

How to Build  
A Successful Mentoring Program  
Using the  
*Elements of Effective Practice*<sup>™</sup>



A STEP-BY-STEP TOOL KIT FOR PROGRAM MANAGERS

# Don't Forget the Free Tools!

Please note that this PDF does *not* include all of the tools available on the CD-ROM. You can review and download the tools you want directly from the web site:

## Tools for Designing and Planning

[http://www.mentoring.org/find\\_resources/tool\\_kit/design/](http://www.mentoring.org/find_resources/tool_kit/design/)

## Tools to Manage a Program for Success

[http://www.mentoring.org/find\\_resources/tool\\_kit/management/](http://www.mentoring.org/find_resources/tool_kit/management/)

## Tools to Structure Effective Program Operations

[http://www.mentoring.org/find\\_resources/tool\\_kit/operations/](http://www.mentoring.org/find_resources/tool_kit/operations/)

## Tools to Establish Evaluation Criteria and Methods

[http://www.mentoring.org/find\\_resources/tool\\_kit/evaluation/](http://www.mentoring.org/find_resources/tool_kit/evaluation/)

# Section VI.

## How to Structure Effective Program Operations

Now that you have ensured that your program will be well managed, as outlined in Section V, *How to Manage a Program for Success*, it's time to focus on the eight processes identified in the *Elements of Effective Practice* to ensure strong everyday operations:

- Recruit mentors, mentees and other volunteers;
- Screen potential mentors and mentees;
- Orient and train mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers;
- Match mentors and mentees;
- Bring mentors and mentees together for mentoring sessions that fall within the program parameters;
- Provide ongoing support, supervision and monitoring of mentoring relationships;
- Recognize the contributions of all program participants; and
- Help mentors and mentees reach closure.

In a review of studies of 10 youth mentoring programs, *Child Trends* concluded, “Mentoring programs that are driven more by the needs and interests of youth—rather than the expectations of the adult volunteers—are more likely to succeed.”<sup>1</sup> The review found that programs based on a “developmental” mentoring approach—in which mentors got to know mentees better, were flexible in their expectations of the relationships, and took their cues from mentees about activities—tended to last longer and were more satisfying for both mentor and mentee than programs based on the “prescriptive” approach, in which mentors viewed their own goals as paramount.

Mentoring program operations will be effective only when procedures and policies are focused on enhancing the well-being of every mentee. By following the guidelines in this section and making effective use of the tools provided, you'll be well on your way to a

mentoring program that satisfies the needs and goals of all involved.

### **BUILD THE RIGHT STRUCTURE**

The day-to-day operating procedures you establish for your mentoring program will greatly affect your program's quality and sustainability. Strive for consistency, compatibility, support and accountability.

From mentor recruitment to mentor/mentee matching, from orientation to relationship closure, make sure all participants clearly understand what your program expects of them—and what they can expect from your program, in terms of training and support. Frequent and honest communication between staff and participants is key.

Let's explore each of the eight essential functions for program operations in depth.

### **RECRUIT MENTORS, MENTEES AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS**

Recruiting mentors for your mentoring program should be driven by quality over quantity. Your mentor recruitment plan should focus on how well each prospective mentor can relate to the mentees in your program and fit in with your program's goals, structure and general culture. Realistically, not all prospective mentors or mentees will meet your program's requirements for participation. It's important to have procedures in place to notify prospects respectfully if their skills and background do not meet program requirements and, if appropriate, to involve them in your program in another role. If your program isn't able to accept a particular youth into the program, be sure that you can make referrals to other programs. This is another instance that illustrates the importance of building partnerships and collaboration in your community.

## WHO IS WILLING TO MENTOR?

In 2002, the AOL Time Warner Foundation, in partnership with MENTOR, sponsored a National Mentoring Poll of 2,000 adults. The poll found that:

- **57 million adults** would seriously consider mentoring;
- **99 percent of all mentors** already in a formal mentoring relationship would recommend mentoring to others;
- The majority of people **became mentors because they were asked**; 75 percent joined through an affiliated organization;
- **Potential mentors tend to:**
  - be between the ages of 18 and 44;
  - have household incomes of \$50,000 or more;
  - have some college education;
  - have access to the Internet; and
  - have a child in their household.
- **Of these potential mentors,**
  - 88 percent would like to have a choice among mentoring options (depending on their schedule and interests);
  - 84 percent want access to expert help;
  - 84 percent want orientation and training before mentoring;
  - 67 percent would like their employer to provide time off; and
  - 47 percent would be willing to mentor a youth online.

**For more information: [Mentoring.org/poll](http://Mentoring.org/poll)**

## Define Eligibility for Participants including Mentors, Mentees and Parents/Caregivers

The first step in recruiting mentors is to define eligibility for participation:

### Develop and write a mentor position description

Define the qualifications and attributes that mentors should have to successfully create and maintain an effective mentoring relationship. Ask peers and colleagues for feedback. When you're confident that you've identified the right criteria, create a position

description that includes the following:

1. Position title;
2. List of qualifications and required attributes;
3. Clear description of the functions the mentor will perform (including the required training for potential mentors);
4. Specific time commitments required (including frequency and duration of each visit; minimum length of time the mentor is expected to maintain the relationship with the mentee; and time to provide feedback to the mentoring program coordinator about activities; and progress); and
5. Location of the mentor/mentee meetings.

Keep in mind that not all people are suited to be mentors or will be compatible with your program's culture and expectations. Use the list of Characteristics of a Successful Mentor and the enclosed tools to help determine the criteria and attributes you'll require of your mentors.

### MENTORING TOOL

See "Mentor Recruitment Plan" and mentor job descriptions in the appendix and on the CD.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL MENTOR

- Caring
- Good listener
- Stable
- Can provide leadership
- Reliable (e.g., shows up on time)
- Committed
- Nonjudgmental
- Discreet (will keep information confidential)
- Patient
- Likes children
- Has a good sense of humor
- Tolerant
- Outstanding employment record
- Does not attempt to replace parent or guardian

SOURCE: DR. SUSAN G. WEINBERGER, PRESIDENT  
MENTOR CONSULTING GROUP INC.

### Select Sources of Mentors

You don't have to go it alone to recruit mentors and volunteers. Trying to blanket the general community with recruiting promotions can be costly, complex and time-consuming. Instead, partner with local organizations that have established volunteer networks, such as your State or Local *Mentoring Partnership* or Volunteer Center. Also, target organizations that have a large employee base and market the benefits of employee mentoring to their bottom line: 75 percent of employees in a corporate mentoring program reported that mentoring improved their attitude at work<sup>2</sup>. And remember to use your advisory group members—ask them to use their contacts to help you recruit mentors.

