



Mandella Project Guidance Notes for Referral and Screening form

Referrer details

This will usually be an individual referring on behalf of an agency or establishment, for example the young person's teacher on behalf of the school, or his or her social worker. It is also possible for non-agency individuals to refer, such as parents or other concerned adults.

About the young person

Other names

These include nicknames, and alternative surnames.

Other telephone

This should include a cellular number.

Cultural groups

People in Canada come from many racial and cultural groups. The young person may belong to more than one group. This information will enable monitoring of referrals made of cultural groups and allow for diversity issues to be considered when creating a plan of action for any future intervention.

Family details

Who holds parental responsibility for the young person?

This question has implications for the issue of consent and who is informed about interventions that take place. Parental responsibility is not necessarily held by the young person's mother or father; it might for example, lie with the local authority.

If applicable, provide details about the young person's mother and father as well as any other guardian (such as foster guardian, other family members and step-parents). It is important to know about the young person's parents even if they are not living with the young person at the time of referral.

Other young people, children, adults in the house

It is important to know about siblings and any other people living with the young person being referred. This will help in preparing a full assessment and indicate if there are any other young people who may be in need of help. If the young person lives in a group or foster home, this section should only include those peers he or she spends most time with.

Current or previous social services involvement with any child

Not every referrer will have this information: for example, the young person's teacher may not know about social services involvement with an absent father. However, include as many details as possible: this will enable swifter, more detailed investigation by the lead agency in the future.

Educational details

This information will enable the program to make contact with the school (or other establishment) immediately, to provide a swifter service for the young person.

Has the young person been recognized with special educational needs?

A young person is defined as having special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty that requires special educational provision to be made for him or her. It should be noted if the young person has been diagnosed with a learning disability here.

Do you know if the young person has received any formal RCMP sanctions?

The young person being referred might have already received a police reprimand for offences committed. If any details are known these should also be recorded here. If there is not enough room to list all known offences they should be noted on a separate piece of paper.

Details of any other agencies you know are involved with the young person

It may be the case that other agencies are supporting the referral: note this here. Any other agencies or individuals known to be involved with the young person should also be mentioned here in order to speed up the assessment and provision of service to the young person.

Risk factors

The next section of the form contains a list of risk and protective factors that could apply to the young person being referred. These are grouped together in areas such as education for easy reference. Where the referrer believes that a factor applies to the young person it should be checked and brief evidence provided. Checkmark as many factors as apply to the young person in each group.

A young person's behaviour should be considered in light of their age and maturity – for example, characteristics such as 'gets easily bored' may be displayed by an 8-year-old as a matter of course, and not necessarily be a risk factor. Comparing an individual to his or her peers may provide evidence of age-specific behaviour.

Most of the factors are self-explanatory: guidance is provided below where further clarification might be needed. **Evidence refers to observations and examples.**

Evidence can include examples from:

- how the young person behaves at school
- how he or she interacts with family members
- the friends the young person spends time with
- things he or she has said to the referrer
- concerns that have been noted by other people.

Living and family arrangements

• Unstable family income

This may include a family that is dependant on some social services. While not necessarily a risk factor in itself, this could provide evidence for a larger problem (for example, a young person who does not have enough money to participate in positive leisure activities).

• Experiences inconsistent supervision at home

This includes changeable and erratic supervision by parents/guardian; an inability by parents/guardian to set boundaries; frequent changes in accommodation.

- **Experiences harsh discipline in the home**

This includes: excessive physical force; being locked as punishment.

- **Family is known to be involved in crime/delinquent behaviour**

'Family' here includes the mother, father, siblings and any influential secondary family members; (a cousin with whom the young person spends a lot of time, a friend living in the home, etc.).

- **Is currently experiencing unstable accommodation**

This includes young people who: - move around a lot because of being in foster care; - live in temporary accommodation; - are subject to eviction by the local authority.

School and education

- **Is regularly absent from school**

This includes absences both with and without parental/guardian consent. 'Regularly' can be defined as 2–3 times per month (either whole days or parts of days).

- **Bullies others at school**

This includes: name-calling, physical violence, threats, and isolating individuals from group activities.

- **Identified as needing special educational services**

While this is not a reason to refer a young person in its own right, the reasons for the special services may provide evidence and information for future intervention.

Neighborhood and friends

- **Lives in an area known for a high crime rate**

This can refer to an area defined by the official local authority as having particularly high levels of crime or it might simply be an area known locally as having a high crime rate.

