

DUSSELDORP
SKILLS FORUM

A school-based mentoring program
assisting early school leavers

Dusseldorp Skills Forum

- Small not-for-profit foundation
- Self-funding - began with a grant of shares from LendLease in 1988
- Supports innovation in education and employment practice with a specific focus on young people
- Operates on three levels:
 - Research
 - Community partnerships
 - Public Policy
- www.dsf.org.au



Dusseldorp Skills Forum & PIY

- Began in one school on the Central Coast of NSW in 1997
- Expanded to other schools on Central Coast with a full-time co-ordinator (funded jointly by Dusseldorp Skills Forum, NSW DET, NSW TAFE, Hunter Valley Training Co)
- 2001 taken up by NSW DET and expanded to cover 6 regions
- 2006 involves 71 schools in NSW and expanding each year with over 1000 mentors involved
- Also operates in small numbers (not systemically supported) in other States

What is Plan-It Youth?

- A mentoring program to support those young people intending to leave school before completing their education
- Usually yr 10s
- Students are matched with a volunteer mentor from the community and together they work through a planning process to investigate their post-school options

Marginalisation of Young People



Almost 15% of Australian teenagers
(approx 200 000 young people) ,
are neither in full time work or full time education.

School Retention Rates

- National Year 12 retention rates are at 76% in 2005
- Students who don't complete Year 12 are three times more likely to become engaged in marginal activities for extended periods

Role Modelling



According to the 2001 census, 18% of children under 15 years (approx 700,000 children) lived in a household with no employed parent.....the 2006 Social Trends Survey confirms this figure is rising!

Typical Scenarios

Most young people don't leave school with the intention of being 'unemployed' or only working in a casual job.

Students leave school before completing Year 12 to do one of the following:

- TAFE
- Apprenticeship (often starts with a trial)
- Full-time employment

The Reality

- TAFE places are taken up by older students
- Trial apprenticeship doesn't turn into a real apprenticeship..... 'can't afford to keep you on'
- No full-time jobs



Young person takes a casual job until something better comes along

Student Selection

All Year 9/10 students are surveyed to determine whether they intend to leave school at the end of Year 10

All students who are considering leaving school are offered the opportunity to participate in Plan-It Youth (depending on mentor numbers).

Participation must be voluntary.



Timing

- During sport time or class time every week - approx 1.5 hours each session for the first three months
- Continuing the partnership for 12 months after completion of the program.....often longer



The Mentors



BUSINESS



RETIREEES



**COMMUNITY
MEMBERS**



Mentor Characteristics?

- clear criminal records check
- good listeners
- like young people
- have some spare time
- make a regular commitment for 12 months
- willing to participate in TAFE training



Are the Mentors Trained?

Training helps the mentors:

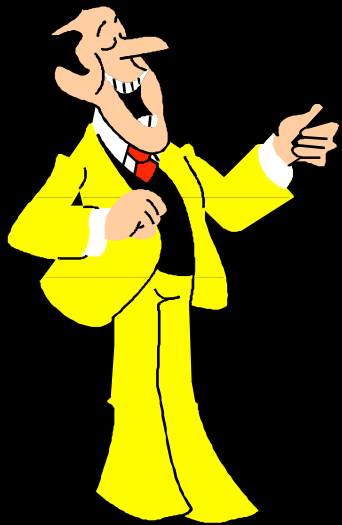
- Understand the issues involved in mentoring
- Become more confident
- Be better prepared
- Demonstrate commitment
- Have the support of fellow mentors



Mentoring in the Community 9803A

The Course

- Interpersonal Skills
- Effective Listening
- Conflict Resolution
- Mentor roles, rights & responsibilities
- Problems faced by today's youth
- Managing difficult behaviour
- Child Protection Legislation
- Confidentiality
- Employment & Training Opportunities
- Topics which meet the needs of the group





Screening

- Mandatory Police/Criminal Records checks
- Extended training - including Child Protection Legislation
- Interview after training:
 - alternatives
 - TAFE teacher plays a critical role
 - "gut" feeling
- Supervised Mentoring 'Practicum'

Matching

- Based on personality and interests
- Mentors and Mentees have an opportunity to request a match after initial group activities
- Barbeques /social events provide an opportunity for the mentors and students to "bond"



What do the mentors and students do?

- Getting-to-Know you activities
- Goal Setting
- Planning
- Talking to young employees
- Planning presentations
- Excursions to business
- Excursions to TAFE, Uni, other providers



The Celebration

- Held at the end of the planning and investigation phase
- Students share their learning with peers, mentors, teachers, family and friends
- An opportunity to say 'thank you'



The Celebration

Presentations
can take any
form - video,
talk, display,
diary etc



The School's Role/Responsibility

- Teacher time each week (\$)
- Liaison with co-ordinator
- Student selection and support
- Admin (attendance, permission notes etc)
- Debrief with mentors
- Lunch for mentors (\$)
- Excursion costs for mentors and students (\$)
- Celebration (\$)

Mentor Support

- A co-ordinator who is readily available
- Careful screening and matching
- Photo ID cards
- School recognition & support
- De-brief session each week after students leave - school provides lunch
- Financial support for excursions etc
- Meetings with other mentors

Five Phases of PIY

Pre-Program Preparation

- Negotiate mentor training
- Market to schools, mentors, students

Phase One (3months) RECRUITMENT and SELECTION

- Mentor Recruitment, Screening and Training
- Student Selection

Phase Two MATCHING

- Orientation
- Parent Meetings
- Introductions and Matchings

Phase Three (3months) PROJECT

- Career Investigation Project - Mentor/Mentee Activities
- Mentor Debriefing
- Celebration

Phase Four (up to 12 months) CONTINUED SUPPORT

- Negotiation of relationship
- Mentor and mentee continue to meet - more activities may be planned

Phase Five (up to 2 years) POST SCHOOL SUPPORT????

- Re-negotiation of relationship
- Mentor and mentee continue to meet after the student has left school

What Have We Learnt?

- Partnership is vital - you can't do this alone!
- Training is best over an extended period
- Only one-to-one matching
- Keep parents informed
- Student participation must be voluntary
- Use the benchmarks from Youth Mentoring Network

Outcomes (March 2005)

Students (123):

Remaining in or returning to education (inc CGVE)	65.0%
Other positive destinations	28.4%
Marginal activities	5.0%
Currently unknown / Lost contact	<u>1.6%</u>
	<u>100%</u>

PIY Costs



For 15-25 students over a year:

- Co-ordination Time
- Travel
- Mentor Training
- Criminal Records Checks
- Mentor support
- Celebration



Interested?

- Go to www.dsf.org.au/plan-it
- Go to 'run your own'
- Register - no cost