Many people get involved in mentoring through their participation in other organizations: employers, community groups, places of worship and so on.<sup>3</sup> The following local organizations can be valuable resources:

- Local business community;
- Civic organizations (Kiwanis, Junior League, Jaycees);
- Minority professional associations;
- Special-interest groups (Retired Senior Volunteer Program, American Association of Retired Persons);
- Universities and schools;
- Fraternities and sororities;
- Council of Churches; and
- Corporate volunteer councils.

### Select Mentors Who Support the Mission of Your Program

Individual motives affect the quality of the mentoring relationship. Good mentors don't view themselves as "rescuers" or as superior to participants. They simply understand that less experienced persons in tough situations need someone who really listens and cares.<sup>4</sup> When you are screening and interviewing mentor



### MENTOR'S VOLUNTEER REFERRAL SYSTEM

Broaden your recruitment efforts: register your mentoring program in MENTOR's Volunteer Referral System at [Mentoring.org/register](http://Mentoring.org/register), enabling prospective mentors who visit [Mentoring.org](http://Mentoring.org) to express an interest in learning more about your program. Registration is free, and all registered mentoring programs must adhere to the *Elements of Effective Practice*.

candidates, try to discern their motives and personal agendas. What do they hope to gain from the experience? What do they think they bring to a mentoring relationship?

### **Use Existing Research to Determine Who Is Likely to Mentor**

Studies by MENTOR,<sup>5</sup> Big Brothers Big Sisters and other groups have identified the kinds of people who are most likely to volunteer for and sustain mentoring relationships. Their findings include the following:

- Women are more likely than men to volunteer as mentors;
- Senior citizens are more likely to volunteer for school-based programs;
- Adults cite lack of time as the biggest barrier to mentoring, followed by the perception that they lack the necessary expertise to help a child;
- Individuals with higher incomes tend to sustain longer commitments than those with lower incomes, most likely because they have adequate resources to overcome barriers such as transportation;
- College students, while likely to volunteer, are more likely to have less stable mentoring relationships because of holiday schedules, exams and so on;
- Married volunteers ages 26 to 30 are more likely to terminate the relationship prematurely, probably because of the demands of their own family situations;
- Corporate, municipal and state employees often prefer school-based mentoring and make sustained commitments because their employers support their involvement; and
- Flexible models—such as “buddy mentoring,” in which two mentors share a mentee—make it easier for employed volunteers to mentor.

### **Emphasize the Benefits of Mentoring**

The benefits of mentoring go both ways.<sup>6</sup> Adult mentors often report that their mentoring experiences improved their lives in tangible ways. Not only do they feel better about themselves for playing a positive role in a child’s life, but they also find that mentoring teaches them more about themselves. Mentoring increases their sense of responsibility and accomplishment, and lays the foundation for better morale at work and better relationships with family, friends and coworkers. In fact, in a national survey of adults who mentored young people, 83 percent said they learned or gained something personally from their mentoring experience. They reported feeling that they had become a better person, developed more patience, developed new friendships, felt more effective and acquired new skills.<sup>7</sup>

#### **MENTORING TOOL**

See “Proven Guidelines to Increase Response to Promotions and Recruitment Campaigns” in the appendix of Section VI.

### **Market the Program**

In Section V, *How to Manage a Program for Success*, we discussed how to establish a public relations/communications effort to market your program to a variety of audiences. Promotion is only one part of an overall strategy to educate the public about your program and its value to the community. Promotion is about building your organization’s image and inspiring people to act. It is key to developing and implementing an effective volunteer recruitment plan.<sup>8</sup> While an overall public relations/communications strategy may include materials such as colorful brochures or video productions, promoting your program to potential mentors, volunteers and even potential partner organizations doesn’t need to be costly. Single-sheet flyers and direct-mail letters can be just as effective if they are well-written and tailored to a specific audience.

Take the following steps to design a consistent message for all your promotion pieces.

- **Create a defining slogan.** Remember, you're selling your program, so your slogan is your 30-second sales pitch. In those 30 seconds, you need to grab the reader's attention while conveying the need, value and benefit of becoming involved. A mentoring program slogan might read something like these:
  1. *"Life's simple pleasures: Gain more from them by spending time with a child who needs a friend. Call XYZ Mentoring Group and spend some time with us."* This kind of approach notes the emotional rewards of mentoring; portrays mentoring as uncomplicated, positive and fun; identifies the organization from the start; and includes a call to action.
  2. *"Enjoy the outdoors? Movies? Ice cream cones? Call ABC Mentoring Group and share them with a child who needs a friend."* Using a direct question draws the reader in immediately. This fun, lighthearted approach—which may also include employing humor—focuses on specific activities that mentors might share with mentees. It's intended for audiences who may balk at the weightiness of more powerful phrases such as "change a child's life" or "invest in our future."
- **Write promotional letters and flyers.** You can write effective direct-mail letters and flyers that appeal to numerous audiences, but you'll also need letters or flyers targeted to specific audiences, such as businesses or schools.

### **Conduct Awareness and Information Sessions for Potential Mentors**

Your recruitment campaign should include opportunities to promote your mentoring program to various groups by conducting mentor information sessions for target audiences. For example, if you are partnering

with a local business, hold information sessions for potential mentors at least twice a year. Many businesses, as well as colleges and universities, hold annual volunteer fairs for their employees or students. These fairs are a great opportunity to increase awareness of your program with potential volunteers.

### **Recruit Mentees**

Recruiting mentees is part of the intake process for involving youth in your mentoring program. If you're building a mentoring program to serve a specific youth population, such as a school-based mentoring program for students seeking academic or career guidance, you know where your potential participants are. If, however, your program is intended to serve a community-wide youth population that may not know about the program, organizations and agencies that work with youth could serve as valuable bridges to participants. The following are some examples:

- Departments of social services or welfare agencies;
- Employment and training agencies;
- Public and private schools;
- After-school programs;
- Community centers;
- Juvenile detention centers/ex-offender programs; and
- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers.

As you recruit mentees,<sup>9</sup> remember that it's important that youth decide voluntarily to participate in the program. Also, not all youth can benefit from mentoring, so it's imperative to follow the criteria for participation that you have identified during the steps described in Section IV, How to Design and Plan a Mentoring Program.

## SCREEN POTENTIAL MENTORS AND MENTEES

The screening process has three primary purposes:

- To screen for people who have the sensitivity, commitment and sense of responsibility to be great mentors;
- To screen out people who have the potential to harm youth or the program in any way; and
- To ensure that youth participants are eligible for and can benefit from your program.

Your program is responsible for screening prospective mentors and placing them in suitable roles. As a general rule, the more risk inherent in your program (i.e., the less supervision of the mentor/mentee meetings), the more rigorous your screening process should be. Careful screening improves the quality of your mentors and helps ensure the safety of youth involved in your program, while also managing your organization's level of risk and liability.

### Suggested Components of Volunteer Screening

Volunteer screening should include the following:

- Written application;
- Fingerprint criminal background check and related checks;
- Character reference checks;
- Face-to-face interview; and
- Participation in pre-match training.

