

Mentoring for Young Offenders

Final Report of the NSW Pilot Program

Prepared for the Crime Prevention Division
Attorney General's Department and
the Department of Juvenile Justice



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Explanation of terms and abbreviations

BSBB	Big Sisters Big Brothers, the mentoring scheme run by the YWCA of Sydney
BBBS	Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
CLDB	Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
CPD	Crime Prevention Division of the NSW Attorney General's Department
DJJ	NSW Department of Juvenile Justice
DOCS NSW	Department of Community Services
OCYP NSW	Office of Children and Young People
LAC	Police Local Area Commands
OJJDP US	Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
YJB	Youth Justice Board of England and Wales
YJC	Youth Justice Conferences, run by a Directorate of the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice
YLO	Youth Liaison Officer in the NSW Police Service
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association.

Executive Summary

The Pilot Program

Pilot program in two locations This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Mentoring for Young Offenders pilot program for the period from April 1999 to March 2002. The NSW Government established the program to explore the effectiveness of mentoring with young offenders referred through Police Cautions or Youth Justice Conferences (YJC). The program was piloted at two sites, a metropolitan site in Parramatta in western Sydney, and a rural site in Coffs Harbour/ Clarence on the NSW north coast.

Model of mentoring The YWCA of Sydney won the tender to establish the two projects, using its Big Sister Big Brother (BSBB) model of one to one mentoring. The model involves adult volunteers, who are carefully screened, being matched with a young person with the goal of developing a friendship. The matches are monitored by skilled program staff, with regular reviews. The model also included regular group outings of the young people and their mentors, and a new component, a family support worker, to assist the families of young people involved in the program.

Overall conclusion

An effective intervention The pilot demonstrated that mentoring, using the adapted BSBB model, can be an effective intervention for suitable young offenders by reducing their offending behaviour and producing positive benefits for the young people and their families.

Limited scope However, the scope of mentoring as an intervention with young offenders is limited. Firstly, it is likely to be appropriate for only a minority of those who are cautioned or conferenced. The two pilots found less than 30% and 14% respectively of the potential target group in each location were referred to them as suitable for mentoring and interested in participating. This suggests that mentoring should be only one element in any strategy targeting young offenders.

Secondly, the number of matches (27) was low, reflecting significant difficulties for both projects in recruiting enough volunteers (with a further 16 young people waiting to be matched as at March 2002).

While it is not clear whether the same difficulties would be experienced in other locations, these findings question the model's scope and sustainability. To be sustainable, a mentoring program may need to reach a certain minimum size (eg 20-30 current volunteers), or be delivered in conjunction with other youth and family support programs.

Issues for replication

The evaluation identified some important issues for the potential replication of the One2One mentoring program. These include:

- an effective referral process is needed, which includes strong partnerships with local referral agencies;
- the advantages of covering a limited geographic area, and adopting a community development approach to build broad local support;

- considerable time and resources are necessary to attract suitable volunteers to become mentors, and is best achieved through word of mouth and connections in local communities rather than mass promotion; a significant lead-time may be required to build the project to the level where it is sustainable; and pre-match activities for referred young people may be needed to maintain contact while they wait to be matched;
- the social context can have a major impact on establishment and implementation. Factors include the size, location (rural, regional or city based) and demographics of the target area, the range of other support services available, and the experience of the auspice agency (in implementing similar projects, and in management).

Findings from evaluations of two major mentoring initiatives with crime prevention objectives in the USA and England and Wales, due in late 2002, should provide more insights into the potential of mentoring with young offenders.

FINDINGS

Impacts of mentoring

Reduced offending and other benefits

Mentoring was found to achieve positive outcomes for young offenders (at least in the short term, as long term outcomes are unknown). All the young people in performing matches of six months or more (n = 13, as at October 31, 2001) reported reduced offending, increased community involvement, improved self esteem and communication skills and more motivation.

These outcomes were consistent in reports by the projects, by young people themselves, by their families and by police. Families in particular noted the changes in the young person's attitudes and behaviour and how much their family relationships had improved as a result. Parents also found that the time the young person spent with the mentor gave them more time to spend with their other children. The YLO in Coffs Harbour noted that local police have generally taken their attention off the young people involved in performing matches, due to reduced offending.

Outcomes achieved by young offenders

The positive outcomes highlight the potential of mentoring for crime prevention and diversion. They were achieved by young people already some way down the offending pathway and at risk of further offending, with around a third being repeat offenders. Most were experiencing significant conflict at home and at school, some had left school early, and many were socially isolated, had poor communication skills, anger management problems and low self esteem.

Other benefits

An unintended but positive outcome reported by some YLOs involved with the program has been their improved profile in the community.

Creating matches

"Performing matches"

The BSBB model was effective in creating and sustaining "performing matches". Most (76%) matches developed into ongoing relationships which had lasted almost 9 months on average (as at October 2001). Young people, families and mentors were satisfied with the matches.

The most common match was a boy aged 13 years matched with a female mentor, which reflected the patterns of referrals and volunteer recruitment. There was no evidence that a particular match type was more or less likely to perform.

The “performing matches” were associated with an effective matching process, and ongoing support from the pilot project workers. By contrast, the “non performing matches” highlighted the need for careful screening of volunteers and assessment of each young person’s capacity for a mentor relationship.

Pattern of young people matched

The majority of young people involved in matches were Anglo Australian. Four Indigenous young people were matched with Anglo Australian mentors (no Indigenous mentors were recruited). No young people from other culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were matched, and little is known from this pilot about the needs of such young people and whether a mentor program would be suitable.

Mentors roles in matches

The evaluation found that mentors can have a wide range of roles and influences with the young people they are mentoring including role model, skill development and filling in time. These vary depending on the characteristics and needs of the young person, the mentor’s skills and interests and the purpose of the match. Role modelling and social (and emotional) support were expected and there was evidence of mentors assisting young people to modify their undesirable behaviours and developing young people’s positive social skills.

Importance of other support

The Coffs/Clarence project demonstrated that family support work can add value through supporting and assisting families of young people matched to mentors. Another highly valued component of the program, from the perspective of the young people and their mentors, was the group activities that provided opportunities for socialising, fun and games in a safe and supportive environment.

Recruiting volunteers

The BSBB model had effective processes for screening and training suitable mentors for working with this target group.

Most significant barrier

However, finding volunteers willing to mentor a young person involved in the juvenile justice system was the most significant barrier faced by the program. While recruiting volunteers is difficult for many community based programs, in addition the projects found that some potential volunteers did not proceed because they feared the target group of young offenders.

A large amount of time and effort went into promoting the service to potential volunteers, resulting in a small pool of committed volunteers in each project, with around 5% of people who made an enquiry going on to becoming a mentor. This was far fewer than the number of young people referred for mentoring.

Lessons

The experience of the pilots suggest that volunteers are more likely to be recruited if the program has a local identity in the community, and can develop partnerships with other local programs. For example, the Coffs/Clarence project developed an accredited mentor training course with the local TAFE, which has proved successful in recruiting volunteers. Meeting volunteer’s costs such as travel, especially in rural communities, may reduce barriers for potential volunteers.

Referrals from the juvenile justice system

Appropriate sources

Police Cautions and Youth Justice Conferences were an appropriate source of referrals, ensuring that the program remained targeted on young offenders. The screening process, based on the “hands on” experience of Police YLOs and YJCs personnel, was applied effectively, and most referrals were appropriate.

Most young offenders were unsuitable or not interested An estimated 20% of young people who attended cautions or YJCs and lived within the catchment areas were referred, with twice the rate at Coffs/ Clarence (31%) as at Parramatta (14%). The remainder were screened out as either unsuitable or not interested in participating. Many young people and their families, especially older young people, had little interest in the program. This was particularly an issue in Parramatta, where YLOs and YJC conveners felt they did not have sufficient information to communicate the benefits of the mentoring program.

The majority of referrals (n = 91) were young men aged 13 -15 years. Referrals were younger than the population attending cautions and conferences in the two locations, but otherwise generally matched the target population. The exception occurred in Parramatta where the proportion of young people referred who came from culturally and linguistically diverse populations (8%) was much lower than the proportion of all young people being cautioned/ conferenced (40%), with no referrals from the three largest cultural groupings - Arabic, Pacific Islander or South East Asian young people.

Partnerships were the key Based on the experience of the pilot, it is clear that an effective referral process involves partnerships with the referral agents (Police YLOs and YJC Administrators). For the mentoring service, this includes the provision of good quality promotional material, and regular liaison to provide up to date information and feedback on the progress of the young people referred. When adequately briefed, YLOs and YJC Administrators became committed supporters of the program.

Establishing and implementing the projects

Coffs/Clarence project a valuable local service The Coffs/ Clarence project took considerable time to establish, an experience common to new mentor programs in the USA and England. The project made relatively few matches (11) in the 22 months to October 2001, although it has reported a further 7 since then, and has 13 other young people waiting to be matched. At the same time, it developed strong partnerships with the key referral agents and has become a highly valued service in the Coffs Harbour community.

LAC too large an area for the project The Coffs/ Clarence LAC proved too large a geographic area for the project to cover effectively. The service consolidated in Coffs Harbour but is only now operating effectively in the Upper Clarence City of Grafton. Many mentors faced the barrier of travelling long distances to visit the young person they were mentoring.

Community development approach The Coffs/ Clarence project used a community development approach to build the service. It engaged with local services to address youth and family support issues and expanded from its core of creating matches to a much broader service delivery base, responding to the gaps in local services for families with adolescents including dispute resolution, parenting skills and group work.

Parramatta project not viable The project in Parramatta took much longer to be established and did not become viable due to high staff turnover and difficulty in recruiting mentors and receiving referrals. The project only made 6 matches in the 22 months to October 2001 (and has reported a further one in the five months since). The project also had difficulties attracting a steady membership of community representatives to its Advisory Committee and stakeholders noted that it was generally not seen as a western Sydney project. The mentors recruited were an exception, strongly identifying it as a western Sydney project.

Difficulty developing partnerships

The Parramatta project was also hindered by its large catchment area, which eventually included 5 LACs. It had difficulties in developing partnerships with all the YLOs in the catchment area and in communicating effectively with YLOs and Conference Conveners, which limited referrals. Moreover, the project was only able to attract a handful of suitable volunteers to become mentors, despite considerable effort. The absence of promotional material specific to the Parramatta project may have contributed to this low rate.

Further research

The pilot program has highlighted questions where further research is needed to understand the potential of mentoring as a crime prevention intervention:

- what is the scope for mentoring with young offenders from Arabic, South East Asian and Pacific Islander cultural backgrounds? What were the barriers to these young people being referred to the project;
- what is the impact of mentoring on the families of young people;
- what are the conditions for a mentoring project with young offenders to become sustainable (such as what time period, what size community, what combination of strategies, what sort of auspice organisations);
- how much scope is there for adapting the BSBB model to become a viable intervention with young offenders whilst retaining its standards and safeguards.

Answers to these questions may emerge from the continuing experience of the Coffs/Clarence project, from the experience of other mentoring projects around Australia which are currently being profiled by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, and from the evaluations being completed of programs in the USA and in England and Wales.

Part A INTRODUCTION

1. Background

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Mentoring for Young Offenders pilot program, one of the few independent evaluations of a mentor program with this target group.

The remainder of this Chapter provides background information including a description of the pilot program and its aims as a crime prevention strategy. It also describes the model of mentoring used in the pilot program, followed by an outline of the evaluation in Chapter 2. The broader context of mentoring with young offenders is described in Chapter 3 based on a scan of the literature.

The second part of the report covers the main findings from the two project sites about the effectiveness of the mentor program over the period from July 1999 to March 2002. Chapter 4 assesses the impact of mentoring in terms of the outcomes of the matches, while Chapter 5 looks at the achievements of the program in creating matches between adult mentors and young offenders. Chapter 6 examines the mentor relationships and how the mentor relationship influenced the young person. The report also describes in detail the processes and issues in relation to the recruitment of mentors (Chapter 7), the referral of young offenders (Chapter 8) and the management of projects (Chapter 9). The report concludes with the implications for running mentoring schemes in other locations (Chapter 10).

1.1 Development of the Program

The NSW Young Offenders Act 1997 introduced new methods for diverting young offenders from the court system, in particular through formal warnings, Police Cautions and Youth Justice Conferences. To explore the scope for complementing these new initiatives with a method for supporting young offenders, the NSW Government funded the Mentoring for Young Offenders pilot program in April 1999.

The program was developed and managed as a partnership between five NSW government agencies, the Crime Prevention Division (CPD) of the Attorney General's Department, the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), NSW Police, the Department of Community Services (DOCS) and the Office of Children and Young People in the Cabinet Office. Representatives of these agencies, as well as a representative from a youth sector non-government organisation, formed the project's Steering Committee.

The three year pilot program aimed to test the effectiveness of mentoring with young offenders who had been referred through Police Cautions or Youth Justice Conferences. Pilot projects were planned for a metropolitan and a regional/ rural area, and the Police Local Area Commands (LACs) in Parramatta (western Sydney) and Coffs Harbour/ Clarence (on the North Coast of NSW) were selected on the basis of estimated numbers of cautions and conferences.

The YWCA of Sydney won the contract to implement the program in two sites, based on its Big Sister Big Brother (BSBB) model (see below for a description of the model). In the second half of 1999, projects were established in Parramatta and Coffs Harbour with the title One₂One. Each project was funded to employ case workers and a part-time family support worker. The project sites also formed their own local Advisory Committees with representatives from local police, Youth Justice Conferencing and local youth service agencies.

In September 1999, the Parramatta project was publicly launched, followed by the Coffs/ Clarence project in October 1999, with the first referrals made in late 1999. In late 2000, the Coffs/ Clarence project established an office in Grafton, based at the Clarence Valley Community Programs.

1.2 Objectives - mentoring with young offenders for crime prevention

The mentoring program aimed to provide positive adult guidance, support and friendship to young people who have received a caution or participated in or been accepted for a youth justice conference, particularly where there is an absence of such stable relationships in their lives. The objectives of the pilot program were to ensure that through the provision of appropriate mentoring, young people at risk of further offending would be diverted from the juvenile justice system and integrated into the community (CPD Brief, 1999).

The pilot program aimed to explore the crime prevention outcomes and other benefits from mentoring at three levels:

- young people - possible outcomes could include reduced rates of re-offending, an increase in esteem and self-confidence, reduced social isolation, greater access to relevant services, reduced risk of harm associated with alcohol and other drug use, improved educational and employment prospects;
- the families and communities of the young people - possible outcomes could include greater awareness of and access to services; better communication within families; improved family relationships and functioning; less victimisation by crime and anti-social behaviour; reduced levels of fear of crime; and,
- the Government - outcomes may include the development of models of mentoring within the juvenile justice system and enhanced policy relating to crime prevention (CPD Brief, 1999).

Program outcomes hierarchy

To illustrate the way these intended outcomes were expected to derive from mentoring, an outcomes hierarchy was developed. It is a representation of the model of mentoring which shows the assumed causal links involved in establishing and implementing a mentoring project, and how results are expected to contribute to the ultimate policy outcomes (see Figure 1.1).

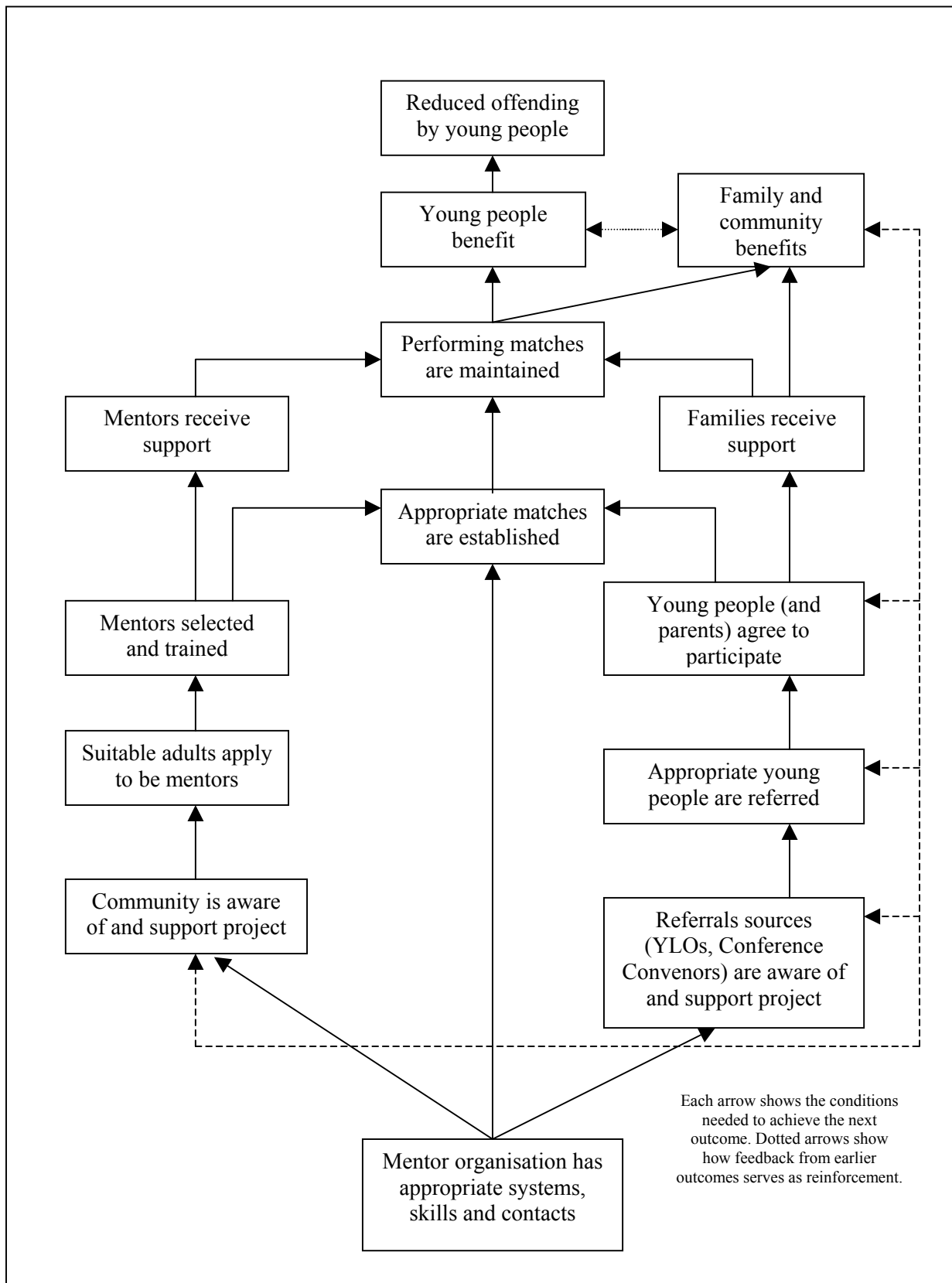
This outcomes hierarchy was developed by ARTD through an analysis of the program activities, the stated objectives, and discussions with the Steering Committee. It provided a framework for the evaluation, and in particular, for considering the effectiveness of the model (see Chapter 2).

