



# Mentoring

*Provide needed support, help overcome everyday obstacles, and create positive change.*

What is a Mentor? A mentor is a concerned role model and adviser who is willing to use the knowledge and experience they have in particular areas of life to support and encourage a person who is re-entering community from jail/prison and/or recovering from addictions. The mentoring relationship enables ex-offenders and/or recovering addicts to build a responsible, fruitful friendship with a mature, responsible adult. Both the mentor and the mentee must be willing to take a chance, accept each other's differences, share experiences, and work at forming a healthy relationship.

Who are the Mentees? Mentees are ex-offenders and/or recovering addicts who likely live in a chaotic environment in which there may be very few people with whom they can develop a trusting relationship. Often, they have limited support systems. As these individuals struggle to re-enter families and neighborhoods they encounter barriers to securing and maintaining housing, employment, transportation, and other basic needs. Adjustment to family responsibilities is always challenging.

What am I committing to? Successful mentors understand that positive changes in the lives of ex-offenders and recovering addicts does not happen quickly or automatically. The mentor and mentee must meet long enough and often enough to build a relationship that helps the mentee feel supported and safe, develop self-confidence and self-esteem, and see new possibilities in his/her life. As such, you are committing to establish a responsible, fruitful friendship with your mentee. Initially you will be meeting with and phoning your mentee weekly. After the first four months the number of meetings and phone call may decrease, depending on the progress your mentee has made. Meetings can take place at an agreed upon location in the community, such as a local restaurant. A commitment of 6 months to a year is expected. In addition, you will be expected to provide 70 x 7 Life Recovery brief but regular updates regarding meetings and phone calls.

What training and support is offered to volunteers? Two 2-hour trainings are provided once a quarterly, covering basic mentoring skills and also what is unique to mentoring ex-offenders and recovering addicts. Mentor support groups are available weekly, with the expectation that each mentor will attend at least one mentor support meeting a month. A 70 x 7 staff facilitates a meeting between the mentee and mentor at which time guidelines that promote healthy communication, boundaries, and expectations are discussed.

What qualifications do mentors have? The most important qualification is a willingness to spend time with an individual and a desire to help that person maintain a stable, crime-free/addiction-free lifestyle. Also, mentors are compassionate people, yet able to set boundaries and keep them. Volunteers are matched with same gender mentees. A volunteer application with references and background check is required.

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