



Mentors In Violence Prevention Programme

Implementation guide for secondary schools and the wider learning community.

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide partners in schools and learning communities with a guide on how the Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme (MVP) can be embedded within a learning setting. It is divided into four distinct Phases with suggested plans and timescales for implementing the programme.

MVP is a leadership programme that aims to create a positive learning environment and work towards long term attitudinal change, therefore evaluation and continuous improvement are at the heart of implementation.

A partnership approach underpins the successful delivery of the MVP programme. This approach enhances young people's knowledge and skills and nurtures a positive profile of the school in the community. We recommend joint planning, delivery and evaluation with all the partners and stakeholders involved.

The Mentors in Violence Prevention programme provides an opportunity for Education, Community Learning & Development, Police, Health and a range of voluntary agencies to work together to improve relationships, learning and behaviour across the whole community and realise and recognise children's rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It focuses on developing a positive and inclusive culture to proactively prevent and deal with all types of bullying and abuse.

We hope you find this guide a useful tool in developing the Mentor's in Violence Prevention programme in your learning setting and contributing to making your learning community a safe place within which our Children & Young People can learn and develop.

The MVP Programme: Building positive relationships, supporting health and wellbeing

The MVP model is an approach to preventing gender violence and bullying that was first developed in 1993 in the United States by Dr Jackson Katz. It was designed to train individuals to speak out against rape, domestic abuse, sexual harassment, bullying and other forms of violent behaviour. MVP focuses on an innovative 'Bystander' approach that empowers and equips individuals to take on a leadership role in preventing abuse and violence. The model has been evaluated successfully within both the US and Scottish High School system and makes use of high school mentors (16 & 17 year old pupils) to deliver training to younger peers.

One of the core philosophies of MVP is the re-framing of the problem of gender violence. For decades, violence against women has been seen, as a women's issue, thus allowing men to remain invisible in the face of violence that is predominantly committed by men against women. The MVP model recognises that not all men are abusive and seeks to engage them in violence prevention as bystanders.

The aims of the MVP programme are:

- 1. To raise awareness of issues that are impacting on young people in the U.K.**
- 2. To challenge thinking by countering mainstream messages about gender, sex and violence.**
- 3. To open a dialogue by creating a safe environment for boys and girls to share their opinions and experiences.**
- 4. To inspire leadership by empowering participants with concrete options to effect change in their communities.**

Alongside the main aims of the MVP programme, evidence is available that through the programme young people gain in confidence and self-esteem.

Phase 1: Preparing to Implement MVP within the learning community

Good preparation is key to the successful implementation of the MVP programme within your setting. The following steps will ensure a solid foundation that will maximise the best possible chance of success.

1. Generate support and raise awareness

This initial awareness raising will allow staff to gain a knowledge and understanding of the MVP programme. It will also begin to start the process of identifying relevant staff who will go on to form the school MVP team.

Tip - Use awareness raising to identify the staff that are enthusiastic within your school. These will be the staff that are motivated to drive and develop the MVP programme.

- Circulate the brief background (found in Supporting Documents) about the MVP programme by email and set a date for an awareness raising event.
- Make available 30-45 minutes for this session.

Establish links with the wider community and identify your MVP partnership team.

Use the wider learning community to support your staff as they implement the MVP Programme. This learning community can include parents / carers, voluntary sector, youth groups who can support schools in the delivery of the MVP Programme and should be part of the MVP partner team.

Tip - Delivering the MVP programme in partnership with youth and community agencies will enhance the mentors experience and contribute to successful outcomes.

- Identify what organisations deliver services and support in your school. These could include police, parents/carers, voluntary and local authority organisations. Professionals from these organisations will form the community part of the MVP partnership team.

- Invite these organisations to the awareness raising event and seek their involvement in the MVP programme as partners. Their role will be similar to school staff involvement and will focus on mentor's support and training. These organisations may also develop MVP programmes within their own settings. A supporting document giving further background to the MVP Programme is available and can be circulated to all partners.
- Consideration needs to be given to conducting relevant disclosure checks on all those involved in supporting the MVP programme.

