

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Tēnā ko te toa mahi
kai e kore e paheke.

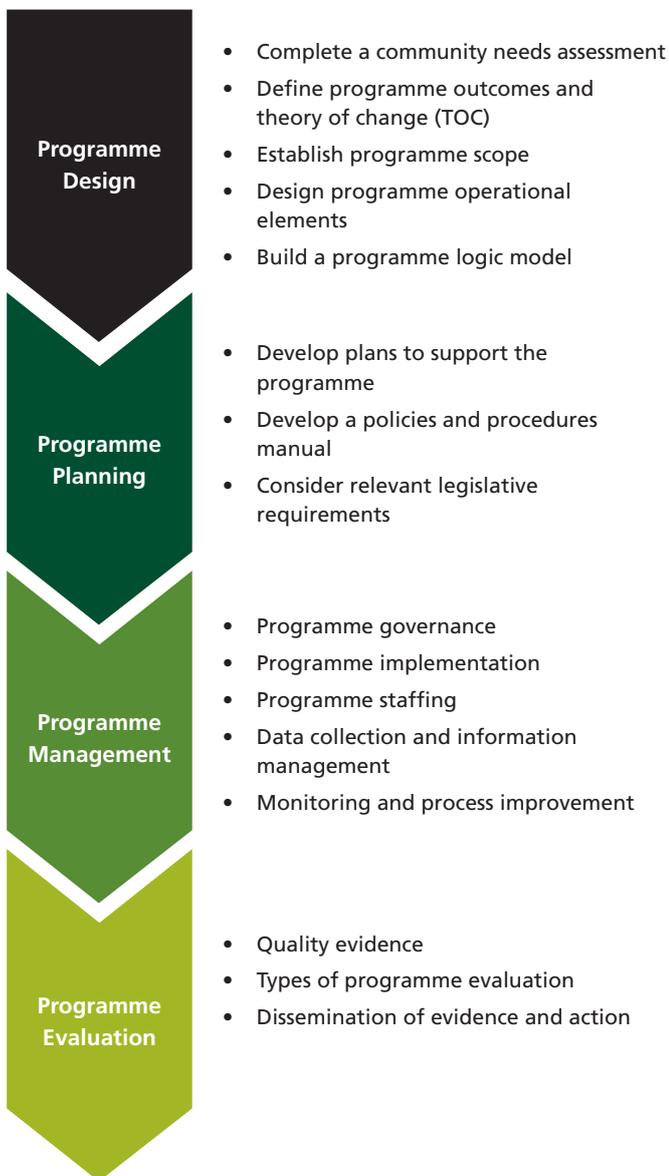
A warrior who works
hard at growing food
will not fail.

OVERVIEW

Developing a formal youth mentoring programme requires proper planning and preparation.

Allowing time to work through the practical steps outlined in this section will help to ensure higher quality and more effective mentoring. Programme development comprises four main stages: design, planning, management and evaluation. The core components of each stage are summarised in the figure below. Each component is further discussed in the accompanying sections.

Figure 4. Stages of programme development and their core components



4.1 PROGRAMME DESIGN

This section outlines a series of key activities to undertake when designing a mentoring programme.

Completing these activities will help ensure programmes have a clear sense of direction and purpose, both in terms of the outcomes of the mentoring relationships established and the long-term viability of the programme.

Key questions to consider when starting a mentoring programme include:

- What is your programme trying to do/achieve through mentoring?
- What is your programme's unique role?

4.1.1 Conduct a needs assessment

A needs assessment of the young people in the target community is the first step when considering whether to initiate a formal youth mentoring programme. Such an assessment will help determine any potential gaps in services for young people and identify specific populations who could benefit from mentoring support. A needs assessment will also help identify the presence of any similar programmes and therefore avoid overlapping services.

Teachers, guidance counsellors, the police and social service agencies will be able to provide valuable insights into the needs of the young people in the target community.

Questions to ask community members when conducting a needs assessment might include:

1. What do you see as the greatest needs facing young people in your community today?
2. Why do you think these needs exist?
3. What programmes are you aware of in your community that may already be addressing the need you have described?
4. Do you know if your community offers any mentoring programmes currently?
5. If a mentoring programme was developed, how do you think this would benefit the young people in your community?
6. Do you have any suggestions about where to recruit volunteer mentors from?
7. Do you know other agencies already serving youth that may wish to collaborate on a mentoring initiative? (Weinberger, 2005).

