Checklist for Choosing, Commissioning, and Evaluating a High-Quality Mentoring Service

## 1. Choosing a Program: Population, Interventions, Outcomes, Evidence

Be confident if:

✔ The target population is clear.

✔ You are clear on how the intervention should be delivered. Consider content, types of mentors, length of the program, and if it is stand alone or in conjunction with other services.

✔ There is a clear link between what is being done in the program and what the expected outcomes are.

✔ The program has been evaluated and has had a positive or relevant outcome.

Be wary if:

✘ The target population isn't specified, is unclear, or is different from the group you were planning on working with.

✘ If it is unclear how you should implement any part of the program or intervention. Always ask for clarification!

✘ If the outcomes or expected outcomes are unclear or not relevant to your target population.

✘ If the program hasn't been evaluated. You don't want to waste resources on an ineffective intervention.

2. Commissioning A Service: Funding, Risk Management, Service Delivery
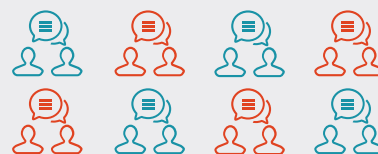
Be confident if:

✔ You know who is funding the service and you have appropriate resources.

✔ The service provider has a clear risk assessment in place, and there are clear safeguarding policies.

✔ Staff and mentors are aware of referral programs and processes available to them.

✔ There are clear recruitment processes that are safe and effective.

✔ Mentors and mentees are given a proper introduction, and goals and expectations are understood.

✔ The service is implemented as close to the description as possible, and that provisions are in place to get it back on track if you need to change the program

✔ There is appropriate supervision and a wider support network for mentors to ask for, and share advice.

✔ There are clear strategies for dealing with 'failed' mentor-mentee relationships.

Be wary if:

✘ There is no reliable or sustainable funder in place.

✘ There is no, or an inappropriate risk assessment in place.

✘ If mentors have no pathways or services available to refer their mentees to if necessary. This is especially critical when dealing with at-risk youth.

✘ The recruitment process is unclear or unspecific. Mentors and mentees aren't properly matched.

✘ There is a failure to manage expectations about program goals and processes, and necessary training isn't provided.

✘ The service that is implemented significantly from the original description.

✘ There are no clear strategies for dealing with the ending of a mentor/mentee relationship.

3. Evaluating A Commissioned Service: Monitoring Processes & Measuring Impacts

Be confident if:

✔ The main components of the program are monitored and recorded through transparent, reliable, and objective means from start to finish.

✔ Any planned or unplanned deviations from the original program are recorded to better inform evaluations and to reorganize a program if necessary.

✔ All program impacts are recorded, both positive and negative.

✔ Post-program follow up is incorporated into evaluations.

Be wary if:

✘ There are poor records (or no records kept). This limits the potential for evaluation.

✘ There are no records of deviations from the original program. This means that information about the program may be inaccurate.

✘ Program impacts aren't noted or recorded.

✘ There is a failure to measure all relevant outcomes, both at program end and through further follow up.

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