



An Outcomes Framework for 1-1 Mentoring Programmes

The 1-1 Mentoring Toolkit

1. About this framework

This framework provided a set of outcomes and indicators that organisations delivering one-to-one mentoring in community settings can use to measure how young people change as a result of their engagement with their mentor.

The outcomes in the framework are those that evidence from research and mentoring practice shows are relevant to one-to-one mentoring programmes. One-to-one mentoring aims to change young people's behaviour, decision-making, emotional regulation, relationships, and engagement with EET pathways through regular engagement with a trusted adult (a mentor) over time. Mentoring works through the development of the relationship between a mentor and a mentee. The mechanism through which 1-1 mentoring works is sometimes described as '*dyadic*' – meaning that mentoring is an interaction between two individuals in which the young person reflects on their experiences, interprets situations differently, and develops confidence, agency, and planning capacity through supported dialogue with their mentor. For this reason, the outcomes presented below measure change in eight core developmental areas where young people can be expected to change as a result of their mentoring experience:

Relationships; Engagement with EET pathways; **Resilience; Self-regulation; Planning ahead; Wellbeing; Decision-making;** and **Community** connection. They are not intended as fixed categories, or ones that will emerge uniformly for all young mentees at the same time, or even in the same order (or at all for some). Instead, these are presented as practical categories that might help organisations describe and organise the different types of change young people may experience through mentoring, while still fitting alongside commissioner outcome frameworks and community-based evaluation approaches.

1.1. How this framework was developed

This framework was developed by combining findings from a research review of studies describing the evaluation of group mentoring programmes, alongside an analysis of mentoring funder frameworks, and a review of outcomes in use by grassroots mentoring organisations. Interviews with mentoring practitioners and young people participating in mentoring programmes were used to corroborate individual outcome areas and to strengthen the indicator descriptions. From these sources, a set of developmental outcomes was constructed – each describing an asset, strength, or personal characteristic that 1-1 mentoring interventions can aim to build through young people's engagement. Once constructed, each outcome was then analysed (in more technical term, a process termed '*conceptualisation*') to understand what it could mean for an organisation delivering 1-1 mentoring to young people who might not still in touch with statutory services such as school and therefore at a higher risk of further disengagement. Based on this analysis, each outcome was unpacked into a set of measurement indicators. Measurement indicators are essentially statements of what someone would '*expect to see*' if an outcome was being achieved in practice. This process, termed '*operationalisation*' translates each outcome into a measurable form that can be used to inform data collection.

1.2. What this framework measures

This framework measures so-called '*soft*' outcomes associated with personal development. These include changes in relationships, engagement with education, training and employment (EET) pathways, resilience, self-regulation, planning ahead, wellbeing, decision making, and connection to community context and support networks.

Table 1, below, shows each outcome area, how it has been conceptualised for 1-1 mentoring programmes, and the studies that informed this through the review.

Table 1 – Outcome development

Outcome	Conceptualisation ('what this mean to us')	Source
Relationships	Improved capacity to form and sustain trusting relationships with adults and peers through mentoring interaction	Rhodes (2008); Albright, Hurd & Hussain (2017); Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu (2021)
EET	Stronger participation in education, training, and employment pathways supported by mentor guidance and encouragement	Rhodes (2008); Farruggia et al. (2011)
Resilience	Improved ability to cope with adversity and resist harmful peer, situational, or emotional pressures	Rhodes (2008); Farruggia et al. (2011); Sanchez et al. (2023)
Self-regulation	Improved regulation of behaviour and emotional responses in challenging situations	Rhodes (2008); Sanchez et al. (2023)
Planning ahead	Improved thinking, planning, and problem-solving supported through mentor-led discussion and guidance	Rhodes (2008)
Wellbeing	Improved emotional regulation, confidence, and overall mental wellbeing through consistent relational support	Sanchez et al. (2023); Edwards, Scheer & Mauer (2022)
Decision making	Increased confidence and capability to make informed decisions through collaborative mentor dialogue	Albright, Hurd & Hussain (2017)
Community	Stronger connection to community context, networks, and supportive social environments through mentoring engagement	Farruggia et al. (2011); Sanchez et al. (2023)

The outcomes presented in the table describe developmental change that takes place during mentoring engagement and are distinct from 'hard' outcomes such as reduction in offending, improved educational attainment, or sustained employment. In practice, offending-related outcomes (for example, arrests, charges, convictions, weapon carrying, or other justice-system indicators) should be analysed alongside the developmental outcomes in this framework rather than treated as direct mentoring outcomes within it.