4.1.2 Define programme outcomes and theory of change

After establishing the needs of the young people in the target community, the next step is to confirm desired **programme goals** and specify associated **measurable outcomes**. For example, a programme goal may be 'improved academic performance' and the measurable outcome may be 'achieving university entrance'. It may be necessary to define smaller measurable goals on the way to achieving a larger goal; using the previous example, achieving university entrance may start with improved school attendance. This provides mentors with opportunities to reinforce positive feedback and journey with the young person.

Having established the desired outcomes, developing a **theory of change (TOC)** that explains how mentoring and the activities that mentors and mentees engage in will result in the desired outcomes is highly recommended. In other words, how does the organisation believe the programme works?

A theory of change should explain how the programme is designed to clearly bring about change, as well as other external factors that influence programme effectiveness. It should also show how the programme, through the work of a mentor, achieves meaningful and measurable results. Finally, it should

draw on relevant theory and research to validate the programme design and explain how the services align with the needs, contexts and circumstances of the young people it serves (MENTOR, 2015).

The theory of change is effectively the framework for the mentoring programme, and will influence every decision made going forward.

The key elements of the theory of change are:

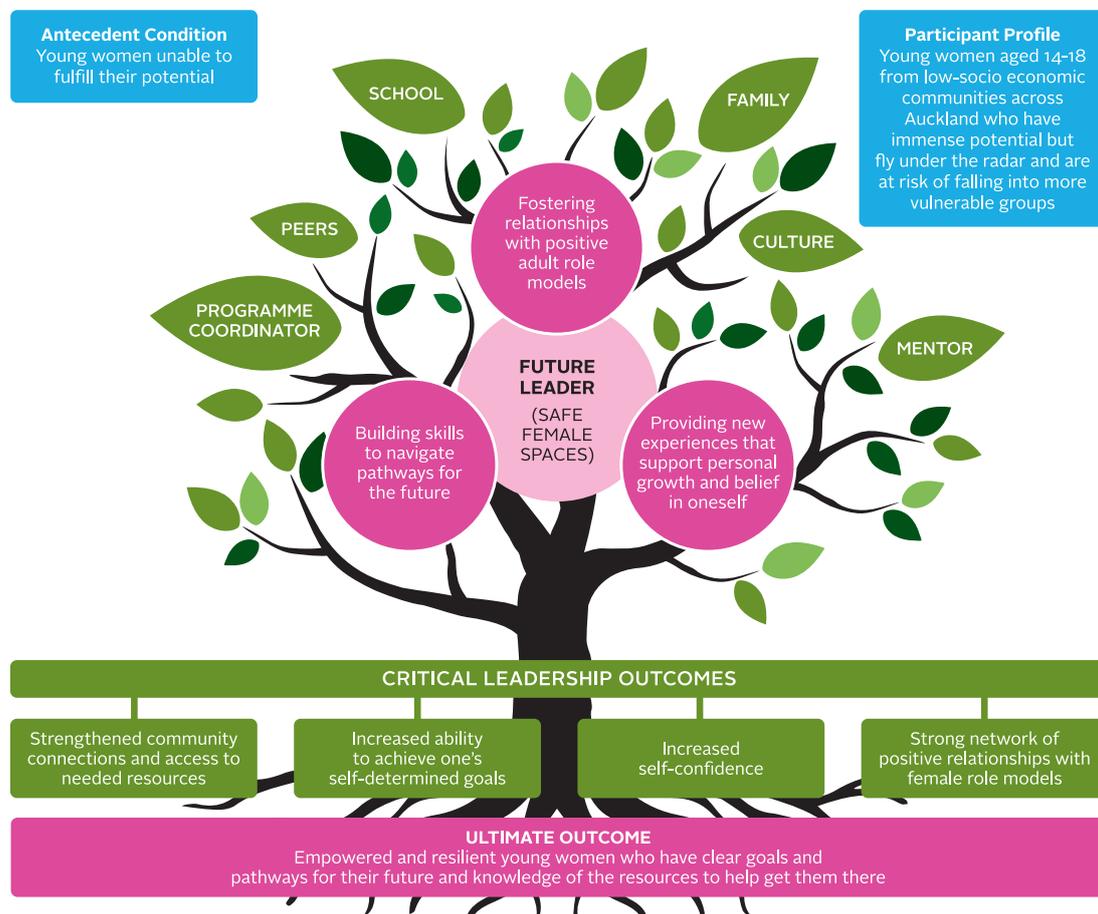
- **Identified need/antecedent condition:** why is this programme needed and what conditions contribute to that need?
- **Critical programme processes:** what mechanisms does the programme use to drive change?
- **Moderating influences:** what variables affect the likelihood of success (either positively or negatively)?
- **Programme outcomes:** immediate, short and long term outcomes that are directly connected to the critical programme processes.

