

## Parent 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.

Is your child -

- suffering at school,
- depressed,
- getting in fights,
- not motivated,
- not happy,
- not connecting with people,
- having a hard time talking to you?

We can match your child with successful professionals who can inspire them and help bring back their Spark.

Share the Spark blends the best of mentor and apprentice approaches, and leaves the flexibility and time commitment up to you and your young person. This micro-mentoring approach enables your young person to spend time with an inspiring professional, learn new skills, experiment to find what interests them, improving and strengthening their emotional wellbeing along the way. Our mentors show them (not tell them) that there are options. By signing them up for our programs you can help them find new inspiration and purpose in life.

### How does Spark work?

**Example 1:** *My child is highly anxious and has difficulty managing his anger. How would your mentors be able to help him?*

Answer: Depending on his age, we would have a meeting with your child and you to find out what his interests are, or what he wants to be when he grows up. During the meeting, we would do a screening and show some videos of our passionate professional volunteers to see which one's appeal to him. Because he is in control of the process and can make his own decisions, he feels empowered and has less reason to be anxious or angry. Plus all our mentors are trained in youth communication and anger management.

**Example 2:** *My child won't speak to anyone.*

Answer: In our program, young people don't have to speak. All they need to do is show up to observe and experience a passionate professional live their best life. Usually what happens is that when they are not pressured to talk, a different pressure dynamic happens for them. They get interested and they start to ask the questions. That is why we screen our mentors carefully. We have people that genuinely love their job and seeing someone doing something they love helps the young person believe that it is possible to get there themselves.

**Example 3:** *I finished school 2 years ago and still have no direction.*

Answer: Our passionate professionals offer a smorgasbord of options for young people entering the workforce. By exploring many different mentor opportunities, they get exposure to many professions. They can see what it is really like day to day, in any area they are interested in, and they can choose as many different areas as they like. If we don't have the profession that they want, then we will try and find it. Young people gain connections and the opportunity to be inspired. Progress happens by spending time together, opening up and talking about the things they experiment with. Mentors follow a program to help them develop a plan for the future.



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

**To enrol in our micro-mentoring program, visit our website or email [succeed@sharethespark.org.au](mailto:succeed@sharethespark.org.au).**

## FAQ's

### Q: What will the mentor do?

Each 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 they stay with one mentor or meet with many different ones they still progress through the program and get the benefits.

### Q: What happens when the young person meets their mentor?

This is an occupation based micro-mentoring program so when the youth spends time with their mentor they observe and experience their job. When your child has access to (and hears observations from) an adult that is not a family member, it can make a big difference.

### Q: What is the time commitment?

Mentors offer a flexible time commitment and they work around the schedule of you and your child. Meetings usually last between 1 – 2 hours at their place of business. Program duration can be anywhere from just one meeting to fortnightly meetings for up to 2 years. 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. The maximum program length is two years, but at any time the mentor relationship can turn into an official apprenticeship or even paid employment. If that happens they exit the Spark program.

### Q: What age do kids need to be?

We take young people from age 8 to 24. Those 16 and under need parental consent to participate.

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

We recognise that your child'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 with them before they meet with any youth. And most of the time, the programs take place in the professionals working environment or another public place.

### Q: How will they get there?

Depends. Sometime the young person can make their own way to meet the mentor, sometimes parents drive them there, and sometimes an arrangement is made with the mentor to provide transport. We are based on the Northern Beaches and so are most of our mentors.

**To enrol your young person in our micro-mentoring program or for more information, please email us at [succeed@sharethepark.org.au](mailto:succeed@sharethepark.org.au).**