While mentoring may contribute to these hard outcomes, they are potentially influenced by multiple factors beyond the mentoring relationship and should therefore be assessed separately using external data, such as police records, youth justice information, school attendance data, or education, training and employment status, and interpreted together with mentoring progress measures in evaluation reporting. In practice, evaluation reports combine these sources by examining how changes in a young person's development are associated with movement in these harder outcomes over time. This allows programmes to assess whether improvements in areas such as relationships, decision making, self-regulation, and wellbeing correspond with reductions in offending, increased engagement in education or training, or other external indicators of stability and progression. Used in this way, this framework supports consistent monitoring of progress *within* mentoring while remaining compatible with wider programme evaluation approaches that combine multiple sources of evidence.

1.3. Outputs, outcomes, and indicators

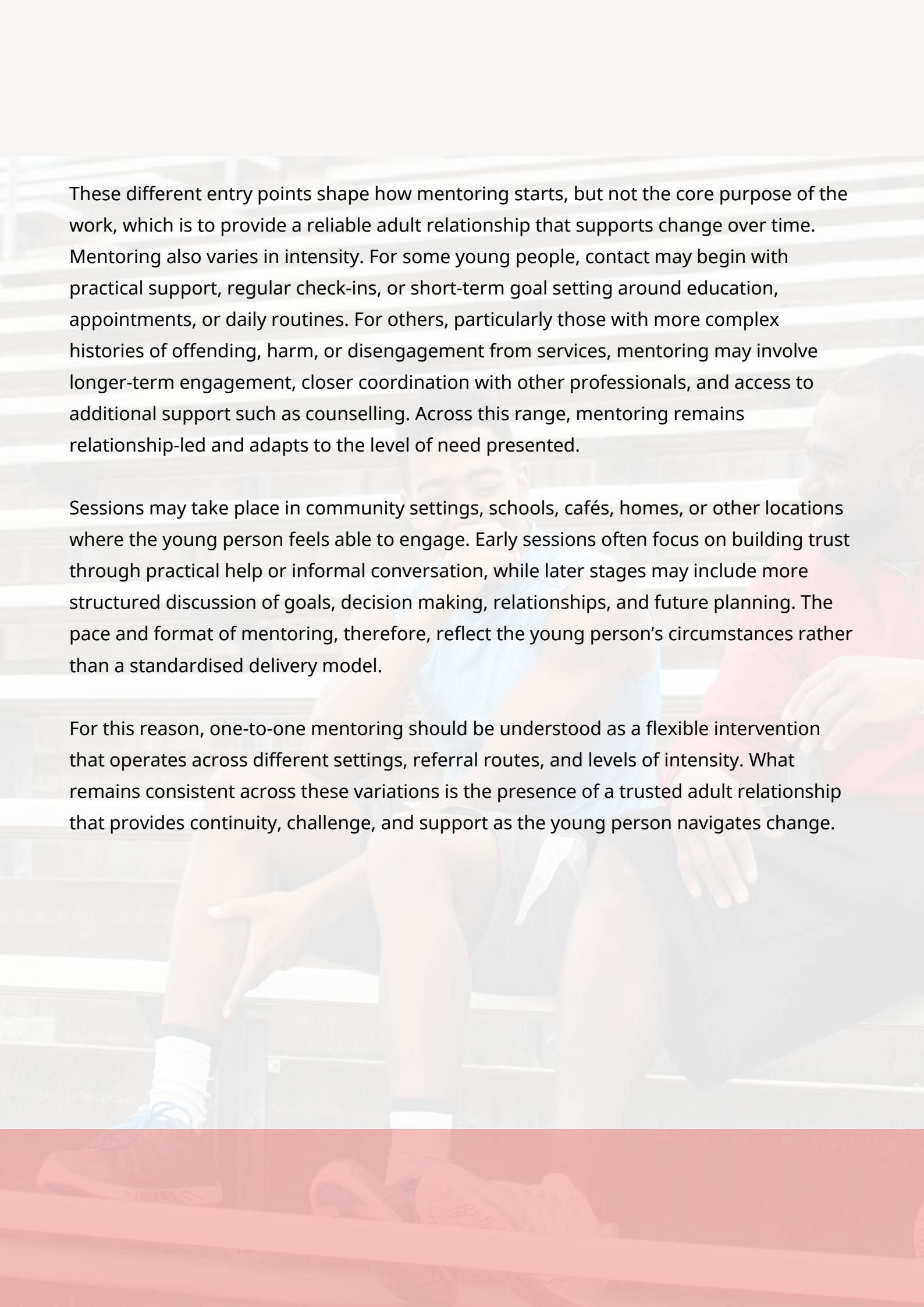
It can be useful to distinguish between **outputs**, **outcomes**, and **indicators** so that different types of evidence generated through mentoring can be interpreted consistently and used appropriately for monitoring delivery, assessing progress, and reporting impact:

