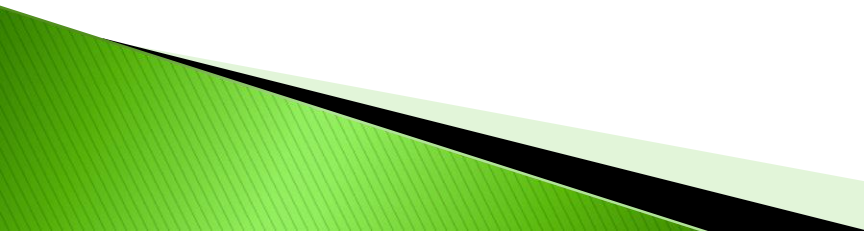
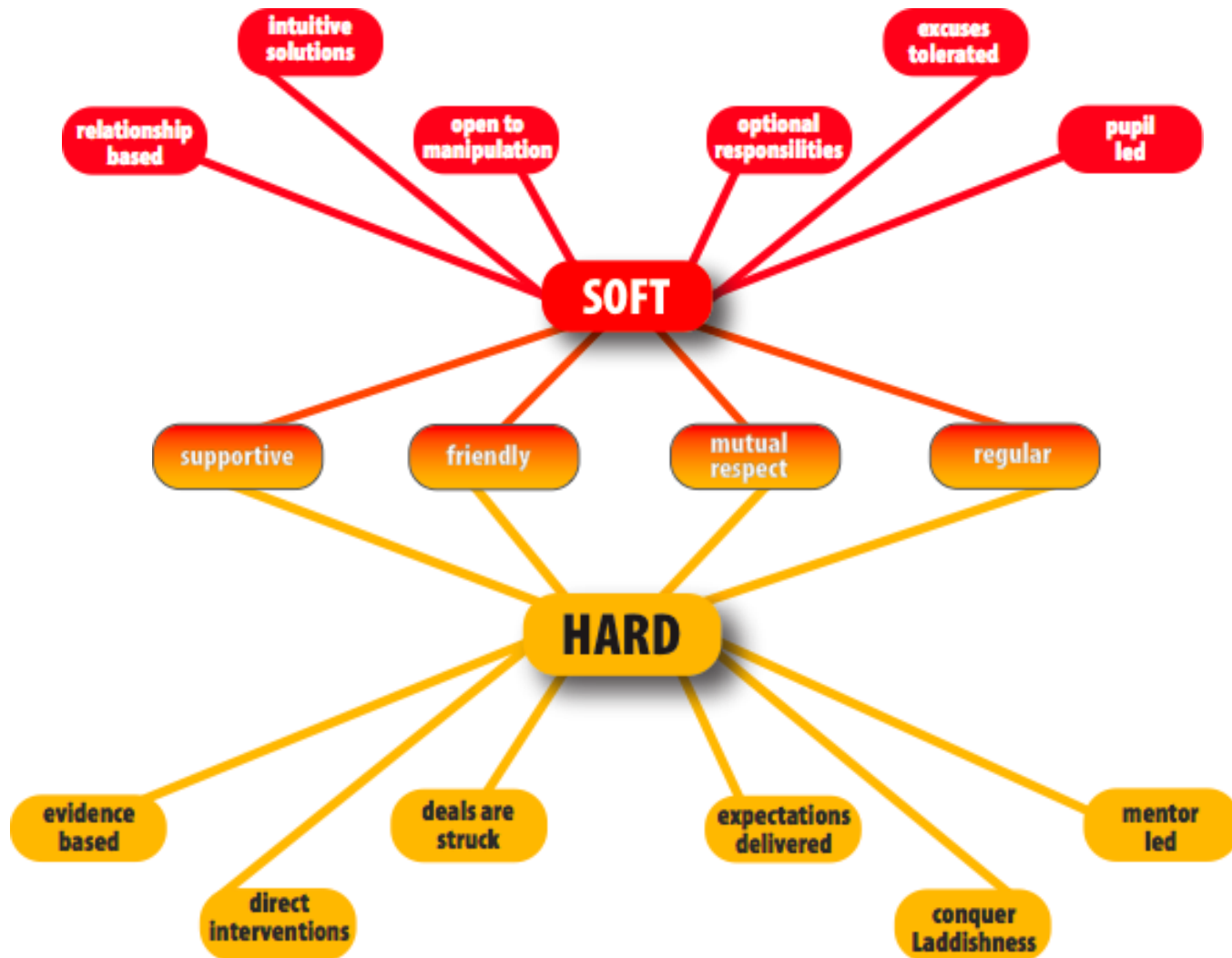


ASSERTIVE MENTORING

An effective method of supporting vulnerable students?

