diverse local context. However, here are listed some fundamental steps that can ensure the success of this process while protecting the pupils' datas according to the GDPR EU policy.

# 01

### Step 1 – Implementation of the OSAT in classrooms

In order to select the mentors and to comply with the GDPR policy, the OSAT questionnaire must be implemented at school, using the school's computers. Any personal device (smartphone, tablet, phone) is not allowed to carry out this activity. The use of the public devices ensures that the public IP address cannot be traced back to the individual pupil who does the test. Before implementing the activity, the students must be provided with an Acknowledgment (that describes the purposes of the project and of the activity itself) that they will give back to the teachers signed by their parents or guardians (if minors) or by themselves (if not minors).

# 02

### Step 2 – Selection of the mentors

Once the OSAT starts the platform will automatically generate a temporary ID code for users doing the questionnaire.

After finishing the questionnaire, students must print their results (they will recognise their questionnaire thanks to the ID code), write their name and give them to the teachers. The printed data allows compliance with the GDPR.

The teacher will select the mentors thanks to the printed copies and to the reflections made individually with the students.

During the implementation phase of the project, the selected mentors will be provided with a Consent Form (that will allow them to participate in the further) that they will give back signed by their parents or guardians (if minors) or by themselves (if not minors).

# 03

### Step 3 – Further use of the platform (outside of the Project)

The OSAT can be used as a support instrument for any teachers that want to implement the principles of the Stronger Youth Project.

For further use outside of the project, teachers must follow the steps described above



(in order to respect the GDPR and Privacy policies and to guarantee the anonymity of the children' data online) except for the final phase concerning the participation of the students in the other activities of the project.

## 2.5 The OSAT platform in the Stronger Youth project website

**Alessia De Vita**  
VITECO

The OSAT, or Online Skill Assessment Tool, as an interactive web application developed to assess the social skills of young people, is accessible online, on the [Stronger youth website](#), in the designed section, and it offers a convenient way for users to engage with and use in their personal development journey.

The questionnaire presents a set of questions with relative answers with different weight scores (not appearing on the screen). This is fundamental to build the technical development of the OSAT. The principle is called “Conditional Logic”. The tool will present a series of questions to the user, and each answer given will be responding to a specific weight. The weight of the answers will then be added to generate a score, and, through the application of complex conditional logics, the tool will generate a specific result.

The principle allows the OSAT to provide the feedback at the end of the questionnaire. The differentiation of answers and scores will generate a diverse colour visual, based on the type of feedback allocation.

The technical development of the OSAT starts with a brief introduction describing the aim, the target group and the use.

The internal structure development is presented in five domains, each with some insights about the theme. The set of answers go from “Never” to “Always”.

More in details:



Never



Rarely



A few times



Sometimes



A lot



Always



At the beginning of the OSAT, a disclaimer with the informative about the project will appear. The disclaimer will clarify the purposes of the Project and of the OSAT tool, stating that the OSAT can be used in the respect of the GDPR and Privacy policy thanks to the relative guidelines and the anonymity ensured by the platform itself.

In the following the text for the disclaimer and the relative checkbox to agree to the processing of data that is fundamental outlined that will be collected in the VITECO database only for analytical scope.

*“As part of the STRONGERYOUTH project (Erasmus+ Programme, Project n. 2023-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000159325), the data collected through the skills self-assessment questionnaire is completely anonymous and will be used exclusively for research and development purposes related to the project.*

*This data does not allow for the direct or indirect identification of participants and will be processed in compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Data will be retained only for the duration of the project and will be permanently deleted upon its completion.”*

*“By proceeding with the questionnaire, you confirm that you have read this notice and agree to the processing of data under the terms outlined above.”*

Going through the questionnaire is quite easy and understandable.