The YWCA Future Leaders mentoring programme theory of change provides a real-life example of how the theory has been applied.

Figure 5. YWCA Future Leaders' Programme Theory of Change



FUTURE LEADERS' PROGRAMME THEORY OF CHANGE



Over the past fourteen years, Future Leaders has offered a wrap-around and engaging programme for young women. The programme has focused on mentoring, leadership and positive connections. Through a recent extensive, iterative and reflective review the critical programme processes of Future Leaders have been clarified.

The Future Leaders Programme Theory of Change is depicted as a tree, which represents the unique and individual nature of each Future Leader participant. The young woman is at the centre. The moderating influences (dark green rectangles), which are key determinants and influential factors in her life, surround her. The critical programme processes intersect and support development (dark pink circles in the diagram). These highlight the wrap-around support that the programme provides. The Future Leader is central to all of the programme's activities, as is creating a safe and supportive environment for young women. There is an acknowledgement that the young women exist within an external environment which they themselves, as well as the programme, may not always have control over. Nevertheless, there is potential for the programme to impact the moderating influences, thus the relationship is multi-directional.

The processes lead into the critical and ultimate programme outcomes, which are in-line with the 5 C's of Positive Youth Development (Confidence, Competence, Character, Caring, Connection). The programme outcomes (light green rectangles) focus on resilience, confidence and empowerment through connection to resources, positive women and community. Additionally, research and evaluation of the programme have shown that the processes also have a positive impact on academic and leadership achievements, as well as increasing cultural understanding.

4.1.3 Establish programme scope

Having a theory of change will greatly assist when establishing the scope of the programme. In particular, it will help determine the:

- **Youth population to be served:** age range, gender, family circumstances, socioeconomic status and ethnic background of the young people to be supported.
- **Delivery method of mentoring:** one-to-one, group, team, peer, e-mentoring, or mixed-delivery.
- **Programme structure:** stand-alone mentoring programme or a component of an existing youth development programme.
- **Setting (location):** where the mentors and mentees will meet: site-based (e.g., school, marae), community-based, or virtual community (e-mentoring).

- **Nature and focus:** of the mentoring programme, e.g., career preparedness, academic support, socialisation skills.
- **Programme duration and frequency:** how often the mentors and mentees should meet and how long their sessions are, as well as the length of the match (refer to Section 3).
- **Mentors:** what types of individuals will be recruited as mentors, and from where.

4.1.4 Design programme operational elements

Once the programme scope is established, the next step is to design the core programme elements that directly support the mentoring relationship. These are:

- recruitment of mentors and mentees
- selection and safety checking of mentors and mentees
- orientation and training of mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers
- matching of mentors and mentees
- monitoring (supervision) and support of the mentoring relationship
- closing the mentoring match

These programme elements are essential to the success of any mentoring programme, and are covered in detail in Section 5 of the Guide.

4.1.5 Build a programme logic model

As a final step, programmes may also wish to develop a programme logic model in addition to, or as an alternative to, a theory of change model. The process of constructing the model will enable a realistic assessment of the work to be undertaken and to identify if further resources may be required to achieve the desired outcomes. Both the theory of change and programme logic models will be helpful for focusing and directing programme evaluation (Weinberger, 2005).

In its simplest form, a logic model provides a graphical depiction of the logical relationships between the resources, activities, outputs and outcomes of the programme. Table 2 illustrates this relationship.