1.3 The model of mentoring

The model implemented in the pilot program was based on the YWCA of Sydney's Big Sister Big Brother (BSBB) model of mentoring. The YWCA has developed this approach drawing on the Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) model from the USA (see below), and incorporated its own experiences operating mentoring programs in Sydney over the last 20 years.

The BSBB model of mentoring offers disadvantaged young people the chance to have a one-to-one friendship with an adult on a regular and ongoing basis. The program has no stated goals other than to present a child and an adult the opportunity to get to know each other, become friends and both benefit from the experience (see Box 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Outcomes hierarchy for One2One mentoring project in the community



The model of mentoring has three essential elements:

- **referrals of young people** - promote with referral agents (Police Youth Liaison Officers, Youth Justice Conference Convenors), apply selection criteria, encourage suitable young people to participate and seek agreement from their family, assess needs and issues, liaise with family, provide support while waiting for match;
- **recruiting volunteers** - the model involves adult volunteers who are carefully screened and selected for their ability to provide support, friendship, guidance and leadership to a young person. The screening process can take up to four months and includes a training program, after which the volunteers are matched with a young person based on mutual interest, personal compatibility and geographical proximity (YWCA submission to the Attorney General's Department 1999). The mentor is given ongoing support by the YWCA during the match, and debriefed on completion.
- **making and supporting matches** - align needs and interest of young person and mentor, arrange meetings, support mentor, support family, monitor the match, deal with issues which arise, complete and exit the match.

The links between these elements are illustrated by the two parallel strands at the bottom of the outcomes hierarchy for recruiting volunteers and gaining referrals of young offenders, where both are necessary for the establishment of matches (Figure 1.1).

1.4 Other characteristics of the model

The pilot program model has a number of other characteristics or features, which are outlined below.

A family focussed approach

The YWCA believed that the BSBB model could be developed to take on a more family focussed approach to mentoring, on the assumption that the best results come from working with both the young person and their family. Because of this, the One₂One model includes a part-time family support worker who is involved with families and complements the case workers who work with mentors and young people.

This orientation is now characteristic of the youth sector in general which, in the past, focussed almost exclusively on the needs and interests of young people. For example, the Youth Homelessness Pilot Program, conducted by the Prime Ministerial Youth Homeless Taskforce and evaluated by ARTD (Department of Health and Family Services, 1998) found this orientation to be a successful one in working with young people at risk of early home leaving.

Group activities

The BSBB model includes periodic group activities for all young people and their mentors. The YWCA has found that young people not only identify with and hold as important the mentoring relationship, but also the program itself.

Mentoring not casework

With the BSBB model, a mentor is a carefully selected and trained volunteer who provides a positive role model and friend to a young person. The mentor and the young person spend 2 to 5 hours per week together, usually at the weekend, over a minimum period of twelve months (though the frequency is usually less once the relationship has become established). The perceived value for the young person, from the BSBB perspective, is the friendship and continuity offered by the mentor. Thus for BSBB, mentoring is a relatively unstructured and informal activity, as distinct from casework approaches which typically involve goal setting and assessing progress towards these goals.

“Performing matches” as outcomes

One of the assumptions underlying the model is that the experience of a quality mentoring relationship in itself is a positive outcome for the young person at risk. The criteria that define a quality mentoring relationship (or to use the BSBB term, a “*performing match*”) include that it is sustained and functional for a minimum of twelve months. The BSBB model links “*performing matches*” to crime prevention and other broader outcomes through the assumption that “*the most effective strategy for preventing youth problems is youth development*” (YWCA Submission page 6). In other words, it assumes that if “*performing matches*” have been achieved, then the program has contributed to preventing young people offending.

2. The Evaluation

In March 1999, ARTD was commissioned to conduct an independent evaluation of the pilot program.

2.1 Purpose and scope

The principal aim of the evaluation was to assess the crime prevention outcomes and other benefits for young people and their families from receiving mentoring support. In addressing this aim, the evaluation had both formative and summative functions.

The evaluation's formative function was to provide feedback to the project's Steering Committee and the YWCA during the implementation of the program, in order to improve it. The evaluation did this through quarterly monitoring reports that provided data on referrals, participation and outcomes by young people as well as identifying issues that arose for the pilot projects.

The summative function was to assess the effectiveness of the pilot project in achieving outcomes for young offenders (such as reduced offending, reduced social isolation, greater access to services, reduced risk of harm associated with alcohol and other drugs, improved educational and employment prospects), and to inform decisions about the potential continuation and replication of the pilot program as a crime prevention strategy.

The question of the capacity of the pilot project to achieve outcomes for young offenders is complex. To portray the possible range of expected outcomes and their causal links, an outcomes hierarchy was developed at the beginning of the evaluation and refined over time to reflect the assumed logic of the program (see Figure 1.1). The outcomes hierarchy illustrates that while conclusions could be reached about the extent the program achieved outcomes at different levels, other issues would need to be considered before attributing the changes to the pilot program, such as:

- young people's offending behaviour tends to reduce as they grow older;
- the impacts of mentoring in the longer term which may show up outside the period of the evaluation;
- other interventions experienced by the young person over the period; and,
- the impact of changing local conditions (such as policing, or opportunities for crime) on levels of offending.

2.2 Approach

The commonly used approaches to crime prevention research are the experimental approach, which uses randomised controls or quasi-experimental designs that focus on the extent that outcomes can be attributed to an intervention, typically with quantitative measures, and a realistic approach which is more concerned with better understanding how the intervention works in practice and searches for patterns of outcomes amongst different segments of the target group (see Pawson and Tilley 1997).

For this evaluation, pragmatic considerations strongly favoured a realistic approach. These included methodological and ethical problems with using comparison groups, and the high cost of an experimental design. Moreover, experimental approaches are more suited for stable and mature programs with a high degree of program fidelity, rather than the evolving nature of a new program. Also, the pilot project aims to assess mentoring with young offenders in some specific contexts in NSW rather than be a research study to test more generally whether mentoring with young offenders works.

With hindsight, this decision was fortunate, as the projects experienced a range of difficulties in their development, tried different strategies, and achieved too few completed matches to make an experimental approach worthwhile. Moreover, the realistic approach was able to explore the factors behind both the difficulties and the successful matches, and generate useful insights for the future.

2.3 Main methods and data collection

The main methods and the data sources are described below.

Review of literature and related schemes

A scan of the published literature and unpublished reports on mentoring for young offenders and young people at risk of offending was carried out throughout the period of the evaluation. Direct contact was made with related schemes in Australia, USA and Great Britain.

Individual referral and monitoring data

ARTD developed a referral form with the YWCA for Police YLOs and Youth Justice Conference Administrators to fill in for all young people being cautioned or attending a Youth Justice Conference and for referring those considered eligible for the program. Non-identifying information recorded included demographics, type of offence and reasons for referral. The forms had additional information for the 91 young people who were referred to One₂One, including reasons for referral. All forms were forwarded to ARTD for data entry and analysis.

Forms were collected for all young people attending cautions or conferences in the two project areas for the period January 2000 to October 21, 2001 (n = 619), to compare those referred to the projects with the general population of young people attending cautions or conferences. While the data has gaps, as there were times when no forms were sent to the projects, it should reasonably reflect the overall pattern of young people attending cautions or conferences over the period.

The evaluators and the YWCA also developed data collection systems, criteria and assessment processes for young people who agreed to participate in the program to provide both parties relevant information. Project personnel used these systems to collect (for young people and their families who had given their consent) non-identifiable information regarding the young person's progress on entry and then at 3, 6 and 12 months after being matched with a mentor. Project workers made assessments of the young person's situation in terms of :

- self esteem
- social skills
- attachment to school, training and employment
- participating in the community
- substance use
- family relations.

Assessment records for young people who were matched were forwarded to ARTD for analysis for the period January 2000 to October 21, 2001 (n = 17).

With the projects were funded in 1999 for three years, the scope for data collection and analysis of participants was the period following the first referrals in January 2000 to October 21, 2001, when the Steering Committee required a report on key findings. Projects also reported later matches to March 2002 (see Section 5.3). At times over 2001 uncertainty over the future of the projects and hence the evaluation constrained the data collection and analysis.

Field visits and telephone interviews

Field visits were made to both sites to collect contextual information and to interview the project personnel, young people involved in the program and their families, mentors and other key stakeholders. Both sites were visited at least three times, during the early, mid and final stages of the program period.

Interviews with young people and their families

During field visits in September 2001, all young people currently being mentored and who consented were interviewed (n=11). Where possible, the young person's parent/s or guardian/s were also interviewed (n= 8).

Interviews and a brief survey with mentors

All mentors currently matched with a young person and some mentors whose match had closed were interviewed in September 2001 (n = 14). Mentors were invited to attend a group interview, which included a brief self-completion survey. The majority of mentors were also interviewed individually.

Case studies

Drawing on information from the projects and interviews with young people, their families and mentors, ARTD developed comprehensive case studies of seven matches, three in Parramatta and four in Coffs/ Clarence.

Interviews with pilot project personnel

Pilot project personnel were interviewed in preparation for each of the quarterly reports and for the interim and final evaluation reports.

Interviews with key stakeholders

The following key stakeholders were interviewed at various times during the evaluation:

- three Police YLOs responsible for cautions in the Parramatta project catchment area;
- the Conference Administrators (CA) at Blacktown and Coffs Harbour and four Conference Conveners at Blacktown;
- members of the Parramatta and Coffs/ Clarence Project Advisory Committees; and,
- representatives of community youth agencies in western Sydney and Coffs/ Clarence.

2.4 Evaluation documents

The evaluation produced a series of reports, some of which were provided to stakeholders for feedback and comment:

Quarterly Monitoring Reports (nine reports, commencing in July 1999)
Interim Literature Review, October 1999
Interim Evaluation Report, February 2001
Key Findings for the Final Evaluation, November 2001.

3. Developments in mentoring with young offenders

This chapter outlines insights from the literature and from mentor programs regarding the scope and effectiveness of mentoring with young offenders. It draws on Australian and international literature as well as unpublished reports and direct contact with mentor programs in Australia during 2000-2001.

3.1 Introduction

Many definitions of mentoring are used in the literature, but most have a common theme of a trusting and mutually beneficial relationship which involves a more experienced person helping a less experienced person. While mentoring occurs informally throughout society, our interest is in structured mentor programs which aim to provide a young person with a supportive relationship with an adult outside of the immediate family. Such programs typically select and train mentors, recruit young people, and make and support the matches.

Mentoring programs are used as a strategy for working with young people across many fields such as education; employment and career preparation; drug rehabilitation; sport and mental health (for example, see the Web sites for peak mentoring organisations listed in the bibliography).

While our interest is mentoring with young offenders, it is however useful to begin by considering mentor programs that target disadvantaged young people, since much of the research is concerned with this broader group. The literature is dominated by work from the USA, reflecting the extensive use of formal mentoring in that country. Much of this literature is prescriptive or descriptive, although in recent years there has been more focus on evaluating programs. The literature offers useful insights into mentoring and features of effective mentoring programs.

Having explored the literature concerning the mentoring of disadvantaged young people, this chapter then considers the far smaller body of knowledge that focuses on mentoring for young offenders and mentoring as a crime prevention strategy. The most relevant programs from overseas are currently being evaluated, although interim findings are available. We also include some programs that are considered mentoring within juvenile justice systems in Australia.

Following this brief scan of the literature, it is apparent that in Australia and one expects elsewhere, many mentoring programs are neither thoroughly documented nor evaluated. What is promising in this respect is a national profile and review of mentoring programs for young offenders commissioned by the National Crime Prevention of the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department (<http://ncp.gov.au/ncp>), expected to be completed in late 2002.

3.2 Mentoring with disadvantaged young people

Extent of mentoring programs

In the USA, mentoring with disadvantaged young people has been a widespread activity for many years. The Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) program began over 90 years ago, and is the dominant approach today. This program currently supports many thousands of matches through local BBBS organisations that generally connect middle class adults with disadvantaged young people. The BBBS mentoring model aims to provide consistent adult friendship and a positive adult role model for young people who might not otherwise experience this, with the relationship lasting a minimum of twelve months. The program operates in Australia with projects in Sydney, Melbourne and other cities.

Mentoring in the USA encompasses a broad range of community organisations, government, schools and businesses, with a major focus on school-based programs. A common rationale is to counteract the lack of caring, mature adults in the lives of many young people. Recent developments include on-line matching and web-based training courses for mentors, young people and service organisations through national peak groups.

Types of mentoring and role models

Within the broad parameters of the mentoring relationship there is considerable variety in the types of mentoring available. For example, one typology based on a study of mentoring programs in Minneapolis targeting young people at risk of entering the ranks of the ‘disenfranchised and disempowered’ identified five types of programs (Saito and Blyth, 1991):

- Traditional mentoring - one adult in a friendship orientated role model relationship with one child. Often involves a one-year commitment (though many last much longer) and mentors are expected to meet their mentees a minimum of three hours per week;
- Long-term Focussed Activities - focus on a particular goal or outcome, over and above friendship or role modelling. They may be remedial tutoring programs for under achieving students, or promoting academic progress or career exploration and skills;
- Short-term Focussed Activity - focus on a particular area such as school or careers, with a six-month or less commitment;
- Team Mentoring - when more than one adult volunteer works with a young person. This may include a family or two unrelated adults; and,
- Group Mentoring - when one adult volunteer works with a small group of young people eg Girl Scouts.

Potential roles of the mentor

The typology above goes some way to describing the different models that exist under the banner of mentoring. Amongst other things, the typology demonstrates that for some programs the development of the mentoring relationship is the goal of the program, while for other programs mentoring is a means to an end to improve opportunities for education or employment. Similarly, the programs differ in their expectations of the commitment of the mentors and of mentors’ roles in relation to the young person.

While most programs assume the mentor will act as a role model for the young person, Ave et al (1999) describe some other ‘types of influence’ present in mentoring programs. These ‘types’ are not mutually exclusive and a mentoring relationship may include a variety of ‘types of influence’ including role model, modifying undesirable behaviours and parental substitute. Each of these types is described in Chapter 5, where we explore in-depth the mentoring relationships developed during the pilot program, and the influences of the mentors.

The impact of mentoring

The primary evidence of the beneficial impact of mentoring on the behaviour of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds comes from a frequently cited study (Tierney, Grossman and Resch, 1995) which looked at a traditional model of mentoring in eight well established BBBS agencies across the USA. Each agency had a high case-load for the study, which used a sample of 995 young people, mainly aged 11-14 years.

The evaluation used a randomised design to compare youth who participated in the BBBS programs with a waiting list control group who did not. Baseline interviews were undertaken by project staff with all youth at the time they were found eligible to be matched with adult volunteers. The evaluators then randomly assigned these young people either to the treatment group, who were immediately eligible to be matched, or to a control group who remained on a waiting list for 18 months. Both groups were re-interviewed 18 months later.

The study found that, compared to the control group, participants in the program:

- were less likely to start using drugs (46%) and alcohol (27%), especially minority youth;
- were less likely to hit someone;
- had improved school attendance and performance, and attitudes toward completing work; and,
- had improved peer and family relationships.

These findings are limited by the reliance on self-reporting data, and the narrow age range of the young people. Despite this, for many advocates of mentoring, especially in the USA, they have offered persuasive evidence of its effectiveness in promoting behaviour (eg Grossman and Garry, 1997; Grossman 1999).

The authors concluded that these positive effects relied on the standards and supports of the developed BBBS programs in making relationships work, that is, “the benefits of mentoring do not occur automatically”. This suggests that newer programs, and those without a sophisticated “mentoring technology” such as the BBBS model, are unlikely to produce such positive results.

Good practice in mentoring

A review of mentor research in the USA (Grossman 1999) supports the theme that a well developed mentor program can create solid relationships, which, in turn, can improve the young people's attitudes toward school and their future, and often improve their behaviour and school performance.

The review found that key elements of effective mentoring relationships were frequent meetings over time to build trust, and close, supportive relationships. Effective mentors (Sipe in Grossman 1999):

- maintain a steady presence in a youth's life;
- respect the young persons's viewpoint;
- pay attention to the need for “fun”;
- get to know their mentees' families, but do not become too involved with them; and,
- seek and use the help and advice of program staff.

By contrast, not all mentoring relationships will produce benefits. Less effective mentors:

- do not meet with their mentees regularly;
- adopt an authoritarian role; and,
- emphasize behaviour change more than developing mutual trust and respect.

Furthermore, the review found that for a program to generate effective mentoring relationships, mentors need to be provided with support; and programs needed effective practices for screening, orientation and training, support and supervision.

The review also found that an issue faced by many current mentoring programs is the difficulty in attracting sufficient volunteers to work with young people with issues and to commit for the 6 to 12 months that the programs demand (Jaffe 1999). In particular, programs in the USA have had difficulties in recruiting male and minority group mentors.

The cost of mentoring

While mentoring using volunteers may appear to be a relatively inexpensive social policy intervention, little is known about the actual costs and how this relates to program features, such as overall size, strategies such as group or one on one mentoring, the quality of the matches and outcomes for young people. An initial study which explored the input costs of mentoring across a substantial number of programs in the USA (n = 52) (Fountain and Arbretton, 1999) found budgets ranging from under \$500 to \$6.5 million, with the average mentoring program “costing” about \$654,000 made up almost equally of the cash budget and donated goods and services and volunteer

time. The average program spent \$1,114 per youth per year, but the range is wide, from \$12 to \$1,900 per youth.

The study also notes that these data do not identify the unique costs associated with starting a mentoring program, which can lead to high costs in the short run until a program stabilizes.

3.3 Mentor programs with crime prevention objectives

Building on the mentoring programs targeting disadvantaged young people, governments in the USA and UK in particular have begun to support mentoring as a crime prevention initiative, either directly targeting young offenders or targeting young people who are considered to be at risk of offending.