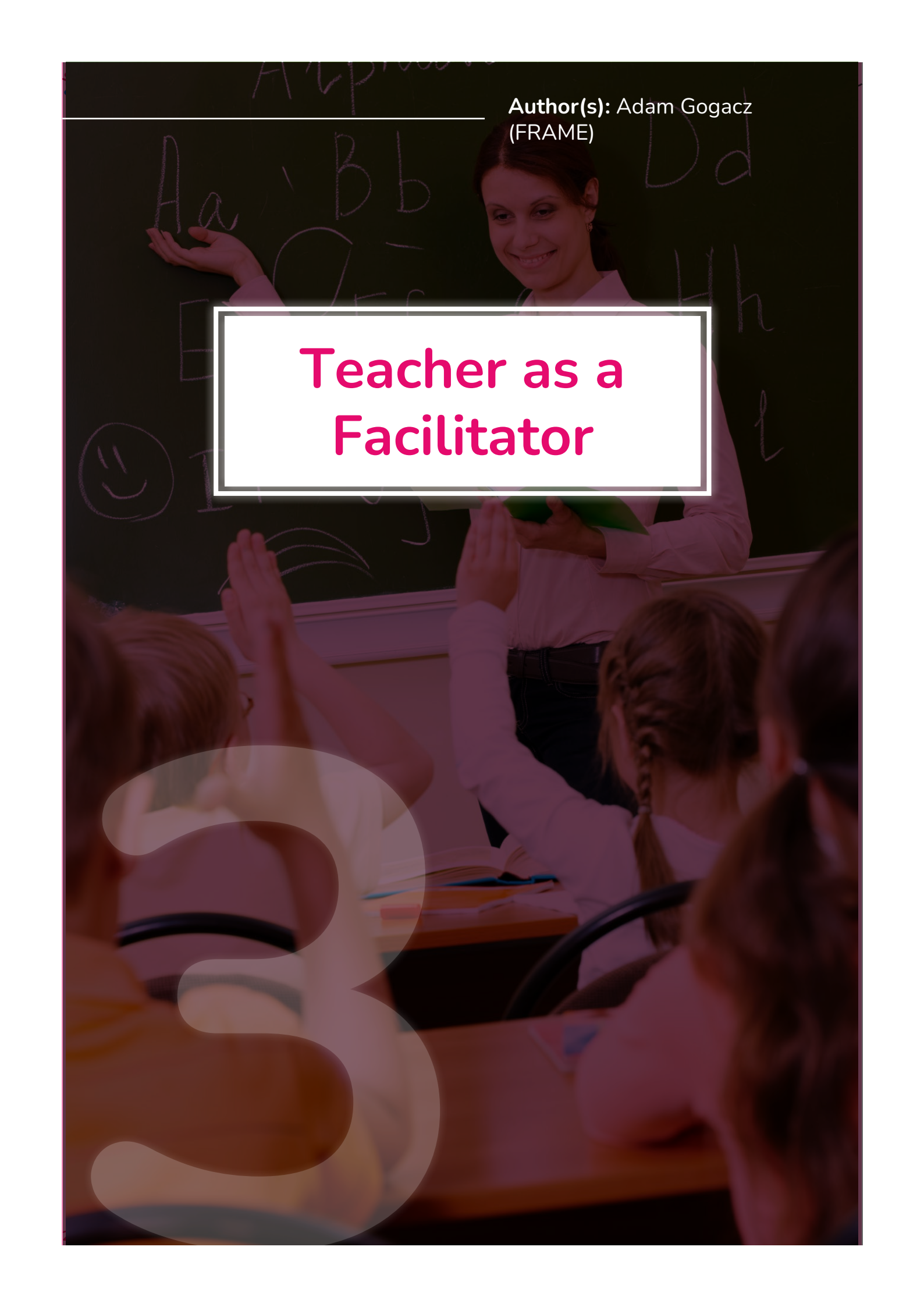
Once the user clicks on “Start”, the computer will generate a random code, that will be associated to the questionnaire filled in. After answering all the OSAT questions; which is a matter of choosing the answer that best represent the personal identification with the situation outlined in the question; at the end the student will print, via the appropriate function in the platform, the feedback received.

## 2.6 Questions for reflection

1. One of the hallmarks of mentoring programs, compared to other peer-mediated programs, is the goal and expectation that both mentor and mentee will develop their own skills throughout the process. With this in mind, what do you think are the most important qualities for an adolescent peer mentor?
2. What are the risks of selecting mentors primarily or almost exclusively on the basis of their academic performance?
3. How to combine the OSAT with an interview protocol to collect the most relevant information to select adolescent peer mentors?





A photograph of a female teacher with brown hair, smiling and looking towards the camera. She is standing in front of a chalkboard filled with handwritten letters (Aa, Bb, Dd, Hh, Ii, Jj, Kk, Ll, Mm, Nn, Oo, Pp, Qq, Rr, Ss, Tt, Uu, Vv, Ww, Xx, Yy, Zz) and a smiley face. Several young children are seated at desks in the foreground, with their hands raised in the air, indicating an interactive classroom environment. The image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay.

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# **Teacher as a Facilitator**



# 3. Teacher as a Facilitator

## 3.1 Introductory questions

1. What is the role of the modern teacher in school? Is he/she still a 'feeder' of knowledge?
2. How can we create an environment in which pupils work most effectively?
3. What is peer education and what role does the teacher play in it?



The role of the teacher has evolved considerably in the 21st century. The traditional model in which he or she was the main provider of knowledge is giving way to a more dynamic and comprehensive facilitator role. A facilitator is someone who supports learning, inspires, encourages independence and helps students to develop their potential in a personalised way. The modern teacher not only imparts knowledge, but also supports the development of students' social, emotional and mental competences. He or she therefore assumes the role of leader and organiser of an environment called the learning environment, in which young people find opportunities and motivation to learn.

## 3.2 Creating a learning environment that fosters development

The teacher-facilitator is responsible for creating a learning environment that supports students' development on many levels. He or she should create a space that fosters openness, creativity and collaboration. Through modern teaching methods, such as project-based working methods, problem-based learning or the use of technology, the teacher helps students to develop critical thinking and independent problem-solving skills. Such an environment not only supports the acquisition of knowledge, but also builds a sense of responsibility for one's own learning process. In order for young people to shape themselves, such an environment should be inclusive, which means, above all, safe and supportive.

Today's challenges, such as the mental problems of young people, require the teacher to be extremely sensitive and empathetic. The teacher-facilitator plays a key role in creating an atmosphere of safety and trust in the classroom. He or she is the person to whom students can turn with their problems and who can spot worrying signals indicating difficult



emotional situations. However, it is important for him/her to remember that he/she cannot act alone. A synergic cooperation of all stakeholders in the educational environment is necessary. By working together with parents, educators and school psychologists, a teacher can support young people to cope with challenges while promoting mental health and looking after the well-being of his or her students.

Being a teacher as a leader requires a lot of flair, but there are now many techniques and ways to support the new teaching role. For example, dividing the learning environment into four types, depending on two main factors: whether the teacher is directly present in the learning process or leaves space for independent work, and whether it is individual or group work.



- **In individual work with the presence of the teacher**, the teacher takes on the role of mentor. He or she motivates learning, but also surrounds and supports the student on an individual basis. Sometimes it is enough to have a one-to-one conversation, which after all does not take much time and allows not only the diagnosis of the student's problem, but also the selection of an appropriate path of individual development.