- **There is a lack of age-specific facilities in the area**

For example, is there a lack of local playgrounds, sports facilities, youth centres or other activities targeted towards young people?

- **Does not use spare time constructively**

For example, is the young person always complaining about being bored and having nothing to do in his or her spare time? Does it seem that he or she wastes any spare time rather than participating in positive activities?

Substance use

- **Seems to see his or her substance abuse as a positive and/or necessary part of life**

This may be applicable if the young person believes that the abuse of drugs or alcohol significantly improves his or her day-to-day life (gives them extra confidence or popularity, for example). This is especially relevant if the young person believes it is impossible to get through the day without some form of substance misuse.

- **Is thought to be at risk of harm through use**

'Risk of harm' includes the need for medical treatment to deal with substance abuse; the dangers of sharing equipment; withdrawal symptoms.

Emotional and mental health

- **Has a condition that affects his or her everyday life (for example, ADHD)**

The risk here relates to the *impact* of a condition rather than its existence: for example, ADHD may have an impact on behaviour at school and affect a young person's learning curve, or suffering from Tourette's Syndrome may make it difficult to form appropriate friendships.

- **Has suffered a significant bereavement/loss that still affects him or her**

The risk here relates to the *impact* of such a loss: for example, one that still affects the young person's everyday functioning. Does the loss cause depression that makes it difficult to go to school, or has the young person sought out inappropriate friendship groups in order to feel better?

- **Seems to be suffering from emotional problems**

This can include anything that is happening in the young person's life that is causing emotional problems: the young person may have trouble sleeping due to problems at school, or become upset by negativity from family members.

Perception of self and others

- **Displays inappropriate self-esteem (too high or too low)**

This applies if the young person believes that no one understands him or her and all problems have to be dealt with alone; if the young person has an undue sense of his or her own self-importance and/or shows little consideration for others.

Thinking, behaviour and attitudes

It is especially important to consider the age and maturity of the young person in this section: for example, an 8-year-old may 'not seem to understand the consequences of his or her actions' by virtue of age alone, and so this should not necessarily be considered as a risk factor for the onset of delinquent behaviours.

- **Acts impulsively most of the time**

The main issue here is whether the young person is impulsive as a general rule, and if this can be seen as a defining part of his or her character. Does he or she ever weigh up the pros and cons of a decision, or nearly always rush into things without stopping to think?

- **Does not seem to understand the consequences of his or her actions**

For example, in relation to his or her own behaviour; or potentially the behaviour of friends or family. The young person should have some understanding of the immediate and direct results of actions (distress to the victim) although not necessarily the longer term consequences (a growth of fear of crime in his or her area).

- **Seems impatient, gets agitated easily if made to wait**

This applies if the young person needs to have things immediately and refuses to wait for anything: for example, the use of a piece of equipment in the classroom or attention from a parent/guardian.

Young person's vulnerability

This refers to potential harm being caused *to the young person*. It may be necessary to contact other mainstream agencies immediately with this information.

- **Due to the behaviour of other people**

This includes: bullying, abuse, intimidation, exploitation.

- **Due to events or circumstances**

This includes: separation, anniversary of a loss, change of care arrangements.

- **Due to his or her own behaviour**

This includes: risk-taking, self-harm, attempting suicide, drugs.

Risk of serious harm to others

This refers to the potential of serious harm being caused *by the young person* to other people. Serious harm means death or injury (either physical or psychological) which is life threatening and/or traumatic and from which recovery is expected to be difficult, incomplete or impossible.

Protective factors

As well as looking at the risks, it is important to highlight some of the good things about the young person (protective/positive factors). What positive factors already exist that can be promoted further in the future?

- **Demonstrates some ambition and future plans**

If the young person can think about the future and has a positive goal, he or she is more likely to be motivated to change his or her negative behaviour now in order to keep that positive goal on track.

Reasons for the referral

This section provides a narrative summary of the reasons for the referral. It should highlight any actual delinquent and/or offending behaviour by the young person that has provided evidence for the referral, as well as details of any impact on the young person, the family, individual victims, school or community.

What work has your agency been doing to deal with the behaviour and risk factors identified above?

This section should provide a summary of the work that was being done with the young person before the referral was made, and any impact this has had on his or her behaviour.

What assistance do you hope will come from the Mandella project?

Proposals could highlight areas where individual agencies may need to offer more help to the young person and his or her family.

Are you aware of any dangers associated with home visits?

These include the young person living in an area which has abandoned syringes, a house with a dangerous dog, and family members who have exhibited violence in the past.



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