

MENTORING
MEN



MODEL OF CARE

UPDATED MAY 2025

FOREWORD

I'm proud to launch this *Model of Care* – a testament to the transformative power of human connection. At its heart, this model reflects our belief that every man deserves the opportunity to be heard, understood, and supported through life's challenges.

This approach captures the essence of what makes Mentoring Men unique: a strengths-based, peer-driven framework grounded in trust, respect, and purposeful conversation. It is more than just a program – it is a community movement that enables men to journey alongside one another, fostering wellbeing, resilience, and belonging.

Our model has been shaped by the lived experiences of our mentors, the voices of the men we serve, and the guiding principles of best practice. It is deeply aligned with national priorities in men's health, and grounded in a preventative, non-clinical model that meets men where they are – early, authentically, and without judgement.

I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of Cassandra Gray, BBehavStud(Psych), BSocSc(Psych)(Hons), our Chief Operating Officer, who has led the development of this model with expertise, care, and unwavering dedication. Her contribution has been instrumental in bringing this vision to life.

We are committed to ensuring this model continues to evolve with integrity, evidence, and impact. Thank you for being part of this journey with us.



Filipe Gama e Silva

Chief Executive Officer & Executive Director
Mentoring Men Ltd.



OVERVIEW

This *Model of Care* outlines the **design** and **delivery** of a **strengths-based, preventative** mentoring program designed to support men's wellbeing through **peer connection** and purposeful conversation.

Mentoring Men's service provides **free, one-to-one life mentoring** for **men aged 18 and over**. Trained volunteer mentors offer regular, non-clinical support through conversations that foster trust, acceptance, insight, and personal growth. Mentoring relationships are built on mutual respect and lived experience, providing a safe space for men to explore challenges, set goals, and strengthen their wellbeing.

This **gender-specific, male-to-male** model of support aligns with guiding principles, as a vital part of the mental health response in key **government strategies**. The National Men's Health Strategy 2020–2030 identifies the need for **male-centred, preventative approaches** that reduce stigma and promote help-seeking behaviour to improve the quality of life for men and positively impacting their networks and communities.

Our program is also **accredited by Suicide Prevention Australia**, affirming its alignment with best practice in suicide prevention and peer-based mental health support.

Through meaningful peer connection, men are empowered to navigate life with greater confidence, purpose, and connection to those around them.



CORE BELIEFS

- Mentoring Men believes in achieving clearer purpose and growth for men, and that many barriers can be overcome through open, positive, and trusting communication. Real change happens through real conversations.
- Men do well when they are provided the opportunity to be real, share experiences, discuss the mucky parts of life, and rejoice in their strengths — throwing away the fragile masks we may wear to disguise our concerns and fears.
- When men do well, they are able to turn up for their families, friends, workplaces, and communities in healthy, connected ways.
- At Mentoring Men, we are committed to creating an inclusive, safe, and respectful environment for everyone. We have zero tolerance towards discriminatory or exclusive language, abusive behaviour of any kind, or other forms of harm.
- Every man has a story to tell — one that's worthy of another man's time, respect, and understanding.

MENTORING

Mentoring is a collaborative, one-to-one connection between two men — a mentee who is seeking change or direction, and a trained volunteer mentor who brings lived experience, empathy, and a steady, non-judgemental presence.

It's a space for honest, real conversation — about the challenges, experiences, transitions, and questions that men face. Topics might range from relationships, work, identity, or simply feeling stuck or disconnected. There's no script and no pressure — just space to talk and be heard.

Mentors are not there to provide the answers or clinical advice. Their role is to listen, offer insights and encourage self-reflection. Helping a mentee navigate challenges, meet their goals, gain confidence and develop new perspectives.

Mentees are not alone, building affirming knowledge that struggles and hardships of an individual have solidarity, commonality, and the ways forward are possible.

Catch-ups are regular — typically weekly, fortnightly, or monthly — and take place in a way that suits both people. That might be a coffee catch-up, a walk in the park, a phone call, or a video chat. The format is flexible, but the connection is consistent.

Many men find that mentoring helps them:

- Gain a clearer sense of direction
- Strengthen their confidence and self-awareness
- Improve their relationships and connection to community
- Feel less alone and more equipped to handle life's challenges

As the relationship builds, mentors gradually take a step back, encouraging the mentee to lead with greater independence and self-assurance.