Table 2. An example of a programme logic model

>> Inputs	Outputs >>		Outcomes		
Resources	Activities	Participation	Short	Medium	Long
What we invest	What we do	Who we reach	What are the short term results?	What are the medium term results?	What are the ultimate desired outcomes?
e.g. staff, volunteers, funds, materials, equipment, facilities	e.g. safety checking, training, supervision, marketing, fundraising, programme evaluation	e.g. mentors, mentees, parents	e.g. improve school attendance	e.g. improved academic results	e.g. achieve university entrance
Assumptions The beliefs we have about the programme, the people involved, the context and the way we think the programme will work			External factors The environment in which the programme exists includes external factors that interact with and influence the programme		
Evaluation					

(adapted from Program Development and Evaluation, University of Wisconsin – Extension, 2003)

4.2 PROGRAMME PLANNING

Thorough programme planning is the crucial next stage of programme development to ensure high quality and effective mentoring.

Plans will help address key variables such as what resources will be required to deliver a sustainable programme? How will the programme be funded? How will the programme be evaluated?

A policies and procedures manual providing clear guidelines to staff, mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers should also be developed at the planning stage, and consideration of any relevant legislation the programme will need to adhere to should be reviewed and taken into account.

4.2.1 Develop plans to support the programme

The following is a list of the plans that programmes should consider developing in order to build an efficient and robust service.

Resource plan

A comprehensive schedule detailing the resources that will be required to set up and run a sustainable mentoring programme should be developed. A thorough analysis of all activities undertaken to deliver the mentoring programme will be required, to ensure the resource plan is complete. Typically, the plan will include: people resources (staff and volunteers), materials (marketing, training), equipment, technology,

facilities, money, time, and partners, who may deliver specific aspects of the programme (training delivery, evaluation).

Financial plan

A detailed resource plan will help programmes estimate the associated costs and develop a comprehensive financial plan. Estimating costs related to the activities the programme undertakes will be important here too. For instance, the activities and costs pertaining to programme marketing and programme evaluation will need to be included in the financial plan.

Essentially, the plan should determine the amount of funds that will be needed to start and sustain the mentoring programme over time. It may comprise a separate 'start up' budget and an annual operating budget for the current financial year, and forecasted budget for at least two further years.

Funding plan

To sustain a programme, developing a diversified funding stream with multiple sources of funding is highly recommended. These may include in-kind gifts, special fundraising events, individual and philanthropic donations, corporate donations, government funding, annual giving programmes, online fundraising (crowd funding) and foundation grants. Third-party events can also be a good source of funding. These events involve another organisation running a fundraising event with your mentoring programme as the beneficiary of the funds raised (such as Grocers' Charity Ball or the Auckland City Marathon).

Marketing and communications plan

A marketing and communications plan to raise awareness of the programme with key stakeholder groups will be important. The plan should begin by identifying all stakeholder groups the programme will need to communicate with: prospective mentors, mentees, parents/caregivers, sponsors and funders, programme collaborators and the community. The plan should also describe how the programme will be marketed to each group, key messages, imagery and branding about the programme and strategies for working with media. It may also articulate how and when to engage in public relations efforts and other strategies for gaining publicity for the programme.

Programme evaluation plan

Developing a programme evaluation plan at the planning and design phase will help ensure programmes are collecting all relevant data and materials that will be needed to conduct a rigorous evaluation. The plan should specify what will be measured to determine if the programme is being implemented with fidelity, and that it is achieving its stated goals and desired outcomes for the participants and the community. The theory of change and/or logic model should greatly assist in this task (MENTOR, 2015).

It is also important to set a plan to disseminate findings on a regular basis to programme stakeholders. The means by which these are shared will vary depending on the stakeholder. However, inclusion of findings in the annual report and periodic updates through newsletters is a good start. Providing information relevant to stakeholders and ensuring they are kept aware of how the programme is progressing may also increase the likelihood of their continued support (Weinberger, 2005).