JUMP (USA)

The most substantial mentoring initiative is the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) which is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the US Department of Justice. First implemented in 1996, JUMP had funded over 200 three year projects by the end of 2001 (at around US\$200,000 pa per project), making over 9,000 matches (<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jump/>). The program is school-focussed and projects involve funded organisations in partnerships with local education agencies.

JUMP provides “youth at risk of delinquency, gang involvement, educational failure, or dropping out of school” with one-to-one mentoring, with many projects using the BBBS model.

While the national evaluation of the program is not due until 2003, preliminary information has been released (OJJDP 1998; 2000 b). This shows that clients entering the program are relatively young (average 12 years, range 5-18 years), a balance of boys and girls, and primarily African-American (52%) or white (21%). The young people mainly have problems with school (around 70%) or “social/family” (53%), with most living with a single parent. While some clients demonstrate risk factors, few are young offenders, with low numbers assessed as having problems with either delinquency (18% of boys, 9% of girls) or alcohol or drug use (less than 4%). Although projects have tried to match young people with mentors by culture and gender, mentors have been primarily white (55%), female (63%) and well educated.

Both young people and mentors have rated their mentoring experiences very positively. They have also reported improvements in schooling and redirecting anti-social behaviours for the young people, although the reports of mentors often differed from those of the young people. The national evaluation is planning to go beyond self-reporting data in assessing benefits to the young people (OJJDP 2000 b).

Many of the projects reported difficulties in recruiting enough mentors, with male mentors (especially from minorities) in high demand. The report described various strategies used by projects for recruiting mentors, and the factors which have motivated people to become mentors (OJJDP 2000 b).

JUMP projects experienced a range of developmental barriers in establishing mentoring which caused many projects to modify their plans (OJJDP,1998). Barriers included:

- unrealistic project goals, timetables and mentor recruitment targets, and a lower than expected take up rate by young people;
- inadequate staff and volunteer resources, especially male mentors;
- lengthy and cumbersome screening procedures; and,
- insufficient community support, and lack of adequate parental involvement.

In response to such difficulties, the program guidelines were revised in 2000 to reduce the required number of matches from 50 to 60 each year to a minimum of 25 new matches each year, for a total of at least 75 matches over 3 years (<http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jump/>).

SafeFutures (USA)

More insights about mentoring with high risk young people come from the interim review of OJJDP's SafeFutures Program, a 5 year demonstration initiative which seeks to prevent youth crime and victimisation through the creation of a continuum of care in communities (OJJDP, 2000 a).

SafeFutures began in late 1996 as a pilot in six local government sites, with mentoring as one of nine components. Three sites used local affiliates of BBBS to provide some or all of their mentoring, while the other three sites initiated new mentoring programs. Start-up difficulties and delays were encountered. There were also concerns about the appropriateness of the BBBS model for different communities and ethnic groups eg the concept of one to one mentoring was not part of the culture of the target populations at the two sites (Native Americans and Asian Americans respectively).

Targeting referrals was found to be a problem. The review noted a trend by program staff to avoid more difficult young people, and by the end of year 3, several sites had introduced processes to focus on higher risk youth.

The programs also encountered challenges in recruiting mentors. While they used a wide variety of recruiting mechanisms, including personal contact, newspaper or radio advertising, and presentations to corporations or other groups, no single approach seemed to be successful across all sites, resulting in delays. Barriers included:

- in low income areas, difficulties in finding adults with the ability or motivation to donate their time. Many worked more than one job, and/or were struggling to raise their own families with limited resources;
- in rural areas, the need to travel long distances worked against attracting mentors and made it difficult to meet with volunteers as a group. It also made each match more expensive;
- while most programs tried to recruit by gender and ethnicity whenever possible, they had particular difficulties in recruiting African American and male mentors;
- in some cases, small community based organisations had difficulty recruiting mentors because they were competing for volunteers with large, well known mentoring programs (such as BBBS) with more resources and experience in recruiting;
- lower interest by many potential mentors in youth already involved in the juvenile justice system or perceived as high risk.

Other issues identified by the interim evaluation were:

- some projects linked organisations in the community with the juvenile justice system which led to systems reforms. However, developing viable collaborations took much time and effort, and once established, had to be nurtured and maintained over time;
- mentoring with high risk youth or those in the juvenile justice system was more expensive, compared with the earlier cost estimate of \$1,000 per match based on costs associated with BBBS mentoring programs;
- difficulties getting families of at risk youth to participate. For the most part, at risk youth and juvenile offenders were being served independently of their families. In some cases, parents were not supportive of changes, and some parents undermined program efforts;
- assessment of outcomes was more difficult for youth who are beyond the at risk stage. Intervention programs may see little or no real change after considerable lengths of time. The

lack of measurable program outcomes in such cases makes it difficult for administrators and funders to determine whether intervention programs are working.

YOT Mentoring Projects, YJB (England and Wales)

Another substantial government commitment to mentoring for crime prevention has occurred in England and Wales, based on the perceived success of a series of projects in the 1990s. The Youth Justice Board in 1999 funded 45 mentoring projects targeting offenders and at risk young people in the 10-17 year age range (www.youthjusticeboard.gov.uk). The projects are funded for three years from when local funding sources are expected to sustain them.

The projects are auspiced by local community sector organisations, with the funding allocated through multi agency YOT (Youth Offending Teams) which bring together all the relevant local agencies working with young people and the criminal justice system.

The target is young people involved in antisocial or offending behaviour, truanting or excluded from school, or showing significant signs of educational failure. Within this mandate, each project sets its own targets and objectives, and in some cases combines mentoring with other strategies such as educational sessions.

Progress reports on the initial mentoring program have shown that like the JUMP, establishment of many of the 39 continuing projects took a lot longer than anticipated. For example, six projects had not made a match after 12-18 months (Tarling et al, 2000). However, in other respects, the experience has been quite different from the JUMP.

YOTs have played a central role in establishing, overseeing and referring young people to the projects, including offering their clients mentoring alongside the supervision of statutory orders. In practice, projects were either independent of or working with their YOTs, with about half in each category. While mentoring is voluntary for the vast majority of projects, there are expectations from some YOTs that projects will take on statutory supervision sessions (Tarling et al, 2001).

The model of mentoring varies between projects, with the BBBS approach being less common. Many projects are multi strategic, combining one to one mentoring by local volunteers with initial residential courses and ongoing training or employment programs (a model developed by the influential Dalston Youth Project in the 1990s). Other projects work through schools and specifically target young people at risk of school exclusion, including some which target black young people (Crime Concern, 2000). The time period for the expected mentoring relationship also varies between projects from 12 weeks to two years (Tarling et al 2001).

As well as using different models of mentoring, the projects have varied greatly in their settings (urban/rural) and size (with referrals varying from 5 to 120 over the period). They have also had markedly different experiences, for example, in recruiting volunteers, which has been difficult for some projects and extremely easy for others. Keeping volunteers with the scheme has also been cited as a problem. Similarly, projects have had either too few referrals or too many. As projects become fully operational, they have had to face the question of balancing quality and quantity of the mentoring service. Small projects were reported to be relatively easy to manage but as the projects grew, so did the level of administration and supervision. The largest scheme with over 100 volunteers has used existing mentors to supervise other mentors (Tarling et al 2001).

Reflecting the greater focus on young offenders, the client group has been quite distinct from that of the JUMP in the USA. The majority of referrals have been 13 to 16 years old and over three quarters are male. The vast majority were either white British (76%) or black British (11%) with very few other ethnic groups.

Information on the benefits and impacts of mentoring in this program is not yet available. At this stage, the final report of the national evaluation is due in mid 2002, and is planned to include data on

re-offending. However, reflecting continuing faith in mentoring, in 2001 the YJB initiated two new mentoring programs within the same target group. One program will fund 30 projects which target hard to reach minority ethnic and other young people. The other program will fund 50-60 projects to provide mentoring help with literacy and numeracy.

Mentoring for Children/ Youth at Risk Demonstration Project (New Zealand)

In New Zealand, the Crime Prevention Unit of the NZ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet piloted six mentoring projects through community based organisations over two years (1997-1999). The program was broad and did not focus on young offenders, with referrals (116) from communities and schools. Matches were made with 63% of referrals, with the young people mainly aged 8-12 years, with little if any offending behaviour.

Most projects used the BBBS model. Project establishment was slow and resource intensive, taking up to a year for matches in five of the six projects. Recruiting mentors was difficult, especially Maori. Most mentors had adult children, or were tertiary students (who were more transient). Recruiting was harder in rural settings, due to limited numbers of people available to mentor (many suitable people were fully committed), and suspicions about mentoring. Project coordinators' work was difficult, under resourced, with experiences of burn out, low job satisfaction, and a turnover of coordinators in all projects over the two years (Ave et al, 1999).

Mentoring Mates (Australia)

This small mentoring project was a crime prevention initiative proposed by the local community within a broader local crime prevention strategy for Woolloomooloo, a small inner Sydney suburb. The part time coordinator developed a profile in the community and worked closely with the local school and community agencies for referrals and follow up. Mentoring was based on the BSBB model.

Referrals were younger than expected (average age ten years) with resistance from older (mid teen) males in particular. The majority of referrals were boys and the most common risk factor was family issues. Mentors came from outside the community, recruited through the main BSBB volunteer program in Sydney. They were primarily female (91%), single professionals aged 21-36 living in adjoining areas of inner Sydney. Twelve young people were matched with mentors after eighteen months, with ten continuing (83%) and likely to be sustained for at least one year (ARTD, 2000). The project has demonstrated the effectiveness of the BSBB model working with younger children at risk in a disadvantaged community, using an established source of volunteers.

This program illustrated the testing behaviour that often arises in the first 3-4 months of a mentoring relationship. The young person may act out in various ways to see whether the mentor is really committed. When this occurs, the role of the program worker was to support both parties through this period (ARTD, 2000).

Inner Sydney Mentoring Scheme (Australia)

While not targeting young offenders, this pilot project funded by the NSW Crime Prevention Division illustrates some of the issues faced in working with poor communities. The project aimed to provide disadvantaged young people in a poor inner Sydney community with mentors who could support them with gaining work, training and life skills. It had 25 "participants" aged 16-20 years, mainly female (17) and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) backgrounds. Of particular relevance to the current pilot program is the difficulties the project experienced in recruiting mentors from the local community, finding that many of the problems that befell the young people also affected volunteers. The project achieved limited positive outcomes, and moved to a more structured, goal oriented approach, developing closer links with the local school, and aiming to access younger people (Vinson 2000).

3.4 "Mentoring" within juvenile justice systems

The available evidence from pilot mentoring programs in juvenile justice systems in the USA shows poor results. Three programs were designed to bridge the gap between custody and release into the community by matching volunteer mentors with young people in custody or on orders in the community. The programs were unable to achieve their goals in making sustainable matches. The programs had major difficulties with implementation related to institutional barriers and lack of training, supervision and support for mentors and for caseworkers (Sipe, 1996; Mecartney, Styles and Morrow, 1994).

In Australia, juvenile justice jurisdictions have used "mentoring" as one of their approaches to support young offenders on supervised orders in the community. In NSW, the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) piloted the Aboriginal Mentor Program in 1996-97, developing into a broader Mentor Program in 1997-98. The Mentor Program aims to support young people on community supervision orders through matching them with an adult who has the personal and/ or cultural skills to address their support needs. Mentors are temporary DJJ employees.

A review of the Program in 2001 found that the Mentor Program had been used with around 5% to 10% of young people on supervised orders in the community (around 200-400 pa), of whom around half were Aboriginal. The review found that the Program had become primarily directed to providing para professional support for clients within their case plans rather than mentoring.

In South Australia, the Department of Human Services has used mentoring for many years with its adolescent clients subject to care and protection and/or supervision orders. The Department introduced paid mentors in 1997, and since then, mentors have, in practice, become casual youth support workers. In 2001, the Department was planning to shift from using 170 casual mentors to a core group of 50 part time employees.

The Ministry of Justice in Western Australia has had a mentor program targeting Aboriginal young offenders (14-21 years) since 1996, now covering the Perth metropolitan area. While the program originally aimed to use mentors from the family group, it found difficulties in practice, and now the mentor must be acceptable to the family, the Ministry and the young offender. Mentors are paid an hourly rate and work with no more than two young offenders at any one time.

Each of these programs is recognised by the Departments as a valuable part of their support for young offenders. They have overcome many of the barriers experienced in their early days, including some of those experienced by the pilot US programs described above, by incorporating the mentor program into a paraprofessional program within the Departments. As such, while these juvenile justice programs have retained the name of "mentor" they have, in practice, shifted some distance from the traditional idea of mentoring, in particular:

- the period of the match is usually short term, bounded by the duration of the supervision order;
- while the relationship involves friendship, its focus is on completing tasks in the case plan;
- participation may not be truly voluntary when the young person is on a supervised order; and,
- "mentors" are paraprofessional Departmental employees often working with a range of young people.

3.5 Conclusions

It is possible to reach some initial conclusions from this scan of the literature and programs, with the promise of more definitive evidence to come as major programs are evaluated.

Outcomes of mentoring

It is clear that mentoring programs are being used extensively to improve the circumstances of disadvantaged young people, especially in the USA. There is also growing evidence about the

qualities of good mentoring relationships and good mentoring programs. The trend for such programs is to match a middle class volunteer with a child aged 10-14 years who has family or school problems, and projects are often closely linked to schools.

Narrowing the focus to crime prevention, the US Department of Justice funded JUMP represents a substantial government investment in mentoring in this policy area. The policy drivers appear to be a high level of enthusiasm for and faith in mentoring, and some evidence that effectively implemented mentoring programs can impact on young people by promoting positive behaviours and reducing negative behaviours. The findings from the JUMP evaluation in 2003 may provide broader information about what works for which young people across a range of program settings.

At the same time, caution is needed in extrapolating these results to young offenders. The JUMP is an intervention which falls at an earlier point along the crime prevention continuum and has generally targeted young people before they become involved in offending behaviour. Even if the findings show that mentoring can have the intended impacts, questions will also need to be answered about how well programs targeted those at higher risk of offending - young people likely to progress to offending behaviour without the intervention of mentoring.

The question of targeting is less of an issue for the other major crime prevention initiative, the Youth Justice Board funded mentoring projects in England and Wales. The focus is more directly on offenders and the projects are closely connected with local criminal justice agencies. To date referrals have mainly been young boys aged 13-16 years, with a proportion already on supervised orders.

The evidence from this program to date indicates that it is possible to engage some young people in this target group in mentoring relationships, and to find volunteers willing to work with them, although there have been marked variations between projects. Furthermore, many of the YJB projects are using one to one mentoring as one of a number of strategies. Findings on outcomes for young people in these projects should provide valuable evidence about the scope of mentoring with young offenders in tandem with other interventions.

Development and implementation of programs

Another conclusion is that mentoring projects take time to establish, and need to build appropriate staffing and procedures, develop relations with referral sources and with sources of volunteers. A mentoring scheme is unlikely to offer a “quick fix” and needs to be seen as a longer term investment. Organisations already involved in mentoring often have an advantage when establishing a new program.

The most commonly cited ongoing implementation issue is difficulties in recruiting enough mentors, especially male mentors, and projects have adopted a wide range of strategies to address this. In part, this may relate to the changing attitudes and capacities for volunteering in different communities, and there is a developing body of research in Australia on the extent of volunteering and volunteer commitment (eg Zappalà 2000, Zappalà and Burrell 2001). There are also indications from mentoring programs that people may be less likely to volunteer to work with older youth who are already involved in offending behaviour.

The cost of mentoring

The one study of the costs of mentoring with disadvantaged young people found wide variations with both program features and costs, and did not provide any conclusive guides. There have been no studies of the cost of mentoring with young offenders, and little information beyond observations that mentoring with high risk youth or young offenders was more expensive, and that projects are likely to experience high costs over the establishment period.

It also appears that the cost assumptions underlying the two major government funded initiatives, the JUMP in the USA and the YJB program in England and Wales, are questionable as projects take on

fewer young people than originally anticipated. However, much clearer information may be available with the final evaluations of these two programs.

Future directions

The main message about mentoring with young offenders from this scan of the literature and programs is that the hard questions remain unanswered (*To what extent will young offenders engage with mentoring? What sort of impacts will mentoring have on their behaviour? Will mentoring programs using volunteers be sustainable? What is the best mix of mentoring and other strategies? How cost-effective is mentoring compared with other interventions?*).

The good news is that we should be much closer to answering some of these questions in the near future, both from findings of the present evaluation and from the results of the evaluations of the two major crime prevention initiatives in the USA and the UK.

Part B FINDINGS

4. Impact of Mentoring

This chapter examines the outcomes of the pilot program in terms of the impacts on the young people involved, their families, and the communities in which the projects were situated. It also looks at any other unintended outcomes for the program.

Key Findings

- the BSBB model of mentoring has had a positive impact on young offenders who were in “performing matches” (both parties continuing to benefit);
- there is evidence of reduced offending for most young people, some of whom were some way along an offending pathway;
- young people demonstrated improvements in their behaviour and attitudes, which in turn has had positive impacts on their family relationships. They and their families report them being more settled at home, school, training and/or work. There was less direct evidence of improved school performance;
- young people also reported the development of their interpersonal and social skills, including improved communication and conflict resolutions skills, increased self esteem and motivation; and,
- community benefits of the program include a positive impact on the profile of YLOs and contributing towards improved policing. The Coffs/ Clarence project has developed into a valuable service in the Coffs Harbour area.

4.1 Profile of matches

While the matches are described in detail in later chapters, the following features provide a context for considering the outcomes:

- the projects produced 17 matches (to October 2001), 6 at Parramatta and 11 at Coffs/ Clarence. Of these matches, 13 (76%) developed into enduring relationships (“performing matches”), with an average duration of 8.7 months;
- the majority of young people matched were young males matched with female mentors (59% of matches);
- most (82%) young people matched were boys, with an average age of 13 years. The three girls were older, aged 15-17 years. All young people matched were Anglo Australian (13) or Indigenous (4);
- most young people were from sole parent families (some sole fathers) with at least one other sibling. On joining the program, the majority (82%) were school students; and,
- the majority of the young people were reported to be experiencing considerable conflict at home (sometimes involving violence), at school and with peers. Many had difficulties at school, leading to truanting and early school leaving. Many were also socially isolated, exacerbated by

poor communication skills, anger management problems and fragile self esteem. Some of the young boys were also diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

4.2 Reduced offending

The young people who were matched to mentors fitted the target population of young offenders. All but one had been cautioned or had attended a youth justice conference.¹ Nine were first offenders considered by the referring YLO as likely to re-offend, while six were already repeat offenders. The offences (related to the caution/conference where the young person was referred) included stealing (33%), break enter steal (20%), assault (including apprehended violence order) (20%), malicious damage (7%), drugs (7%), trespass (7%) and offensive language (7%).²

Young people and their families reported less involvement with the police following their participation in a “performing match”, which was corroborated from other sources. In Coffs Harbour, the Youth Liaison Officer reported reduced offending by young people involved in the program, noting an improvement in the young people’s demeanour and that local police have generally taken their focus off these young people. Similarly, project workers reported that while there were some cases where there was offending early in the match, for most young people no re-offending occurred.

