

Guidelines
for Project
Coordinators

RESILIENT FAMILIES



Mentoring for challenging times

Guidelines for Project Coordinators

Through these sessions you will help to support families who are living in active conflict zones, have been internally displaced, or are living as refugees.

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

- Children are protected from abuse and danger during conflict
- Children build resilience enabling them to move through difficult situations, recognising and building on their own strengths
- Parents have built their own resilience and are confident that they can cope with crisis and care for their children
- Communities are equipped to support families to be resilient during conflict

We are confident that through this programme, families and communities will be strengthened to cope with the current challenges relating to conflict, and that they will come out the other side stronger and better equipped to thrive.

These materials have been developed by Viva in partnership with [World Without Orphans](#) (WWO) and [Innovista](#), based on the [War-time Parenting tips](#) developed by [Parenting for Lifelong Health and others](#), and based on Viva's Child and Family Phone Mentoring Programme developed during Covid-19.

Who can use this programme?

There is no requirement to be a Viva partner in order to use this programme – it is freely available to anyone who can benefit from it. If you want to use the accompanying app, you will need to get in touch with Viva or your relevant partner organisation to request a password. You can email us on info@viva.org

1. What is the Resilient Families Programme?

Through this programme, you will support volunteers in your community to mentor children and adults in the same family, using guided conversations. These mentors will talk to one or more families, and the conversations will be participatory and engaging, and support the family to take proactive steps for each topic.

Mentors will support families over the course of **six mentoring sessions** – plus additional introduction and closing sessions depending on how you are delivering the programme. Each session contains a **parents' session** and a **children's session**. You can use the materials in a variety of contexts, deciding what will work best for the situation your participants are in:

- In-person meetings for individual households, meeting first with the parent(s) and then with the child(ren)
- Phone calls for individual households, speaking first to the parent(s) and then to the child(ren)
- Group sessions, meeting with a group of parents and then separately with a group of children

Ideally, both the parent and the child will go through the programme. However, this might not always be possible. It is also fine to run *just* the parent sessions, or *just* the child sessions.

The six main sessions are based on emerging issues, as well as the 'Parenting for Lifelong Health' parenting tips.¹ The six sessions cover:

- 1) **"Talk about it"** – Helping the family to process where they are at right now and the experiences they have had, and supporting parents to talk to their children about the conflict and their situation²
- 2) **"Strong families"** – Positive communication within families, and spending quality time with children
- 3) **"Mental health and resilience"** – Managing emotions and taking care of mental health, and supporting children to manage their emotions
- 4) **"Staying safe together"** – How to stay together in conflict situations and avoid trafficking
- 5) **"Staying safe at home"** – Anger management and positive discipline
- 6) **"Learning together every day"** – Supporting children's learning, and creating structure and routine

An additional session on **"Coping with Loss"** is also available to provide extra support where families are dealing with grief and loss.

Each session will also include some "parenting tips" images covering some of the week's themes. Mentors will be supported with Guidelines for Mentors, ongoing supervision, and appropriate safeguarding procedures to mitigate the risks of mentoring, and to support effective reporting of safeguarding issues.

Throughout these resources we refer to "parents" for simplicity. However, we recognise that the more appropriate term in many situations could be caregiver, foster parent, or extended family member, for example.

¹ Parenting for Lifelong Health: <https://ukraineparenting.web.ox.ac.uk/downloads> and World Without Orphans, <https://worldwithoutorphans.org/resources/war-time-tips>

² This session is also informed by the Beyond Disaster resources – <https://beyonddisaster.bible> produced by the Trauma Healing Institute, which provides materials to help people recover from natural and man-made disasters, integrating best practices in mental health into a biblical framework, and offering resources for survivors, first responders, and churches in several languages.

2. Resources you will need

Other resources you will need to use as part of the programme are:

1. **Guidelines for Mentors:** This is for you to give to mentors to read and refer to, and ideally to use to inform a mentors' training. The guide has sections highlighted in green for you to update with information specific to your own programme. *Be sure to update the green areas before giving to your mentors.*
2. **Safeguarding code of conduct:** This can be found in the Guidelines for Mentors (Appendix 5), and must be read, understood and agreed to by each mentor before they begin working with families.
3. **Conversation guides:** Ensure each mentor has a copy of these guides and understands the content well.
4. **Access to the Resilient Families app:** The Resilient Families app contains all of the Parenting Tips, as well as providing a place for participants and mentors to answer some questions about the sessions. All mentors and participants should download the app before they begin (see separate section on the app below). If the mentor is unable to access the app for any reason, they should log their sessions online at www.resilientfamilies.viva.org.