If your organisation does not have the resources to conduct evaluations, you may wish to check the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA) directory. The What Works website is also a helpful resource. When engaging an independent evaluation consultant, always ensure you check their credentials and that they are a good fit for your organisation (www.anzea.org.nz; www.whatworks.org.nz)

4.2.2 Develop a policies and procedures manual

Programme policies and procedures covering all aspects of the mentoring programme are critical to the effective management of the mentoring programme. They provide staff with clear guidelines about how to administer the programme and ensure consistent service delivery. A policies and procedures manual also provides mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers with a clear understanding of the ground rules governing the mentoring relationship.

It is important to review policies and procedures on a regular basis, to ensure they continue to be relevant and support the programme's objectives.

The following is a checklist of policies and procedures that programmes should consider developing. The need for some will be dependent on the type of mentoring being undertaken, the setting and the young people being served.

Checklist 1. Policies and procedures

Note: these have been grouped by (a) relevance to programme staff, and (b) relevance to mentors, mentees and their parents/caregivers.

Further references for the relevant section in the Guide are included in brackets.

Policies and Procedures		CHECK
(a) Programme staff		
1	Recruitment, including inquiry and eligibility (refer Section 5.1)	
2	Mentor safety checking Mentee referral and screening Child protection (refer Section 5.2)	
3	Training (refer Section 5.3)	
4	Matching (refer Section 5.4)	
5	Relationship support and supervision (refer Section 5.5)	
6	Recognition and closure (refer Section 5.6)	
7	Evaluation and use of data (refer Section 4.3)	
8	Photos and image use	
9	Reporting requirements associated with suspected child safety issues e.g., child abuse, neglect, suicide	
10	Record keeping	
(b) Programme participants (mentors, mentees, parents/caregivers)		
1	Confidentiality and disclosure	
2	Relationship boundaries	
3	Transportation	
4	Overnight visits and out of town travel	
5	Emergency and crisis situations	
6	Approved activities	
7	Digital and social media use	
8	Giving and accepting of gifts	
9	Grievances/complaints	
10	Inclusion of others in the match meetings e.g., siblings, mentee's friends	
11	Smoking and substance use	
12	Unacceptable behaviour	
13	Money spent on activities/reimbursement policy	

4.2.3 Consider relevant legislative requirements

Programmes will need to stay up to date with any legislative requirements that are of relevance. In particular the safety checking and child protection policies that have recently come into force as part of the Children's Action Plan (CAP) and the Vulnerable Children's Act (VCA) 2014. Appendix C provides a summary of the CAP and VCA.

Regulations under the new Health and Safety at Work Act (2015) came into force on 1 April 2016. The Act creates an opportunity for organisations to review their health and safety practices and behaviours, and consider how risks that could cause illness, injury and death can be appropriately managed. The Act requires everyone to work together to improve health and safety.

4.3 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

This Guide does not attempt to explore the many general management areas of mentoring programmes.

Rather, it provides a high-level summary of recommended practices that aim to support the ongoing growth, sustainability and reliability of mentoring programmes. It gives consideration to: programme governance, programme implementation, staffing, data collection and information management, and monitoring and process improvement.

4.3.1 Programme governance

The formation of a board of trustees and/or an advisory committee that can provide advice and oversight is an important part of programme management. Some programmes may decide to have both, with the formal board handling normal governance responsibilities and the advisory committee providing the opportunity for participants and stakeholders, including the young people being served, to contribute to how services are delivered as the programme evolves over time. Both the board of trustees and the advisory committee should have representatives from a diverse set of backgrounds, so that together they can offer the assistance and expertise required to cover the full range of activities required for developing, managing and evaluating a programme.

4.3.2 Programme implementation

Programme implementation is a significant task with a number of facets to be considered and addressed. Given the size and importance of programme implementation, the Guide has a dedicated section which describes the six core elements of effective practice in youth mentoring. Please refer to Section 5 for details on:

- Recruiting mentors and mentees.
- Safety checking and selecting potential mentors, and screening of mentees.
- Orientation and training for mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers.

- Matching mentors and mentees.
- Providing ongoing support, supervision and monitoring of mentoring relationships.
- Helping mentors and mentees reach closure and recognise the contribution of all programme participants.