- **Outputs** – these describe what a mentoring programme delivers, for example, the number of sessions provided, frequency of contact, length of engagement, or participation in activities. Reporting outputs helps show the scale and intensity of provision.
- **Outcomes** – these describe the areas of behavioural or developmental (or '*psychosocial*') change that mentoring is expected to support through engagement, such as improvement in relationships, decision making, wellbeing, or engagement with education, training and employment pathways.
- **Indicators** – these describe the observable signs that progress is taking place within each outcome area. In this framework, they are expressed as statements describing what a young person can do, does do, or reports over time. These provide the basis for structured reporting through surveys and other data collection methods.

2. What 1-1 mentoring involves

There is considerable variation in mentoring practice, however, at its most basic, 1-1 mentoring is a relationship-based form of support in which an adult works alongside a young person over time to provide stability, guidance, and opportunities for reflection and development. For this framework, mentoring is understood as a non-clinical but structured intervention that responds flexibly to the needs, circumstances, and readiness of each young person rather than following a fixed programme format.

Young people enter mentoring through a range of referral pathways. Some are referred by statutory services such as Youth Justice Services, schools, or safeguarding partners where there are identified risks relating to offending, exclusion, or exploitation. Others are engaged through community outreach or detached street-based work, where mentoring begins through informal contact and develops gradually into a more structured relationship.



These different entry points shape how mentoring starts, but not the core purpose of the work, which is to provide a reliable adult relationship that supports change over time. Mentoring also varies in intensity. For some young people, contact may begin with practical support, regular check-ins, or short-term goal setting around education, appointments, or daily routines. For others, particularly those with more complex histories of offending, harm, or disengagement from services, mentoring may involve longer-term engagement, closer coordination with other professionals, and access to additional support such as counselling. Across this range, mentoring remains relationship-led and adapts to the level of need presented.

Sessions may take place in community settings, schools, cafés, homes, or other locations where the young person feels able to engage. Early sessions often focus on building trust through practical help or informal conversation, while later stages may include more structured discussion of goals, decision making, relationships, and future planning. The pace and format of mentoring, therefore, reflect the young person's circumstances rather than a standardised delivery model.

