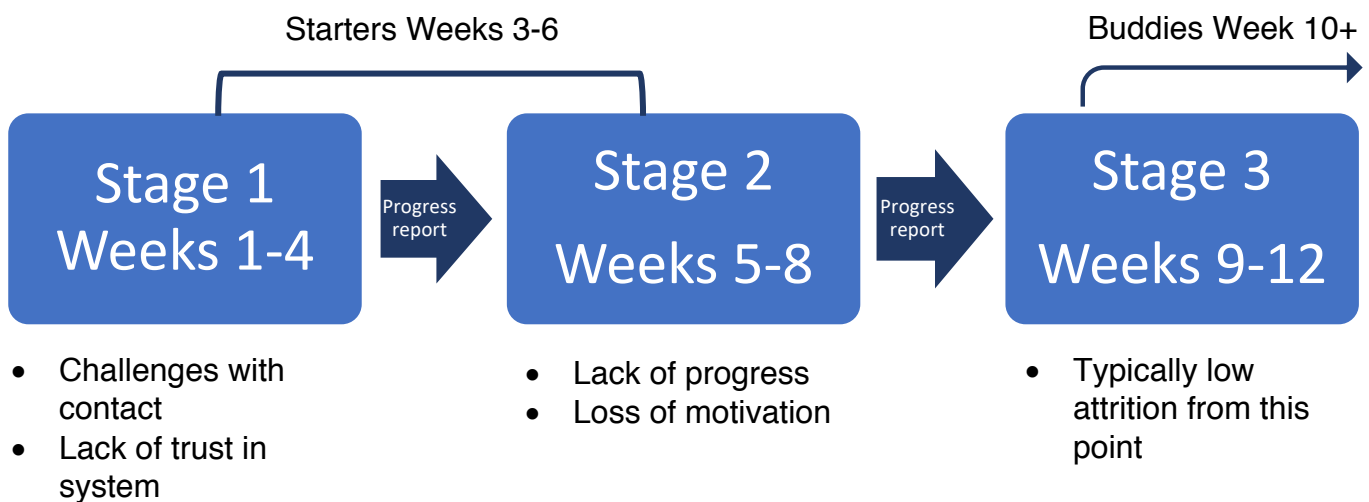


The Court Link Buddy Program



Objective: increase retention to completion among Court Link case management participants.

Features and context



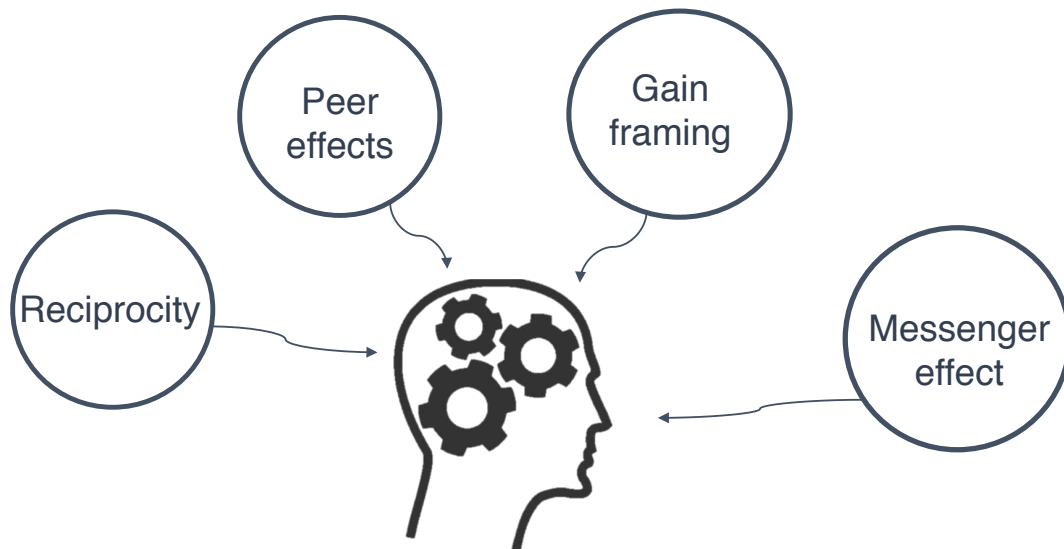
Starter and Buddy Organisation

- ‘Starter’ and ‘Buddy’ are paired through common case manager.
- ‘Starter’ from Weeks 3-6 – Requirements:
 - Contact and relationship with case manager must be well-established.
- ‘Buddy’ is from Weeks 10+ – Requirements:
 - Have completed the second progress report
- Suitability - Case manager determines fit for the buddy system and asks if they would like to participate.
- Completers can also be a ‘Buddy’ on a voluntary basis.

Meeting Organisation

- 2-3 meetings total.
- Meeting are scheduled either end-on (one after another) or overlapping with existing meeting times.
- Meeting is brief, flexible as appropriate with usual meeting length.
- Meeting is informal, case manager is present.
- Participants have a conversation about experiences, progress, challenges and goals. Case manager can use discretion to guide and facilitate conversation.

Behavioural mechanisms



- Reciprocity – Participants are more likely to be engaged as a ‘Buddy’ if they were a ‘Starter’ early in the program
- Peer effects – Positive modelling of progress, personal success story.
- Gain framing – Emphasising the individual benefits, links to strength-based approach.
- Messenger effect – Message more effective from peers, mitigates the negative impact of bad associations with authority.

Benefits

- Increases motivation and engagement with the program.
- Shifts participants mindset to focus on gains and see the future benefit of the program – aligns with strengths-based approach of Court Link.
- Aids Court Link’s objective to rebuild trust in court systems and support services.
- Increased return from investment made in initial referral stage as more are converted into completion.
- Therapeutic value for ‘Buddy’ through an opportunity to reflect on progress and give back to the program.

Evaluation

- Increase retention: higher rates of 12-week completion.
- Meaningful increase in completion rates is a desirable outcome.
- Trial in one new centre opening late 2019. Scale out to state-wide program if demonstrated efficacy.
- Ideally, evaluate using a randomised control trial to assess efficacy. Randomly distribute between participants in a single location.