

1. What is the mentoring program?

You have arrived in Germany and a lot of things are strange to you: the language, social interactions between people, food, the school and health system, the labor market, laws,... That is unsettling and maybe even causes fear.

In turn, people in Germany think of you as a stranger. Many Germans are uncertain, too. Some are even afraid of refugees.

Therefore, it is important that we get to know and understand each other. In general, we can learn a lot from one another! That's why *Flüchtlingshilfe Bonn e.V.* introduces refugees who look for long-term support to volunteers who want to help refugees on a long-term basis.

2. What is a mentor?

A mentor is a person who offers support. They do not get paid for what they do, because they are volunteers and use their free time to help you. Mentors are not experts or professional people, but "normal" people who just want to help and get to know their new neighbors.

A mentor is committed to confidentiality, that means you can tell or ask your mentor everything – he or she will not tell it to someone else.

3. How long does a mentorship take?

It does not matter, if you look for practical support or if you want to get to know people and learn about "the Germans" – a mentorship takes about one year. During this year you will spend around 2-3 hours per week with your mentor.

4. What can a mentor help with?

A mentor can help you with practical things, e.g., finding a German course, a flat or a job, accompany you to the doctor or to the authorities. A mentor can also help you to learn the language and practice speaking it. Or you can just spend time with each other, do something together and share thoughts and ideas.

5. What can a mentor not help with?

A mentor will not give or lend you money.

He or she will not do things that you could (learn to) do on your own. A mentor will not take automatically care of everything or ask all the time, if you need help. You have to tell him or her what you want and ask your mentor when he or she has time for that. Maybe your mentor doesn't want or is not able to fulfil some of your wishes. In that case, her or she can talk to us and together we will find a solution.

Your mentor is not able to accelerate asylum procedures or any other dealing with the authorities – we cannot do that either!

6. What can you do to make the mentorship work and feel good for the mentor, too?

- You should be open and honest towards your mentor. Otherwise it's difficult to build a good relationship.
- Don't be afraid to decline suggestions, if you aren't comfortable with them. In Germany it's perfectly fine to say "no"!
- Say explicitly what you want and don't wait for your mentor to ask. He or she will do that in the beginning but doesn't want to ask you all the time. Your mentor will be happy if you are proactive and tell him or her clearly what you want, because he or she will understand you then.
- Most people in Germany plan their days and weekends, not only official appointments but also personal meetings. For most mentors it is difficult to react spontaneously to a request. Discuss your matters as early as possible to give your mentor some time ahead.
- That also means that you inform your mentor as soon as possible about any letters from the authorities (BAMF, Jobcenter, Immigration office, Insurance etc.) that you do not understand or of which you are not sure what to do with them.
- Write down the appointments with your mentor and attend them. Your mentor has "reserved" the time with you and won't be able to just rearrange the appointment for an hour or a day. If you have to cancel an appointment, please tell your mentor as early as possible.
- Show your mentor that you value the commitment by accommodating him or her in terms of time and space. Of course you can invite your mentor to your home and welcome him or her as a guest, as you may know it from your own culture. But keep in mind that the mentor might also be happy to meet you outside or welcome you into their home.

7. What do I do if a problem arises?

It is absolutely normal that misunderstandings arise when two people from different cultures come together! If both know that, make an effort to understand each other and ask a lot of questions, then this is not a problem.

We also try to find you a mentor with whom you get along well. But, of course, that does not always succeed. If you have the feeling, that it doesn't work out with your mentor, please talk to us! Either we can clear up a misunderstanding or we end the mentorship and look for a new mentor who matches better.

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