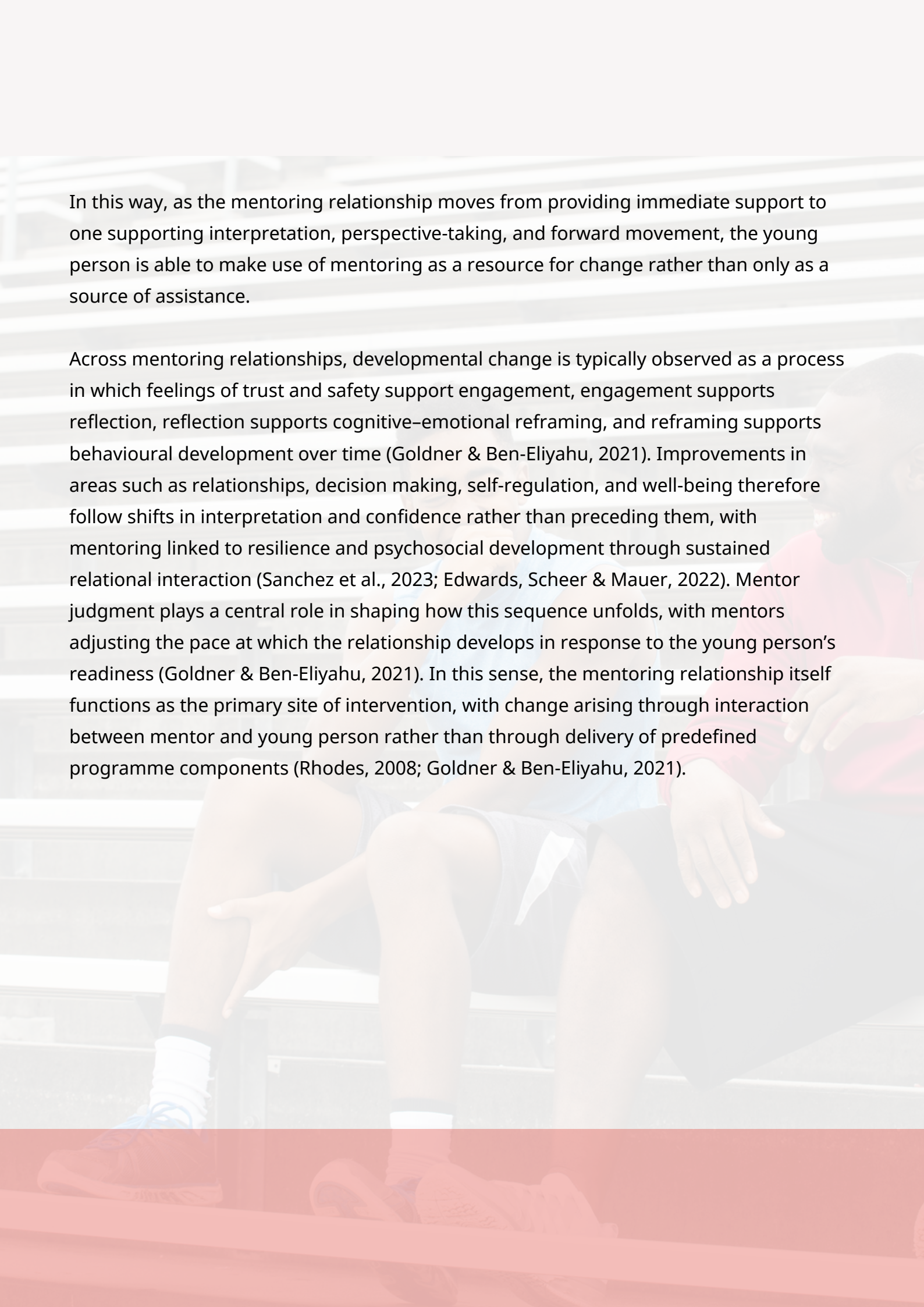
For this reason, one-to-one mentoring should be understood as a flexible intervention that operates across different settings, referral routes, and levels of intensity. What remains consistent across these variations is the presence of a trusted adult relationship that provides continuity, challenge, and support as the young person navigates change.

3. How 1-1 mentoring works - a research review

One-to-one mentoring is understood in this framework as a dyadic interaction. Here, *dyadic* refers to change arising through sustained, contingent interaction between two participants, mentor and young person, in which meaning, trust, and agency are developed through dialogue over time rather than delivered through activities alone. Research on youth mentoring shows that outcomes are shaped primarily by relationship quality, duration, and responsiveness to young people's needs rather than by programme format or activity content (DuBois et al., 2011; Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Research reviews of community-based mentoring similarly identify trust, mutuality, and dialogue as central processes through which mentoring supports change (Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021). The mentoring relationship is therefore not simply the context for change but the mechanism through which change itself becomes possible.