4.3.3 Programme staffing

Although most mentoring programmes are run by not-for-profit (NFP) organisations, it is important to realise the skills and experience required to run a NFP do not differ substantially from running a 'for-profit' organisation, particularly one that is operating in the service sector. NFPs will therefore need management and staff skilled in strategic planning; annual planning; budgeting and financial management; human resource management; information management; programme development and delivery; client services; and marketing and communications. A unique area for NFPs is fundraising, and many programmes will have staff specifically skilled in this discipline.

It is important to consider the mix of staff skills and competencies. Youth development, child psychology, education, youth work and social work are all relevant to the youth mentoring field. Staff with a sound cultural skills base and who reflect the diversity and experiences of the young people being served are also highly recommended (MENTOR, 2015).

Programmes also need to ensure they have sufficient staff to follow all procedures and practices, and to implement the mentoring programme as intended. In particular, attention should be paid to the critical practices that impact child and youth safety and the quality of the mentoring experience.

4.3.4 Data collection and information management

Programmes will need to develop and maintain a comprehensive system for managing programme information. In particular, secure storage of information pertaining to the young people being served will be crucial.

Programme information that will need to be maintained includes: mentor and mentee recruitment documentation; police vetting, safety checking and reference checks; referral forms; parental consent/mentee assent records; records pertaining to the mentor/mentee match including meeting dates and activities; training records; monitoring and support activity logs; programme evaluations; complaints proceedings; and exit interviews.

In addition to the programme information listed above, there is a lot of management-related information that will need to be maintained. This includes information on programme finances (such as detailed records of all funds received from the various funding and donor sources) and personal records of all employees documenting when they were hired, safety-checked and trained to work with mentors and youth.

Investing resources in data collection and information management will help ensure the programme is accountable to all stakeholders, especially the participants and those who have invested time and money.

4.3.5 Monitoring and process improvement

Establishing a system of ongoing programme monitoring is essential to success (DuBois, Holloway, et al., 2002). Staff should be allocated time to review policies, procedures and operations on a regular basis. Mentors and mentees should be regarded as clients of your mentoring programme and they should be given the opportunity to provide feedback on a regular basis to determine how well the programme is achieving its goals. Staff should be encouraged to proactively observe the mentor/mentee matches, anticipate any problems that arise and respond promptly to them. Ongoing monitoring will help identify problems, so that programmes will be better placed to address issues immediately (Weinberger, 2005).

4.4 PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Programme evaluation, whilst it may seem somewhat daunting and challenging, is an opportunity to think critically and reflectively about what works and what can be improved.

It is not simply an exercise in compliance, but a way to check that the programme is robust and effective at serving young people.

Research clearly indicates that mentoring programmes with a history of evaluation are more likely to be effective than programmes that do not conduct evaluations (Farruggia, Bullen, Davidson et al., 2011). There are several reasons why evaluations are important (DuBois, 2014).

- Evaluations help diagnose and remedy problems within a programme.
- Evaluations contribute to programme effectiveness and sustainability.
- Evaluations contribute to the safety and well-being of programme participants.
- Evaluations help to highlight what is going well and contribute to organisational learning and development.
- Programmes that use systematic processes for monitoring and evaluation have been shown to be more effective.

Increasingly, government agencies and philanthropic organisations expect programmes to be able to demonstrate a positive return on investment, hence a good evaluation strategy is required.

Evaluations should therefore be an integral part of programme practices. To achieve this, all organisations should include evaluation in their regular operational budgets. This part of the Guide offers a brief breakdown of different types of evaluation programmes may engage in, as well as some guidance regarding dissemination and use of results.

4.4.1 Quality evidence

Evidence can take many forms. These can include checklists, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, school data (e.g., attendance), and programme data (e.g., number of mentor training hours, length of match).

There are several factors that impact the quality of the evidence collected in an evaluation. These include information being gathered:

- in a systematic, rigorous manner,
- following ethical principles, and
- from multiple informants (e.g., schools, mentors, mentees, families, or others).

Regardless of the type of information gathered, it is strongly advised that organisations refer to the evaluation standards developed by Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA) in partnership with Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (SuPERU). This document outlines how to conduct quality evaluations that are guided by ethical principles (ANZEA, 2015).

4.4.2 Types of programme evaluation

The main objective of an evaluation is to determine if a programme is working or not working, and why (ANZEA, 2015). There are several ways that programmes can do this.