Some of the mentors observed that the young people were choosing not to associate with the same peer group (that they had offended with) or at least appeared to be less influenced by them as they built their self esteem and increased self awareness.

On the available evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that in the short term at least, the young people participating in “performing” mentoring relationships have reduced their offending.

4.3 Other benefits for young people and their families

All the young people and their families interviewed for the evaluation were very enthusiastic about the mentoring relationship and the program, and reported a range of benefits and positive changes that have occurred throughout the time the young person has been mentored.³ These changes were confirmed by the pilot project workers and by the mentors. Benefits and changes include:

Access/exposure to a variety of new experiences, opportunities and ideas

Young people and their families reported that the mentors gave the young people new experiences and ideas that helped improve their social skills, increased their self confidence and reduced the young person’s social isolation.

As well as activities with their mentors, young people were very enthusiastic about the group activities organised by the projects. These activities helped alleviate boredom, allowed structured time with peers to further develop social skills and gave the young people a chance to have fun as well as be in the company of adults who know how to have fun.

¹ One young person’s mother sought assistance from a YLO regarding the young person’s alleged offending and was referred to the program.

² Another young person, nature of crime unknown.

³ In Coffs Harbour, as well as support from the mentor, some young people and their families were receiving assistance from the project’s family support worker and other workers providing one-on-one counselling, dispute resolution and crisis intervention. The project also has an anger management program for young people and provides parenting skills and group work for parents. Families and young people involved in these additional services were as positive about them as they were about the mentor. Some parents also noted the assistance they received from other welfare/ social services.

Improved behaviour

The project workers reported that many of the boys involved in the program were initially experiencing difficulties at school because of fighting, bullying and anger management problems, and that this had reduced for most during their time in the program. Mentors were said to play an important role in this, as they were a trusted adult the young person could confide in about their difficulties and they modelled alternative ways of dealing with conflict and gave good hints:

... like, walk away if I'm in a fight and lose my temper, so if I get into a fight with my brother I just go and read a book.

Families and mentors observed increased maturity in the young people and a sense that they were making better choices about how they behave.

Increased motivation and stability

Young people, their families and mentors described how the young people have become more settled at home (where some are spending more time), school, training or work, and have increased motivation to set and achieve goals, with some completing TAFE and other training programs and finding secure employment. While there was little evidence of improved school performance related to mentoring, some young people were reported to be attending school more regularly.

Improved communication and social skills

Project staff reported that young people had increased their ability to express themselves, better maintain peer friendships and resolve conflict without violence or aggression. Family members noted the young people were much easier to talk to and talked back less.

Improved family relationships

The most significant benefits families reported were reduced conflict in the household, and that the young person is more settled, more polite and respectful and generally a much better person to be around. Young people noted that their mentors and the project workers gave them good ideas for new ways of dealing with family conflict that seemed to work eg *what to do when my sister bothers me* [instead of hitting her].

Some parents valued the time out provided when the mentor and young person were together, noting that it was time they could spend with other children. The mentoring relationship also gave the young person something else to focus on and talk about. A few parents also talked about improvements in their own lives during the period the young person was being mentored.

4.4 Unintended consequences

4.4.1 Improved policing

An unintended but positive outcome from the program has been an improved profile for some of the YLOs involved. While the overall impact has been small given the scale of the program, the program has the potential to contribute to improving the profile of YLOs in the community and improving policing practices with young people. Benefits of the program include:

Promoting the role of YLOs in crime prevention

YLOs noted that being able to refer young people to the mentor program has provided them with a further opportunity to assist families with adolescents to address the difficulties that lie behind the young person's offending. The Coffs Harbour YLO noted that the project in Coffs is one of the few available to refer families with adolescents in need. The profile of YLOs in the community has improved through being able to provide a positive outcome when young people offend, demonstrating that police are concerned with crime prevention.

Increased networking with youth agencies

Youth service stakeholders and YLOs valued the opportunity to have further contact with each other through project Advisory Committee meetings and interagency meetings.

Improving the image of police in the community

Some young people and their families praised the YLO for referring them to the program which has brought about such positive changes from an initially negative experience. As one parent noted:

The police gave me the option, would I like to try it. They saw he [young person] had potential. I was so pleased as I had been looking for something. I had been to DOCS, to the church, everywhere.

The YLO in Coffs Harbour also notes that she sometimes encounters one of the young people on the program during her school visits and that the good rapport she has with this young person helps to positively influence other young people's attitudes toward the police.

Enhancing the professional skills of YLOs

YLOs take pride in their work of cautioning young people and their expertise in accurately assessing the young person and their family's needs and difficulties (behind the offending). For some, this role has been enhanced through their involvement with the pilot program, especially through the process of assessing the young person's need for a mentor relationship.

4.4.2 Meeting wider community needs

The Coffs/ Clarence project used a community development approach to build the service (see Chapter 9), which has seen the project expand from its core of making matches to a much broader service delivery base. Stakeholders in Coffs/ Clarence valued the service as a *great network partner* noting the valuable contribution it has made to the local area by responding to the gaps in services for families with adolescents. Additional services include individual and group work with adolescents, support for young people to complete their youth justice conferencing outcomes, pre-match outings with young people waiting to be matched, family support, dispute resolution and crisis intervention.

4.4.3 Demand for mentors from young people's siblings and others

Another unintended consequence, arising from the success of the mentor matches, is the demand for mentoring from siblings, and from parents of the young people involved in the program for their other children, with some commenting that it may well mean that the sibling *had to offend to get a mentor*. In response to this demand, the Coffs/ Clarence project has developed a siblings group that provides monthly outings.

There is also a strong demand for the service from community youth service providers working with young people considered at risk of offending, and a frustration that referrals are limited to police YLOs and Conference Administrators. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 8.

5. Creating and supporting matches

A core element of a mentoring program is creating enduring matches from young people and volunteers. This chapter examines the patterns of matches and the factors associated with the effectiveness of the matching process.

Key Findings:

- the BSBB model was effective in producing “performing matches”, with most (76%) matches developing into ongoing relationships which had lasted almost 9 months on average (to October 2001). Young people, families and mentors were satisfied with the matches;
- the relatively low number of matches (27) made over the 27 month period reflected difficulties in recruiting volunteers in particular. The projects reported 16 unmatched young people as at March 2002. These findings suggest that the BSBB matching process requires a sizeable pool of volunteers and referrals in order to generate reasonable numbers of matches.
- the most common match was a boy aged 13 years matched with a female mentor;
- the “performing matches” were associated with an effective matching process, and ongoing support from the pilot project workers;
- by contrast, the non “performing matches” highlighted the importance of careful screening of volunteers and assessment of the young person’s capacity to be involved in a mentor relationship, the vicissitudes of life notwithstanding.

5.1 “Performing matches”

The BSBB model involves the matching of young people who lack adequate adult role models with an appropriate adult volunteer who can provide support and friendship through a trusting relationship. Young people and their adult Big Sister or Brother agree to spend a few hours together each week, usually for a minimum of 12 months. The match is made by professionally trained personnel and takes into account the young person’s needs, interests, temperament and location and the skills and qualities the volunteer offers.

A “performing match” is defined as a match that has regular meetings and is assessed as “performing” by project staff at 6, 9 and 12 months. The criteria are whether the young person experiences benefits from the relationship, the mentor sees benefits for the young person from the relationship and experiences benefits for him/herself.

Most matches were “performing”

Of the 17 matches made by the projects to October 2001, 13 (76%) developed into ongoing relationships (“performing matches”), with an average duration of 8.7 months, including ten which are ongoing and four which have continued for more than 12 months (Table 5.1)⁴.

⁴ The projects reported an additional 10 matches in the five months to March 2002 - see 5.3 below.

The key factor behind the performing matches appears to be the quality of the processes for making and supporting the matches (see below).

Three of the performing matches have subsequently closed when the young person moved away after periods of 6, 8 and 11 months respectively, with one young person being re-matched with the same mentor when he returned to live in the area (within 2 months). Whilst some degree of moving is inevitable, the likelihood could be higher for this target group (eg poor families, single parents), especially in locations like Coffs Harbour on the North Coast of NSW.

Table 5.1 Performing and not performing matches by duration and project

Types of matches	Parramatta		Coffs/ Clarence		All	
	no.	av. months	no.	av. months	no.	av. months
Performing - ongoing	4	10	6	8	10	8.8
Performing - closed	2	8.5	1	8	3	8.3
Not performing - closed	.	.	4	5.6	4	5.6
Total	6	9.5	11	7.1	17	8

Source: Match assessments from pilot projects at 31 October 2001 (n = 17).

Types of matches

Most matches involved a young boy matched with a female mentor (59%), with the remainder either a male with a male mentor (23%) or a female with a female mentor (18%), reflecting that the majority of volunteers recruited were women. There was a comparable pattern across the two projects.

There was no evidence that a particular match type was more or less likely to perform.

While four of the young men were Indigenous, to date no Indigenous mentors have been involved.

Table 5.2 Gender pattern of matches (performing and not performing) by project

Type of match	Parramatta			Coffs/ Clarence			All		
	female MENTOR	male FEMALE	male MALE	female FEMALE	male FEMALE	male MALE	female FEMALE	male FEMALE	male MALE
Performing	2	3	1	1	4	2	3	7	3
Not performing	3	1	.	3	1
Total	2	3	1	1	7	3	3	10	4

Source: Match assessments from pilot projects at 31 October 2001 (n = 17).

5.2 Non “performing” matches

Four matches can be considered as not “performing” and closed (after 1 week, 4, 8 and 10 months respectively). All of these matches were at Coffs/ Clarence. Each involved a boy aged 12-14 years (3 Anglo Australian, 1 Indigenous). Whilst it is inevitable that some matches will not endure, these cases (Box 5.1) illustrate the importance of a careful assessment and matching process to ensure both mentors and young people are likely to persist with the relationship.

5.3 The matching process

The BSBB matching process is based on careful assessment of the characteristics and interests of the young person, and the strengths, motivation and experience of the volunteer.

Quality of matching

All of the families and young people interviewed for the evaluation expressed satisfaction with the match and the mentor. This included young males who requested a male mentor but agreed to a female mentor instead of waiting, for what was expected to be a considerable period, for a male volunteer.

Many of the mentors expressed delight at how similar they were to the young person with whom they were matched, and with the effectiveness of the matching process. The quality of the matching contributed significantly to a match “performing”, and required considerable skill and knowledge about the mentor and young person by the project worker. This knowledge was gained through meeting with young people to conduct the family assessments and the project workers’ attendance at group outings. In Coffs/Clarence, the pre-match outings gave workers further opportunities to get to know young people. Knowledge of the mentors was gained through the volunteer assessment and training program (see Chapter 7).

The results of matching for One₂One are consistent with research on “performing matches” in the USA, which has found that the characteristics of mentors (age, race, gender) do not seem important in themselves, but the key factors are taking into account the young person and mentor’s preferences, as well as their attitudes, interests, and preferred activities (Sipe, 1998).

Box 5.1 Non “performing” matches

The first closed match occurred early in the program when the mentor failed to meet the young person. This demonstrates the need for careful screening to ensure that mentors are capable and willing to fulfil the commitment they make.

The second match closed after four months. Initially there were difficulties in the young person’s family that caused some disruptions in the match, and the mentor later travelled away to Melbourne for work.

The two other matches were both referred from Youth Justice Conferencing. One was described as a difficult match from the beginning, with the young person being resistant through behaviour but not expressing a desire to end the match.

The other match, (the only Grafton match) closed after 10 months and had also been difficult from the beginning. The young person lived in a caravan park and other accommodation (generally homeless) with his mother (and her partner), who had major substance abuse problems. The young person was also strongly influenced by an older cousin with whom he offended. Later, a member of the mentor’s family had a major illness which curbed the mentor’s ability to participate in the match.

The young person’s homelessness was a significant factor preventing this match from developing into a trusted friendship. It demonstrates the need for young people to have at least some stability in their lives to be able to meet regularly with the mentor.

The number of matches

While the model was effective in ensuring the quality of matches, the number of matches was far less than expected. Over the 22 month period to October 2001, 17 matches were made, 11 by the Coffs/Clarence project and 6 by the Parramatta project. However, the projects reported an additional 10 matches in the five months to March 2002, 8 by the Coffs/Clarence project (including 1 re-match)

and 3 by the Parramatta project. As a result, the projects had 22 current matches at March 2002, 15 at the Coffs/Clarence project and 7 at the Parramatta project⁵.

The main barrier for both projects was recruiting sufficient mentors (see Chapter 7). In addition, the Parramatta project also had limited referrals (see Chapter 8). As at March 2002, Coffs/ Clarence had 13 young people waiting to be matched and 7 undergoing family assessment, and Parramatta had 3 young people waiting to be matched. Yet at different times both projects have had volunteers waiting to be matched.

This evidence suggests that the BSBB matching process requires a sizeable pool of volunteers and referrals in order to generate a reasonable numbers of matches. For example, an established mentor program like the BSBB Sydney program, with over 50 current matches, has mentors available for re-matches once a successful relationship has completed, as well as generating new volunteers through word-of-mouth from existing mentors. The Coffs/Clarence project appears to be approaching this stage of development, especially with the recent upsurge in matches (see Chapter 9).

5.4 Supporting the matches

To begin a match, the project workers arrange a meeting with the young person, their parent/ guardian if required and the mentor, usually on neutral ground. Following this initial meeting, the mentor and young person will spend some time together and will arrange their next meeting.

The matches are supported through regular contact with the project workers via mentor meetings, formal review meetings (at 3, 6 and 12 months), group outings, a project newsletter in Coffs/Clarence and informal contact as required. The majority of the mentors felt supported by the project workers, especially when they were struggling with issues concerning the match. They also appreciated the mentor meetings where they had a chance to share experiences, be supported by other mentors and find good ideas for possible activities with the young person.

In Parramatta, mentors (and one young person) expressed concern over the high turnover of project workers and the subsequent loss of continuity. In addition, some project workers were seen as more effective and supportive than others, based on perceived maturity and ability to build rapport with the young people. These mentors also expressed frustration with the poor turn-up at mentor meetings.

These findings confirm previous research (see Public Private Ventures and Saito and Blythe) that identified a number of key elements for an effective mentoring project, in particular intensive supervision and support.

⁵ The matches reported since October 2001 are not included in the data analysis in this report.

6. The mentoring relationship

It is often assumed that mentoring is a positive experience for young people because the mentor provides a strong role model. However, there are a number of other ways in which the mentor relationship can influence the young person being mentored.

This chapter explores the mechanisms behind the “performing matches” outlined in the previous chapter, to better understand the types of influence the mentor role can have on the young person. It uses a series of case studies based on actual matches which have been altered to ensure anonymity of those involved. Note that the case studies are based on interviews conducted in October 2001 and the duration of matches is to that date.

Key Findings:

- there are a range of roles and influences that mentors can have with the young people they are mentoring. These varied depending on the characteristics and needs of the young person, the mentor’s skills and interests and the purpose of the match;

The main types of mentor influences found with the projects were:

- role modelling. While present in all the “performing matches”, was most obvious in the matches between young women and young female mentors;
- emotional and social support. This is at the core of the BSBB relationship and mentors demonstrated this through a caring, attentive and constant presence in the young person’s life that provided opportunities for the young people to explore their difficulties and concerns;
- modifying undesirable behaviours. The willingness of the mentors to be matched with a young offender demonstrated their more open attitudes, and they particularly assisted young people in modifying their negative communication patterns and aggressive behaviour;
- skill development. Mentors were not expected to achieve any particular outcomes with the young people however, young people noted their mentors provided them practical advice about different ways to respond to difficult situations;
- filling time and providing enjoyable activities. This was another important role for mentors - young people had opportunities to do fun activities with their mentors that they might not otherwise have been able to do. The time spent with the mentor was also time out for the young person and their family;
- parental substitute. This was the least likely role for the mentor. Indeed, families of the young people appreciated that the mentors were not overly involved in their families’ lives. Nonetheless some mentors did fill a gap that a parent might otherwise have filled in the young person’s life.

6.1 A range of influences of mentoring

The BSBB model has as its goal to assist young people to develop a stable, trusting and ongoing relationship with an adult. The role of the mentor is perceived as providing a positive role model and friend to the young person.

Chapter 4 describes the positive outcomes achieved for all the young people involved in “performing matches”, including reduced offending, increased self esteem and for many, improved social and communication skills that led to better family and peer relationships. To achieve these outcomes, it is clear the mentor played a significant role in the young person’s life. Ave et al (1999) in their evaluation of the New Zealand Mentoring for Children/Youth at risk demonstration project identify a number of possible psychological mechanisms that, theoretically, explain the mentoring concept. The mechanisms are:

- Role model
- Social (and emotional) support
- Modifying undesirable behaviour
- Specific positive skill development
- Filling time
- Parental substitute

The mechanisms are not mutually exclusive and all may be operating in the mentor relationship. Of the mentor relationships examined for the evaluation all demonstrated some, if not most of the mechanisms. The mix of influence the mentors had varied depending on the type of match, the characteristics of the young person, the mentor’s skills and interests and the type of match formed.

The mentors themselves, while confident that they were having a positive impact on the life of the young people they were mentoring, were the least likely to identify specific influences. In contrast, the young people, their families and the One2One program were able to describe in more detail the areas where the young person had made changes and, to some extent, the types of influences the mentor was having on the young people.

It is useful to consider the extent to which these or other types of mechanisms apply in the mentor relationships developed in the pilot program.

6.2 Role model

Role model is one of the most frequently used psychological concepts in mentoring. The idea is that if one has a clear model of the kind of individual one aspires to be, then the person who represents that ideal provides a variety of definable characteristics which the younger person imitates and thus gradually becomes more similar to in terms of values, attitudes and social behaviours. How this process occurs is explained differently depending on the theoretical orientation adopted (Ave et al 1999).

The mentor as role model is integral to the BSBB approach. In practice, while all the mentors involved in the pilot project did model positive behaviours and supportive friendships, the influence of the role model as someone the young person aspired to be was clearly evident in the long term relationships between two young women (15-16 years old) and their female mentors in their mid twenties.