2. Planning for implementation

The MVP programme recognises that the school calendar is often planned well in advance. Planning a timetable for the next three phases of implementation during the preparation phase will keep you on track. In your first year don't be too ambitious. Be realistic and use the first year to embed the programme.

Once you have completed the two-day MVP training you will have a much clearer idea of how you want to implement the programme. An example of an MVP timeline is found in Supporting Documents. On initial MVP training time is allocated to the development of an initial implementation timeline.

Consideration needs to be given to engaging with the young people, the timetabling of MVP lessons, any financial costs and availability of the wider MVP team.

Tip - Identifying a lead person and advanced planning will ensure successful embedding of MVP within your school.

- Identify a lead person to develop your time line and to be responsible for the development of the MVP Programme. It's important this lead is fully supported by members of the school leadership team.

- Consider other demands on the school calendar. For example, look at exam periods, school trips and sports activities, work experience even Monday holidays. How will these impact on your plans?
- Your timeline will need to include Mentor Recruitment sessions, Mentor Training Sessions, Staff planning meetings and delivery sessions to younger pupils.
- Use your time line to plan where MVP peer led sessions will take place.
- Include community team partners in planning your timeline.
- Attempt to identify one hour each week for mentors to come together. Be reassured that as you develop the programme the mentors will often arrange their own training.

3. Select staff to be trained

Careful selection of trainers is crucial to the success of MVP. The initial awareness session for school staff will have generated interest however it is vital that as well as staff who can relate to pupils' lives and experiences there is involvement from a person in a leadership role who can drive the programme in the school.

Tip - Recruit staff for their enthusiasm skills and commitment to the programme and aim as much as possible for a 50/50 gender split.

- Recruit willing members of staff who have an awareness of MVP and want to get involved.
- Aim as close as you can for a 50/50 gender breakdown so you have positive male and female role models. MVP aims to challenge the perception of gender violence being a woman's issue.
- Identify which staff member will lead MVP in the school and identify a lead from the community team to work alongside them.

- Consider offering some places to parents/carers who are actively involved with the school. Disclosure checks of these participants will be necessary.
- Continue to work with your wider community network to build your team.
- Your MVP lead should always be aware of staff movement and any other gaps in your MVP capacity. If more training is required contact your MVP training team.
- It may be that further training can be arranged to engage other staff members who are not on the initial MVP training.

4. Arrange MVP training

Arrange dates for the two day MVP training which your team will have to complete in order to work with mentors and develop MVP in your school. Training can be arranged through your local MVP Coordinator. The programme for the training is contained in Supporting Documents

Tip - Train a group of 4 – 6 school staff from a range of roles within your school.

- Group sizes will be set for the training course to maximise discussion and learning and allow time for practice sessions. We recommend 4- 6 school staff to minimise disruption and to make effective use of resources.
- Best practice examples of MVP are often when a range of staff have been trained including deputies, classroom teachers, guidance staff and learning assistants.
- Staff are not expected to know about all the issues discussed in the MVP curriculum, however a basic awareness is beneficial and a variety of websites and social media can support knowledge.
- It is recommended that staff who are trained plan feedback sessions to other staff on the training and embedding of MVP. Organise planning meetings with community partners after the two-day training.

- Set shared goals, aims and aspirations for the MVP programme together. Partnerships are more effective and likely to last if all partners are involved at all stages, including planning.

- A one day capacity training is also offered to further build your team.

Phase 2: Recruitment and training of peer mentors

Peer mentors are at the heart of the MVP Programme. Their ability to influence their own peers as well as younger peers is evidenced in evaluations of the MVP programme. It is important to give careful consideration, to the selection and recruitment of Peer Mentors. Look beyond the usual 'good' students so that your group are representative of the entire school. Remember we want mentors who can influence others.

The following should be considered during this phase:

1. Develop selection and recruitment process for mentors

Peer mentors should be identified from more senior year groups. Depending on the size of your school a team of 20-30 mentors is recommended.

Tip - Recruit a diverse group of mentors that reflect the population of your school and aim for a 50/50 gender split where possible.