Why did we try it?

- ▶ It was first developed in a secondary school in the North East and proved highly effective in raising attainment of students (particularly amongst those who came from homes where there was little expectation of progression to FE and HE)
 - ▶ The programme has since been successful in many other pre-16 institutions.
 - ▶ In essence it is very simple and requires little more than data already available on Cristalweb
- 





soft and assertive mentoring differ significantly

Principles at Hurworth school


- ▶ Mentoring is *ASSERTIVE*– not *SOFT*
 1. Counselling/ emotional support is not the purpose of the programme
 2. The programme is ‘high profile’– SMT are all Mentors
- ▶ Meetings are target driven– based on tracking data

The FSFC Version!

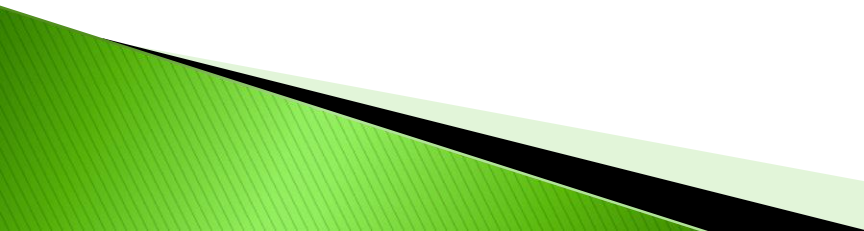
- ▶ Mentors– all senior members of staff
 - ▶ Tutors asked to recommend suitable candidates– fairly loose criteria
 - ▶ Student had to agree – initial commitment for a weekly meeting for 6 weeks
 - ▶ Parents informed of the mentoring arrangement
 - ▶ Mentors briefed on student's difficulties
 - ▶ Mentor and mentee paired up by me
- 

- ▶ Relevant subject teachers/CM's contacted to inform them of the mentoring pairing and explain what would be required of them each week (**REVIEW DATA**). Additional comments (and particularly points for praise) very welcome via email
 - ▶ Mentor made contact with all subject teachers to ascertain their perspective of the student and to discuss possible areas for action/intervention
 - ▶ Mentor immediately made contact with and agree an initial meeting time/venue
- 


The First Meeting

- ▶ Time limited– 30 mins. maximum (a gentler ‘coaching’ approach to start with)
 - ▶ Explain what Assertive mentoring is (hard v soft stuff!) Emphasise that weekly meetings will focus around data provided by their teachers, there will be check constant checking and excuses will not be accepted.....
 - ▶ Outline teacher’s concerns and look at current review data (including previous week’s attendance/punctuality if relevant)
 - ▶ Agree realistic targets for the next week
- 


Weekly Meeting

- ▶ Short (15mins?) sharp and to the point!
 - ▶ Focused totally around latest data and agreed targets from last meeting– student given a copy of the latest data for them to keep in their folder
 - ▶ Starts with something positive if at all possible.....
 - ▶ Targets set for next week and discussion possible strategies to achieve them
 - ▶ Agreed action(s) noted– student given copy or makes own notes.
- 


Between the weekly meetings

- ▶ Mentor checks that agreed action has taken place eg has the hwk been handed in or the student attending every lesson
 - ▶ IMMEDIATE intervention if student has not kept to their part of the bargain
 - ▶ Constantly liaison, as required, with teachers, tutors and if appropriate, parents
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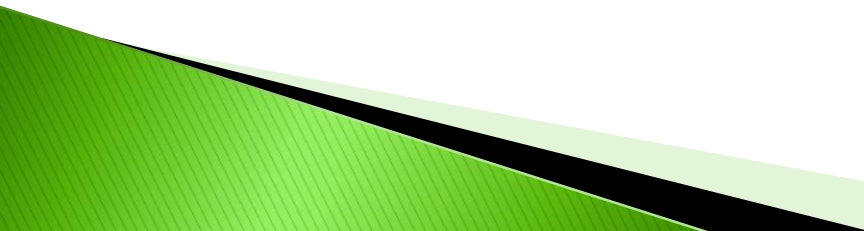
Ongoing

- ▶ I liaised informally with mentors and offered advice/ thoughts/ideas/ provided a sounding board etc.....!
 - ▶ Mentors met again towards the end of the initial 6 week period (beginning of Dec)
- 

