

While serving as a mentor you may hear stories and experiences of participants and often their family members, sense their struggles, and see them when they are most vulnerable. With this in mind, people's lives, feelings, and struggles must be respected and it is important to respect the individual's privacy. This sensitivity will enhance people's confidence in you as a mentor and confidant.

Program Policies on Confidentiality

- Free2Succeed requires confidentiality of all information about the participants. This is not an option, but a requirement.
- This confidentiality policy is in place to protect the interests of each participant in the program and includes any information you may have access to because of your involvement in the program.

Consequences

- Violation of the confidentiality policy can have a negative impact on the program, the participant, families, the public and IDOC. This is an extremely serious matter.
- Free2Succeed must maintain its integrity by protecting sensitive information. By being a volunteer mentor in the program, you subscribe to the same principles.
- The one hurt most of all by any violation of this policy would be the participant. He/she would lose all trust for those that are in positions to help them.

Confidentiality Exceptions

In order to build trust, mentors are required to keep conversations with and information about participants in confidence.

The following are exceptions to this rule:

- **Speaking with staff:** A mentor may and, in fact, be required to speak to program staff about any information or issues brought up in the mentoring sessions. Staff is there to help problem-solve and assist participants with the dynamics of the relationship. There may be some instances in which mentors are expected to speak to staff about particular actions and/or statements of their participants.
- **Conversations with fellow mentors during staff-run mentor meetings:** During mentor trainings or meetings, mentors may discuss their respective participants so that mentors can receive feedback and suggestions from fellow mentors and staff. However, mentors must maintain "group confidentiality" – that is, they are not allowed to discuss anything about other participants to anyone outside the program.
- **Receiving permission from the participant to contact others about a specific problem:** The participant may give the mentor permission to talk to others about him/her when a situation arises where the participant is seeking outside assistance.
- **Mentors must also make a report to staff when the participant:**
 - Reports child or adult abuse, neglect, or endangerment by him/herself or others
 - Discusses drug use or intended drug use
 - Indicates a possible violation of the terms of his/her parole/probation
 - Indicates an intention of hurting him/herself or others, or putting the mentor in danger
 - Demonstrates a marked change in functioning (appears depressed or manic or has noticeable changes in hygiene, sleeping, and/or eating, etc.)