Both young women spoke of their mentors as role models, noting how much they admire the mentor for their achievements. Both felt that understanding how their mentors achieved their success had inspired them to follow in their footsteps, as one of the young women explained: [I see how] *she has done a lot for herself which makes me think I can do that too*. The case studies of Alison and Jill, and Trina and Kim (see over) demonstrate the influence of the mentor as role model.

6.3 Emotional and social support

Every person's need for social support is widely recognised. Moreover, several studies have found that the children who are most resilient had all found at least one other person – in addition to their parents – to provide emotional support. Mentoring is often expected to provide emotional support to the young person to allow them the opportunity to explore their feelings in a safe and caring relationship. (Ave et al 1999)

Unlike other programs, where the goal of the mentor relationship is to improve the young person's school performance or to find employment, the BSBB model of mentoring has as its primary goal the development of a friendship. As such, we would expect that the mentoring relationships developed during the pilot projects would demonstrate a high degree of influence in the areas of emotional and social support for the young person.

The families of young people confirmed this, noting that the mentor provided the young person with someone other than his or her parent(s) to talk to, as one parent noted: *The mentor is someone for him [young person] to talk to, to confide in, who has a positive attitude. He has really changed his attitude compared with before.*

The majority of young people spoke of having someone who would listen to them and with whom they could share their thoughts and feelings. As one young person noted: *an adult not in the family, I can tell things to my mentor and she will listen to me, not like my parents.*

Social support, through participating in enjoyable activities together, provided a safe framework for the younger boys being mentored to receive emotional support from their mentors. The young women and older boys being mentored were more likely to spend time chatting with their mentors about their feelings, though they also valued the activities with their mentors. The influence of social and emotional support was also evident in the support one mentor provided the young Indigenous boy she was mentoring to pursue his artwork as part of his Aboriginal heritage.

Mentors too were very positive about the value their friendship with the young person provided, as one mentor noted: *The young person has someone he can discuss ideas and explore options. He knows he can say whatever he wants and I will listen and won't judge him.* The case study of Stuart and Kylie demonstrates the influence of emotional support for the young person.

Alison and Jill (ongoing match, 16 months)

Alison was 15 when she was referred to the One₂One mentor program following a police caution for stealing, an offence she committed with peers. At the time she was matched, Alison was unemployed having left school early (Year 9), and she had little interest in finding work. She was living with her mother and siblings with whom she gets along though she was spending a lot of time away from home.

Alison was matched with Jill, a self employed business woman in her mid twenties. When first introduced, Alison and her mentor were both nervous as it was artificial - they were thrown together - but after a while the relationship became more natural. In the early stages Alison found it difficult to keep to arranged meeting times with Jill, but gradually, through Jill's persistence, she learnt the importance of the relationship and the commitment her mentor was making.

Alison now describes her mentor as a friend who will *always be there for me*. She feels they have a lot in common, and she enjoys spending time together talking, going to the movies, ice skating and other activities including group activities organised by One₂One.

Alison, Jill and the One₂One project worker all agree that Alison has come a long way since she first was matched to Jill. She is *on her feet*, attending TAFE regularly having already completed two certificate courses, working part time at a job she finds highly satisfying and has re-offended only once early in the relationship (for which she attended a police caution). One₂One described Alison as a person of high self esteem who is increasingly aware of her capacity to reach her potential and far less influenced by peers.

Alison says she feels a lot better about herself, is calmer and stays at home more to spend time with her younger siblings, who appreciate the extra attention. Alison's mother also expressed pleasure about the benefits of the mentor program for her daughter. When asked how her mentor assisted her, Alison mentions:

- knowing that someone wanted to be involved with her, *which has made me want to get involved in everything*;
- being a strong role model — she can see how her mentor achieved her success in life and how *she has done a lot for herself which makes me think I can do that too*;
- a safe friendship to explore beliefs and attitudes and being available for her to share her thoughts and feelings, for example, about the ups and downs of friendships;
- teaching her how to look at situations from the other person's perspective.

Jill feels she has been able to assist Alison by encouraging her to believe in herself. Jill notes that Alison has completely changed from when they first met — she has matured and is now enthusiastic about her future. Jill sought to empower Alison to begin to make better choices in her life and to think through her options and show her that she *was not a victim of her past*.

The one difficulty Jill has experienced in her role as a mentor was at one stage feeling that she was becoming parental in her approach to Alison and getting too involved. She says that she was assisted by One₂One's project worker to develop better boundaries and not become too involved in the young person's decisions.

Trina and Kim (ongoing match, 15 months)

Trina was referred to the mentor program following a police caution for a stealing offence. She was 17 years old at the time, had left school and was unemployed having lost a previous job due to instability at home, where she was experiencing considerable conflict with her mother.

Trina was matched with Kim, a manager in her mid twenties. Trina describes her mentor as a good friend and notes that now she is 18 years of age their relationship has shifted from big/little sister to one where they go out together to venues. She says that during the previous 15 months, she and her mentor have spent regular time together (fortnightly) doing fun activities such as rollerblading, movies, going for drives, watching videos and cooking meals at her mentor's home.

In the time she has been matched with her mentor, Trina notes she has not been in trouble with the police and has grown up a lot. She has completed two TAFE courses and has enrolled in a child care course that, while challenging, is rewarding. Trina also made the decision to move away from the family home and has participated in family counselling. Her mother says this has helped reduce the conflict between them and they can now work on building a positive relationship with each other.

Kim also sees changes in Trina including improved self esteem, making better choices about who she spends time with (people who respect her) and being a lot more settled in her relationship with her mother. She also observes Trina taking an interest in developing her skills and career goals. Before being matched to Kim, Trina didn't think about her future and was hanging around people with whom she was offending. She says she now tries to avoid these people. When asked how her mentor had assisted her, Trina notes that her mentor:

- is a role model for her, especially as she achieves one promotion after another at her work: *she is mature and has her mind set on what she wants to do and goes for it;*
- offers guidance and friendship and has been there for her;
- provides opportunities to do fun activities.

At the beginning of the match, Trina's mother was very nervous about meeting the mentor, concerned that she would judge her and her family circumstances. Instead she has been delighted with Kim, who she believes has provided her daughter with a positive friendship *that is just for [Trina]*. She says she wished the program had been around when her daughter was younger and that she hopes her other child has the opportunity to have a mentor.

Kim feels she has been a positive role model for Trina, demonstrating that achieving one's goals, such as a rewarding job and comfortable home are not as difficult as they look. She notes that in the beginning the relationship was difficult as it was artificial, but over time they have formed a casual, relaxed friendship where they can have fun and do things that are of interest to the young person. Kim says that she had expected they would spend more time talking in depth about issues but that Trina is a quiet person who takes time to think through information.

The One₂One project worker notes that Kim has provided consistent non-judgmental support for Trina and promotes a safe environment for self development. Kim has also provided a role model for age appropriate behaviour and supports and encourages Trina to take steps toward independence.

Stuart and Kylie (ongoing match, 6 months)

Stuart, a 13 year old Indigenous boy, was referred to One₂One by a YLO without having received a police caution. Stuart's mother had approached the YLO for help because she was having problems with Stuart's *backchat and the way he was degrading me in front of his brothers and sisters*, and she was very concerned about possible offending. The YLO considered that if nothing was done for Stuart, the police would soon be involved.

Stuart was originally matched with a male mentor who, for family reasons, could not continue the match. Stuart was re-matched with Kylie, a sole parent in her mid twenties. This match is reported by the One₂One project workers to be going very well.

Stuart says he enjoys the time spent with his mentor and the activities they do together including ten pin bowling, go carting and going out for lunch. Stuart now feels much better about himself and has benefited from Kylie's encouragement, *she tells me I can do anything*. He also notes that there is much less fighting at home and that he is more motivated to pursue his goals.

The changes in Stuart observed by his mother include less trouble at school, he has quietened down, is doing more painting and he is treating her with much more respect. He is also making better choices about whom he spends time with and is no longer hanging around with drug taking friends. The One₂One project workers note that Stuart has developed his self esteem and that he is interacting more assertively with his family and girlfriend.

Kylie notes that when they were first matched Stuart was guarded (the way many young people respond to adults), but that he has gradually learnt to relax and treat her as a friend and confidant. She says that Stuart is starting to have a voice about what *he* wants and about the issues in his life, to have open and honest conversations and to then resolve difficulties that he is experiencing. She feels that she is teaching him about how to be in a friendship through learning how to communicate and explore issues.

A challenge for Kylie as a mentor has been learning to communicate with Stuart on a level he understands that does not offend or patronise him. Another challenge has been finding things to do together, especially as they both have limited disposable income, and in the beginning, Stuart often lacked motivation. Kylie believes that what they do together is far less important than developing the friendship. Stuart agrees, noting that the best thing about the mentor relationship is being able to talk with his mentor about anything.

When asked how the mentor had assisted him, Stuart and his mother noted that:

- he has the opportunity to talk about what has been going on in his life and to discuss any problems he has, trusting that whatever he tells Kylie she will not reveal;
- Kylie has encouraged him to pursue his artwork, as part of his Indigenous heritage, providing him with some ideas for his paintings.

Kylie is aware that she is helping Stuart deal better with situations at home and at school and is helping him to construct his life, to have dreams and goals. She notes that Stuart is changing in the way he approaches relationships and the way he perceives himself and what he wants for his life.

6.4 Modifying undesirable behaviours

The role of the mentor as behaviour change agent is less often discussed. Inevitably problematic behaviours will be exhibited in the relationship and there will be a certain requirement on the mentor to be able to deal with or manage negative behaviour just like a parent or teacher. The skills the mentor has for dealing with negative behaviours are typically not well defined and may be very variable though the successful management of negative behaviours is one of the obvious ways the mentor influences the young person. (Ave et al 1999)

While the role of the mentor in modifying undesirable behaviours in the young person is not prescribed in the BSBB model of mentoring, Ave et al note that the successful management of negative behaviours is one of the obvious ways the mentor influences the young person.

In the pilot projects, the young people matched with mentors, their families and the One₂One workers all identified ways that young people had changed their undesirable behaviours, including decreased offending, aggression and anger, less trouble at school and being a lot more settled at home. Both the mentors and the program workers were considered agents of change in this respect. In particular, the mentors were identified as people with particular skills and attitudes that made them suitable to mentor young people already involved in offending and who may have had other negative behaviours.

The influence mentors and project workers had in modifying undesirable behaviours in the young people was most obvious in the areas of communication and anger management. The young people themselves identified the ways in which their mentors and the project workers had influenced them to modify undesirable behaviours and replace them with more positive and rewarding behaviours and skills (also see next section). These include:

- being able to talk honestly with their mentors and the One₂One workers about difficulties experienced, including substance use and conflict at home and trusting the information shared to be kept confidential;
- the mentor and project workers providing suggestions about how to avoid conflict with family members or peers and the young people putting those ideas into practice. As one young person noted: *like walk away if I get into a fight and lose my temper, so if I get into a fight with my brothers I just go and read a book;*
- respect and affection for their mentor encouraged the young people to learn new ways of behaving around their mentors. For example, one young person noted that he tries to not swear around his mentor;
- participating in an anger management workshop and follow-up with One₂One workers in developing communication skills and self esteem.

The mentors appeared to have less direct influence over the young people's school attendance and school performance - nor were they expected to have a direct role in getting young people back into school. Some young people did improve their school attendance because they learnt to deal with conflict better and were less involved in conflict with peers at school or being bullied.

The case study of Jason and his mentor Jennifer describes the positive influence that a mentor and the project workers have had on changing negative behaviour.

Jason and Jennifer (ongoing match, 8 months)

Jason was 14 years old when referred to the mentor program following a police caution for a domestic violence related offence. At the time, Jason was attracting police attention through his public anger and smoking, and he had very low self esteem. Jason lives at home with his mother and two siblings and there was a lot of conflict and sometimes violence at home. Jason was regularly attending school but with limited interest, in part due to conflict with other students.

Jason was matched to Jennifer, a TAFE student in her 50s. Jason found that having a mentor was more fun than he expected. At first, he thought it was something he was required to do but now he is very happy to be involved. Jason enjoys visiting his mentor's home and he realises that doing this required trust from his mentor. He also enjoys going to the beach with her and talking about their lives. Jason likes his mentor, describing her as peaceful, with a caring attitude. He also feels comfortable about contacting her if he has a problem.

In addition to being matched with a mentor, Jason and his family have received intensive support from the One₂One family support worker and other workers as well as being referred to other services for assistance (which the mentor program has coordinated). Jason has also participated in One₂One's anger management program.

In the 8 months Jason and his family have been involved with One₂One, there have been considerable changes, especially in Jason's behaviour. Jason's mother notes that when they first started the family was in crisis. Since then, she has seen Jason become more confident and respectful, he no longer gets angry in public, and has reduced his offending, and appears more settled at home. Jason's mother was surprised her son was matched to a woman but believes it has been very positive, describing his mentor as *like a grandmother* for Jason.

Jason himself feels he has changed in the time he has been matched with his mentor. He has learnt to trust his mentor and share information about himself and he is developing social skills, which helps in mixing with other young people. He has improved his manners and is trying not to swear, and he notes that the conflict at home has decreased.

Jason, his mother and the One₂One program worker identified the following ways that his mentor has helped him:

- providing useful tips on how to deal more constructively with conflict at home and school;
- *I have someone to talk to if I get into trouble;*
- time out and a break for the family;
- new and positive experiences with his mentor and looking forward to outings;
- providing support and encouragement;
- practical support eg taking him to a TAFE open day.

While Jason's mother feels that he still has a way to go, especially to control his anger better at home and improve his school attendance, she is impressed with One₂One noting that, *this has been the one program since the kids have been little I have had any benefit from.*

6.5 Specific skills development

It is often assumed that the mentor will teach specific competencies to the young person. Here the presumption is that the activities engaged in with the mentor will instruct the young person in skills that they would not otherwise have the chance to learn. This implies the mentor does need to function like a teacher and actually show the young person how to perform. A particularly common form of specific skill emphasised is that of transitional life skills. (Ave et al 1999)

In company with modifying undesirable behaviours is the development of positive skills by the young people involved in mentoring. The young people, their families and project staff identified some of the skills the young people developed including: improved communication, conflict resolution and anger management skills, and increased maturity. Three of the young people had also made a successful transition to work and/or training (see the case studies of Alison and Jill, Trina and Kim and Alan and Narelle).

The mentors and One₂One workers were careful to note that the young people involved in the program entered with a range of skills that the mentor relationship helped to develop. Observations from parents, young people and the One₂One project workers regarding the young person's new skills include:

It has made a difference - he is learning to behave differently, not just aggressively

She no longer associates with the same group of friends (with whom she was offending) and seems to be looking around for new friends

He has increased motivation - he did nothing when he left school and the mentor helped him get started to look for work

While he still gets angry at home, it is not happening in public anymore - it is a big improvement as he learns self control

I'm learning to walk away from conflict

I have improved my manners and try not to swear

The role of the mentor in this development of skills was not directly as teacher/ tutor, as may be the case in other mentor programs such as school based mentoring where the role of the mentor is to improve the young person's scholastic ability, but more as a model of positive behaviour and providing practical advice about different ways of responding to different situations that enhanced the young person's sense of wellbeing.

The case study of Alan and Narelle demonstrates the influence of the mentor in developing the young person's skills.

Alan and Narelle (ongoing match, 12 months)

Alan was referred to One₂One following a police caution for a stealing related offence. Alan, aged 15 years, had 3 prior offences. At the time he was referred, he was experiencing conflict at home where he lived with his father, who expected Alan to take on a lot of adult duties. Alan was seen as very responsible in his approach to others.

Alan was matched with Narelle, a TAFE student in her late 20's and parent of young children. Alan says he enjoys going to the beach with his mentor and talking and visiting her home, *she provides me with advice and we have a good laugh*. He says his mentor is a really good friend, like a sister.

Around 6 months into the match, Alan made the decision to leave school, having become disillusioned with the school system. He then spent a difficult period unemployed, experiencing some mild depression. Narelle kept regular contact with him during this period, and she and the One₂One worker actively helped him with finding work, including developing a resume and ongoing encouragement. Alan eventually gained full time employment in a job he enjoys. He has also moved to live with his mother and sibling.

Alan notes that he no longer has any difficulties with the police and is thinking much more positively about his future and the possibility of study. He thinks that leaving school was a good idea as he is now less angry than he used to be. He also feels he has a better attitude toward himself and other people, is trying to swear less and resists taking responsibility where it is not required (eg at One₂One Mega gatherings). Alan feels the changes in him have been a combination of mentoring and maturing — the mentor has brought out his maturity and he puts it into practice now.

According to Alan's mother, having a mentor has benefited Alan — he has increased self confidence knowing someone is there for him. She is also surprised as she thought that mentoring would be more like counselling once a month. She believes that it was very difficult for Alan living with his father as he would put Alan down and feels that without the program Alan would have probably be on probation by now.

Alan, his mother and the One₂One project worker saw that the mentor had contributed to his development in the following ways:

- always being there and being positive
- demonstrating acceptance of the person he is 'underneath'
- he was treated respectfully which has helped bring out his self respect
- being a confidant, *I have told [mentor] things I would not tell anyone else*
- persistent encouragement and support, especially through significant transitions such as from school to work and moving to live with his mother
- learning to have fun and 'lighten up'.

Narelle agrees that he has changed a great deal in the last 12 months and feels the relationship has given Alan an adult with whom he can communicate, someone who can be objective and non-judgmental, *I think the mentor relationship has helped him relax a bit more and had a part in building his self esteem*.

6.6 Filling time

Though not often referred to, the time spent with the mentor is likely to be more constructive than time spent alone or in the company of other youngsters exhibiting anti-social behaviour. Such influence has benefits in terms of its impact on the environment of the young person rather than any direct attempt to alter behaviour. (Ave et al 1999)

All of the young people and their families interviewed for the evaluation valued the opportunity that having a mentor gave them to participate in enjoyable social activities, as one young person noted: *Every second Tuesday we go out and we choose cool places to go and things to do.* As such, the mentor offered much more than just filling in the young person's time.

Some parents and young people noted that mentors assisted the young people with constructive activities instead of them participating in undesirable behaviours, gave something for the young people to look forward to each week and something to talk about with their families.

