

#KeepMentoring

How to keep

*Mentoring
Programs*

alive in times of
social distancing

INTRODUCTION

From Coordinadora de Mentoría Social, a Spanish platform that promotes quality mentoring in the field of social action and, therefore, the development of trust bonds between people, we have been thinking about the impact that COVID-19 can have on the programs and we have put together a list of suggestions to help mentoring programs adjust to the social distancing context.

This document is a support tool, rather than a guide to be strictly followed, which we make available not only to social mentoring programs but also to any project that assists people in vulnerable situations. Thus, the indications that we give here are to be adapted to the different realities, objectives and profiles of the targeted people.

In addition to the obligations and recommendations that the different governments are encouraging, we believe that mentoring programs can contribute to improving the situation by developing a highly valuable task of emotional support and assistance, especially for the most vulnerable people.

Since our routines have changed and our movements' activity has been restricted, it is easy for some people to feel overwhelmed and to tend to isolate themselves, thus intensifying their vulnerability. That is why now, more than ever, we need support networks, safety spaces and comforting relationships.

In this regard, mentoring programs take on a more than relevant meaning in the present time: only if we feel connected will we be able to face this situation with the willpower, patience and state of mind that it requires.

Consequently, circumstances lead us to incorporate a claim in this very introduction: Internet access as a first-order right for all people. In order to maintain mentoring relationships during social distancing, access to communications becomes a crucial element that will determine the quality and impact of our support. Hence our appeal to public administrations, as well as to large companies in the telecommunications sector, to do everything in their power to guarantee this access, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

From the Coordinadora, we want to help maintain the support network and ensure that the most vulnerable people can continue to count on the spaces of trust provided by the relationships with their mentors.

Thus, we are at your disposal for whatever need and, above all, we encourage you to adapt your projects to ensure that ties are maintained, even if remotely.

**You can contact us through email:
coordinadora@mentoriasocial.org**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MENTORING PROGRAMS

STOP AND THINK

Before we start, let's stop and think. There's no point doing things just for the sake of it. We need to spend some time understanding the situation and considering how we can contribute the most to the present context.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Train yourselves through articles and books to give the best emotional support to both mentors and mentees.

MAKE A MAPPING OF THE CONNECTIVITY SITUATION OF THE MENTEES TO BETTER ASSIST THEM

If they do not have a Wi-Fi connection or data (or little hired data) perhaps it is time to consider giving them access if you have the financial resources to do so:

- Many companies are selling extra bonuses to expand the data at a low cost to people who already have a service contracted with them, although they do not always advertise it. We recommend calling the companies, as this is surely the best option.
- In the case of mentoring projects concerning minors, if the mentee does not have a mobile/computer, we recommend talking to the family and agreeing on a day and time a week to use their devices.

PROVIDE RESOURCES ON VIDEO CALL TOOLS

It can be a good thing to facilitate the different channels that can be used by both mentors and mentees, especially in cases of people who are less used to technologies.

MAKE OURSELVES AVAILABLE

Most of the mentors have surely already taken the initiative to contact their partners through alternative means but, despite this, they will like to know that the programs are there to support them and that you do everything possible to provide them with the necessary resources to guarantee that communication.

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION IN NEIGHBOURHOOD SUPPORT NETWORKS

Encourage participation in the neighbourhood support networks that are being generated in your cities. Mentors can participate in these spaces but they can also encourage and guide mentees to use them if needed.

GUARANTEE ROUTINES TO THE MENTEES

Encourage mentors to show themselves as a resource to ensure mentees' routines: they can talk about schedules, things to do during the day, reading time, homework time, housework time...

COVID-19 PROTOCOL

Establish a protocol on how to act in case of diagnosed people, at-risk people or if someone has been in contact with people who have COVID-19.

PROVIDE MENTORS WITH RESOURCES FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, GAMES AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES THEY CAN SHARE WITH MENTEES

It is important that, beyond talking about the COVID-19 situation, mentors and mentees share time together focusing on different things. Talking too much about the present circumstances can cause even more distress, so it is good to be able to broach other topics. For this, online mentoring experts emphasise that it is advisable to have activities to do about which to talk later. Some of these resources can be:

- Create challenges on Instagram in which mentors and mentees can participate and also participate in some that are already underway.
- Propose the writing or recording of a kind of "journal in isolation" to exchange between the mentor and the mentee.
- Publicize streaming/online activities as a resource for mentees.
- Promote the display of interesting movies/videos/series that the mentor and mentee can comment on.
- Make a list of online games.
- Joint creations: paper.li, pixton, collaborative stories with voice notes...
- Exchange recipes and share photos of the meals.
- Learn/improve a language or competence.

ADAPT THE MONITORING WE DO TO MENTORS AND MENTEES

- Make follow-up video calls.
- Use the email so that the mentors can inform us about how the mentoring relationship is going.
- Intensify contact via WhatsApp with mentors.
- Create an online gathering space between mentors.
- Promote contact between mentors, connecting them so that they can help each other and that the experience of one can help another.

CONTACT THE SPONSORS

Inform your sponsors about how the project is currently being carried out. Let them know the importance of supporting vulnerable groups these days, and how monitoring can allow detection of the most exposed cases. Do such before they ask, in case they are already making decisions about which projects they will prioritize.

15 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MENTORS

Important: Be aware that mentors may have other concerns than remotely meeting their mentee due to their vulnerable situation. Give space and respect the rhythm of the mentee to process what is happening. As always, it is important to empathize with the other before anything else.

1. Acknowledge and understand the concern of mentees and do not deny the situation.
2. Acknowledge your own concern and talk about it with the mentees but without alarming them.
3. Be active in promoting compliance with the recommendations given by the governments (transmit the idea of minimizing outings, washing hands...).
4. Show yourself available to mentees, facilitating different means of contact (telephone, video calls, WhatsApp).
5. Verbalize that "we are there" for the mentees. Tell them directly that you care about them and their well-being.
6. Reject blaming/racist speeches regarding the expansion of COVID-19.
7. Promote truthful information sources and avoid the spread of rumours.
8. Propose virtual activities to be done with the mentee.
9. Report any risk situation to your reference technician.
10. Provide mentees with official resources and channels on what to do if you feel unwell or meet someone who has symptoms.
11. Make a plan with the mentee about how you will communicate during these months (establish one day a week but be open to being in contact at other times as well).
12. Set adapted goals for the next 2 months: "What can we take advantage of to do these two months while we don't see each other in person?" Plan joint activities.
13. Apprise the importance of taking care of yourself in these times, of being patient, setting yourself acceptable challenges and not spending all day watching the news.
14. Jointly exercise online with the mentees.
15. Contact the program technicians for any questions and follow their instructions.

#KeepMentoring

This document has been drafted by the different organizations that are part of the Coordinadora de Mentoría Social to support all those mentoring and assistance projects that encounter difficulties in maintaining active relations during the exceptional situation created by the expansion of COVID-19.

We encourage organizations worldwide to make a list of resources for projects and mentors that fit their needs and their context. From our side, we have created a list (in Spanish) of specific resources, and you can find it on our website.

Find out more here: <https://bit.ly/2QKu4kr>

**WE PUT OURSELVES AT THE DISPOSAL OF ALL THOSE
ORGANIZATIONS AND PEOPLE WHO NEED OUR SUPPORT:
coordinadora@mentoriasocial.org**



Coordinadora
Mentoría
Social

Organizer of the [2020 European
Mentoring Summit](#) (7-9th of October).