



# **Working with Young People**

**Last Updated: April 2026**

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### **Purpose of this policy**

This policy outlines MENT4's approach to working with young people. It explains the standards, values and practices expected from staff, mentors, facilitators and volunteers when supporting children and young people.

### **Our approach**

MENT4 believes every young person has value, potential and purpose. Our role is to create safe, consistent and aspirational spaces where young people can feel seen, heard and supported.

We work through trusted relationships, mentoring, creative engagement and practical support. We aim to meet young people where they are, while helping them move forward with confidence and hope.

### **Trauma informed practice**

Many young people we work with may have experienced trauma, instability, exclusion, loss, exploitation, discrimination or other difficult life experiences.

Staff should work in a trauma informed way by:

- building trust through consistency
- avoiding judgement or shame
- recognising that behaviour may be a form of communication
- creating emotionally safe spaces
- giving young people choice where appropriate
- remaining calm and professional
- avoiding unnecessary confrontation
- focusing on strengths, not just challenges

Trauma informed practice does not mean excusing harmful behaviour. It means responding with understanding, boundaries and care.

### **Trusted adult relationships**

MENT4's work is built around the power of trusted adult relationships.

Staff and mentors should aim to be:

- consistent
- reliable
- respectful
- honest
- encouraging
- patient
- boundaried
- emotionally safe

Young people should experience MENT4 adults as people who care, listen and follow through.

### **Seeing the whole young person**

Young people should never be defined only by risk, behaviour, background or past mistakes.

Staff should consider:

- strengths and interests
- hopes and goals
- family and community context
- emotional needs
- barriers they may be facing
- skills and talents
- identity and lived experience

Our role is to help young people see the gold within themselves.

### **Respect and dignity**

All young people must be treated with dignity and respect.

Staff must not:

- shame, mock or belittle young people
- use aggressive or humiliating language
- make assumptions based on background or behaviour
- use threats or intimidation
- dismiss a young person's feelings
- favour one young person unfairly over another

Respect should remain consistent, even when behaviour is challenging.

### **Voice and choice**

Where appropriate, young people should be encouraged to have a voice in their support.

This may include:

- setting goals
- reflecting on progress
- choosing creative activities
- sharing what support feels helpful
- giving feedback on sessions
- contributing to programme development

Young people are more likely to engage when they feel ownership and agency.

### **Consistency and reliability**

Consistency is essential when working with young people.

Staff should:

- attend sessions on time
- communicate clearly if plans change
- follow through on agreed actions
- avoid making promises they cannot keep
- provide stable and predictable support
- maintain appropriate boundaries

Broken trust can have a significant impact, especially for young people who have experienced instability.

### **Challenge and accountability**

Supporting young people also means helping them take responsibility for their choices.

Staff should challenge behaviour in a way that is:

- calm
- respectful
- clear
- fair
- proportionate
- focused on growth

The aim is not to punish or shame, but to help young people reflect, learn and make better decisions.

### **Safeguarding first**

All work with young people must be carried out in line with MENT4's safeguarding procedures.

Staff must:

- report safeguarding concerns promptly
- never promise absolute confidentiality
- follow professional boundaries
- record concerns accurately
- seek advice when unsure
- prioritise safety over personal loyalty or relationship

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

### **Working with families and professionals**

Where appropriate, MENT4 may work alongside parents, carers, schools, social workers, youth workers, police, local authorities or other professionals.

Staff should communicate professionally, share information appropriately and keep the young person's wellbeing at the centre.

Staff must not share confidential information unless there is a legitimate reason and proper process for doing so.

### **Cultural awareness and lived experience**

MENT4 values lived experience, cultural understanding and relatability. These can help staff connect with young people in meaningful and authentic ways.

However, lived experience must be used with wisdom. Staff should only share personal experiences where it is appropriate, safe and helpful to the young person.

The focus should always remain on the young person's needs, not the adult's story.

### **Managing difficult behaviour**

Some young people may present with challenging behaviour, including anger, withdrawal, disrespect, risk taking or poor engagement.

Staff should:

- stay calm
- avoid power struggles
- set clear expectations
- use de-escalation where possible
- separate the behaviour from the person
- seek support when needed
- record and report concern appropriately

Where behaviour creates risk to the young person, staff or others, this must be escalated.

### **Professional boundaries**

Warmth and authenticity are important, but all relationships must remain professional.

Staff must follow MENT4's boundaries policy and avoid blurred relationships, inappropriate communication, favouritism or over involvement.

### **Final note**

Working with young people is a privilege and a responsibility. The way we show up matters.

At MENT4, we aim to offer young people consistent care, honest encouragement, safe boundaries and genuine belief in their future.

*This document has been approved by:*

**Luke Peters**  
**Executive Director**

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to be "L. Peters".

*Helping young people discover what they are MENT4*

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# 1. APPENDIX A

## Safeguarding Form

All concerns should be recorded as soon as possible after the concern was raised in accordance with MENT4's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

Information should be provided on this form in a factual manner. Any concerns expressed by young people should be a reflection of what was actually said; do not try and interpret any of the information. Any views, opinions or observations should be recorded clearly identifying this.

Joanna Joseph (DSL) 07443917058  
[joanna.joseph@ment4.org](mailto:joanna.joseph@ment4.org)

### BASIC INFORMATION

Date:		Time:	
Location:			
Your full name:			
Your role:			
Name of child/young person:			
Age of child/young person:			

### DETAILS OF CONCERN

Details of concerns/incident (do not interpret information – use the same language that was used by the child / young person). Are you reporting your own concerns or those reported from a third party?

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*Continue on a separate page if needed.*

**Who else has the child/young person told? E.g. who else knows of these concerns?**

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Please tick to confirm that you have reinforced MENT4's Safeguarding Children and Young people policy and procedures

**ACTIONS TAKEN**

<b>What actions have you taken, if any?</b>	
<b>To whom in MENT4 have you reported your concerns?</b>	
<b>Who and when was this information shared?</b>	<b>Date:</b> <b>Time:</b> <b>Staff or Volunteer?</b>
<b>Staff or Volunteer?</b>	

**SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY A MENT4 SAFEGUARDING LEAD**

<b>MENT4 Safeguarding Lead name:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Time:</b>	
<b>Outcome:</b>	<b>No further action report to be filed</b>		
	<b>Internal monitoring until...</b>		
	<b>External action and escalation to...</b>		
	<b>Urgent and immediate action to be taken</b>		
<b>Referred or Signposted to:</b>			

*This form should be shredded once all relevant information is stored on to MENT4's online safeguarding reporting systems. Please make sure you follow MENT4's Data Protection Policy, Confidentiality Policy and Safeguarding Policy.*