The social activities provided by the mentors and by the program, both one-on-one and through the organised group outings of young people and their mentors, were particularly important to the 13-15 year old boys, who enjoyed the outings, with some young people also recognising that they helped develop their socialising and communication skills. For example, one young man really enjoyed the mega gatherings [of mentors and young people] as they help him with mixing: *I never used to like big groups of people but I like some of the group games and there is always lots of food.*

Usually the mentor would contact the young person a few days beforehand to discuss possible activities for their time together. For some mentors, thinking of places to go and things to do sometimes proved challenging, especially since the young person usually had very little money to afford costly outings and may have lacked motivation, at least in the beginning of the relationship. Invariably mentors would pay for the young person if they were to go to the movie theatre or out for a meal but most often they would find low cost activities that the young person found enjoyable.

Activities with their mentors also provided valuable time out for the young person from their family, as one parent noted: *He has a day out and time out from his sister and the stress caused by the ongoing conflict between them.*

Several parents also noted that the regular time their child spent away from the family home with their mentor was time for them to spend with their other children.

The case study of Matthew and Gwen demonstrates the benefits of filling in time.

Matthew and Gwen (ongoing match, 7 months)

Matthew is a twelve year old boy who has Aboriginal heritage. He was referred to One₂One following a police caution for a trespassing offence. Matthew had one prior offence and was associating with known offenders. On entry to the program, Matthew was described as having low self esteem and was very sensitive about whom he was associating with. His mother notes that he was in trouble a lot at school and into trouble with older boys as he was very easily led. Matthew has also been diagnosed with ADHD.

His mentor is Gwen, a health professional in her 30s. Matthew and his mentor describe the match positively, both having lots of fun and developing a good friendship.

Matthew recalls that when he was first introduced to the idea of a mentor he was very unsure, but when the One₂One worker had visited and talked more about the sorts of activities they would do, he made up his mind it was okay. He initially wanted a male mentor but agreed to be matched to a woman rather than wait a long time for a male mentor to be found. Matthew has no regrets about agreeing to a Big Sister. He says he really likes her, she is a nice person and makes him laugh, does not take things too seriously, or get upset if there are problems.

Matthew's mother was concerned that having a mentor would be too much for the family as they were already receiving intensive assistance from a local community service. However, this has not been the case and she feels that his mentor has '*got through to him*', he responds very well to her attention, and she has strongly influenced him to develop goals for himself.

According to Matthew's mother he is spending a lot more time at home and not associating with the peer group that he was offending with and has offended only once (stealing), early in the relationship. He has improved his attitude towards her and does not speak back as much as he used. He has also settled down at school and is attending regularly. She also values the time out it provides to spend time with her younger child.

Gwen says that in the time she has known Matthew he has become less aggressive. His relationship with his mother is more settled and he is not fighting as much at school. He also seems to be thinking through the consequences of his actions more — how it will affect him in years to come. When asked how his mentor has assisted, Matthew, his mother and the One₂One project worker offered the following suggestions:

- encourages him to dream and to pursue the things he wants to do;
- is active, does things that interest him, and provides fun activities that he would not otherwise get to do like going to the movies and car shows;
- is fun loving and tolerant and shows love and attention;
- does not take sides nor come between mother and son and not get too involved in family issues;
- offers alternative ways for him to deal with conflict and peer pressure.

Gwen feels she has provided a consistent person for Matthew through regular, reliable contact, tending not to react the way a parent would to issues, being non-judgmental and taking an active interest in him.

6.7 Parental substitute

In formal mentoring programmes there is often the assumption that some young people are either deprived of certain parental role models or the ones they have are considered undesirable or dysfunctional. The presumption is that a mentor may provide substitute for the kinds of learning that would otherwise come from a particular parent, be it father or mother. In this type of mentoring relationship there is a risk of harm especially since parenting is often perceived as largely permanent while mentors usually come and go. (Ave et al 1999)

The majority of young people involved in the One₂One program were from sole parent families, usually the mother, with one sole father involved. Ave et al note that in such situations, the mentor may provide a substitute for the absent parent.

The degree to which this type of influence applies to the young people matched in the pilot program is relatively small, with two matches demonstrating some characteristics of parental substitution. The match between Tom and Jack, where Jack provided Tom with regular attention and encouraged his participation in the type of activities eg bicycle maintenance and bicycle riding that Tom might have otherwise done with his father, is one example. Another is a mentoring relationship in Coffs/ Clarence between a young woman whose mother had died and her female mentor, where, according to the young woman's father, the mentor provides his daughter with a mature woman she can confide in.

In both cases, the mentor was clearly acting as a positive role model for the young person but was also, to some degree, filling a gap in the young person's life left by the absence of a parent. Other ways in which mentors could be perceived to fulfil the role of a parent have included assisting a young person to find employment and accompanying a young person to a TAFE Open Day.

The parents of the young people matched were highly appreciative of the mentors and the guidance they provided though none identified the mentor as a parental substitute but rather as a confidant and/or role model. Nor did parents express concern that the mentor was too over involved in the family's life.

Indeed, a few parents valued that the mentors did not interfere in their family's life. For example, Matthew's mother was concerned that having a mentor would be too much for her family which was already receiving intensive assistance from a local community service. However, this has not occurred as, according to Matthew's mother, *the mentor does not take sides and does not get over involved with the family.*

Some mentors are more involved with the family, talking through issues with the parent/s and sometimes receiving phone calls from the parent/s regarding the young person. For the mentors, a significant challenge is to remain neutral with parents, particularly when the parent may seek the mentors disapproval of the young person or when the mentor hears about conflicts and difficulties at home for the young person. The case study of Alison and Jill describes this difficulty for the mentor, who was assisted by project staff to develop boundaries around her support for Alison.

The case study of Tom and Jack demonstrates the relationship that can be established between a boy who has had negative male role models in his life and a positive adult male mentor.

Tom and Jack (ongoing match, 4 months)

Tom, a 12 year old boy, was referred to One₂One following a police caution for stealing related offences. He has three previous recorded offences. At the time he was referred, Tom was struggling with grief from the loss of his father (having had very little contact with him in the past 12 years). His stepfather had also recently left the family home. Tom was also experiencing difficulty at school with peers and conflict with his sibling.

Tom was matched to Jack, a single man in his early 40s who works as a labourer. While still in its early days, the match is reported to be going well. Tom enjoys spending time with his mentor and the activities they do together, especially bicycle maintenance and visiting the Big Banana.

Being matched to a mentor is better than Tom thought it would be and he never imagined he would get to do so many fun things. Tom thinks he has a lot in common with his mentor and that his mentor does not talk about boring stuff. He feels he can talk openly with his mentor and say things without getting into trouble. He also sometimes gets good advice from his mentor like, *when mum tells me to do something important, then I should do as asked.*

Tom feels he has changed since being matched with his mentor. He is no longer in trouble with the police and he has made an improvement at school but he does not feel there have been any changes at home. However, Tom's mother says there have been some small changes at home, although Tom remains very angry about the death of his father. She feels he has improved his communication and that going out with his mentor gives him something to look forward to and to talk about at home.

Tom's mother notes how important it has been for him to have a male mentor who could show Tom that not all men are violent (there was a lot of domestic violence for a long period in the family home). She says Tom's mentor has made a real difference as Tom is learning to behave differently, not just aggressively. This has been facilitated by Tom's involvement in the anger management program operated by One₂One.

The One₂One project workers confirm that Tom is less aggressive and has improved his self esteem. Where once he would make and lose friends very easily and was the target of torment at school, he has matured and is aware of how to behave around peers.

Tom, his mother and the One₂One project worker suggested that his mentor has helped him in the following ways:

- providing a regular outing, interesting activities and positive focussed attention;
- modelling a relationship based on equality rather than dominance;
- opportunities to practise skills to maintain friendships and model positive social interaction;
- time out from the family and home situation and time out for his family too;
- an unconditional friendship and positive male role model.

7. Screening, training and recruiting volunteers

This chapter examines the outcomes achieved in providing appropriate mentors to be matched with young offenders, represented by the left hand strand of the outcomes hierarchy (Figure 1.1).

Key Findings:

- the BSBB model is effective in screening and training suitable mentors for working with this target group (young offenders);
- however, the most significant barrier experienced by both projects was attracting enough appropriate volunteers to ensure sufficient numbers of mentors were available for matches;
- despite considerable efforts in promotion, the rate of recruitment remained low throughout much of the life of the program;
- the Coffs/Clarence program achieved greater success later in the program when it formed a partnership with the local TAFE to operate a general mentor training program;
- the lower than expected number of volunteers reflects challenges in commencing a new program, and highlights the need for clear planning and effective promotion.

7.1 Screening and training suitable mentors

The screening and training of mentors takes considerable time and effort and includes a series of in-depth interviews, a personality test, police check, referee reports and a home visit, as well as a full weekend training program.

The quality of the screening and training is reflected in the high proportion of “performing matches”. Looking back, the mentors noted that while the screening and training process was arduous and lengthy, it was highly valuable. Its thoroughness reinforced the seriousness of the commitment required of them in agreeing to become a mentor and encouraged them to be realistic about their ability to make that commitment:

Going through it made me realise that I didn't want to be selected if I couldn't fulfil the expectations of the role.

The Public Private Ventures research identified a number of elements as prerequisites for an effective mentor program:

- thorough volunteer screening capable of weeding out adults unable to keep time commitment, or who may pose a safety risk to young people
- mentoring training that includes communication and limit-setting, tips in relationship building and recommendations on effective interaction with young people;
- procedures for the selection of appropriate participants in each match and
- intensive supervision and support.

7.2 Profile of the mentors

The profile of volunteers who completed these processes and went on to become mentors was different in each location. In Parramatta, the six mentors were typically young single professional or business women (age 20-28 years, with one aged 37), with one male mentor, a professional aged in his 30's. This group had a similar profile to the mentors in the YWCA's BSBB program.

By contrast, in Coffs/Clarence the mentors were more diverse. The eight women ranged in age from their 20s to 50 year olds, half were single mothers and three were TAFE welfare students. The three males were aged 30-40 years, two married and one single.

While both projects had referrals and engaged Indigenous young people (Chapter 4), no Indigenous mentors were recruited.

7.3 Low numbers of mentors

A major difficulty experienced by both projects was ensuring sufficient numbers of mentors were available for matches. After more than two years, the two projects had 19 mentors on their books (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 Status of available mentors at 31 October 2001, by location

Status	Parramatta	Coffs/ Clarence
Matched	4	6
Waiting to be matched or re-matched	2*	7**
Total	6	13

Source: Data from pilot projects at 31 October 2001. Notes: * one mentor may be willing to be re-matched. The circumstances of two other trained mentors have changed, and they are no longer available. ** Three other volunteers are awaiting training.

The number of mentors recruited to the program has been far lower than was expected, with around 1:20 people who enquire eventually becoming a mentor. ARTD's interim evaluation report (Feb 2001) explored in detail the reasons for the slow uptake of the program by volunteers, and the strategies being developed by the two projects to increase volunteer recruitment.

Since that time, the Parramatta project has wound down its recruitment activities to a minimum (mainly advertisements in the local paper and ongoing contact with youth and other community agencies). The Coffs/ Clarence project has continued to occasionally promote the project to volunteers in its target area, relying mainly on word-of-mouth and referrals from the two volunteer agencies. The project has also developed, in partnership with the TAFE, a general mentor training program and expects to recruit some volunteers from this. The first training program, held at One₂One, has 17 participants.

The main sources of volunteers varied between the project sites. In Parramatta the project worker reported that most interest appears to have been via newspaper articles and advertisements in local papers. More recently, most enquiries are via the *Go Volunteer* website. In Coffs/Clarence, the best

recruitment strategy was the partnership established with TAFE to provide an accredited mentor training course. The information evenings were generally useful, though this varied with large numbers on some evenings, and few on other evenings.

7.4 Factors contributing to the low rate of recruitment

The slow trickle that has characterised the recruitment of volunteers to these programs reflects the experiences of other volunteer mentor programs, especially in their early years. However, it appears that there are some key factors that have hindered the recruitment of volunteers to these pilot programs.

Nature of the target group

The projects consider that many potential volunteers do not pursue the process because they have concerns regarding the target group. This issue was documented in the interim report. The YWCA attempted to use the pool of volunteers from BSBB for the Parramatta project, without success.

Partly in response to this issue, the YWCA has established a BSBB to operate in parallel with the One₂One program in Parramatta/Holroyd area. The BSBB project will target young people at risk, seeking referrals from a range of service providers (including YLOs in these areas who can refer young people they are aware of who are at risk without having had to be cautioned or conferenced). The Coffs/ Clarence project is planning to broaden its target group to include young people at risk, in the expectation that the number of volunteers will increase. It is uncertain the impact this will have on the referral of young offenders to the program.

Critical mass of volunteers

The low number of volunteers has been the major limit on mentor programs in the USA, and word-of-mouth recruitment has been found to be most effective (Sipe, 1998). For developing programs like One₂One, there may be a critical mass involved in recruiting volunteers. For example, the YWCA has found that the BSBB program in central Sydney, which now has over 50 matches, tends to attract volunteers by word-of-mouth from the current mentors, and in this way the applications tend to be appropriate and recruitment relatively self-sustaining.

In contrast, the Parramatta project has found that its promotion of the program has generated a higher than expected number of inappropriate applications, which have had to be screened out.

In practice, the Coffs/ Clarence project may have approached a critical mass (in Coffs Harbour) with 15 current matches, 13 young people waiting to be matched and 7 completing family assessments, while 11 volunteers were waiting for training or being screened at the time of writing (March 2002).

Too broad a geographic area

Both projects have also had difficulty in promoting the service across their entire catchment areas, which are large and diverse. This issue of the scope of the service is discussed in Chapter 9.

Promotion of One₂One

According to the auspice agency, due to budgetary constraints the projects were not promoted as One₂One but rather relied on generic BSBB promotional material and strategies (eg the use of café postcards or banners on public buses). These strategies were criticised by stakeholders in both locations as unsuitable and failing to understand the targeted communities, and may have missed potential volunteers as a result.

Stakeholders in western Sydney were critical that the program was too closely linked with the YWCA of Sydney, and had failed to develop a distinctive profile as a western Sydney service. The Parramatta project did not develop its own One₂One brochure, and the existing BSBB material was criticised by stakeholders as not specific for the program, and only suitable for mentors rather than young people and their families.

Mentors at this project were also concerned that the project would be combined with the BSBB Sydney, when they wanted to be identified as a specialist western Sydney project for young people involved in the Juvenile Justice system.

Other factors that may have hindered recruitment of volunteers include:

Length of commitment

The projects consider that some potential volunteers are deterred by the 12 month commitment expected of them (documented in the interim report).

One current mentor with the Parramatta project was offered a six month commitment with the option to continue, and notes that this was much more appealing than 12 months. However, while a shorter time commitment may be more attractive to potential mentors, project staff have observed that in matches that are nearing their 12 months, there is a much stronger bond and more natural friendship compared with these matches at 6 months.

Project staff skills in case work not promotion

All the project workers have a background in social welfare/ psychology, and were attracted to working with matches and with families. While most had some skills in community development, project staff noted that they are not specialists in marketing.

Reimbursement for mentors

The issue of fuel reimbursement for volunteers in Coffs/ Clarence was raised with the funding body early in the project's development and agreed to by the steering committee. The YWCA reports that it has agreed for volunteers in rural areas to be reimbursed for travel 'on an as needs basis'.

Paid mentors v. volunteers

Some stakeholders in both locations are of the view that mentors should be paid rather than volunteer and that this would increase the pool of mentors. However, the basis of the BSBB model is that the mentor be voluntarily involved with the young person, and that this attitude and commitment is an important ingredient in building a relationship. For these reasons the YWCA would never embrace a paid mentor scheme. None of the mentors raised this as an issue, though some in the Coffs/Clarence project acknowledged economic hardship due to the long distance travel involved (see reimbursement above).

Not following up enquiries

One mentor noted that the lack of follow-up by the program of people who make an initial enquiry might have resulted in the loss of potential volunteers. The YWCA notes that when a volunteer first expresses an interest in the program a caseworker speaks them to. If they are still interested in the program, an information package is sent to them. In addition, the YWCA points out that in the pilot program, follow-up calls have been made, and people making enquiries have been invited to information nights.

8. Referrals of young people

This chapter examines the intake of young offenders into the program, the other crucial element in making matches, represented by the right hand strand of the outcomes hierarchy (Figure 1.1).

Key Findings:

- Police cautions and Youth Justice Conferences were an appropriate source of referrals, ensuring that the program remained targeted at young offenders. The majority of referrals came from police cautions, in line with the overall numbers of cautions and conferences;
- an estimated 20% of young people attending cautions or YJCs were referred to the program, with the rate of referrals higher at Coffs/ Clarence (31%) than Parramatta (14%). The remainder were screened out as unsuitable or not interested in participating. The screening process, based on the “hands on” experience of Police YLOs and YJCs personnel, was applied effectively, and most referrals were appropriate;
- the average age of young people referred is younger than the population attending cautions and conferences in the two locations. Otherwise, the referrals generally matched the target population. The exception occurred in Parramatta where the proportion of young people from culturally and linguistic diverse populations who were referred (8%) was much lower than the population being cautioned/ conferenced (40%), with no referrals from the three largest cultural groupings - Arabic, Pacific Islander or South East Asian young people;
- where referrals were made, the parent/ guardian often had an important role in influencing the young person, indicating that successful referrals occur when the young people are still responsive to parental influence, and parents are interested in seeking help;
- the Coffs/ Clarence project achieved an adequate level of referrals, which at around 30-40 per annum is consistent with around 20-30 matches pa, if there were enough volunteers available (the project currently has 13 young people waiting to be matched). The Parramatta project had less than half this level of referrals;
- while there were local contextual differences, the main factor behind referral numbers appears to be the strong partnerships developed by the Coffs/ Clarence project with the YLOs and Conference Administrator/ Conveners; and,
- the Coffs/ Clarence project has used individual pre-match outings to keep its un-matched referrals engaged and to begin to provide them with a service. Staff note that the ongoing viability of this approach is uncertain with current resources and increasing numbers of matches.

8.1 Referrals of young people

A significant feature of the program was that referrals were young people who were already offenders, being either cautioned by Police or attending a Youth Justice Conference.