- **In group work with the teacher present**, he or she is more of a coach who motivates the joint effort, leads the group and, depending on the task, works with or instructs the group. In working in this particular environment, it is very helpful to create a relationship of being an authority, a role model who shows the group how to act, what to be.



- **Individual student work without the direct presence of the teacher** is otherwise known as self-learning. With the right choice of material, time and motivation to act (positive, not negative!), the learner independently arrives at a solution to a problem or assimilates knowledge. The creation of such an environment requires a good knowledge of the learner on the part of the teacher. The most important factors to consider here are:



cognitive abilities (tasks given to the pupil should be neither too difficult for him/her, because he/she will not cope with them, nor too easy, because he/she will get bored and will not do them);



the way they organise their own work (a student who cannot organise his/her own activities should not have full freedom on what and when he/she works, it is better to give very specific, short tasks with a short deadline);





organisational possibilities to work on one's own (sometimes, for various reasons, e.g. economic, students do not have the conditions at home to work on their own, it would be good to provide them with the possibility to work on their own at school.



— **Group work without the direct presence of the teacher** is the type of learning environment that, due to the nature of the Stronger Youth Project, interests us most. In this case, the teacher gives the task and monitors the group's performance. This is a typical type of educational environment for the project method, but also for peer education.

### 3.3 Peer education

Peer education is a method in which students learn from each other by doing things together and exchanging experiences. The teacher-facilitator plays a coordinating role in this process, supporting students in building relationships based on trust and cooperation. By creating the conditions for teamwork, organising discussions and group projects, the teacher helps students to develop social competences such as communication, empathy and conflict resolution skills. Peer education not only promotes more effective learning, but also builds bonds between students, which has a positive impact on the atmosphere in the classroom.

One of the basic determinants and at the same time a characteristic of peer education is that pupils in their environment use the same communication codes. It is easier for them to establish a peer relationship and thus convey information or teach skills. It can often be the case that peer education significantly relieves the teacher's work with the class group, as the more able pupil can take on the role of 'assistant' and translate for those of his or her fellow pupils who have difficulty understanding.

### 3.4 The teacher as a leader and guide – practical implication

Peer education is a method in which students learn from each other by doing things together and exchanging experiences. The teacher-facilitator plays a coordinating role in this process, supporting students in building relationships based on trust and cooperation. By creating the conditions for teamwork, organising discussions and group projects, the teacher helps students to develop social competences such as communication, empathy and conflict resolution skills. Peer education not only promotes more effective learning, but also builds bonds between students, which has a positive impact on the atmosphere



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### 3.5 Reflective questions for the teacher

1. What is the role of a teacher leader?
2. How do you create an educational environment in which students can realise their full potential?
3. What is the role of the teacher in peer education?
4. Why is peer education not only effective, but can also benefit the teacher himself/herself?







# STRONGER YOUTH



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# Peer Mentoring





## 4. Peer Mentoring – The Idea

### 4.1 Introductory questions

1. How can peer mentoring support the mental health of young people?
2. What are the key roles of a mentor and mentee in peer mentoring focused on emotional well-being?
3. What strategies can you implement to effectively guide both mentors and mentees in their roles?
4. How do you envision setting boundaries to ensure a healthy mentoring relationship that promotes growth and understanding?



### 4.2 Understanding the Basics of Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring is a supportive approach to mental health that connects young people with peers who understand their struggles. By fostering trust and reducing stigma, peer mentors create safe spaces for open conversations, encouraging resilience and emotional growth.

### 4.3 How can peer mentoring support the mental health of young people?

Peer mentoring provides a unique and informal approach to supporting the mental health of young people, fostering relationships grounded in trust, empathy, and mutual understanding. By creating a non-hierarchical environment, it helps eliminate the stigma often associated with seeking help from adults or professionals. This supportive framework allows young people to confide in peers who are navigating similar challenges, making it easier to discuss their struggles openly.

Equipped with mental health support tools, mentors share their own experiences, which builds trust and encourages mentees to express their feelings. Initiatives such as the “Do You Dream?” podcast series and Taylor Schad’s TEDx talk further showcase how peer mentoring fosters a sense of community. These platforms enable students to share their vulnerabilities and normalize conversations about mental health, helping them feel less isolated.

Moreover, peer mentoring aids in easing life transitions, particularly within educational



settings. Research indicates that mentors help new students integrate socially and academically, significantly reducing feelings of isolation and the risk of dropout.

The positive impacts of peer mentoring are well-documented for both mentors and mentees. Mentors often experience improved reasoning skills, greater self-esteem, and increased empathy and conflict resolution skills. Meanwhile, mentees benefit from enhanced academic achievement, improved social skills, and increased self-efficacy, along with a decrease in behavioral issues.

In summary, peer mentoring is a powerful tool for mental health support, creating safe spaces where young people can connect, reduce stigma, and build resilience through shared experiences with those who truly understand them.


## 4.4 What are the key roles of mentors and mentees in peer-mentoring for emotional well-being?


In peer mentoring relationships focused on emotional well-being, both mentors and mentees play crucial roles, each contributing to a supportive and enriching environment. Understanding these roles helps optimize the mentoring experience, fostering growth and emotional resilience in young people.




### The Mentor's Role and Responsibilities

Peer mentors are typically individuals who have overcome similar challenges, allowing them to relate authentically to their mentees' experiences. Their key responsibilities include:

 **Active Listening:** mentors provide a safe, judgment-free space where mentees can freely express their feelings and concerns. This listening role is vital in building trust and establishing a solid mentoring relationship.

 **Empathy and Support:** effective mentors demonstrate empathy, helping mentees feel understood and valued. They validate mentees' emotions, fostering a sense of belonging and security.

