Child and Family Phone Mentoring Programme

Guidance for Viva Partner Networks

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together for children

Introduction

During this time we need to come together and support each other in different ways. By running this programme, you will help to support families who are spending more time at home, may be struggling with reduced income and are unable to access all the information on what COVID-19 is and how to prevent the spread of it. You will support families to build stronger relationships, encourage positive parenting, and reduce the risk of violence against children at home.

Through this programme, we will work together to help ensure that:

- Children are **protected from abuse and danger**, knowing how to keep themselves safe
- Children are **educated for life**, with the skills and experience needed to develop socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually
- **Families are strengthened** to increase care and support for children
- Christians together **demonstrate God's love in action**

We believe that through this programme, families and communities will be strengthened to cope with the current challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that they will come out the other side stronger and better equipped to thrive.

Contents

Programme summary

Through this programme, you will train volunteers in your community to mentor children and adults in the same family using resources sent to phones and phone calls. These mentors will talk with an average of ~10 families speaking to one parent and one adult in the family directly. The phone calls will be participatory and engaging and support proactive action for the family on each topic.

The mentors will complete 8 phone calls including the introduction and closing call with six phone call themes based on emerging issues, as well as the 'COVID-19 Global Parenting Resources'[1] The six sessions cover:

1) **COVID-19 awareness** – good practices for staying safe and how families can talk about COVID-19 together

2) **Building strong relationships within the family** – How to listen to and spend time with children, helping children identify their strengths and their role in the family

3) **Mental health and resilience** – techniques for staying calm and relaxing, understanding children's reactions, how to cope with strong feelings and how to talk about how we feel

4) **Staying safe at home** – Anger management and positive discipline strategies, recognising and preventing abuse and what to do when we feel unsafe

5) **Staying safe online** – How to engage with children's online world, risk awareness and setting limits, helping children to make positive choices online

6) **Learning together every day** – Supporting children's learning as a parent and structuring time at home in a positive way to stay healthy and active

Each session will also include a visual 'poster' covering some of the week's themes, as well as a game or activity to do as a family, and a brief devotional reflection which the mentor can send as an additional support where appropriate. Mentors will be supported with training, ongoing supervision, and appropriate safeguarding procedures to mitigate risks of one-to-one mentoring and support effective reporting of safeguarding issues.

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[1] COVID-19 parenting – Unicef, WHO, CDC, USAID, Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children

Resources you will need

Other documents you will get as part of the programmes are:

1. **Mentor guidelines:** this is for you to use to inform your training of mentors, and to give to mentors to read and refer to. The guide has sections highlighted in green for you to update with your network and country information. *Be sure to update the green areas before giving to your mentors.*

2. **Safeguarding Code of conduct:** this must be signed by all your mentors before they begin making calls. Consider asking mentors to take a photo of their signature and copying it onto the document to return if you cannot get handwritten signatures at this time, or sending an email confirming they have read and signed.

3. **8 call scripts:** ensure each mentor has a copy of these scripts and understands the content well

4. **Resources to send to the family each week:** Each week there are posters and games (© Right to Play) for the mentor to send to the family. You will need to make sure each resources are translated into the language you are using for the calls. Translations for the 'Parenting Tips' posters can be found in many languages here: https://www.covid19parenting.com/

5. **Call log:** each mentor should log their calls online through this link: bit.ly/3fP1o4l. For those without internet access, we have included a paper copy of the call log to be completed after each call. They will need one copy of the call log for each family they work with.

Note: If you need a version of materials with less pictures for printing, please do ask.

Set up

Assigning roles

Network coordinator: identify network members for partnering in the mentoring programme. Ensure the MoU with the network member is in place before starting the mentoring programme. The network coordinator will need to take on or assign these roles below.

Programme Supervisor: This person will manage the logistics for the programme. They should be the point of contact for all mentors and their name and contact details should be written in the dedicated space on the mentor guidelines document. They will provide regular supervision for mentors and offer support when needed.

Programme Safeguarding Officer: It could be the same as your network safeguarding officer. Mentors should know that they should report any safeguarding concerns to this person. Their details should again be written into the mentor guidelines document.

Mentors: These are the people who will make the calls to the children and families. Ideally, they will be volunteers that have volunteered with the network before and already been trained in child protection and how to work with children, or volunteers who have worked with children through their church projects. Key mentor characteristics include:

- Have some experience of working with children
- Enthusiastic about working with children
- Excellent communication skills

Mentor training

Each network will run this programme slightly differently, so please plan your mentor training accordingly. The mentor guidelines should be used to ensure that all mentors have good information on how to make the calls safely, and to ensure that they have a positive impact on the children and parents they speak to.