Before you begin screening volunteers, your organization should develop a written policy documenting your screening process. This policy should include a list of elements that each prospective volunteer must complete, guidelines for selecting or disqualifying volunteers and clear instructions on interpreting a criminal history check. You should also keep in mind that information gathered through the screening process should be kept confidential. Also, always document what you find during the screening process and the

decisions you make about the volunteer. This documentation verifies that your program followed your written screening policies on each prospective mentor.

### Require Written Applications

The first step in the screening process is to require all prospective mentors to complete a written application, which includes the preferred grade level, age and gender of the young person with whom they wish to work and their preferences for meeting times. (Some programs match mentors only with individuals of the same gender and ethnic group. Others do not. This decision should be made in the program design phase.) The application includes a statement of the applicant's expectations, special interests (which are helpful in matching mentors with youth), a complete list of personal references and employment history. The application also includes a release statement that authorizes a background check, fully discharges the program from liability and claims and states the applicant's commitment to abide by program rules and regulations.

### Conduct Reference Checks, such as, Employment Record, Character Reference, Child Abuse Registry, Driving Record and Criminal Record Checks

Criminal background checks are critical, but they are only one element of a careful screening process. A robust system of reference checks and interviews of potential volunteers, evaluation of risk and ongoing monitoring should be a part of your organization's regular procedures.

### Criminal Background Check

The criminal background check system in the United States is complicated. Each state is the gatekeeper for background checks; that is, the state decides who can access background checks and for what purpose. There is no consistency from state to state on eligibility, process, cost and turnaround time. In many states, the most thorough types of background checks may not be available to mentoring organizations. Check with your state to find out what options are available.



#### MENTORING TOOL

See mentor applications, interview questions and reference forms in Section VI on the CD.

It can be very confusing for a mentoring program staff person to sort through the types of background checks that are available and decide what is the best. Below you will find information on factors to consider in selecting the background check your organization will use. There is no single criminal database in this country that includes every criminal record, so there is no “perfect” background check. Many organizations use a combination of two or three types of checks to get the most complete information.

- **Fingerprint-based vs. name-based.** A name-based check uses a person’s name and Social Security number to match any possible criminal records. There are several weaknesses with a name-based check:
  1. The volunteer could provide you with a false name and Social Security number. In fact, more than 1 percent of the 45 million individuals in the FBI criminal database have used more than 100 aliases and false Social Security numbers.
  2. Female volunteers may have two or more different last names if they have been married one or more times. If you check only the current name, you can miss criminal records.
  3. Criminal databases can have mistakes in the spelling of an individual’s name and other relevant information. A name-based check might miss a criminal record if the record itself contains mistakes.
  4. Because many names are similar, you can get a “false positive”—your potential volunteer seems to have a criminal record, but the record actually belongs to another person with the same name.

A fingerprint-based check is the only way to verify a person’s identity and ensure that the criminal records found are for the right person. However, in many states, fingerprint checks are not available to mentoring organizations. A reliable and thorough option for mentoring programs is SafetyNET, a fingerprint-based search of the FBI’s nationwide criminal database. More information on SafetyNET is included later in this section.

Additional background checks include:

- **County/local checks.** Background checks of a county or local jurisdiction can be obtained through the local police department. These checks include only crimes committed within that jurisdiction. Conducting a county search is better than doing no background check at all, but there are weaknesses. People in our society are very mobile; they move around a lot and may work and live, take vacations and business trips or serve in the military in different counties. In large metropolitan areas, an individual may pass through three or four counties in the course of a day’s activities. In addition, if you check the counties where your volunteer has lived over the past three to five years, you are relying on the volunteer to be truthful about past residences. Use county or local searches with great caution, because you will miss any criminal offenses committed in other jurisdictions.
- **State background checks.** These background checks are obtained through a state agency (the specific agency varies from state to state). They include only crimes committed in that state, so the limitations in a county check also apply to a state check. Also, costs and response times vary widely from state to state. Some states allow fingerprint-based checks, some allow only name-based checks, and some offer both types for different fees. Most state checks also include arrests, but a few include only convictions. A list of State Criminal History Record Repositories is available at [www94311.temp.w1.com/csb/csb\\_crim.htm](http://www94311.temp.w1.com/csb/csb_crim.htm).
- **Private vendor checks.** Dozens of private vendors advertise their ability to conduct criminal background checks. The costs, response times and quality of these checks vary widely from company to company. Private background checks are generally name-based and usually find only convictions, not arrests.

Private vendors use two basic methods to conduct background checks. Some search county record repositories for the volunteer’s county of residence for the past three to five years, which has the same drawbacks as a county search. Other vendors main-

tain databases of criminal records, often searchable online. Some of these vendors advertise their background checks as national in scope, but they are actually only multistate. These vendors buy criminal data from individual states; but many states have strong privacy laws and do not sell any criminal data. Other states sell only a portion of their data (e.g., parole records but not full conviction or arrest files). This means that when you run a search through a private vendor, you are accessing complete records from a few states, partial records from many states and no records from many states.

If you are using a private vendor check, find out as much as you can about what method the vendor uses to conduct the background check and what data is accessed.

- **FBI checks.** The FBI maintains the most complete criminal database in the United States. It contains more than 200 million arrest and conviction records of more than 45 million individuals. All records are fingerprint-based. Five to seven thousand new individuals are added to the FBI database every day when persons are arrested for the first time. The database is made up of all federal crimes plus approximately 70 to 90 percent of each state's criminal databases. Low-level misdemeanors and citations are generally not present in the FBI database, so programs that use an FBI check may wish to supplement it with a driver's license check or a state background check to access these records.

To obtain an FBI check, you must go through your state background check agency. Unfortunately, many states have strict eligibility requirements for FBI checks, and mentoring organizations often don't qualify. When FBI checks are available, they may be very costly or have a lengthy turnaround time.

Mentoring organizations can access FBI checks through SafetyNET through January 31, 2006. MENTOR hopes that the SafetyNET pilot will become a permanent program beyond 2006. Through SafetyNET, any mentoring organization in the country can get an FBI check on a volunteer for \$18, with results returned in three to five business days. To learn more

about SafetyNET or to apply to join the pilot, visit [Mentoring.org/SafetyNET](http://Mentoring.org/SafetyNET).

Many mentoring programs conduct other types of checks to supplement their criminal background checks. The following are some examples:

1. **Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) check.** This check provides information about an individual's license records, including license convictions, reportable accidents, license expirations, suspensions or revocations, license restorations, driving under the influence charges (DUIs) and point/insurance reduction completion. Depending on state rules and regulations, the prospective volunteer rather than the mentoring program may need to submit the check. A list of state DMVs is available on the Drunk Driving Defense Web site at [www.drunkdrivingdefense.com/national/dps-offices.htm](http://www.drunkdrivingdefense.com/national/dps-offices.htm).
2. **State sex offender registries.** Most states now have sex offender registries that are available online, making it easy to search several states for an individual. Any crimes that would cause an individual to be on a sex offender registry should show up in a state or FBI criminal background check, but this is a good double check. However, sex offender registries are not reliable as the only method of doing a background check; they depend on the offender to update the registry when he or she moves, so they are usually dated. A list of state sex offender registries is available on the FBI Web site at [www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/states.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/states.htm).
3. **Child abuse registries.** A few states allow organizations that work with children to check an individual against the child abuse registry. These databases often include complaints of abuse that did not result in arrest or prosecution and so would not be in a criminal database. Try contacting your state's department of child welfare to see if the child abuse registry is accessible.