 **Resource Sharing:** mentors share coping strategies, tools, and resources from their own experiences. For instance, the "Do You Dream?" podcast highlights how mentors guide their peers through emotional challenges, providing practical advice



that helps them manage stress and anxiety.



**Encouraging Independence:** while offering support, mentors empower mentees to develop their problem-solving skills and resilience. They encourage mentees to set personal goals and work towards achieving them, fostering a sense of ownership over their emotional well-being.

The importance of mentorship in times of crisis is highlighted in Taylor Schad's TEDx talk. After experiencing significant loss in her school community, she initiated the Cobbler 2 Cobbler project, where mentors equipped students with the tools to navigate complex mental health situations. This underscores the critical role mentors play in providing emotional support, especially during challenging times.



## The Mentee's role and Responsibilities

Mentees also have specific responsibilities that enhance the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship:



**Openness to Support:** mentees are encouraged to share their feelings and challenges candidly. This openness is essential for building a meaningful connection with their mentor.



**Active Participation:** mentees should engage actively in discussions, demonstrating a willingness to receive feedback and learn from their mentors.

This active involvement enhances the mentoring experience and fosters mutual growth.



**Setting Personal Goals:** working collaboratively with mentors, mentees should identify and set personal goals for their development. This goal-setting process helps mentees focus on their emotional growth and provides direction for their journey.



**Respecting Boundaries:** mentees need to understand and respect the boundaries established within the mentoring relationship. This respect ensures a safe and supportive environment, which is crucial for effective mentoring.

In the "Do You Dream?" series, students reflect on their emotional struggles and emphasize how the mentoring program empowers them to articulate their challenges. This illustrates the significance of active participation in the mentoring process, as mentees who engage meaningfully are more likely to benefit from the support provided.



## 4.5 What strategies can you implement to effectively guide both mentors and mentees in their roles?

### The B.E.S.T. Model

Navigating the mentoring journey can be enriched by utilizing the B.E.S.T. model, which outlines the four key stages of a mentoring relationship: Building, Enhancing, Sustaining, and Transitioning. Understanding these stages will help both mentors and mentees effectively guide one another through their roles.

Building is the initial stage where the foundation of trust is established. It's crucial to approach this phase with consistency, authenticity, and an open mind. Take the time to introduce yourself confidently, learn how to pronounce your mentee's name, and foster mutual interests. This initial connection sets the tone for the relationship.

Once the relationship is established, you move to the Enhancing stage, which focuses on setting goals and deepening discussions. This is your mentee's opportunity to articulate their ambitions, so it's important to listen actively and refrain from imposing your own goals. Encourage them to explore their interests and help them identify clear, achievable objectives.

As the relationship matures, you enter the Sustaining stage. Trust is stronger, and conversations become more personal and open. However, this new comfort can also bring challenges. It's essential to periodically evaluate your progress together, reassess goals, and negotiate expectations to keep the momentum going.

Finally, in the Transitioning stage, preparation for change is key. Discuss the future of your relationship openly, celebrating your achievements while clarifying what comes next. Ensure both you and your mentee feel a sense of closure, wrapping up the relationship positively and confirming your ongoing connection.

By following the B.E.S.T. model, mentors and mentees can navigate their journey with clarity and purpose, ultimately fostering a rewarding and productive mentoring experience.

### Tips for Establishing Trust

Establishing trust is essential for a successful mentoring relationship. Here are some practical tips to help mentors build that trust with their mentees:

- 1 Be Consistent:** align your actions with your words. If you commit to something, follow through. Being reliable helps your mentee feel secure in the relationship.



- 2 Show Mutual Respect:** acknowledge that you both come from different backgrounds and experiences. Avoid imposing your beliefs or pushing your mentee into uncomfortable situations.
- 3 Be Supportive:** use encouraging language and avoid dismissive remarks. Show that you're on their side, regardless of their challenges.
- 4 Practice Active Listening:** pay attention to your mentee's interests and concerns. Listen more than you speak, and only offer advice when they specifically ask for it.
- 5 Let Them Lead:** allow your mentee to steer the conversation and set goals. This empowers them and reinforces that their thoughts and feelings matter.
- 6 Be Present:** during your time together, be attentive and engaged. Your mentee should feel like the focus of your attention.
- 7 Have Fun:** don't forget to enjoy the process! Building a rapport through shared activities can make tackling tougher issues easier later on.
- 8 Be Realistic:** set achievable goals and avoid making commitments that require excessive time, money, or effort. This helps maintain a practical approach to your mentoring relationship.
- 9 Be Authentic:** don't try to play a role to connect with your mentee. Being yourself is the best way to foster genuine trust and understanding.

## 4.6 Reflection and Practical Applications

These reflections aim to guide educators in transitioning from theory to practice, ensuring that peer mentoring is effectively integrated into their support systems for young people.

1. What steps can you take to promote the roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees in your setting?
2. How will you communicate the importance of boundaries to both mentors and mentees?
3. In what ways can you collect and share success stories from your mentoring program?
4. How can you create a supportive environment that encourages open dialogue among students?





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# Set of Activities





# 5. Set of Activities

## 5.1 Introductory questions

1. What is the role of a teacher in fostering social and personal development in adolescents?
2. How does a teacher facilitate learning environments that nurture empathy, communication, and teamwork?
3. What activities can help educators build emotional resilience and promote well-being among adolescents?



## 5.2 Overview of the Set of Tools

The **Set of Tools** provides a comprehensive framework for educators to guide adolescents through key areas of personal, social, and emotional growth. Designed for flexibility, it supports teachers in fostering well-rounded development in students aged 12-20, while allowing for adaptation to different classroom settings and individual needs. The Set of Tools draws on a variety of methods and pedagogical approaches that are both interactive and reflective, ensuring that students engage meaningfully with the learning process.