Main frustrations:


- ▶ Attendance– students fail to turn up
 - ▶ Snow before Christmas caused much disruption and therefore good practice was hard to establish
 - ▶ Students lie/stretch truth/tell half truth etc and give varying versions of events to different teachers
 - ▶ Not all teachers are thoroughly on board with the AM programme
 - ▶ Data doesn't always correspond with teachers' expressed views– reluctance to be honest (?), and the review data is not updated often enough
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Main frustrations:

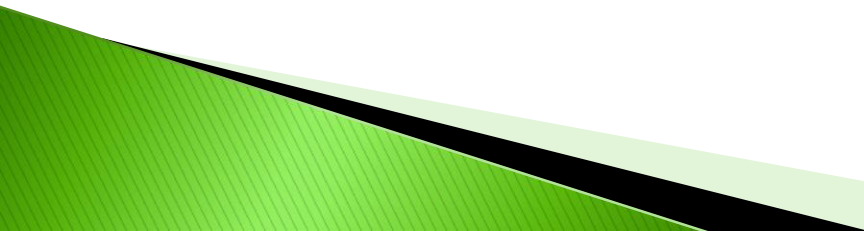
- ▶ Some staff are not as assertive as the Mentor and student 'gets away' with poor performance
 - ▶ There seem to be no consequences for non-compliance with the programme
 - ▶ **Referrals are flawed:**
 1. Entrenched habits– students are referred when they already have a long history of difficulty.
 2. Tutors refer students who agree to the programme– however, 'agreement' may be rather co-erced!
 3. Some students seem to have overwhelming/emotional/health difficulties which are beyond the remit of the programme
- 

Ongoing Issues

- ▶ When to proceed to disciplinary process
 - ▶ Relationship between Mentor, Teacher and Tutor

 - ▶ At the moment we need to keep paper copies of everything– in the future it should be possible to record most things on Cristalweb
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Modified Strategies

- ▶ Texting to be used to remind student of meeting
 - ▶ Only first year students to be accepted onto the programme– hopefully they are less entrenched in their under-performance
 - ▶ Tutors reminded that Mentees must be true volunteers and view the programme in a positive/supportive way
 - ▶ Students to be made aware from the outset that the programme is time limited and that if progress is not made, the agreement will be terminated
 - ▶ 6 weeks will be the initially agreed period of the agreement but further weeks can be added by mutual agreement
 - ▶ There will be no communication between Mentor and student's parents
- 

Did it work????!!!

- ▶ 12 students: 8 male. 4 female + 2 *quick leavers*
- ▶ Duration on programme: 8–16 weeks
- ▶ Improvement in grades in one or more lessons:
(deterioration in red!)
 1. Focus: 6 (2)
 2. Effort in lesson: 6 (3)
 3. Effort in hwk: 5 (4)
 4. Meeting deadlines: 4 (8)
 5. Consolidation: 2 (3)
 6. Exam technique: 1 (3)

Did it work???!!!

- ▶ Improvement in overall anticipated final grade in one or more subjects: 6
- ▶ Comment from Sociology CM:
‘What a great experience I have had with the Assertive Mentoring scheme. Jordan is being mentored by Stephani and she has managed to get Jordan from having submitted no work in the autumn term to meeting all her deadlines and using her free time effectively. It has made such a difference, Jordan is like a completely different person’

Conclusions

- ▶ Steep learning curve....!
- ▶ The new review data on Cristalweb is a superb tool for the Mentor
- ▶ The programme was developed in a secondary school and therefore requires modification:
 1. The 'assertive' rigour of confronting Mentees with evidence regarding their underperformance is essential– however, a 'coaching' approach is more appropriate in facilitating change in a post-16 setting
 2. Selection of Mentees needs to be more selective! A referral from a tutor is not sufficient
 3. It is not necessary to have only senior managers acting as Mentors
 4. Not everyone is cut out to be a mentor...

Next Year

- ▶ Carry on with the programme but modify in the light of this year's experiences:
 - ▶ Criteria for selection– use mostly 1st years who are not as entrenched in poor habits– Mentors to be given more opportunity to consider a possible Mentee and whether it would be appropriate to enter into an agreement
 - ▶ Aim to start 1st meetings at October ½ term
 - ▶ Staffing– modify existing team– some existing Mentors may wish to discontinue their involvement and others will be asked to join the team
 - ▶ Criteria for pairing must include concern in more than one subject
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