MENTOR strongly recommends that your program conduct criminal background checks for all volunteers. At the same time, criminal background checks are no substitute for personal reference checks and a face-to-

face interview. An interview can give you solid clues as to whether your applicant has the characteristics to make a good mentor, such as patience, flexibility, commitment and an open mind. But only by asking for and then checking with individual personal references will you get a more complete picture of the applicant.

### Conduct Face-to-Face Interviews

Review and discuss the mentor position description with candidates to ensure that they understand the program's expectations. Know what questions you want to ask before the interview. Explore not only the personal



#### MENTORING TOOL

See screening tools, including a list of interview questions, in Section VI on the CD.

attributes you'll require, but the practical expectations as well. Will the mentor's daily routine leave adequate time for a mentoring relationship? Is the candidate close enough geographically to the meeting location so that transportation will not pose a problem? Will the candidate be comfortable with the level of supervision you intend to provide? Give the applicant the opportunity to ask questions and provide honest, forthright answers.

### The Potential Child Molester

Watch out for characteristics and areas of concern that may surface in volunteer screening and carefully explore them with an eye to detecting the high-risk individual. The possession of one or two of these characteristics does not constitute a concern, but if an

## INDICATORS OF THE POTENTIAL CHILD MOLESTER

- Over-identification with children: in his or her interaction with children, regresses to their level of behavior, relinquishes adult role and responsibility, or tends to become more like the child.
- Exaggerated animation around children: eyes light up and expression heightens in reference to children.
- Premium on one-on-one activities: prefers low visibility over those activities that involve a group.
- Indication of anxiety regarding adult sexuality.
- Extremely judgmental attitude toward homosexuality.
- Describes the type of child he or she wants to mentor in specific terms, emphasizing specific physical or emotional characteristics (e.g., wants child with blonde hair, age nine, very shy).
- Overly anxious to be matched immediately.
- Absence of appropriate peer relationships—confines circle of friends to significantly younger associates.
- History of being abused, neglected or sexually victimized.
- Character immaturity: shy, withdrawn, or passive.
- Police record.
- Dating history or sexual development does not follow "normal" pattern.
- Does not have meaningful relationships with other adults.
- Applicant has found his or her own mentee and tries to get the agency to "legitimize" the match.
- Premature separation from military service.
- Abuse of alcohol or other substances.
- No ambition for responsibility.
- History of moving from job to job or place to place.
- Becomes extremely angry or defensive when asked to submit to a criminal background check, even after the reasons for this are explained.

SOURCE: *THE ABCS OF MENTORING*, MENTORING PARTNERSHIP OF LONG ISLAND, 2003.

overall pattern begins to emerge, it should be discussed with a clinical supervisor (if you have one) or your program coordinator.

### Screening Out Mentors<sup>10</sup>

Some people don't make good mentors. There are no hard-and-fast rules other than the obvious ones: criminal record, history of child abuse and so forth. However, you may want to also screen out those who exhibit the following characteristics:

1. Don't have enough time to commit to being consistent in their mentoring;
2. Seem to be volunteering for status or job promotion reasons;
3. Hold rigid opinions and don't seem open to new ideas;
4. Seem too concerned about what a mentee can do for them;
5. Want to be a mentor so they can work out problems from their own past; or
6. Do not have skills that match your program's needs.

### How to Say No

If a potential mentor exhibits any of these traits, it is best not to accept that applicant. Remember, there is no legal right for interested volunteers to serve as mentors. You may want to offer the volunteer a different opportunity, so it's a good idea to be prepared with a list of volunteer assignments other than mentoring: fundraising, office work, public relations and so on. When you must turn down an applicant, here are some things you might say:

1. "We have no mentees who would match well with you at this time."
2. "Your skills and interests don't fit our mentoring profile, but we'd like to have you involved with the program. Might I suggest some other important volunteer opportunities?"

### Interviewing Mentees

After youth are selected to participate or receive a referral from a parent or caregiver, the next step is to provide an orientation to the youth and parent/caregiver to determine if the program is appropriate to their needs. If the mission of your program meets their needs and expectations, you can then screen the youth through an intake interview.

Focus the interview on the youth's eligibility for participation. Use it to assess the youth's attitude and interest in the program and to help you make an appropriate match. You can also use the interview to gather personal information about the youth and outline the program expectations and policies to the parent/caregiver. If you determine that the youth could benefit from participation in the mentoring program, have the parent/caregiver complete and sign a consent form and arrange for the mentee to receive training.

### Hold Orientations

#### MENTORING TOOL

See orientation and training agendas and handouts in Section VI on the CD.

Conducting orientations as part of the screening process can also serve as a mechanism to weed out prospective participants who do not have the time or the motivation to participate in the program. Detailed information on mentor and mentee orientation sessions is included in the following section.

### ORIENT AND TRAIN MENTORS, MENTEES AND PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Establish a schedule that includes orientation and training for mentors and mentees. In this section, we will focus on key components for orienting, training and supporting mentors and mentees.

#### Mentor Orientation

By providing prospective mentors with a pre-match orientation, you allow them to make a more informed decision about whether to participate in your program. It also gives them the chance to meet other prospective

mentors and begin an informal support group. Make sure all your program staff members attend mentor orientations.

### **Provide an Overview of the Program, Clarify Roles, Responsibilities, Expectations and Discuss How to Handle a Variety of Situations**

In order to adhere to the *Elements of Effective Practice*, your agenda should include the following:

- An overview of the program, including mission and goals;
- The qualities of successful mentors, including a mentor job description that outlines program expectations and requirements;
- A description of eligibility, the screening process, suitability requirements and length of the screening and matching processes;
- The level of commitment expected (time, energy, flexibility, frequency);
- Benefits and rewards of participation;
- A summary of program policies, including those governing privacy, communications, liability and evaluation; and
- Safety and security, including use of the Internet.

You can use this opportunity to handle administrative matters, such as having prospective mentors fill out program forms, personal reference forms and release forms for criminal background checks. This is also a good time to distribute your schedule of mentor training sessions. Allow enough time for questions and answers at the end of the orientation. Your prospective mentors should clearly understand the goals of your mentoring program as well as a mentor's roles and responsibilities.

