



# ACCESS PROGRAM

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR MENTORS

### Who are Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC)?

Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC) is a Sydney based non-government, not-for-profit charitable organisation that delivers a range of crisis and early intervention accommodation and support services to women, children and families who are impacted by the effects of domestic and family violence or homelessness. You can read more about WAGEC at [www.wagec.org.au](http://www.wagec.org.au).

### What is the ACCESS program?

The ACCESS program aims to address gender inequality and the disadvantages faced by women impacted by homelessness, domestic violence and social disadvantage. The program seeks to:

- increase women's economic opportunities
- improve women's health and wellbeing
- build on women's strengths to improve their confidence, resilience and capabilities.

### Can I apply to be a mentor?

You can apply to be a volunteer mentor if you:

- identify as a woman
- are over 18 years of age
- have time to dedicate to your mentee (minimum of about four hours per month for six months)
- are able to attend 12 hours of mentor induction and training (3 hours in person, 9 hours online)
- are able to commit to attending mentor group supervision (online) every 6 weeks and providing mentoring reports to WAGEC every 6 weeks
- are willing to undergo our volunteer onboarding process for your safety, our safety and the safety of our clients.

### Is it a virtual or in-person mentoring relationship?

You can meet with your mentee in-person or virtually, or a mix of both. If you meet in person, you and your mentee must comply with relevant government COVID-19 spatial distancing and safety requirements and WAGEC safety protocols. The majority of mentors and mentees choose to meet mostly virtually, but some meet entirely in person – you and your mentee can decide what works best for you both.

Mentoring relationships might take place:

- on the phone - via video or audio calls
- via virtual meeting – using Zoom, Skype, or WhatsApp video calls
- at a café, library, community facility, or shopping centre

- by going for a walk together around the neighbourhood or the park
- by attending a course, workshop, or information session together
- via email or text message.

## Is mentoring for you?

You would make a great ACCESS mentor if:

- you are curious about other people
- you are passionate about gender equality and women's empowerment
- you share our values
- you have spare time and want to use it to do something meaningful
- you have strong personal boundaries
- you like to connect with people from all walks of life and all backgrounds
- you are able to mentor from a place of non-judgement and let the mentee set the pace of your mentoring relationship.

## What qualities do you need to be an ACCESS mentor?

We asked our brilliant mentors what qualities you need to be an ACCESS mentor. They said:

- adaptability and flexibility
- epic listening skills
- openness to being taught and guided by your mentee
- non-judgmental
- respectful and patient
- compassionate and empathetic
- good boundaries
- dedication and commitment
- enthusiasm and positivity
- encouraging and supportive
- readiness to learn new things and to be wrong.

## What's in it for you?

Being a mentor is a unique experience and will provide you with the opportunity to:

- gain professional, specialist training and experience to add to your work and volunteer history
- improve your coaching, mentoring and leadership skills
- contribute to creating a positive change in a woman's life by supporting her to achieve her goals
- gain meaningful exposure to potential career opportunities for supporting women.

You will be supported along the way. We will provide you with:

- access to specialised training and support, including financial capacity building, trauma-informed and strengths-based practice, understanding and addressing domestic violence, gender equality, and mentoring fundamentals
- a mutually beneficial relationship with your mentee
- a certificate of completion
- knowledge and skills you can use in your professional, volunteer, and personal life
- group supervision sessions (virtual) every 6 weeks and ongoing one-on-one support
- opportunities to connect with other women in the community.

## What kind of goals and activities will you support your mentee with?

As a mentor, your role is to support your mentee to access the next step in her journey towards economic safety. What that step looks like varies for each individual mentee. Some of the activities mentors typically support their mentees with include:

- accessing English classes online to improve English skills
- building IT confidence and skills
- identifying transferable skills and potential job options
- identifying career pathways, changing careers, or re-entering employment
- building confidence and self-esteem, including public speaking skills
- support and encouragement for managing mental and/or physical health concerns, including exercise, managing chronic illness/injury, healthy eating and lifestyles, and different ways of thinking
- taking driving lessons to obtain a driver licence
- assistance with assignments and homework
- assistance and feedback on cover letters, job applications, and resumes
- encouraging the mentee's growth mindset and reminding her of existing strengths and past successes
- accessing practical support such as clothing for job interviews and laptops for study.