Mentoring is not a clinical service or a therapy session — it's a structured, peer-based relationship that supports men to feel seen, heard, and empowered to take meaningful steps forward in their lives.



PHASES OF MENTORSHIP

1

COMMENCEMENT

Focuses on building rapport, establishing trust, clarifying expectations, and exploring the purpose of the mentoring relationship.

2

GROWTH

Trust deepens, conversations become more open, and mentees begin sharing challenges, aspirations, and personal reflections.

3

FAMILIARITY

A more active phase where mentors support goal progression, self-awareness, and practical strategies through meaningful dialogue.

4

RE-SHAPING

The mentee gains confidence and independence, while the mentor gradually steps back and the relationship begins to evolve.

5

SEPARATION

A time for reflection, celebrating progress, and formally closing the mentoring relationship while looking ahead to the future.

Key elements of the phase

'Breaking the ice' & finding areas of commonality

Conversations become more reflective, honest, and personal

Mentees begin taking steps towards personal goals

A shift from support-seeking to self-direction

Reflecting on the mentoring experience

Clarifying and discussing boundaries

Challenges and aspirations related to goals discussed

Solutions-focused and action-oriented dialogue

Mentee recognises their own growth and abilities

Celebrating milestones & key achievements

Talk about possible goals & intentions for mentoring

Mentors ask thoughtful, open-ended questions & listen without judgment

Mentees start to reflect on their own behaviours, emotions and patterns

The mentee begins applying strategies and reflections across different areas of life

Defining the formal end of the mentorship

Developing a connection through trust and respect

Establishing a rhythm & routine to ongoing sessions

Mentors serve as a sounding board and motivator

The ending and next steps are discussed openly and positively

Discussing future aspirations & supports beyond mentoring

Guiding the Mentoring Journey

Mentorships follow a natural progression from initial engagement to closure. The phases support rapport building, goal development, collaborative work, transition planning, and meaningful reflection as the relationship matures.

SUPPORT DURING MENTORSHIP

Mentoring Men provides structured support to both mentees and mentors throughout the relationship. This includes:

- Guidance in navigating complex situations
- Help with problem-solving and alternate approaches
- Ongoing supervision and escalation support when needed

This ensures that both mentors and mentees feel confident, connected, and appropriately equipped throughout their journey.

MONITORING & QUALITY ASSURANCE

To maintain program integrity and track outcomes:

- Wellbeing surveys and feedback mechanisms are embedded throughout the mentorship
- Session-based feedback and quarterly check-ins help monitor progress and identify support needs
- Flourishing Measures (e.g., Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Science) are used to evaluate impact over time

REFERRAL PATHWAYS

If a mentee's needs evolve beyond the scope of peer-based support, Mentoring Men staff facilitate appropriate external referrals, ensuring safety, continuity of care, and alignment with best practice boundaries.

PRINCIPLES

Our work is guided by a set of core principles that ensure support is meaningful, accessible, and grounded in care. These pillars shape how we connect, listen, and walk alongside others on their journey.

1

MENTEE-CENTRED

Ensuring the mentee's needs, preferences, and goals are prioritised.

2

LOCALISED & EQUITABLE ACCESS

Reducing barriers to participation and creating inclusiveness. Providing both face to face and virtual mentoring.

3

SAFE & QUALITY CARE

Ensuring mentors and mentees receive evidence-based, best practice support.

4

ROBUST OUTCOME MEASURES & EVALUATION

Mentoring Men tracks effectiveness and impact through participation evaluation.

5

FUTURE VISION

Strengthening men's mental health through early intervention, peer support, and community-driven wellbeing.

MENTORS

Volunteer mentors bring lived experience, compassion, and a willingness to walk alongside another man through life's challenges. They are everyday men from diverse backgrounds, offering a steady, non-judgemental presence and a commitment to helping others thrive.

Mentors offer support by drawing on their own life experiences rather than clinical expertise. Their role is grounded in listening, encouragement, and promoting self-reflection—empowering mentees to build confidence and take ownership of their personal journey. Some mentors may have professional or clinical experience, but all operate within the non-clinical, peer-based Mentoring Men support model.

