

## Organisation Information Sheet

Share the Spark Inc. is an ACNC approved charity focused on helping youth find the SPARK that leads towards a fulfilling life. We recognise that parents and young people today are under increasing amounts of pressure and stress from many different sources.

A young person may be -

- struggling in school,
- upset or depressed,
- getting in fights,
- not motivated,
- not happy or engaged,
- not connecting with peers,
- having a hard time communicating.

Share the Spark matches young people with successful professionals who can inspire them and help them find their Spark for life.

Share the Spark blends the best of mentor and apprenticeship approaches. The flexible micro-mentoring program enables a young person to spend time with inspiring professionals, learn new skills and experiment to find what interests them - improving and strengthening their emotional wellbeing along the way.

Sparks programs are free of charge and available to any young person between the ages of 8 – 23 who feels like they will benefit from spending time with a trained and WWC screened mentor.

### How does Spark work?

**Step 1:** *A young person is connected with Share the Spark and expresses interest in participating in our program.*

Any young person between the age of 8 - 23 who feels they will benefit from our programs may apply. The easiest way to make contact is via our website at [www.sharethespark.org.au](http://www.sharethespark.org.au). Our trained Spark staff will speak with the young person and their parents, teachers or program coordinator where applicable to find out what they are looking for and what they may need. Parental consent to participate in the program is obtained for young people under 18.

**Step 2:** *The young person selects their mentor.*

Spark empowers young people right from the start by allowing *them* to choose the mentor they would like to start with. We have mentors from many walks of life and many different professions. All have been thoroughly trained and screened and have approved Working with Children checks. If we do not have someone in the profession they are looking for in our 'mentor library', we will go out and source them.

**Step 3:** *The young person spends time with the mentor, usually at their place of work.*

Mentoring usually takes place fortnightly at the mentor's place of work or a similar public space. The young person is able to observe in real life what the profession entails and can ask questions and make observations about what they are experiencing. If they want to try out a different profession they are encouraged to experiment. Young people can change their minds and do not have to stick with only one mentor throughout the duration of the program.

**To enrol in our FREE micro-mentoring program or for more information, visit our website [www.sharethespark.org.au](http://www.sharethespark.org.au) or email [succeed@sharethespark.org.au](mailto:succeed@sharethespark.org.au)**



Empowering youth to make life affirming choices.



[www.sharethespark.org.au](http://www.sharethespark.org.au)

## FAQ's

### Q: What process does the mentor follow?

Every mentor follows a process based on the Collaborative Recovery Model developed by the Illawarra Institute for Mental Health. This conversation based approach develops over time and can be used successively by different mentors. Whether young people stay with one mentor or meet with many different ones, they still progress through the program and get the benefits.

### Q: What benefit does the young person receive?

The Collaborative Recovery Model is an evidence based model that focuses on values clarification, strengths identification, goal setting and action planning. This is also an occupation based micro-mentoring program so when the youth spends time with their mentor they observe and experience their job and make useful connections for their future.

### Q: What is the time commitment?

Mentors offer a flexible time commitment and they work around the schedule of the young person. Fortnightly meetings usually last 2 hours at their place of business. Meeting times are flexible and based on the agreement made between the mentor and the young person.

### Q: What if they don't get on with their mentor?

The mentor choice is up to the young person and they are encouraged to try different mentors. They don't have to stick with the first one they choose, and by choosing several they have exposure to different professions and perspectives.

### Q: What results can I expect?

Most young people emerge from the program with a clearer sense of purpose, more resilience, increased ability to handle strong emotions and better self-esteem. Plus, knowledge and experience of different work environments and connections to successful professionals!

### Q: How much does it cost?

The micro-mentoring programs are completely free of charge for everyone.

### Q: How long does it last?

It depends on the young person. They can continue to go as long as they feel they are getting benefit from it and can stop at any time. The maximum program length is two years, but the mentor relationship can turn into an official apprenticeship or even paid employment. If that happens they exit the Spark program.

### Q: Who can participate?

Any young person between the age of 8 to 23 who feels they will benefit from our programs can participate. Those under 18 need parental consent.

### Q: What safety mechanisms do you have in place?

We recognise that a young person's safety and wellbeing is your number one concern. It is ours too, so we do everything possible to ensure their safety. All our mentors have approved Working with Children Checks. References are checked. They complete our in-depth training programs. Our youth adviser meets them before they meet with any youth. And most of the time, the programs take place in a working environment or another public place.

### Q: What is the connection with suicide prevention?

Share the Spark prevents suicide by ensuring young people STAY healthy. Like with diabetes, the best way to prevent a disease is to maintain your health BEFORE you get sick. Spark's programs enable young people to make life affirming choices and encourage a future filled with purpose and passion. All our mentors are trained in suicide prevention, but we do not provide counselling or therapy services. However, we do work closely with other service providers who can provide these services and we refer young people to them when they are needed.

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