Essential elements to include in your mentor training:

- **Child and adult safeguarding**: All mentors MUST have read, signed and understood the network safeguarding policy and the network safeguarding code of conduct. If they are volunteering through their church, they may also need to sign their church code of conduct and child protection policy. In addition, all mentors must read, understand and sign the phone mentoring code of conduct given in this programme resource pack. Ensure that your training gives mentors the opportunity to understand and ask questions about the phone mentoring code of conduct.
- **Local COVID-19 situation and guidelines:** The situation is different in each country. Please update the mentor guidelines with the relevant information from your city. It is important that mentors have a good understanding of key information around COVID-19 and what is good information so that they can support and answer questions from the people they are speaking to.
- **Referral numbers:** Please think about useful numbers that may be helpful to the families if they need additional support or advice, to report a safeguarding concern or to ask for help. Include these numbers in the mentoring guidelines and make sure the mentors are aware of them.
- **Understanding of topic content:** Whilst the mentors have the scripts for each call, it is important that they have an understanding of the issues raised by the topics so that they can look out for signs, ask helpful questions and offer

support where possible. Be sure to make clear to mentors that if they do not know an answer, they should feel confident to say that they do not know, and to offer to look something up and tell them on their next call. False information can be harmful.

- **Understanding the call log system:** The call log system is designed to help keep track of the reach of the programme and monitor its impact. Make clear to mentors that they will not be judged on the answers of the family. Don't be disheartened if families do not complete their planned actions each week; simply having the conversation and discussing these issues is a positive step. We know families are having a hard time and entering their honest feedback will help us better understand how the families are coping and how we can improve the programme.

- **Practice:** you could encourage mentors to call each other as part of the training to practice using the scripts and get used to the content. Another example could be to suggest mentors practice using the scripts with their own family members, which could be a fun family activity.

Network example of programme set-up

In Patna, India, our partner network trialled the materials. Here is a summary of their programme set-up:

In selection and training of the mentors for COVID 19 Child and Family Mentoring Program and field testing the first session the following steps were employed by Patna Network:

1. *__Introduction__ of the Program was done with a few network partners over the phone.*
2. *__Willing Partners__ were requested to nominate candidates to be trained as mentors. It was requested that the nominated persons:*
   - *must have some experience on working with children*
   - *must be excited about working with children.*
   - *the person nominated should have good communication skills.*
3. *__Program Supervisor__ (in this case, the network Coordinator) then arranged a meeting (WhatsApp) with the nominated persons. In the meeting the program purpose and six themes were introduced.*
4. *__Material__ of theme-1 with parents was handed over to them to study.*
5. *__After two days__ they were made to attend a 45 minutes TOT on WhatsApp call. The Coordinator gave training on how to contact the parents, explain the purpose and fix schedule with them for the training. They were taught on the training approach to be adopted, time limit, contents of the training, how to handle questions of parents, also about the activities/games included in the session.*

6. **They were asked** to prepare their training plan and notes and attend a practice session next day. They were also asked to bring any queries or questions they have about the content of the session 1.
7. **The coordinator**, heard their notes and plans next day again on a group WhatsApp call, giving opportunity to each participant.
8. **Prior to training** the mentors, the coordinator, herself ran mentoring sessions with parents in two families and recorded the calls with the families' permission. She then shared its recording with the mentors.
9. **With the help of the mentors**, the network coordinator prepared a list of families to be mentored. Appointments were sought with parents.
10. **Mentors** then gave training to parents in one family each. They also recorded their training session with permission from the family and sent it to the coordinator. On the basis of their recording, the coordinator approved the mentors to complete further trainings.

Identifying families

Each network will already be working with people who are vulnerable and struggling at this time. Think about which families will be least likely to access information, or who may be most in need of support, or most at risk of domestic violence. One way to determine the most vulnerable families is to assess how many of these vulnerability criteria they meet (these can be adapted to your context):

- Families where you are already aware that there is a risk of domestic abuse or family violence for parents or children
- Larger families with more than 4 children
- Families where the female caregiver or young person is pregnant or a nursing mother
- Single parent families
- Families where there is a child or parent with a disability
- Families where there is a child or adult with a serious physical or mental health condition
- Families where the primary caregiver is an elderly relative
- Families including child(ren) who are not living with their mother or father
- Families living in poverty or unable to meet their daily basic needs
- Refugee or asylum-seeking families

Meeting one or more of these criteria can help you to determine which are the most vulnerable families who may benefit most from mentoring support.

Families will also need to include at least one child between the ages of 5-18 to take part in the child mentoring part of the project.