Evidence-informed Practice

Evidence-informed practice compares programme practices against practices that have been found, through previous research, to be associated with effectiveness (i.e., youth outcomes). Research has shown that there is a strong positive association between programme practices and programme effectiveness – **the more effective practices your programme engages in the more likely your programme will be effective** (DuBois, 2014).

The checklists in this Guide can be used to demonstrate the extent to which the programme follows evidence-informed practices. This information can be used to help develop an evidence-informed programme; identify and action areas for improvement; and demonstrate to key stakeholders that the programme is evidence-informed. Using best practices is an example of evidence-informed practice.

Evidence-based Practice

Another way to evaluate your programme is by gathering and reviewing data or information specifically related to your programme. This is called evidence-based practice. Information can be gathered on both programme processes and outcomes (DuBois, 2014). Although these are presented separately below, it is important to acknowledge that processes and outcomes are clearly linked and both should be considered when assessing programme quality.

The purpose of a *process evaluation* is to assess programme fidelity, i.e., is the programme being delivered as intended or planned. DuBois outlines six key process evaluation components (DuBois, 2014):

- adherence (do the intended activities actually take place?)
- exposure (is the amount of service provided enough?)
- quality of delivery (how well are the services provided?)
- responsiveness (how do staff, stakeholders and young people respond to and experience the services provided?)
- programme differentiation (to what extent is the programme different from existing services?)
- dosage (to what extent are individual participants involved with and exposed to programme services?).

In order to examine processes for evaluation, organisations should:

- clearly document all programme processes,
- set up a mechanism for regularly monitoring processes, and
- create an action plan for addressing any inconsistencies and adjusting programme practices.

The purpose of an *outcomes evaluation* is to assess if a programme is effective, i.e., the extent to which the programme has influenced the intended outcomes for participants (DuBois, 2014). As a basis there will need to be a pre- and post-mentoring relationship level of measurement. **It is important to be clear that this is not simply measuring whether the outcomes have occurred, but to what degree the programme has caused these outcomes to occur.** Therefore, a critical precursor to an outcomes evaluation is the development of a programme specific theory of change or logic model (refer to Section 4.1). This should include a clear understanding of the intended outcomes and the relationship between programme practices and outcomes.

“
Gauging outcomes accurately and doing so in ways that can be attributed persuasively to programme involvement is a challenging undertaking.”
 (DuBois, 2014, p. 481)

Organisations are encouraged to seek support and guidance prior to engaging in an outcomes evaluation for their programme. In particular, organisations are encouraged to seek advice on general study design, sampling, measurement, and data analysis. For example you could seek advice from an evaluation consultant or a researcher based at your local tertiary institution who has relevant experience.

There are also a number of well-recognised frameworks to assist with outcomes evaluations. In particular, Results Based Accountability™ (RBA; RBA, n.d.) and Social Return on Investment (SROI; Community Research, n.d.) are two outcomes-based frameworks organisations are finding useful. Resources and professional development opportunities are available

through a number of agencies including The Tangata Whenua, Community and Voluntary Sector Research Centre. www.communityresearch.org.nz

4.4.3 Dissemination of evidence and action

It is important that programmes have a clear plan regarding how research findings will be shared with stakeholders. When developing this plan keep the intended audience(s) in mind. For example, how information is shared with families may be quite different from how information is shared with funders. Information provided to stakeholders should also include a clear set of recommendations detailing how the information will be used to improve the quality of the programme and how this will be monitored.

Checklist 2. Programme evaluation

Programme Evaluation	CHECK
Assess programme practices against effective practice checklists (evidence-informed practice).	
Develop a system for collecting and managing data	
Evaluate and monitor programme processes, such as match duration and frequency, training hours (mentors), contact with mentors and supervision, mentees, mentoring relationship (mentee and mentor perspective)	
Understand expected programme outcomes (impact on young people)	
Evaluate expected programme outcomes (impact on young people)	
Evaluate the effectiveness of mentoring relationships	
Engage in quality research guided by ethical principles	
Collect information from a variety of key stakeholders (e.g., parents/caregivers, mentors, mentees, programme staff, teachers)	
Maintain a continuous improvement process based on evaluation data and feedback	
Disseminate evaluation findings to key stakeholders (including young people)	