- Consider working with a year group who will be able to mentor over a two-year period. The benefits of a two-year period are experience and support to future mentors in year two of the programme. In second year mentors will be able to support recruitment and training of new mentors.

- You will know the best methods in your school to recruit Peer Mentors. Some schools have found a year group assembly a good way to raise awareness and recruit. Other schools have found the smaller group approach useful. Remember to highlight the benefits that mentors will gain through this experience.

- Many schools and community groups are accrediting the Peer Mentors involvement in MVP.
- Depending on the number of volunteers consider running a selection process. Whilst this might take more time it will allow you to get the right mentor team in place. Some schools use an interview process or ask the young people to submit an application form.
- Schools that have been running MVP for more than one year use the peer mentors to recruit new mentors. You may find as MVP develops within your school that you have more mentors volunteering than you need and a selection process can help you choose who becomes a mentor.
- Consider approaching individuals who may not volunteer to become mentors. Staff will be aware of pupils who would benefit from mentoring.

2. Training your mentors

Training of your peer mentors is a continuous process throughout their involvement in the MVP programme. The training that the mentors receive is crucial to the success of the MVP programme in your setting, as they are the ones that will deliver the programme to their younger peers.

Your mentors are a team and when they start delivering peer led sessions they will be contributing to the overall effectiveness and ethos within your school. The training of your mentors should not be rushed and the time you put into training them is an investment in them and your school.

The training you give mentors should be similar, to the two-day staff training with only some exercises removed or adapted to be age appropriate. Remember mentors are not required to be experts on the issues within the MVP curriculum only that they are able to use the playbook and understand the bystander approach used within the MVP Programme.

Tip - Train your mentors in partnership with the community MVP team. Use the Playbook and session plans and to support delivery of their training.

- Staff from the MVP community team are a crucial part of the peer mentor training. Ensure they are involved in the planning and delivery of training.
- Set up regular training sessions throughout the year. Many schools have weekly sessions with mentors.
- Don't forget to include and use the staff from your community team. They don't have the same restrictions of the timetable and forward planning will allow them to identify and commit to training time with mentors.
- A suggested plan and training topics for mentors are contained in Supporting Documents.
- If resources permit, consider the main part of the Mentors' training at the beginning being completed through a residential, even if it's just one night. The schools that train their mentors this way report it pays dividends in the development of the MVP team and the mentors' skills, enthusiasm and commitment. It communicates to the mentors the value that the school place on their involvement.
- Use organisations who can enhance mentor knowledge. For example, use specialist organisations such as local Women's Aid and groups that focus on LGBT issues. They are always willing to support awareness raising. Build this into the mentor training programme.
- Make use of media to supplement mentor training. Always be on the lookout for media clips and cuttings which support MVP discussion.
- It is suggested all MVP mentors undergo some form of child protection training to prepare them for the possibility of pupil disclosure during MVP sessions. Use in-school trainers for this.
- MVP training and support is an ongoing process. When peer-led sessions are being delivered mentors should continue to meet and discuss future

sessions which they will be leading. These sessions also provide valuable feedback opportunities.

3. Support for MVP mentors during training and delivery of MVP sessions

Statistics illustrate that a vast number of people are affected by bullying and gender violence. Therefore, it is imperative that you are prepared for student disclosures and that you provide appropriate support for any participants who may need it.

Tip - Have regular meetings with mentors so they can seek advice and support easily. Feedback and debriefing their peer delivery sessions will contribute to their learning and skills development.

- Remember at the beginning of each session to set ground rules and acknowledge with the group that these issues can affect us all.
- Establish confidentiality rules within the group.
- Do not allow students to name individuals when telling personal stories.
- Do not allow MVP training sessions to turn into a group therapy session. If you suspect this is happening gently steer this back to the scenario being facilitated. Ensure you follow up with the individual concerned and signpost them to appropriate support services.
- Have regular meetings with mentors to ensure appropriate support provision is in place.
- Look at other ways of communicating MVP to the school. Consider the use of artwork for continuing the MVP discussion out with the class.