In practice, mentoring relationships often begin through practical and transactional forms of contact such as accompaniment to appointments, help completing forms, advocacy with services, or support navigating education, justice, or social care systems, which research describes as typical early engagement functions of relationship-based mentoring provision (Rhodes, 2008). These activities function as entry points that help establish credibility and trust within a developing mentoring relationship (Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021). They demonstrate reliability, reduce immediate barriers to engagement, and allow the relationship to stabilise before more reflective work becomes possible.

Over time, and at different points depending on the young person, the function of the mentoring relationship typically shifts. As feelings of trust and safety develop, young people might begin to use mentoring more strategically as a space for reflection, planning, and decision making, consistent with evidence that mentoring relationships support dialogue and agency formation over time (Albright, Hurd & Hussain, 2017; Rhodes, 2008).

A background image showing two young people sitting on bleachers. One person, wearing a blue shirt and white shorts, is pointing at the leg of another person wearing a red shirt and dark shorts. The scene is outdoors, likely at a sports event.

In this way, as the mentoring relationship moves from providing immediate support to one supporting interpretation, perspective-taking, and forward movement, the young person is able to make use of mentoring as a resource for change rather than only as a source of assistance.

Across mentoring relationships, developmental change is typically observed as a process in which feelings of trust and safety support engagement, engagement supports reflection, reflection supports cognitive–emotional reframing, and reframing supports behavioural development over time (Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021). Improvements in areas such as relationships, decision making, self-regulation, and well-being therefore follow shifts in interpretation and confidence rather than preceding them, with mentoring linked to resilience and psychosocial development through sustained relational interaction (Sanchez et al., 2023; Edwards, Scheer & Mauer, 2022). Mentor judgment plays a central role in shaping how this sequence unfolds, with mentors adjusting the pace at which the relationship develops in response to the young person's readiness (Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021). In this sense, the mentoring relationship itself functions as the primary site of intervention, with change arising through interaction between mentor and young person rather than through delivery of predefined programme components (Rhodes, 2008; Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021).

4. What outcomes are relevant to 1-1 mentoring

The outcomes presented in this framework represent the areas of change most commonly associated with 1-1 mentoring interventions for young people. They have been identified through a combined review of the mentoring evidence base, commissioner outcomes frameworks, frameworks used by grassroots mentoring organisations, and interviews with young people and mentoring practitioners. Together, these support a set of outcome areas that mentoring could reasonably be expected to achieve over time (Rhodes, 2008; Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021; Sanchez et al., 2023).

The same area of change can are often described differently across evaluation studies, commissioning frameworks, and delivery settings (Albright, Hurd & Hussain, 2017; Farruggia et al., 2011; Edwards, Scheer & Mauer, 2022). For example:

- **Relationships:** These are variously described as trusted adult relationships; peer relationships; attachment; social support; relational connectedness; prosocial relationships; mentoring alliance; social capital (Rhodes, 2008; Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021)
- **EET:** Often referred to as education engagement; participation in learning; training engagement; employability pathways; progression pathways; aspiration and attainment; NEET prevention; economic participation readiness (Rhodes, 2008; Farruggia et al., 2011)
- **Resilience:** Other terms used for this include coping skills; adaptive functioning; persistence; resistance to peer pressure; stress response capacity; psychological resilience; adversity management (Sanchez et al., 2023; Rhodes, 2008)

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- **Self-regulation:** This covers other related ways of describing similar change, such as emotional regulation; behavioural regulation; impulse control; self-control; affect regulation; executive self-management (Rhodes, 2008; Sanchez et al., 2023)
 - **Planning ahead:** This includes executive functioning; future orientation; goal planning; life skills; cognitive skills; solution-focused thinking; strategic thinking (Rhodes, 2008)
 - **Wellbeing:** A general term including mental wellbeing; emotional wellbeing; psychological wellbeing; confidence; self-esteem; subjective wellbeing; internal wellbeing (Sanchez et al., 2023; Edwards, Scheer & Mauer, 2022)
 - **Decision making:** Can include judgement; consequence awareness; risk awareness; choice competence; agency; behavioural reasoning; reflective choice capacity (Albright, Hurd & Hussain, 2017)
 - **Community:** Covers community connectedness; belonging; social participation; neighbourhood integration; civic engagement; access to support networks; connection to place (Farruggia et al., 2011; Sanchez et al., 2023)

