

upside

Youth Mentoring

Mentors Information Pack



Who we are

We're Upside Youth Mentoring (formerly Brothers In Arms) and we exist to support change in Aotearoa New Zealand's young people with adverse childhood experiences. We want to help them feel a little brighter and more loved than they did yesterday. Our dream is to change the future of our nation.

We've been matching young people with mentors since 2006 and with over 700 matches and 6000 hours of mentoring a year, we've seen time and time again the life-changing effects of this connection.

Right now we work in Auckland, Rodney and Tauranga.

Our young people

Each of the young people (9–13 years old) we journey with has been referred to us by principals, counsellors, social workers and psychologists who believe a positive role model is what this young person needs to help navigate their current challenges. 100 percent of them are with adverse childhood experiences.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are major contributing factors for poor youth development that can lead to negative health and social outcomes in adulthood.

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organisation have identified 10 ACEs that can have serious implications for children during their childhoods and can continue to affect them in their adulthoods. These include being exposed to abuse, neglect and environmental challenges before they are 18 years old.

Volunteering

As a volunteer, you are our most valuable partner. You're committing to meeting with a young person every week for at least 12 months. The focus of those times is building a quality relationship of unconditional love, care and support with your young person.

Commitment

We're going to be honest here. Being a volunteer mentor isn't always easy. It's a commitment that tests most people who do it. It's normal to feel like giving up somewhere along the way – maybe because you don't feel like you've got anything to offer, or your young person doesn't want anything to do with you.

The good news is that most of these uneasy situations are totally resolvable! The most important thing we ask is that you stick by your commitment to a young person for a year.

What the year looks like

2 hours

weekly hang out with young person

3 hours

monthly mentoring supervision

6 events

throughout the year (including camp and graduation)

The application process

1. Application

Fill out that application form! This form is comprehensive and we use it for police vetting, getting character references and our face-to-face interview with you.

2. Interview

The interview helps both you and us decide whether volunteer mentoring is the right fit for you. It's an opportunity to chat about who you are, what you have to offer a young person and for us to answer any questions you may have.

3. Induction

After the interview, we'll know whether or not we're moving into the induction stage with you. If we do, you'll attend the next induction day scheduled in our calendar. These are run 3–4 times a year and we'll be in touch with a date.

4. Accept/decline

After the interview and induction day, a final decision will be made about whether or not you're the right fit to be a mentor. You'll receive an email with our decision.

If we don't feel like you're suitable to become a mentor, we will do our best to explain why we feel this way.

5. Matching

Once your vetting form has come back clear, we get to work on matching you with a young person. We'll match you with a young person who lives geographically close to you (within 15–20 minutes by car, where we can), is of the same sex, and has similar interests. Where appropriate, we try to also meet requests from either of you – e.g. ethnic matching.

When we have a possible match for you, we'll check in to be sure you're okay with it and then let the whānau know about you. Once everyone involved is happy, we'll book in a time to meet the young person at their home.

On the day, we'll meet you outside and head in together. We'll introduce you to the whānau and spend some time getting to know each other. Commitment agreements are then signed by you, the young person and their caregiver. After this, we'll head out to grab a bite to eat with you and the young person. If everyone's comfortable, we'll leave you guys to hang out for a bit.

Once you both arrive back at the home, you're welcome to book in your next hang out by yourselves. Your Mentoring Coordinator will check in the next day with both you and the young person to see how it all went. We'll help if any issues pop up.

“I love mentoring! I've gained a very special person in my heart and life. And over the last while, I've become a better person too.”

– Sarah, Mentor

Throughout the year

Mentor supervision

Over the course of your match, we'll get you to fill out a monthly feedback form online. This is for you to let us know about any concerns you have or tell us any good stories (which we love!).

There is also a monthly supervision session where we get all our current mentors together. We hang out, check in on how things are going with your young person, share some great ideas and get some training from a guest speaker/staff member on a relevant topic.

Events

There are six epic events each year –

- 3x mentor–young person events
- 1x camp
- 1x Beach Day (which the whole whānau is invited to)
- 1x graduation (more on that later)

6 and 12 month check-ins

We also have face-to-face catch ups with you during the course of the match where we treat you to a coffee or lunch. Here we talk in-depth about any questions or concerns you have about the match, young person or their whānau environment.

We are also free to catch up at any time throughout the year if you have concerns or just want to chat about how things are going. If professional help is required we'll organise and pay for you to see a counsellor.

Graduation

At the one-year mark for you and your young person, we celebrate this milestone achievement with a special dinner on us.

Where to from here?

Hopefully by now you and your young person have built a friendship and want to keep hanging out. Things might look a little different and you might hang out a little less, and that's all good. Let's talk about it!