‘To be an effective mentor you need flexibility, openness, to be mentee focussed and go at her pace. Don't be too sure that you know what is best for your mentee - it's her life!’  
- ACCESS mentor

## As a mentor you will:

- be a good listener
- be consistent and reliable
- celebrate your mentee's achievements
- provide guidance, encouragement, support and companionship
- use a strengths-based and capacity building approach to support your mentee to develop new skills and strengthen existing skills and capabilities
- help your mentee access information and resources to support her goals
- help your mentee complete tasks such as enrolling for online learning opportunities or applying for a job
- listen to and debrief with your mentee after a difficult experience or setback
- be willing to participate in training and support provided by WAGEC and other partners
- provide regular reports and feedback to WAGEC about your relationship with your mentee, and the ACCESS mentoring program
- compliment and support the mentee's case management relationship by engaging with your mentee's case manager and maintaining open communication between the parties.

## As a mentor, you will not:

- loan or give money to your mentee
- give financial advice to your mentee
- duplicate or undermine support being provided by your mentee's case manager
- tell your mentee what they should do
- speak or act on behalf of the mentee
- provide counselling to your mentee
- make yourself available or on call at all hours<sup>1</sup>.

## Who are our mentees?

Your mentee will have a case manager who provides professional, holistic support related to housing, visas, health, parenting, and other forms of practical and emotional support. Our mentees:

- are women over the age of 18, with varied backgrounds and journeys
- experience multiple barriers to achieving economic safety
- may have experienced domestic and family violence
- may be experiencing physical or mental health barriers impacting their ability to achieve financial or employment goals
- are diverse in age, cultural background and life experience
- have applied to be matched with a mentor and participate in the program.

## What are the key dates?

Stages	Timelines	Details
Submit mentor application (5-10 minutes)	Friday 18 December 2020 – Sunday 3 January 2021	Submit via Mentorloop website
Receive invite to attend mentor induction session	By Thursday 7 January 2021	Via phone or email
Attend an induction session (3 hours)	Session 1: Saturday 9 January 2021 10am – 1pm Session 2: Saturday 9 January 2021 2pm – 5pm, or Session 3: Monday 11 January 2021 6pm – 9pm	In-person in Redfern and/or Newtown
Attend mentor training (3 weeks x 3 hours per week)	Week 1: Monday 18 January 2021 – Sunday 24 January 2021 Week 2: Monday 25 January 2021 – Sunday 31 January 2021 Week 3: Monday 1 February 2021 – Sunday 7 February 2021	Online via Zoom – You must attend the session in real time.
WAGEC matches mentors and mentees, introduction meetings between case managers, mentees and mentors	Monday 8 February 2021 to Sunday 21 February 2021	
Mentoring relationships commence	Monday 8 February 2021 to Sunday 21 February 2021	

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Tools for Change: Mentor Resource Handbook, Women's Health Goulburn North East (2013), page 5

## How do I apply?

Please submit your application by signing up to Mentorloop. You can find the link on the WAGEC website at [www.wagec.org.au/support-for-women/](http://www.wagec.org.au/support-for-women/)

Apply by 11:59pm on Sunday 3 January 2021.

Your application to become a mentor is not a guarantee that you will be appointed as a mentor or that you will be allocated a mentee. The safety and wellbeing of our mentees is paramount, which means we will carefully match each mentor and mentee to ensure a productive, safe, and positive relationship for both parties. There are several stages in the mentor application and induction process, and by applying you acknowledge our discretion to discontinue your application at any stage of the process.

You must be able to attend one of the induction sessions in person in order to complete the rest of the mentor training, and to be considered for selection as a mentor.

We expect to receive a higher volume of mentor applications than we are able to match to available mentees, and we ask prospective mentors to please be flexible and understanding of this during the application process.

### Contact us

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### Follow us

[facebook.com/WAGECREDFERN](https://facebook.com/WAGECREDFERN)  
[instagram.com/womens.girls.emergency.centre](https://instagram.com/womens.girls.emergency.centre)

### Acknowledgements and references

Hunter Women's Centre (2017), Moving Forward project

Women's Health Goulburn North East (2013), Tools for Change – Mentor training facilitator guide

Women's Justice Network – Adult Mentoring Program

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