

Lifespace Trust Code of Ethics and Good Practice

This Code is based on The Association for Coaching and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council Codes of Ethics

Lifespace Trust is committed to maintaining and promoting excellence in mentoring practice. It therefore expects all staff and volunteers, acting as mentors, supervisors, trainers or trustees, to adhere to the essential elements of ethical, competent and effective practice as set out in this Code of Ethics and Good Practice.

Terminology: The term 'mentoring' is used to describe all types of mentoring that may take place (individual, group, peer) within all contexts the organisation works in. The term 'mentee' is used to refer to any young person aged between 9-19 who accesses the services of a trained mentor. This term is interchangeable with any other term that may be used with similar meaning such as 'learner', 'student', 'child', 'young person', or 'client'.

1. Equipped for the role

1.1 You will have the training, skills, support, qualifications and practical experience appropriate to your role within Lifespace Trust, and appropriate to the needs of the young people you are working with. If not, you can discuss any concerns or queries with your supervisor who can help you to determine whether or not to continue with a certain young person(s). Any claims of qualifications, accreditations or professional competence you make must be clearly and accurately explained (whether written or verbal), and no false or misleading claims are made or implied in your application or information supplied to Lifespace Trust.

1.2 You will be familiar with the importance of reflective practice and continuous learning, and value the supervisory relationship as a means of regular and healthy maintenance of your own wellbeing, good practice and learning needs.

1.3 A mentee may need levels of psychological support you are not competent or qualified to provide. If so, the mentee should either be matched to an alternative mentor to an appropriate source of care, such as the Client's GP, a counsellor, psychotherapist, or another appropriate service or agency. It is your responsibility to initiate this with your supervisor and/or a member of staff as soon as you suspect you are near to the boundaries of your competence.

1.4 You will be fit and healthy enough for your role, physically as well as mentally, emotionally and relationally. If not, or you have concerns, you should seek advice and support. If necessary, you can choose to stop mentoring until you are 'in a good enough place' and, if necessary, your mentees should be offered alternative support in the meantime. We encourage early and open discussion in supervision to ascertain if this is the healthy course of action. Lifespace Trust will always be willing to signpost mentors to other external help they can access, where appropriate.

1.5 The organisation will have professional indemnity insurance adequate to cover your role, including all mentoring, education and supervision practice.

2. Maintaining Good Practice

2.1 You will read, understand and agree to sign a Mentor Agreement at the start of each academic year. You can voice questions and concerns about any content therein which will be responded to promptly by the Lifespace Trust staff team.

2.2 You will always act in a manner that shows respect and dignity for all people and organisations, and upholds the reputation of Lifespace Trust. Any claims you make about mentoring will be honest and reflect current knowledge and understanding.

2.3 You will be mindful of the context within which mentoring takes place and adjust your practice accordingly e.g. primary school, secondary school, F.E. college, community setting. If the context changes, you will undertake appropriate re-contracting with a mentee.

2.4 You will be sensitive to issues of culture, faith, gender, sexuality, disability, race and all other aspects of diversity. This will prove so in both face to face meetings as well as any online content you publish.

2.5 You will monitor the quality of your work through feedback from mentees and your supervisor and other appropriate professionals with whom Lifespace Trust works. You will welcome constructive feedback on your approach and practice in order to continue to develop in your role.

2.6 You will aspire to continue your development as a mentor in both the theory and practice of mentoring. For mentors and supervisors, there should be an additional 7.0 hours (or one day equivalent) of specific training per year.

2.7 You will regularly reflect on your practice and development with a suitably qualified and experienced supervisor, who will be bound by the requirements of confidentiality.

3. Contracting

3.1 You will explain and make explicit to mentees your commitment to abide by this Code of Ethics and Good Practice, and discuss an agreement to negotiate the specifics of your mentoring practice with them.

3.2 Before starting work with a mentee, you will ensure that they know and understand the nature of mentoring, why it's happening, including session length and frequency, and confidentiality, including caveats.

3.3 You will be aware of the potential for conflicts of interest, especially of an emotional nature that can arise through personal mentoring work, and deal with them quickly and effectively to ensure there is no detriment to the mentee.

3.4 You will be open about the mentoring methods you use, and be ready to supply your mentee with information about the processes involved on request. This can be supported through use of the Lifespace leaflet for young people, referral to the Lifespace website page 'Young People' and mention of the Lifespace video as an introduction to the work we do.

3.5 You will consider the impact on your mentee of any relationships you have with other young people (e.g. through clubs, voluntary groups, knowledge of siblings etc.) and discuss with your supervisor or member of staff any potential conflict of interest with those who might be affected.

3.6 You will not exploit the mentee in any manner - not physically, emotionally (e.g. teasing or insulting), mentally, sexually, or in any other way. You will always treat them with respect and value, regardless of their circumstances, background, ethnicity, beliefs, faith, gender, ability or disability and will not harm their reputation in any way.

3.7 You will ensure that the duration of the mentoring agreement is only as long as necessary for the mentee. Endings of mentoring relationships are not always obvious but wherever possible a mentor should follow the 'ITCH' procedure - looking for (I) indicators of closure; (T) testing the timescale for closing; (C) checking up on outcomes and reasons for the mentoring happening in the first place; (H) handing over to relevant person(s) / agency.

3.8 You will plan and communicate in advance, where possible, your expectations to a young person and do all you can to reduce their anxieties and any potential dependency on yourself as a mentoring practitioner. You will be proactive in your supervisory relationship to gain advice and perspectives that will aid you in your decision making.

3.9 While confidentiality will be an essential aspect of your commitment to mentees, your agreement will make clear that if evidence of illegal activity or the potential for harm to the mentee or by the mentee is disclosed during the engagement, you may have to inform the appropriate authorities. If possible and appropriate, this should be done with the mentee's consent and permission. If the mentoring request has come via a school or other named organisation, arrangements should be made to ensure a level of confidentiality in the best interests of the mentee while working within current legislation. You will act within applicable law and not encourage, assist or collude with others engaged in conduct which is dishonest, unlawful, unprofessional or discriminatory.

3.10 You will respect the mentee's right to terminate the agreement at any point in the process. Where possible, you will request an Exit Interview but will not insist on this as a condition of closure.

4. Statutory and Legal Duties

4.1 You will keep up to date and comply with statutory or legal requirements that affect your work.

4.2 In particular, you will be aware of and comply with legislation related to working with children or vulnerable adults, including the need for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before starting. You will commit to this being renewed before any existing check expires (e.g. every three years).

4.3 You will keep appropriate and accurate records of your work with mentees only for as long as necessary and ensure they remain confidential, are stored securely, and comply with the Data Protection Act 2003 [*See our separate statement on Data Protection*]

4.4 You will understand that your responsibilities continue beyond the closure of any mentoring relationship, including keeping confidentiality, avoiding exploitation of any relationship, provision of follow up support that has been agreed to, keeping records safe.

4.5 If you have any concerns or questions relating to this Code then please either speak to your supervisor, member of staff or trustees by arrangement.