In total, 104 young people have been referred to the program by police YLOs and Conference Administrators (to March 2002). This represents an estimated 20%⁶ of young people in the catchment areas who attended cautions or youth justice conferences, and reflects the strict referral criteria being applied by YLOs and Conference Administrators in deciding who to refer to the project. The rate of referrals was higher at Coffs/ Clarence (31%) than Parramatta (14%) (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Referrals for each project as proportion of all eligible young offenders

	<i>Parramatta</i>	<i>Coffs/ Clarence</i>	<i>All</i>
All cautions/ conferences	335	284	619
Ineligible - outside of catchment	100	18	118
Eligible - lived in catchment	235 (70%)	266 (94%)	501
Number of referrals	28	63	91
Proportion of referrals (of all eligible young offenders)	14%	31%	22%

Source: All referral forms from pilot projects at 31 October 2001 (n = 619).

The majority of referrals came from police cautions, and was generally in line with the overall numbers of cautions and conferences (Table 8.2).

Table 8.2 Referrals by source for each project

<i>Referrals</i>	<i>Parramatta</i>			<i>Coffs/ Clarence</i>			<i>All</i>		
	<i>Caution</i>	<i>Conf</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Caution</i>	<i>Conf</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>Caution</i>	<i>Conf</i>	<i>All</i>
<i>Number</i>	22	6	28	44	19	63	66	25	91
<i>Proportion</i>	79%	21%	100%	70%	30%	100%	73%	27%	100%

Source: All referral forms from pilot projects at 31 October 2001 (n = 619).

The Coffs/ Clarence project achieved an adequate level of referrals, which at around 30-40 pa (Table 8.3), is consistent with around 20-30 matches pa, if there were enough volunteers available (the project has 13 young people waiting to be matched - see 5.3). The level of referrals to the Parramatta project was less than half that of Coffs/ Clarence (see 8.5 below).

Both projects had a slight decrease in the rate of referrals in 2001 from the previous year, which may be due to a decreased number of cautions in the LACs across the two years.

⁶This estimate is based on the 91 referrals and 619 forms which ARTD received from January 2000 to October 2001. As YLOs and Conference Administrators indicated they did not forward a form for every caution delivered or conference held, this number understates the actual number of young people who attended a caution or conference during this period, so the actual rate of referrals is lower.

Table 8.3 Referrals per month, by project and year

<i>Year</i>	<i>Parramatta</i>	<i>Coffs/ Clarence</i>
2000	1.4/ month	3.2/ month
2001 (to October)	1.1/ month	2.5/ month
<i>Total number of referrals</i>	28	63

Source: All referral forms from pilot projects at 31 October 2001 (n = 619).

8.2 The referral process

A referral process was developed in conjunction with the project partners (pilot projects, Advisory Committees, Police and Conference Administrators) for YLOs and Conference Administrators to refer eligible young people to the program. The YWCA also developed guidelines for YLOs and Conference Administrators to support the referral process - to determine whether the mentor program would be suitable for eligible young people.

The referral criteria were designed to ensure that the great majority of young people were screened out because each project was expected to make 35 matches per year from the estimated 400 young people cautioned or conferenced each year in the two locations. As we saw above, the projects made far fewer matches than this, with no matches made during their first year of operation.

The referral form had a series of assessments and decision points, where a positive response led to continuing the assessment and a negative response led to not making a referral. The basic criteria and assessments are outlined below:

Decision 1- Basic Eligibility

The criteria for initial consideration were that the young person:

- received a caution or conference
- resides within the catchment area
- wants to participate
- their parent/ guardian/ carer agrees to the initial referral.

An issue raised by these criteria was the difference between where young offenders committed an offence and / or were arrested, and where they lived, which determined the location of a caution or conference. For example, many young people who were arrested for offences committed in the Parramatta shopping precinct lived outside of the catchment area. Overall 30% of cautions or conferences in Parramatta were outside the catchment compared with 6% at Coffs/ Clarence (Table 8.1). Due to the small number of referrals from the Parramatta LAC, the catchment area for the Parramatta project was expanded in May 2000 and again in August 2000, with five surrounding LACs referring

Decision 2 Risk of re-offending

When the young person was considered eligible, a series of other filters were applied. The first was their likelihood to re-offend.

Is the young person highly likely to reoffend in the next 12 months?

The project aimed to match young people who were most at risk of re-offending, and to avoid those unlikely to offend again. The factors used to determine this risk included previous offending, the nature and pattern of offending, whether the offending was spontaneous or planned, the age of first offending and whether there were other risk behaviours eg drug use.

This criteria was removed in May 2001, in response to the low number of referrals to the Parramatta project, and concerns about the capacity to apply the criteria in a uniform way. The project reported in July 2000 that the number of referrals had increased following these changes.

Decision 3 Mentoring suitability

The second filters related to whether mentoring was an appropriate intervention for the young person.

Could a mentor have a positive impact on the young person?

Mentors were not expected to address all the contributing factors for all young people (eg if the main cause of offending was drug dependency then attending detoxification/ rehabilitation is more appropriate). The factors used to determine the suitability of mentoring included whether the young person had an existing role model in their life, whether they lacked adequate adult support and whether the factors contributing to offending could be addressed by a mentor.

Is a mentor relationship likely to work for this young person?

The project was concerned that young people or mentors not be set up to fail, making it important that only young people who were assessed as having a reasonable chance of forming and maintaining a mentor relationship were accepted. Factors used to assess this included whether the young person wants to be a part of the project, whether there is a family/ guardian/ carer in the young person's life who is open to a mentor relationship, whether there is sufficient stability in the young person's life (including a place of residence) to allow a mentor relationship to develop, that the young person demonstrates a capacity for a relationship/ engagement, whether the young person's needs are too overwhelming for the mentor, and any factors that could prevent the relationship from working.

In many cases where the YLO decided that a mentor was not likely to have a positive impact or a mentor relationship was not likely to work, the young person self selected out of the program anyway.

8.3 Which young people are referred to the program?

The gender of young people referred (approximately 75% of referrals were young men) reflected the proportions of young people being cautioned/ conferenced.

Compared with the young people attending cautions and conferences in the two locations, young people referred to the program are younger, and those matched are younger again (Table 8.4).

Table 8.4. Age of young people referred and matched, by location

Average age in years at:	Parramatta	Coffs/ Clarence
Caution/ conference*	15.1	15.0
Referral	14.3	14.3
Match	12.8	13.3

Source: All referral forms from pilot projects at 31 October 2001 (n = 619).

The cultural background of young people being referred to the Coffs/ Clarence project closely matched the population of young people attending cautions and conferences. In both cases, around 80% were Anglo Australian and 20% Indigenous young people.

In Parramatta, the proportion of young people from culturally and linguistically diverse populations being referred was much lower than the population being cautioned/ conferenced (8% compared to 40%). In particular, no referrals occurred from the three largest cultural groupings - Arabic, Pacific Islander or South East Asian young people.

The proportion of Indigenous young people referred to the Parramatta project was higher than the population attending cautions/ conference (16% compared with 6%). However, caution is required because of the low numbers involved.

Table 8.5: Cultural background of young people referred and matched, by location

Cultural background	At caution or conference		Referred		Matched		
Parramatta							
Anglo	157	54%	18	75%	4	67%	
ATSI	16	6%	4	17%	2	33%	
Arabic*	40	14%					
Pacific Islander*	28	9%	40%				
SE Asian*	27	9%					
Other	24	8%	2	8%			
All	292	100%	24	100%	6	100%	
No data	43		4				
Coffs/ Clarence							
Anglo	216	81%	48	80%	9	82%	
ATSI	51	19%	12	20%	2	18%	
All	267	100%	60	100%	11	100%	
No data	17		3				

Source: All referral forms from pilot projects at 31 October 2001 (n = 619).

Notes: * Arabic included Lebanese (17) and Turkish (9); South East Asian included Vietnamese (9), Philippines (6), Chinese (5). Pacific Islander included Maori (8), Fiji (5), Samoa (5)

8.4 Which young people accept a referral?

A key factor is that the young person voluntarily enters into a mentor relationship. According to YLOs and Conference personnel, particularly in the Parramatta project area, the majority of young people attending cautions and conferences and eligible for the program were not interested in being referred and could not be encouraged to do so by the YLO, convener and/or family members who thought the young person would benefit from an adult mentor.

Conference personnel noted that this was particularly the case, as the young people attending conferences tend to be older, more entrenched in offending behaviour and far more responsive to their peer group rather than to adults. Furthermore, the project's coordinator notes that *many young people and their families want the caution or conference process to be over and left behind. As a Conference Convenor noted, this is a barrier to young people and families engaging with One 2 One, as they deem the program as extending the connection with the offence and its consequences for a further 12 months.* Nonetheless, Conference Conveners believe that it is useful for them to be able to continue to refer young people to the project where this is possible.

In some cases the young person and family agreed to be referred at the time of the caution/ conference, but later, when the pilot project staff followed up the referral, the young person and/or their family had changed their mind and were not interested in participating in the program.

Feedback from the young people and their families suggests that initially at least it is often the parent/ guardian who, seeking assistance with the difficulties affecting the young person and the family, expresses an interest in the mentoring program and is able to influence the young person to participate. This would indicate that successful referrals occur when the young people themselves are still at an age, or stage where they are responsive to parental influence as opposed to older and/or more streetwise young people for whom their peer group and not their family is by far more influential.

8.5 Factors behind the level of referrals

There was concern regarding the perceived low rate of referrals (compared with the expected rate of 35 per annum per location) and, while there is certainly the potential to increase this rate in Parramatta

(see below), the rate of referral of young people has nonetheless been commensurate with the rate of volunteer recruitment for the program.

Fewer referrals in Parramatta

The number of referrals in Coffs/ Clarence was more than double that of Parramatta (for both cautions and conferences), despite a further five LACs being added to the Parramatta catchment in the second year. External factors affecting Parramatta include a greater proportion of cautions and conferences where young people lived outside the catchment areas (30% compared with 6% at Coffs/ Clarence), the impact of the Olympic Games (with no cautions), and a reported more recent decrease in the number of cautions. However, the main factor influencing this different rate appears to be the lack of development of strong partnerships with some of the YLOs and Conference Conveners. Project workers though did put in considerable effort over an extended period to establish these links and had a good working relationship with the Parramatta YLO and the Conference Administrator for the area. The high staff turnover at the Parramatta project may have contributed to this.

Strong partnerships with referral agents

A key success factor for the referral process was good working relationships between the YLO/ CAs and the project staff, which includes the provision of information and feedback to the referring officers.

Naturally, this has been a lot easier in Coffs/ Clarence, where there is one YLO and a small number of Conference Conveners, compared with Parramatta where there are seven YLOs and 18 Conference Conveners who are expected to refer young people to the project.

In Coffs/ Clarence, the YLO and Conference convener were highly satisfied with the referral process noting that they have a very good working relationship with the mentor project staff, are very well informed about the program and receive adequate and timely feedback from the staff (and sometimes other stakeholders in the youth services network) about the referrals. The YLO also noted a range of other benefits from being associated with the program (Chapter 4).

In contrast, the Parramatta project experienced difficulties in receiving a regular flow of referrals. Feedback from YLOs and Conference Conveners in western Sydney indicates that up until recently, there has been insufficient information about the program eg conveners stated they do not know how many mentors are available and how the service goes about making contact with the family and young person once a referral has been made; there is limited contact with project staff (the current project worker has visited YLOs and addressed Conference Conveners for the first time) and little if any feedback from the project about referrals made.

Absence of One₂One promotional material

Stakeholders in Parramatta also expressed frustration in not being able to adequately promote the program to young people and their families, due to a lack of information about the program and the absence of relevant printed or other material for young people and their families, with the only brochure available promoting BSBB (not Parramatta One₂One) to volunteers. One convener has suggested a short video to show young people the sort of fun activities that are offered to young people through the program.

Broadening the referral sources

Some stakeholders (particularly in Coffs/ Clarence) including YLOs, expressed frustration with the narrow referral sources and referral criteria (having had to attend a caution or conference), noting that there have been young people 'at risk' of offending who were highly suitable for the program but who could not be referred as they had not attended a caution/ conference. While it may appear unfair, nonetheless, both projects would probably have been inundated with referrals from these alternative sources.

8.6 Working with young people on the waiting list

Coffs/ Clarence has had high numbers of young people ready to be matched, including some who have been waiting more than six months. To keep these young people engaged and to begin to provide them with a service, the project began pre-match outings, with the worker providing a fortnightly one-on-one contact for the young person, similar to the mentor relationship.

These pre-match outings have proved popular amongst the young people, who attend regularly. As this component develops, it is envisaged that some young people and their families could make use only of this aspect of the program, ie the young person will not be matched with a mentor. The project workers believe that the ongoing viability of this component is uncertain due to limited resources and the increasing number of matches being made.

9. Project establishment and management

This chapter looks at the lessons that emerged from the processes of establishing and managing the projects at the two sites.

Key findings:

- careful planning is needed to establish a mentoring program which fits into the circumstances of the local community, particularly in dealing with the factors which can influence recruiting and utilising volunteers;
- a reasonable level of local management is needed to ensure projects respond appropriately to local contexts; and,
- a community development approach is the most suitable to establish and implement the program, rather than promotion.

9.1 Extent of project establishment

In Coffs/ Clarence, following some initial difficulties with staffing structures and problems with managing a regional program from Sydney, the project has become a valuable service within the local area capable of responding to local needs and working in partnership with local service providers.

The project in Parramatta has taken much longer to be established and could not be considered a viable program due to high staff turnover, a failure to develop a strong identity amongst its stakeholders, including referral sources and a slow rate of recruitment of volunteers and referral of young people (see Chapters 5 and 7). Nonetheless, the project did make six matches, four of which are “performing matches” that achieved positive outcomes for the young people involved. These outcomes are documented in Chapter 4.

Stakeholders in both locations identified issues concerning the establishment and management of the pilot projects, and these are outlined below.

9.2 Insufficient scoping and planning

The selection of Parramatta and Coffs/ Clarence for the pilot program locations was based on the numbers of young people being cautioned/ conferenced in these two LACs. However, stakeholders in both locations noted that insufficient scoping and poor planning of the pilot projects resulted in much slower development than expected. Issues raised include:

- the Coffs/ Clarence region has a high proportion of low income families and high unemployment, making it more difficult to recruit suitable volunteers. This is the experience of other mentor programs in low income areas (see Chapter 3, Inner Sydney Mentoring Scheme) that clearly have a high need for the program but have difficulty finding sufficient volunteers available to mentor young people. Had this been identified from the beginning, stakeholders note that the expected number of matches could have been re-adjusted earlier, helping to reduce the pressure on the program and staff;
- there has been a much slower development of the program in Grafton and the Upper Clarence, compared with Coffs Harbour. Stakeholders note that it was unrealistic to expect the project, on the limited budget and staffing ratio, to develop a service across the LAC, given the large geographic size of the LAC. Another factor was the marked differences (and some hostility) that exist both within and between the Coffs Harbour region and the Clarence Valley (Grafton), one

coastal, the other rural inland, accentuated by the natural geographic boundary of a large national park.

The Coffs/ Clarence project focussed on building a profile in the Coffs Harbour community, recruiting volunteers via partnerships with key stakeholders. The project has a high profile and established position in the Coffs Harbour area where it is perceived as a strong network partner by local youth and other agencies. With limited resources, the project has not had the capacity to develop to the same degree in Grafton, where it is limited to two days work a week. While mentors and young people are expected to be matched soon, it is questionable whether the service can be sustained in the upper Clarence with current resources and without the presence of a project worker in the area to support matches and maintain networks and local partnerships.

This issue is particularly relevant given that a community development approach is the preferred approach for this type of program that relies on volunteers;

- the need to consider the additional costs in developing services in a rural location, in particular the cost and time spent in travel for staff and volunteer mentors. Stakeholders note that the funding for the Coffs/ Clarence project was insufficient;
- the Parramatta area is centred on a large CBD and retail district, with a large commuter population and much smaller residential population. The pilot project spent considerable time and effort and struggled to recruit mentors from this area, with limited success. Stakeholders note that some of this could have been avoided had sufficient planning gone into developing the project before case workers were employed; and,
- the expansion of the Parramatta project's catchment to cover five additional LACs in western Sydney led to the project targeting its promotion area by area, spending six weeks in each location. However, it appears this strategy has resulted in the project having to spread itself too thin, with the current project worker noting that six weeks is far too short a time to develop effective links with local service providers and the broader community.

9.3 The level of local management

The value of a tested and accredited model of mentoring was highlighted in the earlier chapters, with the YWCA of Sydney bringing its BSBB infrastructure and many years of experience to the two projects.

However, it is also clear that an appropriate level of local management is also needed to ensure the projects respond appropriately to local contexts. Stakeholders in Coffs Harbour were critical of the project being managed from Sydney, recommending that any future programs be more locally managed. They believed that while the YWCA has learnt how to manage the project in Coffs Harbour, enhanced by the appointment after the first twelve months of a regional manager and a project coordinator, there have been some ongoing difficulties such as recognition of the needs in a rural environment, particularly concerning the cost of and access to transport and promotional strategies relevant to the local communities. The local Advisory Committees in each location went some way to providing a local voice and could be a useful structure for future projects.

9.4 Community development an effective approach

One of the differences between the two projects concerned the way in which they related to their communities. The Parramatta project operated to a large degree as an extension of the service delivery of the YWCA's central Sydney BSBB program into the Parramatta area. As described earlier, it experienced difficulty in recruiting mentors, receiving referrals and retaining staff. The project has also had difficulties attracting a steady membership of community representatives to its Advisory Committee. Stakeholders noted that it was not seen in the area as a western Sydney project. The mentors were an exception, strongly identifying with the western Sydney project, and wanting to remain distinct from the city project.

In contrast, the Coffs/ Clarence project has established the service within the Coffs Harbour area. It has more mentors than the Parramatta project although recruiting from a much smaller population, and has gained sufficient referrals through good working relationships with the referral agencies. For the last year, the project has retained a solid team of local workers.

The Coffs/ Clarence project has used a community development approach to build the service, regularly consulting with the local community, including a wide representation of agencies on its Advisory Committee. It has engaged with local services to address youth and family support issues, and expanded from its core of making matches to a much broader service delivery base, responding to the gaps in services for families with adolescents.

Part C CONCLUSIONS

10. Conclusions

As a pilot, the One₂One program aimed to explore the effectiveness of mentoring with young offenders and the pilot's potential for application elsewhere in New South Wales. This chapter looks at the implications which have emerged in considering replicating the program.

10.1 Mentoring can be an effective intervention for some young offenders

The model of mentoring can be effective with a particular group of young offenders and their families. However, it is clear that it is likely to be appropriate for only a minority of young people who are cautioned or conferenced, with up to 15% and 30% of the target population referred to the projects in each of the two areas.