## 5.3 Key Components of the Set of Tools

The toolkit is divided into four main areas of focus: **Social Skills**, **Personal Skills**, **Mental Resilience**, and **Wellbeing**. Each category is designed to address different aspects of student development, using a diverse array of activities and instructional strategies that promote both individual growth and peer-to-peer learning.

### 1 Social Skills



**Focus:** Helping students develop interpersonal abilities that are essential for building relationships and working effectively with others.

Social skills underpin healthy interactions and relationships. These are the skills that enable individuals to communicate effectively, empathize with others, work collaboratively and resolve conflict. For adolescents, these skills are essential to help them navigate



the complexities of social environments, from friends and family dynamics to school and future workplace interactions.

Social skills are particularly important during adolescence, a time when peer relationships are often the center of attention. Developing these skills enables young people to form meaningful bonds, gain confidence and succeed in both personal and professional contexts.

The set of tools offers activities designed to strengthen students' communication skills, enhance their ability to work in teams and promote empathy. These activities will include group collaboration exercises, discussions that encourage understanding of multiple perspectives and reflection sessions to promote emotional intelligence. By improving their social skills, students will be better prepared to navigate both personal relationships and future professional environments.

You'll find structured activities that involve peer-to-peer interaction, giving students opportunities to practice active listening, negotiation and conflict resolution. These activities will also focus on how to cultivate positive relationships through effective communication and empathy.

## 2 Personal Skills



**Focus:** Encouraging self-discovery, emotional management, and goal setting to promote individual personal growth.

Personal skills are about self-understanding and striving to become the best version of yourself. It involves self-awareness, self-regulation and the ability to set and achieve meaningful goals. Adolescents in this phase learn to define their identity, understand their strengths and weaknesses and set aspirations. Personal competencies give adolescents the tools to understand themselves and to make choices that align with their long-term vision. This process fosters self-confidence, independence and resilience, enabling them to take responsibility for their future.

The set of tools includes activities aimed at developing students' self-awareness and self-regulation. Activities such as guided reflection exercises will help students to explore their strengths and weaknesses, manage their emotions and understand the impact of their behavior on others. The tools will also encourage students to set realistic and achievable goals, giving them the structure to pursue personal development in a focused way.

You will find resources to facilitate self-assessment exercises, where learners can reflect on their progress and identify areas for improvement. These activities aim to promote a



growth mindset by helping students learn how to set meaningful personal goals, take responsibility for their actions, and continually strive for self-improvement.

### 3 Mental Resilience



**Focus:** Providing students with the skills to cope with challenges, manage stress, and build emotional strength.

Mental resilience is increasingly recognized as a crucial skill for adolescents, who often face a variety of emotional, social and academic pressures. The set of tools includes activities that develop students' resilience through problem-solving exercises, stress management techniques, and strategies for dealing with adversity. These activities promote a sense of control, helping students to become more adaptable and able to overcome difficulties.

Developing mental resilience not only protects mental health, but also prepares adolescents for the realities of adult life, where failure and uncertainty are inevitable. Resilience fosters a positive outlook, enabling young people to persevere even when facing difficulties.

In this section, you will be equipped with resources to engage students in resilience-building exercises, which may include mindfulness practices, relaxation techniques, and adaptive thinking strategies. By encouraging emotional resilience, the set of tools helps students become better equipped to deal with both everyday challenges and more complex emotional situations.

### 4 Wellbeing



**Focus:** Promoting holistic wellbeing, including physical, mental, and social health.

Well-being refers to the overall health and balance of an individual, encompassing physical, emotional, and social aspects. For adolescents, this means feeling supported, connected, and capable of thriving in various areas of life. Well-being is not just the absence of problems but the presence of positive practices and environments that enable individuals to flourish.

The Set of Tools places a strong emphasis on the overall wellbeing of students,






recognizing that a healthy and supportive environment is essential for both academic success and personal development. This section provides activities focused on promoting both physical health, such as simple fitness routines, and mental wellbeing through peer support systems and emotional wellness discussions.

In addition, there are activities designed to create a sense of community within the classroom. You will be guided on how to create safe and inclusive spaces where students feel valued and supported and where their well-being is considered an integral part of their learning experience.




## 5.4 Types of Activities Included in the Set of Tools

The Set of tools includes a variety of interactive, reflective and experiential activities. Each activity aligns with the theoretical underpinnings and practical aims of the toolkit, ensuring relevance and engagement. Below you will find some examples of activities that are included in the Set of Tools:

### 1 Social Skills Activities




-  **Building Empathy Through Storytelling:** Participants share personal stories to develop empathy by actively listening and reflecting on others' emotions;
-  **Walking in Their Shoes:** Groups work with scenario cards to imagine how others feel in challenging situations, encouraging perspective-taking and compassionate responses;
-  **Conflict Resolution Role-Plays:** Students engage in guided role-plays to practice de-escalating disagreements and finding mutually beneficial solutions.

### 2 Personal Skills Activities





-  **Self-Discovery Map:** Students visually organize their strengths, values, and goals to gain insights into their identity and areas for growth;
-  **Vision Board Creation:** Participants create visual representations of their aspirations, promoting creativity and motivation;
-  **30-Day Challenge:** Students commit to a small, achievable daily habit over 30 days, fostering perseverance and self-discipline.



### 3 Mental Resilience Activities




-  **Resilience Toolbox:** Students brainstorm and categorize coping strategies into physical, emotional, social, and cognitive categories, creating a personalized toolkit for stress management;
-  **Stress Mapping:** Participants visualize their stressors and identify actionable solutions through a structured mapping process;
-  **Controlled Breathing Exercises:** Simple mindfulness practices teach students to regulate their emotions and reduce stress in moments of overwhelm.