### **Mentor Training**

The investment you make in initial and ongoing training of mentors contributes to the success of your program in a number of ways. Your training should be geared to helping mentors achieve the following:

- Become more skilled at developing caring mentoring relationships;

#### **MENTORING TOOL**

See training handouts on building relationships in the appendix of Section VI.

- Learn about the challenges and barriers their mentees face and how to become more sensitive to those challenges and their effect on mentees; and
- Gain confidence in their ability to make a difference in the lives of their mentees, which will motivate and sustain their enthusiasm for the program.

Mentors are most successful when they receive thorough training *before* they are matched with young people and receive coaching and support *throughout* their involvement. Mentors can fill many roles; experience from established mentoring programs reveals four major tasks that mentors typically carry out. During initial trainings, make sure you cover the four major tasks<sup>11</sup> of mentoring:

#### **1. Establishing a positive personal relationship.**

The quality of each mentoring relationship depends on the extent to which the mentor and the mentee come to know, respect and trust each other. A relationship with a supportive person is the most important factor in a young person's personal growth. Youth participants often gain a sense of self-worth when they recognize that a caring adult other than their parent is willing to invest time and energy with them. To ensure that a positive personal relationship develops, your training should cover effective communication skills, the lifecycle of a mentoring relationship, mentor do's and don'ts, how to deal with emotional issues young people may have, how to work with mentees' families, how to handle difficult situations and how to say good-bye when a mentoring relationship ends. Role-playing is an effective method to help prospective mentors learn how to deal with these issues.

#### **2. Helping young people develop life skills.**

Mentors can help mentees develop life-management skills, such as decision making, values clarification and long-range planning. Through these skills, the young person can gain economic independence and personal empowerment. To facilitate the development

of these skills, your training should teach mentors how to help young people build their communication skills, manage time and set goals.

3. **Assisting in case management.** Through training, mentors can become knowledgeable about the social services available in their mentees' communities and, in collaboration with program staff, help their mentees access these services. Training should also help mentors understand what they are required to report to the mentoring program coordinator should their mentee share anything that could affect the mentee's safety. In addition, training should help prospective mentors know what documentation they must regularly provide to the program coordinator to facilitate effective monitoring of the match. Such documentation should include monthly activity reports.

4. **Increasing awareness of and ability to interact with other social and cultural groups.** Training should help mentors better understand multicultural issues, as well as issues currently affecting youth. Characteristics of youth and strategies on how to work with different age groups are included in the appendix of this section and in the adolescent development section of the *Community Mentoring for Adolescent Development* manual, which can be downloaded at [www.mentoring.org/training\\_manual](http://www.mentoring.org/training_manual).

While you should cover all of these tasks thoroughly, you'll want to prioritize them according to your program's goals and the training needs of your mentors.

Every quarter, provide your mentors with ongoing training and support. Bring them together to ask questions, exchange ideas and share experiences. Also, consider inviting guest speakers, such as former mentors and mentees, to share their experiences. Such give-and-take helps create a mentor network and support group. In addition, ensure that your mentors understand that they can turn to your program coordinator for guidance and help whenever difficulties arise in their mentoring relationships.

Additional topics for ongoing mentor training include the following:

- Clarifying values;
- Solving problems;
- Learning counseling skills;
- Understanding youth;
- Dealing with substance abuse;
- Learning leadership skills; and
- Understanding emotional problems.

### **Mentee Orientation and Training**

At the mentee orientation, outline your expectations for the youth who are participating in your mentoring program. Make roles and responsibilities clear to minimize the potential for misunderstandings.

In addition, youth participants need the opportunity to address their concerns about mentoring. In developing your curriculum, put yourself in the young person's shoes. Make sure the orientation answers questions such as these:

- Who is this person I'll be spending time with?
- What can mentoring do for me?
- How much time will mentoring take?
- Are all this time and effort worth it?

Give young people the opportunity to talk about what they want to get out of the mentoring program. Also, schedule time for them to get to know one another and begin developing a sense of community with other participants.

Consider including these additional topics in the orientation or training:

- What to expect—and what not to expect—from mentors;
- Basic communication skills (nondefensive statements, assertiveness, listening skills);
- Ways to interact with mentors (activities, problems mentors can help with); and

- What to do when things aren't working out with a mentor (basic problem-solving and conflict resolution skills).

Invite parents/caregivers to the orientation and hold a question-and-answer session afterward to allay any fears and address additional concerns. Parental participation and consent are crucial to creating the atmosphere for a successful mentoring relationship. Assure the parent/caregiver that the mentor's primary role is to provide guidance and friendship to the child, not to become a substitute parent. Involve parents/caregivers by asking them to do the following:

- Notify their child's mentor or the program coordinator when their child can't make it to a scheduled meeting;
- Attend and help with group meetings or end-of-year celebrations; and
- Meet with the program coordinator to share concerns and assess progress.

### MATCH MENTORS AND MENTEES

A review of "What Makes a Successful Mentoring Relationship?" in Section III will be helpful as you embark on matching young people with the most appropriate mentors. When you are considering potential matches, ensure that the prospective mentor and mentee:

- Meet your program's eligibility criteria;
- Share some or all of the following traits: gender, age, language requirements, availability, needs, interests, geography, life experience and temperament; and
- Are committed to the conditions of the match and the mentoring relationship.



#### MENTORING TOOL

See matching criteria, in Section VI on the CD.

Successfully matching mentors with youth takes preparation. Give mentors and mentees an opportunity to do the following:

- State their needs and personal preferences with regard to the match;
- Know how matching decisions are made; and
- Request a different match if, after a reasonable effort, the original match is not satisfactory.

### Use Established Criteria

In matching mentors with young people, you'll need to use preestablished criteria, which may include these points of compatibility:

- **Personal preferences.** Mentors and youth may request someone of the same gender, a certain age range or another characteristic. You should honor such requests whenever possible.
- **Temperament.** Try to ensure that personality and behavior styles mesh. Does the mentor have a nurturing, familial approach or a more formal approach? Match the mentor with a young person who responds best to that mentor's particular style.
- **Life experiences and interests.** All else being equal, matches made on the basis of similarities (e.g., hobbies, lifestyle and family makeup) usually lead to strong relationships. (See Dr. Jean Rhodes' article "What Makes Mentoring Work," which can be found in the Research Corner at Mentoring.org.)
- **Race.** Depending on your program's goals, race may be an important factor in the matching process. Pairing mentors with young people of the same race can encourage greater candor and frankness. That kind of strong rapport between mentors and young people is essential in forging a trusting, long-term relationship.

Some programs allow young people to choose their own mentors. Self-selection can help relationships form more naturally, on the basis of mutual interest. On the downside, this may mean a mentor's preference can't be honored. Mentors or youth who do not get their first choice may be disappointed.

## Arrange an Introduction Between Mentors and Mentees

After you have matched a mentor with a mentee; give each one basic information about the other. The type of information you provide will depend on the type of mentoring you offer. For example, if your mentoring pairs meet strictly on site at a school or community center, you would not provide home addresses and telephone numbers. On the other hand, if your program is community-based and allows pairs to meet on their own in the community, you would need to supply personal contact information.