While the offer of mentoring should not be restricted to any age or gender group, it is most likely to be taken up by younger males (11-14), especially where parents themselves are seeking assistance with the young person and are able to influence them to participate in the program. The pilot found that some Anglo Australian and Indigenous young people and their families are likely to agree to mentoring, but little is known from this pilot about the perceptions and interests of people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Because of its restricted appeal, it is clear that mentoring can be only one element in any local crime prevention strategy targeting young offenders.

Findings from the evaluations of two major mentoring initiatives with crime prevention objectives in the USA and England and Wales, due in late 2002, should provide more information into the potential of mentoring with young offenders.

10.2 Projects stay on target when referrals come from the criminal justice system

The pilots demonstrated that police cautions and Youth Justice Conferences could be appropriate referral sources for a mentoring project run by a community-based organisation, ensuring a continued targeting of young people already on an offending pathway. However, the projects could have a more sustainable referral base without losing focus on its target group if referrals were extended to include selected young people considered by YLOs to be at risk of offending.

The key to an effective referral process through the criminal justice system is to develop close partnerships between the mentor organisation and the referral agents. The partnership needs ongoing collaboration including good quality promotional material, regular liaison to provide up-to-date information (number and characteristics of mentors available to be matched), and feedback on the progress of young people referred.

The projects demonstrated the capacity for local collaboration between criminal justice and community agencies, in line with the development of multi-agency Young Offending Teams (YOT) in England and Wales (see Chapter 3).

10.3 Gaining volunteers the most significant barrier

The most significant barrier in developing a mentor program is the recruitment of volunteers willing to mentor a young person involved in the juvenile justice system. In the pilot project, a large amount of time and effort went into promoting the service to potential volunteers, resulting in a small pool of volunteers in each project, with only around 5% of people who make an enquiry going on to become a mentor.

Recruiting sufficient volunteers requires a large enough population base. The experience of the pilot projects also suggests that volunteers are more likely to be recruited if the program has a local identity in the community, and is promoted by word-of-mouth. It appears that some potential volunteers do not proceed because they fear ‘young offenders’.

Strategies to increase the pool of potential mentors include:

- careful marketing;
- opening the program up to young people at risk of offending, whilst retaining police cautions and Youth Justice Conferences as the sources of referrals; and,
- the reimbursement of travel for volunteers, especially in rural communities.

No Indigenous volunteers were recruited. An issue may be “competition” from of the Department of Juvenile Justice’s Mentor Program, which has had a high profile in some Indigenous communities and uses paid mentors.

10.4 Pre-match and group activities essential

A quality matching process is essential to generating “performing matches”. This requires time and careful assessment by program workers and also requires a number of young people and volunteers who can be matched. As a result, waiting times for both young people and volunteers appear to be inevitable. However, while it is reasonable for adult volunteers to wait, it is unrealistic (and not good practice) to have the young people simply wait. In particular, it may lose the “turning point” of the opportunity created by the young person and their family’s involvement with the criminal justice system.

To address this, pre-match activities will be required by projects to continue to engage young people following referral until they are matched and, as has occurred in the Coffs/ Clarence project, to begin to address un-met needs (including family support).

However, the provision of regular pre-match outings has become a significant commitment on the Coffs/ Clarence project’s resources and worker time and, to be sustainable, needs further resources.

Both pilot projects held regular group activities for the matches and the young people and mentors waiting to be matched. These outings were particularly popular amongst the young people and provided them, along with their mentors, a range of fun and exciting group activities. As with the pre-match outings, however, these activities take a considerable amount of resourcing that needs to be included in future programs.

10.5 Family support an important component

The BSBB model used in the One₂One pilot program incorporated a family support worker to assist families of young people being mentored. The Coffs/ Clarence project was the only one which employed a part-time family support worker who was found to add value to the model by being able to assist the families of young people with individual and group work, crisis intervention and family mediation. The addition of a family support worker was particularly relevant in the rural community where there are few services for adolescents and their families.

10.6 Attention needed to project establishment and management

The pilot has confirmed previous research that the development of a mentoring project requires a substantial lead time to both build a strong referral process and a pool of potential mentors. The process needs considerable resources and time spent planning and building cooperative working relationships with key stakeholders.

The pilot projects have also demonstrated that community development (typical of the Coffs/ Clarence approach) rather than promotion (typical of the Parramatta approach), and a reasonable degree of local management, are likely to be key ingredients in the successful establishment in a community.

10.7 Context an important consideration in replicating the pilot

The pilot program assessed mentoring with young offenders in two specific locations in NSW. As we saw, the program, while maintaining the core elements of the BSBB model, was implemented differently at each location. It is important, in contemplating potential replication at other locations, to consider not only the interventions (mechanisms), described in previous chapters, but the social contexts in which they occurred, in order to reach conclusions about what is likely to work and in which circumstances (Pawson and Tilley: 128-135). Key features of the contexts and the mechanisms at each location and which led to the different outcomes are shown in Figures 10.1 and 10.2.

Figure 10.1 Coffs/ Clarence project - context, mechanisms and outcomes

<i>Context</i>	<i>Mechanisms</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Large target area (LAC) covering two diverse regional centres (Coffs Harbour and Grafton) with rural surrounds. Selected for relatively high numbers of young offenders. Range of socio-economic circumstances, but culturally limited (mainly Anglo-Australian and significant Indigenous communities). Few youth and family services.	Traditional model of mentoring with rigorous selection and volunteer training, careful matching, and support of matches.	Relatively low number of matches created (11), but most become performing matches. Young people in performing matches demonstrate reduced offending and risk behaviour.
Auspice organisation established and managed the project from Sydney. Local autonomy an issue, with increased local management over the period.	Project expands from mentoring to address other needs. Workers provide pre-match support to young offenders and their families, and run activities (eg anger management sessions)	Young people and their families supportive of service.
Support from Youth Justice Conference Administrator and YLO for project targeting young offenders.	Workers liaise closely with Youth Justice Conference Administrator and YLO for referrals.	Adequate numbers of suitable referrals received, mainly boys 13-15 years, including Indigenous boys.
Project run from dedicated building in Coffs Harbour town centre.	Volunteers sought from variety of sources including TAFE college welfare students, local promotion, and word of mouth.	Core group of volunteers developed, though never enough for all matches. Volunteers are mix of (mainly) women, with range of ages and backgrounds.
Staffed by the two youth workers and P/T family support worker, all with local community experience, including existing links with police, and with other local services.	Project focussed on Coffs Harbour.	Project well established in Coffs Harbour, seen by stakeholders as valuable service. Limited resources precluded establishment in Grafton.
	Active Advisory Group of local stakeholders monitor progress, suggest directions.	

Figure 10.2 Parramatta Project - context, mechanisms and outcomes

<i>Context</i>	<i>Mechanisms</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Initial target area (LAC) was Parramatta, the major commercial and business centre in western Sydney, and relatively small surrounding residential population. Selected for relatively high numbers of young offenders. Range of socio-economic circumstances, and diverse cultural mix. Adjacent areas had large residential populations, and range of existing youth and family services.	Traditional model of mentoring with rigorous selection and volunteer training, careful matching and support of matches. Sporadic links with Youth Justice Conference Administrator and Parramatta YLO for referrals. In response to continued low rate of referrals, target area expanded to five additional LACs, taking in adjacent residential areas.	Few matches are created (7), but most become performing matches, with some enduring well over 12 months. Young people in performing matches demonstrate reduced offending and risk behaviour, including improved family relations. Families support matches. Small numbers of suitable referrals received from YLO, with long gaps between referrals.
Auspice organisation established project in its own premises in Parramatta, with project managed from central Sydney.	Project has a promotional strategy to attract volunteers, through media and events, using generic BSBB promotional material and strategies	YLOs and Youth Justice Conference Conveners report limited understanding of the pilot project. When area expanded, problems in engaging new YLOs, partly because of the large geographic area to be covered.
Support from Youth Justice Conference Administrator and Parramatta YLO for project targeting young offenders.	Advisory Group of local stakeholders was formed, but difficulties attracting a steady membership.	Only 5% of volunteer enquiries are suitable for mentors. While some initial volunteers join, there is never enough for all matches. Most volunteers are young professional women.
Majority of project staff (2 positions) are new to the region and do not have existing links with police or other services. High turnover of workers.		Project has limited local identity or support. Project will not continue, with matches absorbed into auspices' general mentoring program.
Little knowledge of potential for recruiting volunteers in the region.		

10.8 Sustainability of a mentoring program

The pilot program has demonstrated that it is possible to develop a mentor program, based on the BSBB model and targeting young offenders, that can reach a level of around 10-15 successful matches per annum. However, what of sustainability in the longer term? The evidence from the pilot suggests that to be sustainable a mentoring program may need to reach a certain minimum size (eg 20-30 current volunteers) or be delivered in conjunction with other youth and family support programs.

The issues around sustainability can be illustrated using a systems perspective. Mentor programs aim to create “performing matches” from two very different streams of people, young people at risk and adult volunteers. A constant problem for mentoring programs is that the two sub groups have very different dynamics, as shown in Figure 10.1, based on the Coffs/ Clarence project.

Figure 10.3 Comparison of dynamics of young people and adult volunteer streams

	<i>Young people sub-system</i>	<i>Adult volunteer sub-system</i>
<i>Numbers each year</i>	15-20 referrals pa through police cautions and YJC, from constantly renewed numbers of young people entering the target group	5-10 pa, from a relatively finite number of volunteers in the community May take 5 years to build a pool of volunteers
<i>Life cycle</i>	One only match, participate for around one year from time of referral	Multiple matches, can participate over a period up to 10 years
<i>Drivers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “turning point” of caution or conference • Parent(s) want help with difficult young person • Young person attracted to activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived benefit to young person • Sense of doing good
<i>Possible factors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to criminal justice system, to policing • Reduced risk factors in population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other opportunities for volunteering • Profile of young offenders in the community

The different dynamics make it difficult for programs to achieve a reasonable balance between young people at risk and adult volunteers, at least at the beginning of a program. They indicate that a program will more quickly build a waiting group of referred young people, and make it necessary to include additional strategies such as pre-match activities. They also suggest that the key to a sustainable program is a pool of available volunteers, which may take five years or more to build up, but then provides a significant resource for a longer period (see Figure 10.4).

Figure 10.4 Projected outputs for mentor project over 5 years

	<i>New matches made</i>	<i>Closed matches (20%)</i>	<i>Completed matches</i>	<i>Matches at end of period</i>
Year 1- Development	5	1	0	4
Year 2	10	2	4	8
Year 3	15	3	8	12
Year 4	15	3	12	12
Year 5	15	3	12	12

Note: Assumes 20% of new matches close because of people moving away or not “performing”. The duration of other matches is 12 months.

10.9 Costs of mentoring

The basic costs of the mentoring projects were professional staffing (able to work across youth work, volunteer support, family case work, promotion, community development), the office and equipment, travel, promotion, activities and mentor costs such as travel. The unfunded “costs” are the contributions of the volunteer mentors. As the pilot program was in the process of development for much of the period, a cost analysis was not undertaken. However, some implications about costing have emerged.

Firstly, it is clear that servicing this target group is more costly than that of mentor programs which target younger age groups, who are less down the offending pathway. A lesson from the pilot is that programs for young offenders take more work in recruiting and supporting mentors, in gaining appropriate referrals, and in providing pre-match activities to keep engaged young people who have been referred. Such programs are also less likely to achieve economies of scale in terms of numbers of cases per project worker. Both these lessons are consistent with the limited evidence to date on costings from programs in the USA and England and Wales.

A second implication is that the assessment of the cost-effectiveness of a mentoring program may vary markedly with the output/ outcome measure used. From the experience of the pilot program, the most appropriate measure is the numbers of (twelve month) “performing matches” which are produced. Measures based on lower order “outcomes” (see Figure 1.1) such as “matches made” are unlikely to embody the quality of the intervention, while measures based on higher order outcomes (eg behaviour changes of the young person) will be much harder to measure and will be more likely to be confounded by other factors.

On this basis, the results of the pilot and the projected longer term outputs of a project using this model (Figure 10.2) suggest that, despite the use of volunteers, a cost effective mentoring program will require a careful balancing of staff inputs in relation to the expected numbers of matches. There was no evidence from the pilot of likely economies of scale allowing higher numbers of cases per project worker. Of course, any assessment of cost effectiveness has to also be comparative - the cost of mentoring compared with the costs (and outcomes) of other interventions with young offenders.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of America <http://www.bbbsa.org/>
Mentoring Australia http://www.mentoring_australia.com
National Mentoring Centre <http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/>

National Mentoring Partnership <http://www.mentoring.org/>
National Mentoring Network <http://www.nmn.org.uk>

Appendix 1: Summary of Matches

	<i>Young person</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Family situation on entry</i>	<i>Mentor</i>	<i>Features of the match (comments from project staff)</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Duration months (30.10.01)</i>
P1	Alison 15 years Anglo Employed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I'm on my feet</i> completed TAFE program and other course. Has p/t employment and is studying; speaks in public forums about match (for YWCA); high self esteem; changed peer group; spends more time at home with family. 	Lives with mother/ brother. Conflict with mother. No adult role-model.	Jill 27 years single self-employed businesswoman	The mentor travels a long distance. In last 2 mths mainly communicate via email.	Ongoing	16
P2	Trina 17 years Anglo Employed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I'm not getting into trouble</i> left home to ease situation with mother - rebuilding relationship; completed 2 TAFE courses and currently enrolled; changed peer group; improved self esteem. 	Lives with mother and brother. No role models or direction.	Kim mid 20's single manager	Long standing match that is now a friendship. Young person is 18 years.	Ongoing	15
P5	Matt 12 years ATSI Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Gives me the chance to do things I would otherwise not get to do</i> less fighting, improved school attendance; more respectful to mother; moved away from offending peers; less aggressive and reactive. 	Lives with mum, 2 sisters. Doesn't see dad often.	Gwenda mid 30's single health professional	Excellent match.	Ongoing	7
P6	Malcolm 12 years ATSI Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gradual re-integration in school; exposure to different recreational opportunities; personalised and individual attention as he comes from a large extended family. 	Lives with family, including father.	Brenda early 20's partner university student	Match is progressing well and a strong friendship is developing.	Ongoing	2

P4	Christopher 15 years Anglo Unemployed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased motivation to find employment; improved communication skills; improved self esteem. 	Lives with mother. No father figure or adult male contact.	Sam mid 30's single business person student of law	Match worked well until the young person re-located with his family.	Closed	11
P3	John 12 years Anglo Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> young person developed a strong friendship and good rapport with the mentor. 	Lives with mum, brother and sister. Stepfather no longer with family. Good relationship with father.	Felicity mid 20's single hospitality manager	Young person moved out of area to live with father.	Closed	6
C1	Stuart 13 years ATSI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I've got more self esteem and I can do more things.... my mentor tells me I can do anything</i> improved family relationships, less conflict; involved in more cultural and artistic pursuits; new friendships. 	Lives with mother and younger siblings (2 brothers, 1 sister). No contact with father since birth. Conflict with mother.	Kylie (Current mentor) mid 20's sole parent	Current match going really well with much needed positive female role modeling. (First match 10 mths, closed due to sickness in mentor family. 2nd ongoing, 5 months.)	Ongoing	15
C3	Alan 15 years Anglo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I've got a better attitude toward myself and other people</i> left school and eventually secured reliable employment; approaching relationships with more maturity and awareness; improved family relationships; learning to have fun and relax. 	Lives with father and brother. Mum has drug problem. Father's work takes him away from home for extended periods. Major conflict between young person and dad.	Narelle late 20's sole parent TAFE student	Has just had 12 month match birthday – has developed into almost a real big sister relationship.	Ongoing	12

C7	Jason 14 years Anglo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Telling my mentor some stuff and trusting some people</i> • improved behaviour at school and home by learning new ways of dealing with conflict; • improved self esteem and social skills. 	Lives with mum.	Jennifer mid 50's married TAFE student	Going really well - has become a natural friendship. Young person is very possessive of mentor when around his family.	Ongoing	8
C9	Zac 11 years Anglo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I've learnt how to control my temper at home and at school</i> • changed schools and made a successful transition; • less fighting with siblings; • improved self esteem. 	Lives with mum, stepfather and younger brother and sister.	Rebekah mid 20's single support worker	Cruising along really well. Young person idolizes mentor. His behavior has improved radically.	Ongoing	5
C10	Tegan 15 years Anglo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better awareness of herself and what is right and wrong; • improved attitude and more respectful; • spending more time at home and more settled; • more responsible and seeking a new peer group. 	Lives with dad and younger sister. Mum died 2 years ago. Moved from Qld at end of last year.	Sharon late 30's sole parent retail worker	Going well – young person is getting female role modeling.	Ongoing	4
C11	Tom 12 years Anglo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No more police trouble</i> • learning that not all men are aggressive; • developing a new peer group and learning to keep friends. 	Lives with mother and 15 year old sister. Stepfather just left after 11 years. Never met his real dad.	Jack early 40's single council worker	Going well – a lot of practical skill development occurring.	Ongoing	4

C6	Luke 12 years Anglo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not getting into trouble with the police anymore</i> • improved social skills; • less anger and more respect for himself and others. 	Lives with mum, whose partner doesn't live with them, and is not supportive of the kids. Irregular visits to dad. Large number of siblings from combined families (5 girls, 7 boys).	Bob mid 30's married rural industry	This match was fantastic. (2 x 4 month matches with same mentor). Closed when young person moved away.	Closed	8
C8	Nick 14 years Anglo	Mentor unaware of improvements.	Lives with mum and 3 siblings (2 older, 1 younger). Supervised occasional contact with dad.	Yvonne mid 40's sole parent TAFE student	This was a difficult match from the beginning with the young person being resistant through behavior but not verbally. Closed at young person's request.	Closed	8
C5	Colin 12 years ATSI Not attending school.	No information	Lives with mother and her partner in caravan. Alcohol problems at home.	Female mid 40's sole parent support worker	This was the first Grafton match. Non "performing match", where the young person was homeless and the mentor had major illness in the family.	Closed	10
C4	Trevor 13 years Anglo	No information	Lives with mother. Has 2 younger brothers. Peer pressure is a problem, and mother has little control. Domestic violence issues.	Male 38 years single self employed	Disruptions in young person's family and mentor moved away. Young person's father drowned in floods in 1999. Young person has been re-referred to the program.	Closed	4
C2	Daniel 12 years Anglo	No information	Lives with mother. Has 2 older sisters, older brother and younger sister. Stepfather - domestic violence – AVO now in place.	Female late 40's sole parent welfare student	Mentor did not show up at the first meeting.	Closed	0.25