Phase 3: Delivery of peer led MVP sessions

Peer Mentors delivering to younger peers is a key element of the MVP programme. The majority of young people are not involved in abuse or violence however it is recognised that they have the ability to make a positive influence on their own peer group as well as younger peers in the school. The timeline that you planned earlier will have identified when peer led sessions will commence. Mentors should after initial training, begin to focus on the first lesson that they will be delivering.

1. Plan and organise timetabling of MVP sessions

MVP will be able to support pupils in different areas of the school curriculum. Whilst the most obvious linkage is to the PSE programme some schools deliver MVP during English, Modern Studies, tutor and key adult time. During the initial planning stage schools should start to identify areas where MVP could support the school curriculum.

Tip - Have mentors delivering to the same group of younger peers. Consider keeping all the MVP resources in a place where mentors and staff can access them for planning and preparation.

- Consider use of key adult/group tutor time.
- Consider using the issues raised within MVP to support other areas of the curriculum such as English, Modern Studies, RME etc...

2. Pairing of MVP mentors

From your group of MVP mentors you will have to decide on appropriate pairings. You may have mentors of mixed ability and efforts should be made to ensure that less-confident mentors are supported. Schools should also acknowledge that some mentors may be able to support the delivery in other ways e.g. through artwork, drama and social media.

Tip - Single sex pairs are recommended where possible.

- It is recommended that most of the delivery should be in single sex groups. Mentor pairings should reflect this.
- Use stronger mentors to support less confident ones.
- Some mentors will decide that they are not ready for delivery of sessions to younger peers, try and involve them in supporting other areas of the programme (i.e artwork, newsletter etc)

3. Identifying from MVP playbook the scenarios to deliver

NOTE: Prior to the delivery of your first MVP session ensure the pupils taking part have completed the pre-programme questionnaire.

The MVP Playbook recommends that MVP mentors deliver at least four sessions no more than one month apart. Sessions will depend on the year group identified to receive MVP training.

Tip - Identify scenarios relevant to the age of the group that is being delivered to and identify any emerging issues that the scenarios can address.

- Consider arranging for MVP mentors to meet with the younger peers prior to their first delivery. This will allow mentors to get to know the pupils and build confidence and trust with them.
- Engage with parents/carers, raise their awareness and ask them to speak with their children.
- Speak with school staff and the school police officer if relevant, to identify any emerging issues within the school. MVP can be used as a way of addressing these issues with the pupils. A school assembly, supported by mentors and members of the school MVP team, would be an effective way of addressing issues such as bullying or sexting.

- 3 introductory sessions are available to be delivered to year groups. These sessions begin to introduce the MVP Programme as well as introducing the mentors to the younger pupils in the school. These sessions can be delivered in small groups or as part of school assemblies.

Phase 4: Building the MVP programme to last

Now that you have begun to implement the MVP programme you can start to identify opportunities which will support the continued use of the MVP Programme in your school. The MVP programme is designed to be embedded in your school so that year on year you can utilise a regular supply of MVP mentors to keep the programme going.

The MVP programme contributes to the whole school Health and Wellbeing curriculum. Over approximately three academic sessions all pupils will have the opportunity to be involved in the MVP programme. Young pupils mentored in S1 and S2 will have opportunities to become MVP mentors in their senior years.

The following areas are highlighted to support this embedding process.

1. Annual review and evaluation of the MVP programme

Annually confirm and revisit the plans you made with community partners. Include reviewing the goals, aims and aspirations you set at the start. Have you achieved these? Do you need to set new ones? This will support progress and encourage creativity whilst maintaining the quality of the MVP approach.

Tip - Carrying out evaluations will give evidence of the impact and outcomes that have been achieved through the MVP programme for the young people and your school.

- Complete staff and student evaluation of the programme.

- Run focus groups with mentors and younger peers for more in depth feedback about their learning and the impact of the MVP programme.

2. Develop system for ongoing MVP training of staff and young people

Constantly assess your MVP capability. Do I need to train further staff members? Can I use MVP to develop/support staff development?

Tip - Support members of staff from your MVP team to become future trainers.

- Consider supporting key members of staff to become MVP trainers. This will allow continuous MVP development in your school.