3. Set-up

i. Assigning roles

Programme coordinator: The programme coordinator will manage the logistics for the programme. S/he should identify individuals to volunteer for the mentoring programme. They should be the point of contact for the Mentor Supervisors, and their name and contact details should be written in the dedicated space in the Guidelines for Mentors (p.4). The programme coordinator will also need to assign the roles below.

Mentor Supervisor(s): Depending on the size of your programme, you should have at least one mentor supervisor, who should be the point of contact for a group of mentors. We recommend that a mentor supervisor should oversee no more than 10 mentors, so if you have more than 10 mentors, you should split them into groups and assign more than one supervisor. The mentor supervisor's name and contact details should be written in the dedicated space in the Guidelines for Mentors (p.4). They will provide supervision for mentors, meeting with them regularly (ideally between every mentoring session) and offering support when needed.

Programme Safeguarding Officer: This may be the Programme Coordinator or Mentor Supervisor. Mentors should know that they should report any safeguarding concerns to this person. Their details should again be written into the Guidelines for Mentors (p.4). The Safeguarding Officer must have received training in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and your church / organisation must have a written safeguarding policy.

Mentors: These are the people who will conduct the sessions with children and families. Ideally, they will be volunteers that are known by your organisation / church and have already been trained in child protection and how to work with children. Key mentor characteristics include:

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

The number of families assigned to the mentor will depend on their availability, but should not exceed 8 families for 1:1 sessions at any point.

ii. Mentor training

Ideally, you should plan a short training session with your mentors before they begin meeting with families. However, we recognise that in a conflict setting this may not always be easy or possible.

If training is possible, you should use the Guidelines for Mentors as a basis for this training. In particular, you should make sure that you include:

- **Psychological First Aid and building resilience in children:** There are sections in the Guidelines for Mentors about the importance of building the resilience of children and families (pp.2-3), as well as on how to offer Psychological First Aid to individuals before they start the sessions (Appendix 1). You should take mentors through this information and ensure that they understand it.
- **Personal resilience:** Many of the mentors may themselves be struggling with what they have experienced, and participants may also share difficult stories with the mentors. It is important that mentors know how to look after themselves and build their personal resilience. In the Guidelines for Mentors, there is an opportunity for mentors to reflect on how they can take care of themselves, and to develop their own “personal wellbeing plan” (Appendices 2a and 2b). There should be an opportunity to complete this during a training session.
- **Child and adult safeguarding:** All mentors must have read, signed and understood your organisation’s / church’s safeguarding policy, and the code of conduct found in Appendix 5 of the Guidelines for Mentors, as well as understanding how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse and how to respond to incidents of abuse (Appendices 3 and 4 in the Guidelines for Mentors). Ensure that your training gives mentors the opportunity to understand and ask questions about the code of conduct. All mentors should sign the Commitment to Safeguarding Form (Appendix 6).
- **Referrals:** Please think about useful contacts that may be helpful to the families if they need additional support or advice, to report a safeguarding concern, or to ask for help. You can work together with the mentors and mentor supervisor(s) to come up with a list, using the template in Appendix 7 of the Guidelines for Mentors, so that each mentor has a copy of these details.
- **Understanding of topic content:** Whilst the mentors have the guides for each session, it is important that they understand the issues raised by the topics. 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 families during their next session.
- **Understanding the Resilient Families app:** The Resilient Families app is designed to help keep track of the reach of the programme and monitor its impact, as well as giving participants access to the parenting tips. See the section below for more information about the app, as well as Section 6 in the Guidelines for Mentors (pp.12-14). Ensure that mentors have a clear idea of how and when to use the app.
- **Practice:** you could encourage mentors to practise the sessions with each other as part of the training so that they familiarise themselves with the content. Or you could suggest mentors practise using the guides with their own family members, which could be a fun family activity.

If training is not possible, at the very least, you should provide each mentor with a copy of the Guidelines for Mentors, which they should read carefully and sign where indicated to show that they have understood and agree with what is written.

iii. Which families should take part?

