

The need for consistency

Exposure to difficult life events in early care experiences disrupts stability in the lives of young people. An underpinning support principle in the HYPAR mentor is the ability to provide this needed stability for the young person, with particular focus on how you implement the intervention and support plan in a reliable, predictable and consistent manner.

In infancy, stable, attuned and consistent relationships are critical for healthy emotional development, and lead to secure and trusting attachments.

Relationship aspects and consistency:

Establishing consistency in the relationship you have with the young person will lead to stability and trust, and provide the basis for the relationship. This will include your self-awareness about your own triggers, limitations and boundaries, which will help you be authentic and share who you are as a person. Your consistent and stable influence enables the young person to move into their environment, practice skills, learn and make mistakes, and to return to you for guidance and steadying.



Consistency as a HYPAR mentor

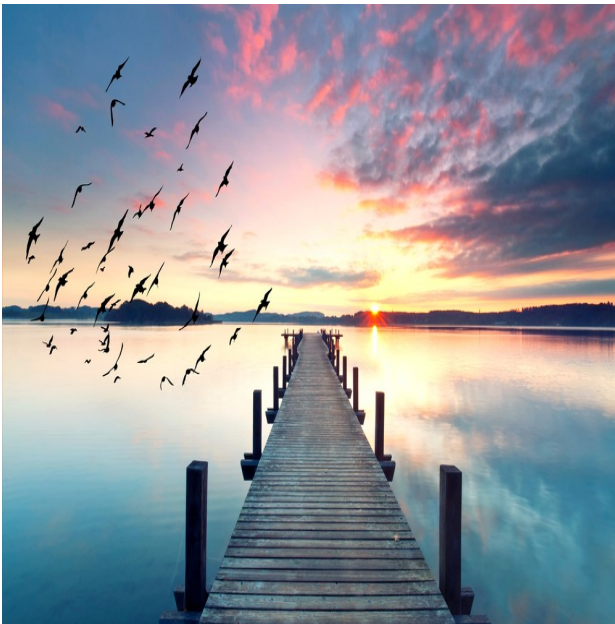
- As a HYPAR mentor, there will be a need for you to have informal or formal systems in place to ensure that you can offer support in a structured way.
- Having a structured approach which the young person is aware of, and accepts, makes it easier for you remember the main areas of focus for the young person and helps you easily identify progress.
- Maintaining a consistent approach will require a structured plan (e.g. support/ care plan) with goals that are clear and well defined.
- To uphold consistency, goals should have a clear purpose and a key learning outcome for the young person. It will then be important to determine in a deliberate way the amount, frequency and method that you will use to support the young person.

Reflection point:

As a mentor, consistency can be aided by establishing the goal that you remain as a steadying influence on the young person.

Consistency enables you to be a safe base for the young person, with the understanding that you are also there to gently stretch and push their personal development in increments and over time. Identify with the young person about how the working relationship will progress in terms of focus and growth. Have a plan in place for times of difficulty in the relationship, or where repair work is needed between you and the young person.

The steadying influence of the mentor can be very important to help the young person experience guidance, boundaries, and support.



An example of having structured elements in place:

"I am now going to use structure in each of my shifts, so that I can help the young person I am working with develop their social skills. Specifically, they will be better able to introduce themselves to others and keep a calm flowing conversation. For the next 4 weeks, in line with the care plan review, I am going to spend at least 30 minutes of each of my shifts talking about social behaviour and how they have practiced new skills I have taught them. I will make sure that on each session I will provide praise at the beginning of the shift and again before I leave (as an absolute minimum). Before I start I will generally discuss, reassure and check my plan goals with the young person so they know my approach from beginning, middle and end".

Helping maintain consistency

Consistency in your mentoring relationship:

- Have systems in place within a structured plan for the young person.
- List the outcomes or end results that you want to help the young person achieve.
- Determine frequency, and the way that you implement the support.
- Have a system for managing consistency.
- Review and feedback.

Consistency in your mentoring relationship:

- Establish a solid foundation for your working relationship.
- Maintain a steadying influence on the young person.
- Enable room for growth and learning within the mentor relationship.
- Agree on how the mentor relationship is reviewed and managed over time.