It's up to the program coordinator to determine how best to arrange for mentors and mentees to meet for the first time. Pairs can meet in a group setting or individually. Some programs hold a group meeting and provide mentors and mentees with nametags. Mentees must mingle in the crowd to find their mentor. Icebreakers are useful for the first mentoring meetings; for example, you could have mentors and mentees interview each other.

## Ensure Mentors, Mentees and Parents/ Caregivers Understand and Agree to the Terms and Conditions of Program Participation

All participants should have signed an agreement in which they commit to follow the program's guidelines on training, frequency of contact, confidentiality and meeting documentation. The first meeting is a good time to reinforce these guidelines with mentors and mentees and get them excited about their new relationship.

## Rematching Mentors and Mentees

Before you attempt to rematch a mentor with another mentee (or vice versa), the program coordinator should meet with each person to discuss whether it would be



### MENTORING TOOL

See icebreakers and group activities in Section VI on the CD.

possible for either or both to improve their match by making some changes.

You may want to insist on a cooling-off period before you attempt a new mentor/mentee match, especially if either partner is angry or needs to learn more interaction skills. It's important for both the mentor and the mentee to feel closure with their previous relationship before they are matched with someone else. You may need to divert the mentor's energy into volunteering in another capacity if that individual seems unable to work well as a one-to-one mentor. In some cases, you may need to end a volunteer's involvement altogether.

Despite your best efforts, some matches will falter, but you don't have to struggle with these challenges alone. Look to the appropriate resources listed here or turn to mentoring peer professionals or MENTOR's State and Local *Mentoring Partnerships* for guidance or support before you dissolve a troubled mentoring relationship. Learn from these experiences and apply the lessons to the successful matches you'll be making in the future.

Review "Provide Ongoing Support, Supervision and Monitoring of Mentoring Relationships" later in this section for additional information on troubleshooting matches and recommendations on how best to provide support and monitoring of mentoring relationships in your program.

## BRING MENTORS AND MENTEES TOGETHER FOR MENTORING SESSIONS THAT FALL WITHIN THE PROGRAM PARAMETERS

### Provide Safe Locations and Circumstances

It's paramount that program participants meet in safe and comfortable locations. Mentoring meetings and activities form the basis for the development of trusting and caring relationships between mentors and mentees. Successful mentoring programs do the following:

- Foster a sense of ownership and belonging among volunteers and participants. Be sure to get participants involved in planning program activities.

- Sponsor a mix of group activities that support program goals and encourage interaction among all participants in addition to one-to-one activities. Group activities foster a sense of community for both mentors and mentees, providing informal support for the mentors and a strong support system for mentees. Examples of group activities are field trips, social get-togethers, community service projects, recreational/cultural events, awards and recognition events and skill-building workshops.



**MENTORING TOOL**

See activity ideas, goal-setting forms and Internet resources in Section VI on the CD.

**Provide Resources and Materials for Activities**

Although the final mix of activities will be decided in part by the mentors and participants, some activities should be built into the program design and are strongly encouraged.

**EXAMPLES OF MENTOR ACTIVITIES**

Type of Activity	Examples
Skill-building workshop	Interviewing practice, goal setting
Social get-together	Picnic, potluck dinner, parents' night
Recreational/cultural	Concerts, sporting events, mentoring program sports teams (bowling, softball)
Field trips	Museums, colleges, local businesses
Community service	Neighborhood cleanup
Awards/recognition	Parent/family night, formal reception

**PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT, SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS<sup>12</sup>**

Successful mentoring relationships do not just happen. Although most mentoring pairs will derive enough pleasure from the experience to keep them going, some reach an impasse that makes them begin to doubt their willingness to continue. That's why providing ongoing support and supervision is so important.



**MENTORING TOOL**

See survey forms and guidelines in Section VI on the CD.

**Offer Continuing Training Opportunities for Program Participants**

Programs should offer special training sessions on a wide array of topics, including

diversity and cultural sensitivity, conflict resolution, problem-solving skills, teen sexuality and pregnancy, communication skills and skills for setting limits. In the "Orient and Train Mentors, Mentees and Parents/Caregivers" section, we listed some possible training topics. You may also want to repeat popular training topics.

**Communicate Regularly with Program Participants and Offer Support**

The program coordinator should contact each mentor within the first two weeks of the match to see how things are going, then follow up every two weeks for the next few months. Contact can be made by phone, by e-mail or in person. Once the relationship appears to be making progress, the program coordinator might try contacting mentors once a month to ensure that the match continues to make progress and to address any problems that may arise.

Another way to offer support to participants is to observe and interact with mentors and young people during planned activities.

### **Help Mentors and Mentees Define Next Steps for Achieving Mentee Goals**

Refer to the CD for sample goal-setting activities, and look for sample forms in MENTOR's *Learn to Mentor Tool Kit* at [www.mentoring.org/mentor\\_training](http://www.mentoring.org/mentor_training) or [www.mentoring.org/mentee\\_training](http://www.mentoring.org/mentee_training).

### **Bring Mentors Together to Share Ideas and Support**

Schedule regular opportunities for groups of mentors to come together to discuss common problems and to socialize. Include time for problem-solving, discussion, ongoing training and networking. You may want to divide each meeting into sections by topic or dedicate a meeting to one activity (e.g., problem-solving). Consider holding similar sessions with mentees. Use the feedback to refine your program and increase mentor/mentee retention.

### **Establish a Process to Manage Grievances, Resolve Issues and Offer Positive Feedback**

Establish a formal process for managing grievances, rematching mentors and mentees, solving interpersonal problems, handling crises and bringing closure to relationships that end prematurely. Make sure that all participants clearly understand the process and that relevant documents are maintained in a confidential file.

### **Assist Mentors and Mentees Whose Relationship Is Not Working Out<sup>13</sup>**

Working to effect positive change in someone's life is an unpredictable business, and mentoring isn't always easy. Because mentoring involves creating a new personal relationship, disappointments and hurt feelings are possible. Many problems that arise out of misunderstandings are not addressed. Frequently these misunderstandings come from cultural, ethnic or religious differences. It's important to have a set procedure for handling potential conflicts within a pair before issues arise. Establish a policy that encourages mentors and mentees to talk openly and honestly, and to inform the program coordinator immediately of questions or struggles in their relationship. The primary objective when the mentoring pair experiences difficulties is to help them successfully resolve their own differences. Healthy, supportive relationships depend on candid

give-and-take between mentoring pairs and program staff.

You can also help in the following ways:

- Coach the mentor and mentee separately;
- Bring them together for a mediated discussion;
- Introduce the problem to a support group of mentors; and
- Introduce the problem to a support group of mentees.