### 4 Wellbeing Activities

-  **Collaborative Mural:** Groups collaborate to create a mural representing their collective identity, fostering community and teamwork;
-  **Cultural Mosaic:** Students celebrate diversity by sharing cultural artifacts, food, and stories in a structured event;
-  **Team-Building Olympics:** Teams compete in fun challenges like obstacle courses and creative problem-solving tasks, emphasizing collaboration and physical activity;
-  **Gratitude Journal:** Daily journaling helps students reflect on positive experiences, cultivating a mindset of appreciation and resilience.

## 5.5 Practical Application

Each activity is designed to be user-friendly and adaptable, with clear instructions, learning objectives, and preparation guidelines. For example:

-  **Duration and Materials:** Activities vary in length (from 5-minute breathing exercises to 2-hour murals) and include easy-to-source materials like journals, sticky notes, and markers;
-  **Flexibility:** Teachers can adjust the difficulty and focus of activities to suit different age groups and classroom settings;
-  **Integration:** Activities can be integrated into lesson plans, school events, or extracurricular programs, ensuring alignment with broader educational goals.



## 5.6 Conclusion

The Set of Tools provides educators with a robust framework for fostering the holistic development of adolescents. By addressing key areas like social skills, emotional resilience, personal growth, and well-being, these tools help prepare students to navigate life's challenges with confidence and adaptability.

## 5.7 Reflective Questions for Teachers

1. Which tools resonate most with the needs of my students, and how can I adapt them to my classroom?
2. How can I use these activities to foster a sense of community and belonging among my students?
3. How will I measure the success of these activities in promoting students' social and emotional development?
4. What additional resources or strategies could complement these tools to maximize their impact?







# STRONGER YOUTH



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# Monitoring and Evaluation





# 6. Monitoring and Evaluation of The Process of Peer Mentoring

## 6.1 Introductory questions

1. What are the primary goals of monitoring and evaluation in peer mentoring?
2. How can educators balance supervision and empowerment in peer mentoring?
3. Which tools and strategies can make the monitoring and evaluation process effective?



Effective monitoring and evaluation are critical components of any peer mentoring process, ensuring that the mentoring activities are progressing as intended and that they achieve their desired outcomes. The core objective of this chapter is to provide educators with guidance on how to monitor and evaluate the peer mentoring process, ensuring that both mentors and mentees benefit from their participation. The monitoring aspect focuses on tracking the progress of the mentoring relationship and the activities undertaken, while evaluation looks at measuring the impact, success, and areas for improvement of the program.

In the context of the Stronger Youth project, where the aim is to enhance social resilience and prevent depressive behaviors or social exclusion among at-risk adolescents, monitoring and evaluation also serve an important role in ensuring that the tools and activities are being used effectively and that the desired outcomes of increased self-esteem, social competences, and personal growth are being achieved.

## 6.2 Objectives of Mentoring and Evaluation

Evaluation focuses on assessing the success of mentoring activities at key milestones:

- 1 Tracking Progress** - to ensure that the mentoring process is aligned with the objectives of the project, such as improving social competences, building personal resilience, and fostering inclusion.



- 2 Ensuring Participant Well-being** - monitoring helps identify potential issues early, such as conflicts or emotional distress, allowing educators or supervisors to intervene if necessary.
- 3 Measuring Impact** - evaluation assesses how successful the mentoring relationship has been in achieving outcomes such as improved communication skills, increased social inclusion, and mental well-being.
- 4 Informing Continuous Improvement** - The feedback gathered through evaluation allows for improvements in the design and implementation of mentoring activities. It ensures that both mentors and mentees are gaining the maximum benefit from their engagement.
- 5 Supporting Educators's Role** - This process aids educators in fulfilling their supervisory role as participatory observers, providing them with data to guide minimal intervention when required.

## 6.3 Monitoring the Mentoring Process

Monitoring is an ongoing, real-time activity that involves regular check-ins to ensure the mentoring process is functioning smoothly. For educators, this involves a balance of supervision without excessive interference, in line with the project's objective of empowering peer relationships. Key aspects of Monitoring include:

- 1 Regular Check-ins** - Educators should schedule regular check-ins with both mentors and mentees to gauge their progress. These check-ins can be conducted in a semi-structured manner, asking both parties how they feel about the mentoring relationship, the activities they are engaging in, and any challenges they may be facing.
- 2 Tracking Activities** - It's essential to monitor which activities are being completed and how the mentees are responding to them. Educators can create simple logs or use online tracking tools where mentors can record the activities they have done and reflect on the outcomes.
- 3 Emotional and Mental Well-being** - Given the focus on preventing depressive behaviors, it's crucial to monitor the emotional well-being of both mentors and mentees. Educators should be trained to recognize early signs of distress or disengagement, ensuring that appropriate action is taken when necessary.
- 4 Documenting Progress** - Mentors and mentees should be encouraged to keep personal journals or logs where they reflect on their progress, challenges, and achievements. These documents provide valuable insights for the evaluation process and help both mentors and mentees track their personal development.



Educators should act as facilitators, ensuring that the relationship between mentor and mentee remains positive, while avoiding micromanagement. This requires adopting a participatory observation approach, where educators remain aware of the mentoring dynamics without intruding unless intervention is needed.

## 6.4 Evaluation of the Mentoring Process

Evaluation is focused on assessing the success of the mentoring process once certain milestones or goals have been reached. In the Stronger Youth project, this involves evaluating the extent to which the mentoring activities have improved the social, personal, and mental resilience of mentees and provided meaningful development opportunities for mentors.