You are probably already working with people affected by conflict and displacement 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 abuse or trafficking. One way to determine the most vulnerable families is to assess how many of the vulnerability criteria they meet from the table below (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
- Families in particularly unsettled circumstances – e.g. in temporary accommodation
- 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
- Families which have been separated due to conflict
- Single parent families
- Larger families with more than 4 children
- Families where the female caregiver or young person is pregnant or a nursing mother
- 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

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 should also include at least one child between the ages of 5–18 to take part in the child mentoring part of the project, if possible.

Top tips for enrolling families on the mentoring programme:

- Make a list of families to invite to take part – you could send them a message or use the introductory conversation guide.
- You must get consent from the families to take part – the Introduction Conversation gives an opportunity for families to decide whether they would like to participate.

iv. Using the “Resilient Families” app



Viva has developed an app to accompany the Resilient Families programme. The app supports the programme by:

- Giving families access to the “parenting tips” connected to each session, which they can refer back to at any time.
- Allowing parents to make a note of their answers to some of the discussion questions, so that they can come back and reflect on these if they want to.
- Enabling Viva (and the partner organisation running the programme) to understand the way the sessions are being used, the impact on families, and how the project can be improved. Data that is collected is completely anonymous, and is used for monitoring and evaluation purposes only.

All mentors and parents should download the app, which can be found by searching for “**Resilient Families**”, “**Стійкі сім’ї**” or “**Стойкие Семьи**” (depending which language your phone is set to) in Google Play or the App Store. The app is **free** to download.

When the app is first opened, the mentor or parent will be prompted to enter a password. These passwords should have been given to you by Viva or your organisation contact. Please contact them if you have not received this, or contact info@viva.org

You should give these passwords to the mentors to share with parents. It is very important that parents use the parent password, and mentors use the mentor password.

Participating adults and mentors should use the same phone each time they take part in a session.

Who should log what?

The mentors should log basic details about any group sessions they hold with adults, by clicking “Log an adults’ group session” and answering the questions there.

In 1:1 parent sessions, mentors should not log any details, unless the participating adult is unable to download the app. In this case, the mentor can log answers for the adult by choosing ‘Log a one-to-one parent session’.

For all sessions with children, mentors should also log responses to the underlined questions from children’s sessions, by clicking either “Log a children’s group session” or “Log a one-to-one child session”.

The parents should log their own responses to the underlined questions in the parents’ sessions, by clicking on the “Questions” option within the theme that they are discussing.

If it is not possible for the mentor to use the app, they can still record sessions by clicking on www.resilientfamilies.viva.org (which is also in the Guidelines for Mentors).

v. 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 your organisation) 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 finding the sessions. Follow up on this and make phone calls to at least one family mentored by each mentor.

4. Running the programme

i. Session monitoring

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

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

ii. 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 own safeguarding policy. There is a sample Incident Record Form in the Appendix of this document, which the Safeguarding Officer can give to a mentor if they need to report a safeguarding concern.

iii. Providing supervision and support for mentors

It is likely that the mentors themselves will be dealing with challenging circumstances, and/or will hear difficult stories from families. The Mentor Supervisor needs to be able to recognise signs of stress, anxiety, or difficulty coping, and support the mentors well through this time.

It is important that mentors are aware of signs in themselves that show them that they are struggling or need to take a break. Completing the Wellbeing Plan in the Guidelines for Mentors (Appendix 2b) can help

with this. It is also helpful to set up a pattern of breaks for mentors – taking a few weeks off after completing a full cycle of mentoring sessions, for example. Peer support and the chance to reflect on challenges together can also be very helpful.

Signs of stress, anxiety or difficulty coping

Hearing difficult stories and living in a context at risk of, or experiencing, conflict can take a toll on mentors too. We may notice:

- Physical signs like difficulty sleeping, eating too much or too little, tiredness or inability to focus
- Emotional difficulties – crying often, or feeling angry all the time
- Spiritual challenges – feeling disconnected from God or our usual spiritual practices
- Disconnection from our family or community
- Losing capacity to enjoy the things that we normally do for fun

When we notice these things, we should have a plan for how we can take action to build in some support for ourselves. The Guidelines for Mentors include some ideas on this.