Finally, stay alert for mentors or mentees who want a new match right away or who are not compatible with their second or third mentor or mentee. Their complaints may signal other problems.

### **Ensure Appropriate Documentation is done on a Regular Basis**

For information on the types of documentation to gather, refer to "Design a System to Monitor the Program" in Section V, How to Manage a Program for Success.

## **RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

### **MENTORING TOOL**

See ideas for recognition in Section VI on the CD.



Providing recognition for significant contributions and accomplishments is an important component of a healthy, safe and rewarding mentoring environment. Little things—a pat on the back, the positive mention of one's name—do matter. Both public recognition and private kudos for a job well done boost morale, foster team spirit and raise retention rates across the board: mentees, mentors, volunteers and staff alike.

### **Sponsor Recognition Events**

Consider holding a formal event—such as an annual breakfast, lunch or dinner—to recognize the hard work and dedication of everyone involved with the mentoring program. Planning a major recognition event can be time-consuming but is well worth the effort. Hold at least one event a year to allow mentors and mentees to be recognized not only by their peers in the mentoring group but also by the community at large.

### Recognition Tips

The following are some ideas for recognition events:

- Recognize outstanding mentor and mentee efforts, especially in reaching personal goals, such as improved grades or maintaining perfect school attendance for a specified time (e.g., one month, two months);
- Encourage mentors to tell the story of their involvement, both through organization-sponsored programs and through their own initiative. (One of the most effective recruitment tools is having mentors ask their friends and colleagues to mentor);
- Develop special recognition programs, such as a “match of the month” to honor mentors and mentees; and
- Ask your advisory group to recognize and congratulate mentors and reiterate their personal commitment to mentoring.

Who doesn't feel good when they've received a compliment, an award, a good grade? What child would not like to have a trophy, a ribbon, a certificate of merit with their name on it, displayed in his/her room? This is especially important for mentees who may not have such experiences often. Your mentoring program can do wonders for a child's self-esteem and level of hope by making recognition of the child's accomplishments—both great and small—an integral part of your operations.

### Make the Community Aware of the Contributions Made by Mentors, Mentees, Supporters and Funders

- Invite local media to cover the event.
- Spotlight mentors' contributions in articles about them in organization newsletters, via e-mail, on bulletin boards—in whatever ways the organization spreads the word.
- Work with local print and electronic media to run stories about your mentoring program. National Mentoring Month (January) and National Volunteer Week (in April) are perfect tie-ins.
- Nominate mentors for local or national volunteer recognition awards, but be sure to get their consent first.

### Actively Solicit Feedback from Mentors and Mentees Regarding their Experiences

For information on soliciting feedback from mentors and mentees, refer to “Establish a Public Relations/Communications Effort” in Section V, How to Manage a Program for Success.

### Use Information to Refine the Program and Retain Mentors

Mentors and mentees need to feel that they are part of your organization and that their feedback is valuable. If they submit feedback, be sure to acknowledge it, and if appropriate use it to improve your program.

### HELP MENTORS AND MENTEES REACH CLOSURE

Mentoring relationships change over time and may end for any number of reasons:

- A mentor and mentee pair do not get along;
- Either the mentor or the mentee drops out of the program;
- Life circumstances make it difficult or impossible to continue the relationship (a mentor is transferred to another city or changes in family responsibilities or living situations occur for the mentor or the mentee);
- The mentee reaches a level of self-sufficiency with the particular mentor so that mentoring is no longer needed; or
- The program ends.

#### MENTORING TOOL

See closure resources in Section VI on the CD.



As with the end of other relationships, mentors and mentees are likely to have mixed feelings. If the relationship ends prematurely or on a negative note, one or both may feel angry, rejected, depressed or guilty. For young people with low self-esteem, the end of a mentoring relationship may reinforce attitudes of worthlessness and hopelessness. It may not be possible to have a formal closure process for both the mentor and the mentee because of circumstances surrounding their departure from the mentoring program. In these instances, it's important to reach out to each participant to provide closure.

Remind both mentor and mentee that their relationship is not necessarily ending but instead is transitioning from formal mentoring. When mentors no longer are needed for intensive support and nurturing, they can still hold an important place in their mentees' lives.

Think of the ending of a mentoring relationship as a process rather than a singular event. Establish a process for your program and include it in your policies and procedures manual. Be sure to follow these procedures every time a relationship ends—no matter what the reason.

### **Conduct Private, Confidential Interviews with Mentors and Mentees**

Have mentees and mentors meet with staff and with each other. Listen to and support both as they sort out what happened in the relationship and what (if anything) went wrong, and help them remember the good aspects of the relationship and the positive things they did.

Provide them with questions they should ask of themselves and each other that will help them articulate thoughts and feelings, such as these:

1. What was the most fun activity?
2. What should I *not* do again?
3. Did we achieve the goals we set?
4. What did we learn from each other?
5. What will we take from the relationship?

### **Ensure Mentors, Mentees and Parents/Caregivers Understand the Program Policy on Meeting Outside the Program**

During the exit interview, review your program's policies about mentors and mentees contacting each other outside the program, and help the mentee define the next steps for achieving personal goals.

## Checklist of Program Progress: PROGRAM OPERATIONS

As you work to ensure strong, everyday operations for your program, as outlined in the *Elements of Effective Practice*, use the checklist below to gauge your progress. Checking off the items on this list indicates that you are putting the proper components in place to grow a quality, sustainable program.

If your program is already well established, you can use the checklist to gauge the soundness of your current policies, procedures, and organizational structure.

*Note: The design, focus and structure of your program may mean that some of these components will not be applicable or will need to be modified to match your specific program structure.*

### 1. Recruit Mentors, Mentees and Other Volunteers

#### A written recruitment plan with multiple strategies

- Our program has a written recruitment plan, which includes:
  - Goals for recruitment;
  - Potential sources of types of volunteers most appropriate for our youth population;
  - A timeline of scheduled activities;
  - Designation of program staff responsible for recruitment activities; and
  - Budget for recruitment efforts.
- Our program tailors its recruitment pitch to target specific audiences.
- We have written job descriptions that are used in our recruitment efforts to define eligibility for participants, including mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers.

- Recruitment materials describe the level of commitment involved (e.g., frequency, longevity).
- Our program makes it a priority to integrate our community partnerships and connections into our recruitment efforts.
- We conduct awareness and information sessions for potential mentors.
- Our recruitment plan is regularly reviewed and revised.

### 2. Screen Potential Mentors and Mentees

#### Established mentor/mentee intake procedures

- Our program has a step-by-step written intake procedure for both volunteers and youth.
- Copies of these procedures are kept in our program's policy and procedure manual.
- The steps of the procedures are clearly explained to volunteers and youth at several points.
- We have an established tracking system for volunteers and youth as they move through the steps of the intake procedures.
- Our procedures are effective for both customer service and risk management.
- Our intake procedures are regularly reviewed and revised as needed.