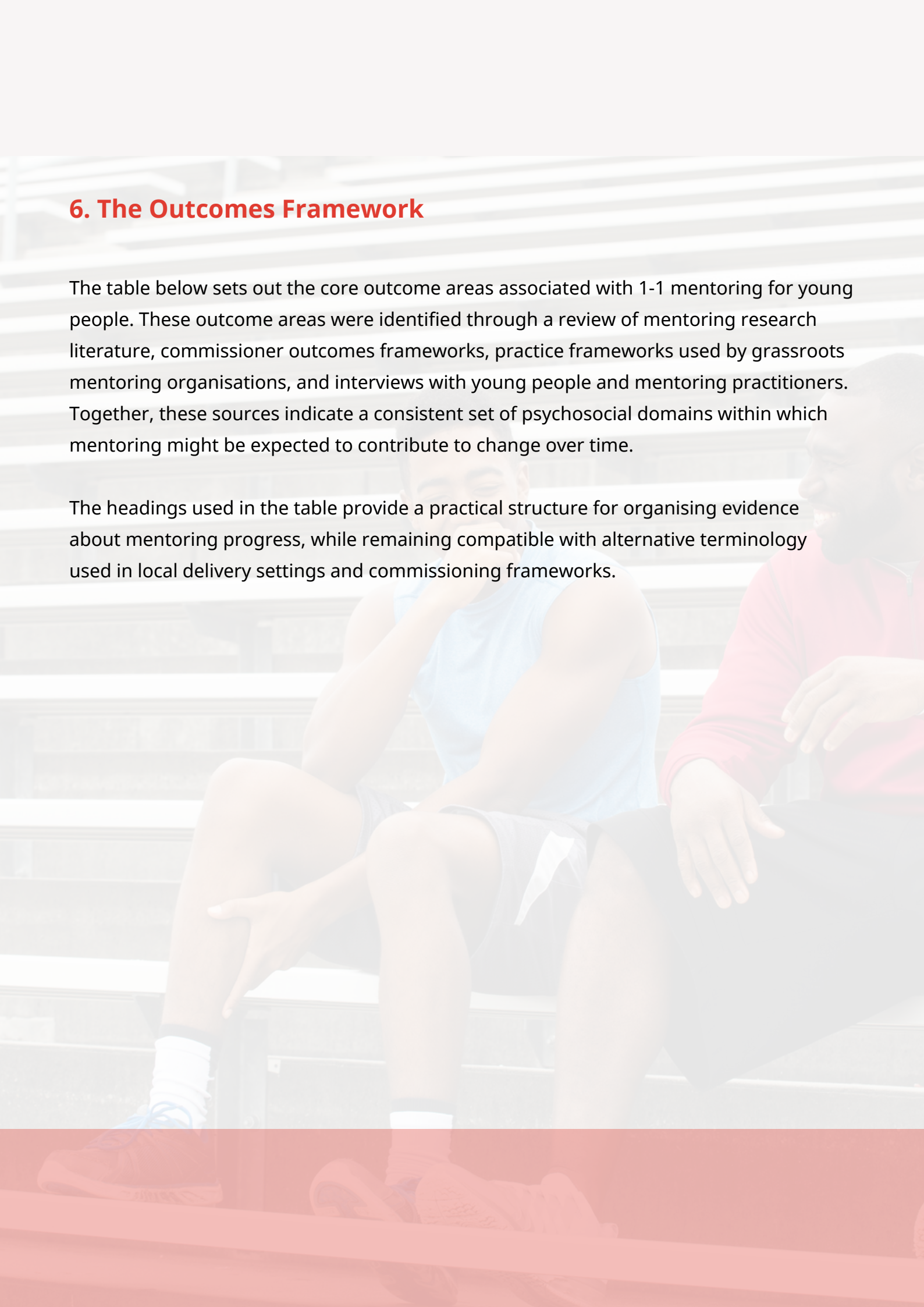
For this reason, the headings used in the table should be interpreted as organising categories rather than fixed labels. They are intended to support consistent measurement of mentoring-related progress while remaining compatible with locally defined outcome frameworks (Goldner & Ben-Eliyahu, 2021; Rhodes, 2008).