- 1 Measuring Social and Personal Competences:** One of the key goals of the project is the development of soft skills like communication, empathy, and social resilience. Evaluation should involve qualitative measures such as self-assessment surveys, feedback forms, or reflective discussions with both mentors and mentees. For example, mentees can be asked how their self-esteem or social skills have improved since engaging in the mentoring activities.
- 2 Outcome-Based Evaluation:** Educators should track tangible outcomes such as improvements in school participation, reductions in conflict, or increased involvement in social activities. Mentors can also evaluate whether they feel more capable and confident in supporting their peers.
- 3 Intercultural and Social Inclusion Competences:** Given the project's focus on inclusive practices, educators should assess whether mentees feel a greater sense of belonging in their communities and whether they have developed an awareness of intercultural competence through shared activities with their mentors.

### Formative and Summative Evaluation

- a Formative evaluation** is ongoing, collecting feedback throughout the mentoring process to make real-time adjustments. This might include surveys after each major mentoring activity to assess satisfaction and areas for improvement.
- b Summative evaluation** is conducted at the end of the mentoring period to assess the overall effectiveness. This might include in-depth interviews or focus group discussions with mentors, mentees, and educators.

## 6.5 Tools for Mentoring and Evaluation

Various digital tools can streamline the monitoring and evaluation process. Below are





recommended tools and methods that educators can use to effectively track and assess the mentoring process:

- 1 Trello:** This project management tool is highly adaptable for mentoring programs. Each mentor-mentee pair can have a shared Trello board where they log activities, set goals, and document progress. Educators can view these boards in real time, allowing them to monitor the process without intrusive intervention. Mentors can create separate boards for each mentor-mentee pair and all of them can add comments. There is also the possibility to use lists to categorize tasks or activities (e.g. “Completed Activities”, “In Progress”).
- 2 Google forms:** This is an easy-to-use tool for creating evaluation surveys. Educators can develop pre- and post-program surveys to assess changes in mentors’ and mentees’ competences and mental well-being. The data can be automatically compiled into charts and graphs for easy analysis.
- 3 Journaling and Reflection Logs:** These can be used both for monitoring and evaluation. Mentors and mentees can submit regular reflective logs, either digitally (using Google Docs or similar) or on paper, where they describe their experiences, challenges, and achievements.

The monitoring and evaluation process is not only essential for tracking the success of peer mentoring activities but also serves as a powerful tool for continuous improvement. Through effective monitoring, educators can ensure that the mentoring relationships remain productive and supportive, while regular evaluations provide clear data on the outcomes achieved.

By utilizing digital tools such as Trello, Google Forms, and self-assessment platforms, educators can streamline the process, ensuring that mentors and mentees feel supported while maintaining their independence in the mentoring process. Ultimately, these processes ensure that the Stronger Youth project meets its goal of fostering resilience, social inclusion, and mental well-being among at-risk adolescents.



## 6.6 Reflection Questions for Teachers

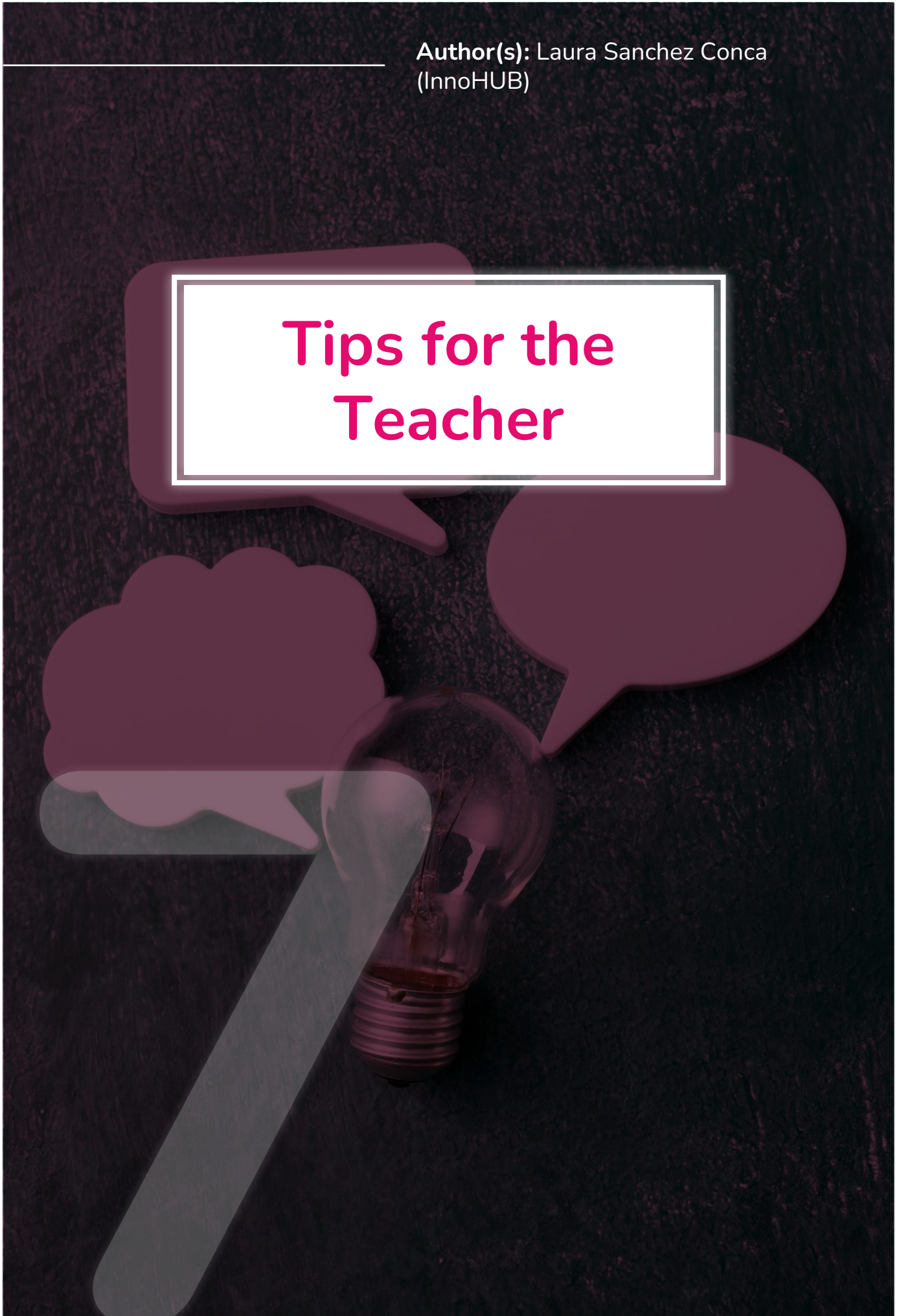
1. What were the most effective strategies for balancing supervision and empowerment in mentoring relationships?
2. How can you improve the evaluation process to capture more meaningful feedback from mentors and mentees?
3. What role do digital tools play in enhancing your ability to monitor and evaluate mentoring activities?