SCREENING AND SAFEGUARDING

A structured intake and screening process ensures suitability and safety, including background checks and alignment with program values. Clear boundaries and safeguarding practices underpin every mentoring relationship.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

All mentors complete Mentoring Men's accredited **Mentor Foundation Training** prior to commencement, ensuring consistency in program delivery and participant experience. Additional training opportunities are offered, including:

- Suicide Prevention Training (accredited)
- Mental Health First Aid (accredited)
- Domestic and Family Violence Prevention (accredited)

ONGOING SUPPORT

Mentors are supported throughout their journey with check-ins, access to program staff, and a range of guidance resources. Challenges are not faced alone—support is readily available to ensure mentors feel confident and well-equipped in their role.

PEER SUPPORT NETWORKS

Dedicated **Mentor Peer Support Groups**—both in-person and online—offer spaces for reflection, shared learning, and mutual support. These groups help maintain mentor wellbeing and promote a sense of connection and community with other mentors across the program.

A strong support structure ensures mentors are not only effective in their role but also grow through the experience themselves—contributing to a cycle of mutual benefit and personal development.



MENTEES

The mentoring program is designed to support men who are seeking clarity, connection, purpose, and/or personal growth. Mentees may be navigating a period of transition, facing challenges in relationships, work, identity, or simply seeking a space to reflect and grow. Some may be feeling disconnected or uncertain, while others are actively pursuing change and self-development.

There is no 'typical' mentee — each brings their own story, experiences, and aspirations. What they share is a willingness to engage in meaningful conversation and explore their path forward in a safe, non-judgemental space, gaining new perspectives.

WHO CAN BE A MENTEE

- Men aged 18 years and over
- Experiencing low to moderate levels of wellbeing, or seeking growth and connection
- Willing to engage in open conversation and explore personal goals
- Able to commit to regular mentoring catch-ups
- Open to giving and receiving feedback as part of a supportive mentoring relationship

WHAT MENTEES CAN EXPECT

- A judgement-free space to talk about life's challenges and aspirations
- Consistent one-to-one support from a trained volunteer mentor
- A relationship built on trust, empathy, and lived experience
- Tailored guidance based on personal goals and stage of readiness
- An informal mentoring journey that supports self-reflection, confidence, and positive change at their pace

SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE JOURNEY

Mentees are not expected to navigate challenges alone. They are supported through:

- A structured intake process to understand their needs and readiness
- Matching with a mentor aligned to their preferences and goals
- Wellbeing check-ins, surveys, and feedback opportunities
- Referral support if more specialised care is required

Mentees are at the heart of the Mentoring Men program. The mentoring relationship is designed to help them feel seen, heard, and empowered — building confidence, resilience, and stronger connections in their own lives.



INTAKE & MATCHING

Mentoring Men applies an in-depth intake and matching process designed to ensure the right support, at the right time, for both mentors and mentees. This process is integral to program integrity, trauma-informed practice, and alignment with participant goals.

COMPREHENSIVE INTAKE ASSESSMENT

All mentors and mentees undergo a thorough intake process to assess:

- Readiness to participate
- Individual needs
- Current suitability for the mentoring program

This enables us to identify strengths, challenges, and any considerations that may influence a successful mentoring relationship.

COMMITMENT TO ENGAGEMENT

Participants are required to demonstrate a willingness and capacity to:

- Commit to the mentoring relationship
- Engage consistently over time
- Contribute feedback to support continuous program improvement

MATCHING METHODOLOGY

Matching is based on alignment between a mentee's goals and a mentor's lived experience and communication style. Additional factors may include:

- Age range
- Geographic location
- Hobbies and interests
- Specific preferences or requirements identified through intake

This ensures each mentoring relationship is relevant, personalised, and positioned for impact.

Trauma-Informed Lens

The intake and matching process is guided by trauma-informed principles, ensuring mentees are placed with mentors who can provide appropriate, safe, and empowering support.

PROGRAM SAFEGUARDS

To maintain program integrity and safety:

- Clearly defined inclusion and exclusion criteria are applied
- External referral pathways are activated where needs fall outside the Mentoring Men scope of practice



SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Our mentoring program sits alongside, not in place of, clinical or formal mental health services. We are part of the broader mental health ecosystem, with a unique focus on prevention and post-crisis support.