5. Hard and soft outcomes

This framework focuses on so called 'soft' outcomes. These are the areas of development that mentoring is most directly expected to influence through sustained contact between a mentor and a young person. They include changes in relationships, wellbeing, decision making, self-regulation, resilience, engagement with education, training and employment pathways, planning and problem solving, and connection to community networks.

Hard outcomes describe wider changes in a young person's circumstances that mentoring may contribute to but not necessarily produce on its own. These can include reductions in offending, improved school attendance, reduced exclusions, movement into education, training or employment, or reduced involvement with statutory services. Information on these areas is usually drawn from external sources rather than collected through this framework itself.

At the reporting stage of an evaluation, evidence generated against a set of developmental outcomes should be examined alongside external information such as police contact, youth justice involvement, school attendance, exclusions, or EET status. This allows evaluation of smaller-scale practice, or those carried out internally, to examine whether progress within mentoring is associated with wider changes over time, without treating those wider changes as a direct result of mentoring alone. This framework isn't intended to be used in larger-scale research where the association between hard and soft outcomes can be explored more rigorously. Hard outcomes are also sometimes used by commissioners as targets or key performance indicators. These measures are important for accountability and contract monitoring, but they do not form part of the outcomes framework itself. The purpose of this framework is to describe and measure the areas of change that mentoring can reasonably be expected to influence directly, so that this evidence can be interpreted alongside wider indicators of longer-term impact.



6. The Outcomes Framework

The table below sets out the core outcome areas associated with 1-1 mentoring for young people. These outcome areas were identified through a review of mentoring research literature, commissioner outcomes frameworks, practice frameworks used by grassroots mentoring organisations, and interviews with young people and mentoring practitioners. Together, these sources indicate a consistent set of psychosocial domains within which mentoring might be expected to contribute to change over time.

The headings used in the table provide a practical structure for organising evidence about mentoring progress, while remaining compatible with alternative terminology used in local delivery settings and commissioning frameworks.

Appendix 1 - The 1-1 Mentoring Framework

Relationships	EET	Resilience	Self-regulation	Planning ahead	Wellbeing	Decision making	Community
<i>The young person attends mentoring sessions consistently</i>	<i>The young person attends EET activity more regularly</i>	<i>The young person talks about situations where they feel pressure to take risks</i>	<i>The young person talks about their experiences, interests, or values</i>	<i>The young person talks through decisions with their mentor</i>	<i>The young person talks about their feelings during mentoring sessions</i>	<i>The young person talks about choices they want to make</i>	<i>The young person talks about challenges or setbacks</i>
<i>The young person talks with their mentor about relationships with peers or adults</i>	<i>The young person talks about their aspirations or personal ambitions during mentoring sessions</i>	<i>The young person reflects on the consequences of their behaviour</i>	<i>The young person reflects on personal strengths and self confidence</i>	<i>The young person reflects on different options before acting</i>	<i>The young person reflects on emotional responses to situations affecting their mental wellbeing</i>	<i>The young person reflects on future possibilities when making decisions</i>	<i>The young person reflects on where they feel they belong in their community</i>
<i>The young person can identify at least one trusted adult they can approach</i>	<i>The young person can describe at least one learning, training, or employment goal</i>	<i>The young person can describe alternative responses to risky situations and peer pressure</i>	<i>The young person can describe positive qualities about themselves and their self esteem</i>	<i>The young person can plan steps towards a goal</i>	<i>The young person can describe strategies to manage difficult emotions affecting mental wellbeing</i>	<i>The young person can make informed decisions about next steps</i>	<i>The young person can identify supportive people or networks in their community</i>
<i>The young person maintains at least one positive peer or adult relationship over time</i>	<i>The young person takes steps towards participation in education, training, or employment pathways</i>	<i>The young person reduces behavioural and emotional difficulties in situations that place them at risk</i>	<i>The young person expresses a clearer sense of who they are and confidence in themselves</i>	<i>The young person uses problem solving strategies discussed in sessions</i>	<i>The young person shows improved mental wellbeing and self confidence in practice</i>	<i>The young person acts on agreed personal goals linked to their decisions</i>	<i>The young person participates more confidently in community contexts and positive peer relationships</i>

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