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# Tips for the Teacher





## 7. Tips for the Teacher

Peer mentoring is a powerful methodology for addressing the social and emotional needs of youth, fostering their resilience and interpersonal skills. Through the implementation of the Stronger Youth project, we have identified key strategies to maximize the impact of this initiative and support educators in their critical role as facilitators.

### 7.1 Key reflections of the project

Mentoring programs provide a unique environment where youth can learn from each other through meaningful interactions. The following conclusions reflect the most relevant lessons from the project:

- 1 Youth empowerment:** Mentoring fosters the development of critical social and emotional competencies in both mentors and mentees. This exchange reinforces mutual trust and collaborative learning.
- 2 Adaptability:** The strategies implemented should be tailored to the specific needs of each school and socio-cultural context.
- 3 Importance of follow-up:** Regular monitoring of the process ensures the quality of mentor-mentee relationships and prevents possible problems.
- 4 Role of the teacher:** The educator acts as a mediator and facilitator, creating a safe space where young people can grow.

### 7.2 Decalogue for educators

To ensure a successful mentoring experience, we suggest this set of key principles for educators:

- 1 Don't impose schedules:** Allow the mentor and mentee to agree on their own meeting times to encourage accountability and self-management.
- 2 Encourage confidentiality:** Ensure that conversations between young people are private, except in risky situations.
- 3 Define clear roles:** Make it clear to them that the mentor is not an academic tutor or professional counsellor, but a supportive peer.
- 4 Promote active listening:** Teach mentors techniques for listening empathetically and without interrupting.







- 5 Avoid unnecessary intervention:** Allow youth to problem-solve within the confines of your relationship.
- 6 Make sure both parties have clear goals:** Encourage mentors and mentees to set goals for their sessions.
- 7 Offer regular support:** Arrange regular meetings with mentors to evaluate their progress and provide guidance.
- 8 Use digital tools:** Consider using platforms such as Trello or Google Workspace to record and track activities.
- 9 Provide ongoing training:** Offer workshops and resources to strengthen mentors' skills.
- 10 Recognize achievements:** Celebrate participants' successes and progress to keep them motivated.

## 7.3 Practical tips for implementing the program

### Creation of a safe environment





A safe space is critical for youth to feel comfortable sharing their experiences. Some strategies include:

-  Design initial sessions where norms of respect and collaboration are established.
-  Promote activities that encourage inclusion and teamwork.
-  Assign a specific place for meetings, making sure it is quiet and warm.
-  Provide materials that support visual communication, such as whiteboards or diagrams, to facilitate mutual understanding.

### Supervision and evaluation of the process



Proper follow-up ensures that mentoring relationships meet their objectives. We recommend:

-  Conduct periodic anonymous surveys to gather feedback from participants.
-  Keep a detailed record of meetings and activities, including comments for improvement.



- ✧ Analyze the results obtained through qualitative and quantitative evaluation tools to make adjustments to the program.
- ✧ Implement group feedback meetings where participants can share their experiences in an open and constructive manner.

## Initial and ongoing training



It is crucial that mentors receive adequate training before they begin. This includes:

- ✧ Introduction to the peer mentoring methodology, explaining objectives, roles and expectations.
- ✧ Dynamics to strengthen skills such as conflict resolution, effective communication and empathy.
- ✧ Regular workshops to address common challenges, share best practices and update knowledge based on new program developments.
- ✧ Creation of educational resources, such as manuals or explanatory videos, accessible to all mentors at any time.

## 7.4 Additional resources for educators

To maximize the impact of the program, consider the following resources:

- ✧ Digital guides and apps: Use tools such as Zoom for virtual sessions, platforms such as Trello for organization and tracking, and secure communication apps to facilitate contact between mentors and mentees.
- ✧ Printed materials: Provide workbooks with exercises and examples for mentors to plan their meetings.
- ✧ Support networks: Establish communities of practice among mentors to share their experiences and learn from each other.

Peer mentoring not only benefits the direct participants, but also creates a more cohesive and inclusive educational community. Educators, as pillars of this methodology, play a vital role in shaping an environment where young people can thrive. By adopting these principles and strategies, we contribute to strengthening the social, emotional and academic skills of the new generations, fostering a future full of opportunities and personal growth.





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