Minimising the risks to mentors' mental health

- **Be discerning in selecting mentors.** If a potential mentor seems to be struggling to cope or has serious mental health challenges, they might not be the right person to be a mentor.
- **Ensure that mentors complete a personal wellbeing plan** (see Appendix 2b of the Guidelines for Mentors). It is important that mentors complete the plan ahead of time, so that if they feel they are struggling, they already have a plan in place. A wellbeing plan is a living document, so they can keep adding to it and reviewing it as they find more things that help them.
- **Ensure that mentors take a break between sets of mentoring sessions.** They should not go straight from one group of families to the next.
- **Let mentors know how and when they can contact the Mentor Supervisor for support.**
- **Meet with mentors regularly.** This could be once a week, with a group of mentors. During these meetings, the Mentor Supervisor should:
 - Give the mentors space to share about what is going well and what is challenging in the sessions
 - Share about any difficult situations they are coming across amongst their families (but make sure this stays anonymous)
 - Remind mentors about their personal wellbeing plans, and ensure that they are taking the actions they need to in order to protect their own mental health and wellbeing
 - Answer any questions raised by the mentors
 - Encourage the mentors
 - Check that the mentors are following all guidelines, and logging sessions successfully
 - Discuss the theme topics together before they carry out the next session
- If possible, you could also **set up a messaging 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).

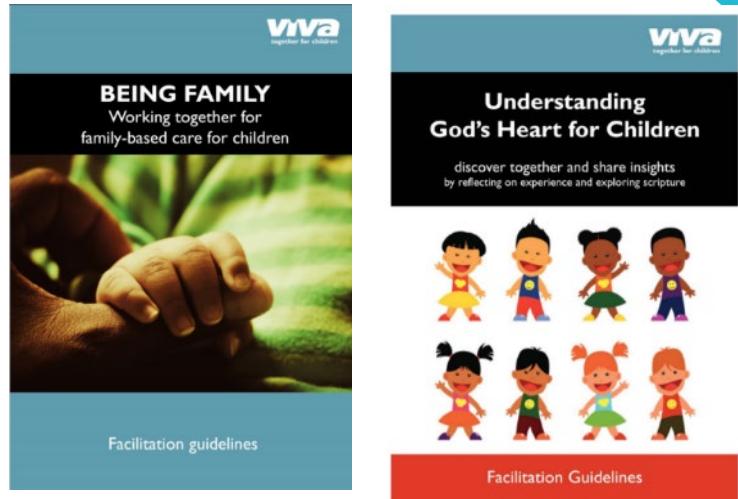
Support for the Programme Coordinator and/or Mentor Supervisor

As well as support to the mentors, it is also advisable for the Mentor Supervisor and the Programme Coordinator to have some outside support. For example, you could identify a psychologist, therapist or someone else with expertise in the area of mental health. This person could advise the Mentor Supervisor / Programme Coordinator when difficult topics are raised or when there are specific challenges which need to be addressed.

5. Ending the programme well

On the final session with a family, the conversation guide asks the mentor to ask if the family needs any additional support. The mentor could consider checking in on the families by phone call or in person in a month's time. They should also give families any relevant referral numbers so they know who to call to ask different questions.

You may want to think about follow-on programmes you could do. If you want to continue working with families on a longer-term basis, Viva has several family-focussed programmes which you could consider running, such as [Understanding God's Heart for Children](#), or [Being Family](#). Please contact Viva on info@viva.org to find out more about running these programmes or others like them.



Appendix: Sample incident report form

Part One – About You	
Your name:	
Your relationship to the person (alleged victim):	
Name of your organisation/Church:	
Part Two- About the person for whom you have a concern or who has made an allegation	
Person's name:	
Gender:	
Person's address:	
Who does the person live with?	
Person's date of birth / age:	
Parent's / carer's name(s):	
Home address (and phone no. if available):	
Siblings (if any):	
Part Three – About Your Concern	
How did you come to have a concern?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was abuse observed or suspected? • Was an allegation of abuse made? • Did a child/adult at risk disclose abuse? 	
Date (s) time (s) location (s) of any incident(s):	
Nature of concern/allegation:	
Observations made by you (Eg descriptions of visible bruising, other injuries, person's emotional state etc)	
NB: Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay (Skin maps may be included)	

Exactly what the person said and what you said
(record actual details, continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Any other information:

For example is the child/young person disabled? Do they have communication problems or a learning difficulty?

Were any other children/adults involved?

External agencies contacted – date, time, name of person dealt with and advice received:

Action taken by you

Signed _____

Date _____