The below illustrates a typical mental health continuum:

Healthy → Unsettled → Struggling (In Crisis) → Healing → Healthy

Mentoring Men provides support either side of a crisis — during the "Unsettled" and "Healing" stages (as circled in blue).



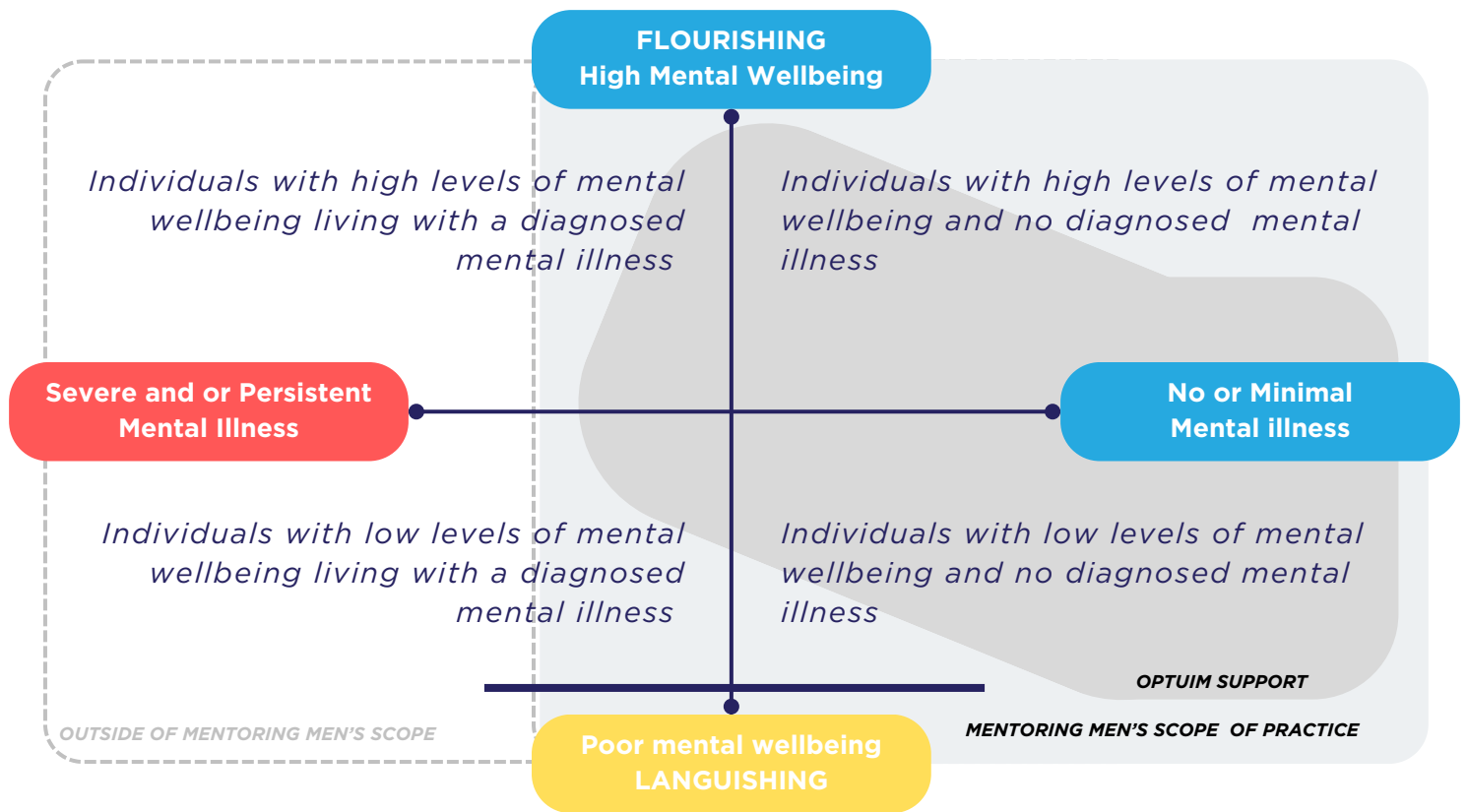
(Reference: Beyond Blue)

This means we support men who may be:

- Beginning to feel off-track or lost for direction,
- Looking to prevent further decline in wellbeing, or
- Rebuilding and progressing positively after a challenging time.

