

Students from Ashkelon Academic College and Bar-Ilan University have been engaged in a mentoring program for prisoners for about 30 years. Approximately 40 male and female criminology students in the final year of their bachelor's degree studies visit prisons once a week throughout the academic year to act as mentors to the prisoners. The program comprises two-hour sessions according to one of two tracks: individual mentoring with the support and guidance of social workers, and group mentoring with the support and guidance of corrections officers. Both the social workers and the corrections officers train the students ahead of the mentoring activities. Among other things, they familiarize the students with the existing arrangements in the various prisons and the precautionary measures they must take when engaging in their activities.

The social workers associated with the Prison Service liaise between the volunteer mentors and those prisoners the social workers determine would most benefit from individual mentoring; the corrections officers form groups of about 10 prisoners they determine would most benefit from participation in group activities led by the mentors. Allocation of mentors to activities is carried out according to the mentor's individual choice, based on their experience in working with populations at risk and their role as group moderators, as well as the demand in the various prisons. In most cases, the program is conducted over a period of about seven months, unless the prisoner is paroled, transferred to a different prison, or, in rare cases, dropped from the program.