



The 10 step plan for IAF Mentors

This theory outlines 10 steps that IAF needs to take to help young people break down personal barriers and find a positive progression into employment. Progress through the steps is not always linear and many are interlinked, but separating them out in this way helps IAF structure provision so that the service provided is holistic and covering all areas of need.

1/ Build the relationship: This first step underpins the whole process and requires a genuine connection to ensure understanding, trust, respect and rapport in the mentor/mentee relationship. Taking the time to listen helps the participant feel like they belong and are understood. An initial needs assessment is completed.

2/ Address basic physiological and financial needs: Mentors provide urgent support and advocacy with these needs to ensure the participant is adequately housed/ fed/warm/and on the correct benefits.

3/ Safeguard and support with personal barriers: Provide support and specialist signposting for personal barriers such as addictions, poor health, caring responsibilities, domestic violence, abuse, trauma, and poor mental health. We cannot change past trauma, but by listening and supporting with coping strategies we can have a positive impact on their future.

4/ Help them understand themselves and the society around them: We help them understand their strengths and weaknesses and their relationships with others/ peer groups. We also help them understand how UK support systems work, and point out the reality that you have to start from the bottom and work your way up. This improved awareness boosts confidence/mental health, helps gain perspective, helps them connect well with others, reduces unhealthy relationships, and supports diversity, respect and empathy for others.

5/ Help them create connections and friends: We help them to build relationships, find support networks and integrate into the community through our youth led social activities. Activities are designed and delivered by young people, for young people. This is their voice, and their space, and their way of connecting.

6/ Provide moral support and give them hope: Mentors are honest with the young people, helping them take responsibility for their actions, discussing how their behaviour needs to change, but they also provide role models and can help young people find a way through their problems. Mentors give young people the hope and motivation they need to drive through changes in their lives.

7/ Create action plans and help them map their future: Mentors help them identify their values, set realistic goals, and explore viable career options. Taking small steps in the right direction can start to build a sense of achievement, progression and confidence.

8/ Help them gain life-skills and employability skills: Mentors directly support with or signpost to other providers to support with all of the young persons skills needs including employability, independent living, literacy and life skills. We encourage and facilitate young people to take in work experience placements to help them understand employer expectations, gain confidence, and gain experience for their CV.

9/ Take a pro-active approach to progression: Mentors provide intensive progression support into EET, helping young people to write CV's, job search, sign up to job sites, complete applications, interview preparation etc. By showing them step by step how to do these things they gain the confidence and knowledge they need to do them themselves in the future. Mentors will also support young people with the logistics of planning their routes to interviews, will buy them interview clothes, and if needed will 'hold their hands' through the whole process. This approach is especially helpful for combatting anxiety, low confidence and for kinesthetic learners.

10/ Help them sustain progression and recognise achievement: We have an open door policy which means that mentors will continue to be there for them and recognise key milestones or achievements even beyond the end of the programme or when they have progressed. The young people we work with often have no-one in their lives and even though they might have progressed they might still be very vulnerable – we would never want to let them down or close the door on them.