Top tips for enrolling families on the phone mentoring:

- Make a list of families to invite to take part – you could send them a message or use the introductory call script.
- You must get consent from the families to take part – see the wording in the introductory call script.
- At any time, if a family wishes to stop receiving the calls, that is their choice. We ask that you log this decision using the call log. This is not a 'failure' – families' needs will change over time and the programme may no longer be appropriate or possible for them.

Family ID system

Developing an identification system can help with your safeguarding, as you are not giving personal details to strangers. It can also help with measuring the impact of your programme. As you are contributing to a global programme, if you have a consistent ID system, it will help us to know which calls are made from your network, so that we can send you information on the impact you are having through the calls.

Here is a recommended family ID system, but feel free to design your own:

Country Code – City – Mentor name – Family number e.g. INDIA-DELHI-BARKER-#1

Feedback and complaints mechanism

It's important that families have some way of letting you know if they are unhappy with the way they are treated by their mentor, particularly because the mentor is otherwise their only point of contact with the project. Ensure that you establish a mechanism for this, such as:

- Sharing a phone number (e.g. a phone held by the network) where families can give any feedback (good or bad) on the programme and report any concerns.
- Explaining to families that they will receive a call at some point during the programme from the programme supervisor, so you can check how they are experiencing the calls.

Running the programme

Call monitoring

Once the mentors are trained, you may want to check that you are happy with the call quality. One way to do this could be to ask the mentor to record a call. If they are to do this, they must first get permission from the family and from you, the programme supervisor.

Each mentor must also log their calls using the call log link or paper version. At any time, if you want to know how many calls have been made in your network, you can ask your Viva Network Consultant and they will get the information to you.

Ensure your feedback and complaints mechanism is in use, and respond quickly to any concerns.

Safeguarding

Ensure that the Programme Safeguarding Officer is aware of their responsibility to respond to any safeguarding concerns raised within the project in line with your network safeguarding policy.

Providing supervision and support for mentors

The Programme Supervisor should be in regular contact with mentors to provide support and encouragement and answer questions. Let mentors know how they can be in touch with you (perhaps at regular times of the week). Each mentor should receive at least two follow up calls during the course of the project. During these calls, the supervisor should:

- Give the mentor space to share about what is going well and what is challenging in the calls
- Share about any difficult situations they are coming across amongst their families
- Check that the mentor is following all guidelines and logging calls successfully
- Answer any questions raised by the mentor
- Encourage the mentor

If possible, other support structures you may choose to put in place could include:

- Set up a WhatsApp group for each cohort of mentors so that they can support one another (ensuring appropriate confidentiality and that personal family information is not shared within the group)
- Facilitating peer support sessions with several mentors together, particularly if they would like to discuss the theme topics together before they carry out the calls with families

The network coordinator (if they are not the programme supervisor) should be in regular contact with the programme supervisor to support them with any challenges or concerns.

Ending the programme well

On the 8th call with a family, the script asks the mentor to ask if the family need any additional support. The mentor could consider checking in on the family by phone call in a month's time. They should also give the family all the referral number so they know who to call to ask different questions.

You may want to think about follow-on programmes you could do, perhaps thinking about inviting them to **Understanding God's Heart for Children**, or **Being Family** training, or other trainings you are doing in the future.
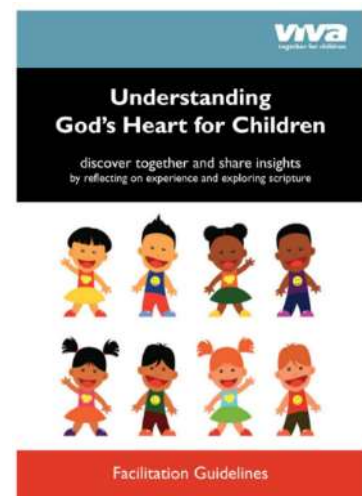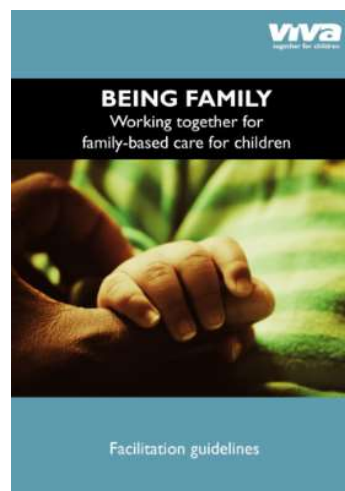
This is a great opportunity for you as a network to build relationships so that you can continue supporting these families in different ways. You could consider linking the family up with a local church or support groups.

We would encourage you to make the most of this opportunity while you can.