

Personal Safety and Lone Working

Because mentors and mentees generally meet 1:1, Bridging the Gap Islington recommends that mentors maintain awareness of personal safety at all times, in particular by observing the following:

- 1) Let your supervisor know the location of your meeting, when it begins, and when it ends – this is to ensure the safety of both mentor and service user.
- 2) Stick to public, open places when meeting with the service user.
- 3) Don't go out of your comfort zone, stick to areas and places that you *and* the service user feel comfortable in - preferably visit the place beforehand so you are aware of the exits and amount of staff.
- 4) Do not visit a service user in their home, unless consent has been given by your supervisor. Do not invite the service user to visit your home.
- 5) Be smart about the personal belongings you take out with you when travelling alone or with the service user.
- 6) You will be given a separate phone to use for arranging meetings with the service user. Do not use your private email address. Emails sent to admin@bridging-islington.org.uk marked "For the attention of..." will be forwarded. Alternatively we can arrange a mentoring email address for you if needed.
- 7) Don't give out social networking information like your Instagram, Facebook or Twitter details to the service user, to ensure your personal safety and privacy.
- 8) If you find that a particular behaviour that the service user displays makes you feel uncomfortable, explain it to them, being careful to make a personal statement e.g. "when you stand too close, I feel uncomfortable".
- 9) If you are worried about the behaviour of your service user, first end the meeting, and then phone your supervisor to discuss your concerns.
- 10) If there are any immediate concerns about the welfare of the service user or yourself, please ask staff in the place you are in for help or in an emergency call 999.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteer mentors should respect the confidentiality of their meetings with their mentoring partners. It's hard to open up to someone that they don't know so this should be taken seriously. However, in some circumstances you do need to share information. These include:

- The volunteer mentor has concerns about a child/ adult protection matter
- There is a risk of harm to any person
- The service user has given their consent for information to be passed on
- In discussions with the mentor's supervisor, who will keep the information confidential

Mentors should discourage criminal behaviour but should not report it. The service user may be encouraged to report to the police past crimes which have not already been considered by a court to avoid the risk of future prosecutions.

Where possible, the mentor will warn a service user if it seems likely that they may disclose something that the mentor cannot keep confidential.

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Item 6 altered 21/5/18

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APS Key area 1