Addressing social and emotional wellbeing early in a man's journey can help prevent deterioration and support long-term positive growth. As well, having a mentor when moving out of a challenging time can foster new perspectives and solidify growth.

DUAL AXIS MENTAL HEALTH MODEL



(Queensland Mental Health Commission, 2015)

Understanding mental health requires more than a single spectrum from illness to wellness. A dual axis model offers a more complete perspective, recognising that mental illness and mental wellbeing are not mutually exclusive. (Keys, 2002)

This model highlights that an individual can experience positive wellbeing while managing a mental illness, or conversely, feel disconnected, unmotivated, or unwell despite no clinical diagnosis. It reflects a more nuanced understanding of where and how peer mentoring can make a difference.

DUAL AXIS MENTAL HEALTH MODEL Continued

The program's focus lies in supporting men across the wellbeing axis, particularly those who are:

- Struggling or languishing
- Managing but not thriving
- Seeking progress on their path toward flourishing

This approach supports the idea that wellbeing is not the absence of illness, but the presence of connection, purpose, and emotional balance.

Informed by Keyes' Mental Health Continuum, mentoring is positioned to support men who may be navigating low to moderate levels of wellbeing, where early, preventative and recovery-based support can have the most significant impact.

Keyes (2003) describes Languishing as 'not functioning well psychologically or socially, but not depressed'. People languishing may not consider themselves unhealthy mentally but not put themselves into the mentally healthy category either.

By offering timely, strengths-based support, mentors help men move toward flourishing — even in the presence of ongoing challenges.

Keyes, C. L. M. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life Journal of Health and Social Research, 43,207–222.

HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS

Outcomes and impact are monitored through a combination of feedback mechanisms and wellbeing assessments. This ensures mentoring relationships are not only supportive in practice but also measurable in their effectiveness.

FEEDBACK AND MONITORING TOOLS

To maintain program quality and inform continuous improvement, mentors and mentees participate in:

- Session-based feedback loops
- Quarterly check-ins to assess mentoring progress and engagement
- Wellbeing surveys at key stages of the mentoring journey

These tools allow for a 'health check' of each mentorship and ensure that the experience is meaningful and effective for both participants.

FLOURISHING MEASURE

Progress is also assessed using the Flourishing Measure developed by Harvard's Institute for Quantitative Social Science (VanderWeele, 2017). This evidence-based tool provides insight into key dimensions of wellbeing, including:

- Meaning and purpose
- Relationships and connection
- Emotional health
- Personal growth and resilience

The use of this framework supports a broader understanding of how mentoring contributes to positive change — not only in mental wellbeing, but in how participants engage with life more meaningfully.



FUTURE FOCUS

Mentoring Men continues to evolve, with the ambition to expand reach, deepen impact, and strengthen community-led wellbeing outcomes. Mentoring Men's program is positioned for growth, innovation, and broader contribution to national mental health priorities for men.

KEY STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:

Increased Accessibility

Expand outreach to underserved populations, ensuring equitable access to mentoring across communities, including rural, remote, and culturally diverse groups.

Partnership Development

Strengthen collaboration with community organisations, health services, and government initiatives to increase program visibility and create integrated pathways of support.

Technology and Innovation

Invest in digital infrastructure to improve participant experience, enhance matching systems, streamline reporting, and build scalable support networks.

Evidence-Based Practice

Continue embedding research-backed approaches into training, program delivery, and evaluation. Utilising data to demonstrate program impact and outcomes.

Suicide Prevention Alignment

Further alignment of service delivery with the Federal Government's Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025-2035, recognising the role of peer-based mentoring in early intervention and social connection.

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention

Continue to facilitate and embed Mentoring Men's Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Training into the program, creating opportunity to have a positive impact on prevention.

As demand grows for non-clinical, community-led wellbeing solutions, the Mentoring Men program is uniquely placed to contribute to meaningful outcomes in supporting men to thrive, families to stay connected, and communities to grow stronger.

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