#### Appropriate mentor screening procedures

- Our program has a step-by step written screening procedure.
- Our program has developed a mentor job description that acts as an initial screening tool.

- Our minimum screening requirements are:
  - Written application with a release statement agreeing to a background check, an agreement to abide by program rules and a statement discharging the program from liability and claims;
  - Reference checks (two to three non-family personal or work references);
  - Face-to-face interview;
  - Criminal background check and checks of available sexual offender and child abuse registries; and
  - Other checks as appropriate (e.g., a motor vehicle license check if the program is community based; a home site visit if the program is community based).
- We have a formal, written interview process with standard questions.
- We keep all applications and screening results on file.
- Our screening process also looks at the non-criminal factors that may render an applicant ineligible or inappropriate for our program.
- We have a written list of disqualifying offenses and mitigating circumstances that mirrors our eligibility policies.

### **3. Orient and Train Mentors, Mentees and Parents/Caregivers**

#### **Initial orientation for prospective mentors and mentees**

- Our program provides an initial orientation for prospective mentors and mentees.
- Our initial orientation covers the program's history, mission and positive outcomes.
- Our orientation also covers eligibility, roles, responsibilities and expectations of participating in the program.

- Our orientation includes program policies and practices, including expectations of mentors, confidentiality and liability information.
- We ensure that mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers understand program policy regarding their meeting outside of the program.
- Our orientation "sells" who we are and what we do.
- We track who participates in orientations and have a written procedure for following up with participants.
- We have pre-match training for all new mentors and mentees.
- Our program has a written training curriculum for both mentors and mentees.
- Our curriculum addresses the following topics:
  - Program history, mission and goals;
  - Program policies and procedures;
  - Mentor and mentee roles;
  - Strategies for beginning the match;
  - Communication skills;
  - Diversity issues;
  - Youth development;
  - How to handle a variety of situations;
  - Crisis management;
  - Networks of support;
  - Child abuse reporting; and
  - Other topics needed for our specific program.
- We have post-training evaluations on file for each mentor and mentee.
- We are able to bring in experts from our community to provide expertise on particular training topics.

#### 4. Match Mentors and Mentees

##### Established matching procedure

- Our program has a step-by-step written matching procedure that is followed by all staff members who are making matches.
- We have developed pre-established matching criteria.
- Each mentor and mentee in our program has a comprehensive file that includes their application, reference checks, interview responses and other information that will assist staff in making an appropriate match.
- Our matching procedure puts the needs of the youth first.
- Our program gives a voice to the parent in the matching process.
- Our program arranges an introduction between mentors and mentees.
- Our initial meeting between matches is structured, with clear goals and objectives.
- We ensure that mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers understand and agree to the terms and conditions of program participation.
- We have developed contingency plans for failed matches.

#### 5. Bring Mentors and Mentees Together for Mentoring Sessions That Fall Within the Program Parameters

- We provide safe locations and circumstances for pairs to meet.
- Our program provides mentors with resources and materials for activities.
- Our mentoring activities are based on the mentees' needs and are fun for the mentees.

#### 6. Provide Ongoing Support, Supervision, and Monitoring of Mentoring Relationships

##### Established procedure for monitoring matches

- Our program has a step-by-step written procedure for monitoring matches.
- Our program's procedure has a set schedule of when program participants should be contacted.
- We communicate regularly with program participants and offer support.
- Our program has developed appropriate tracking tools and a list of questions to ask during check-ins.
- We have identified staff members who are responsible for monitoring matches and have provided them with any training they may need.
- Program staff members are aware of other community resources and support systems that can help with problems outside the scope of our program.
- Our program has an accessible record-keeping system that keeps track of the progress of the match and ensures that appropriate documentation is done on a regular basis.
- We help mentors and mentees define next steps for achieving mentee goals.
- Our program has a procedure in place for managing grievances, resolving issues and offering positive feedback that are revealed throughout the monitoring process.

##### Support, ongoing training, and recognition for volunteers

- We make it easy for mentors to contact and get help from staff.
- Our program offers frequent ongoing training opportunities for our mentors and mentees.
- We ask mentors what additional support and training they need.

- Our program uses feedback from volunteers and youth to determine the content and scope of ongoing training activities.
- Participants in training sessions fill out evaluations that are kept on file and used to improve the program's training efforts.
- Our program provides mentors with resources, staff involvement and other types of personalized support on a case-by-case basis.
- We give mentors information about situations requiring staff notification (e.g., indications of child abuse, suicidality).
- Mentors can participate in a facilitated support group or other support systems to share ideas and receive support.

### **7. Recognize the Contribution of All Program Participants**

- We recognize mentors, mentees, other participants, funders and organizations that sponsor or contribute to the mentoring program.
- Our program regularly recognizes and thanks mentors in a variety of meaningful ways.
- We sponsor recognition events.
- We make the community aware of the contributions made by mentors, mentees, supporters and funders.
- We actively solicit feedback from mentors and mentees regarding their experiences and use the information to refine the program and retain mentors.

### **8. Help Mentors and Mentees Reach Closure**

#### **Established match closure procedure**

- We have defined procedures for handling both unexpected and planned terminations.
- Our program has step-by-step written procedures for deciding when to terminate a problematic match.
- Our program has written closure procedures that factor in the many different reasons why a match may end.
- We conduct private, confidential interviews with mentees and mentors.
- Our procedure provides support and assistance to the youth, the volunteer and parents/caregivers.
- Staff is trained to recognize and respond to indicators that the young person is being adversely affected by the termination.
- Our program ensures that mentors, mentees, and parents/caregivers understand program policy regarding their meeting outside the program. This policy is outlined in a written contract that is signed by all parties at the time of closure.

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Adapted from *Checklist of Program Progress*, Oregon Mentors, *Youth Mentoring: A Primer for Funders*, The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership and *Elements of Effective Practice*, second edition, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership.

## Additional Resources

### Mentor Recruitment

- Best Practices Summary on Mentor Recruitment from Online Community Forum, 2003 MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership  
[www.mentoring.org/mentor\\_recruitment](http://www.mentoring.org/mentor_recruitment)
- Best Practices Summary on Mentor Retention from Online Community Forum, 2003 MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership  
[www.mentoring.org/mentor\\_recognition](http://www.mentoring.org/mentor_recognition)
- *Mentoring Month Handbook*, Texas Governor's Mentoring Initiative, 2004  
[www.onestarfoundation.org/onestar/mentoring/nmm/mmt\\_handbook\\_04.html](http://www.onestarfoundation.org/onestar/mentoring/nmm/mmt_handbook_04.html)
- *Recruiting Male Volunteers: A Guide Based on Exploratory Research*, by Stephanie T. Blackman, Corporation for National Service, 1999  
[www.energizeinc.com/download/blackman.pdf](http://www.energizeinc.com/download/blackman.pdf)

### Mentee Recruitment

- Ten Tips to Mentoring Youth with Disabilities, Progressive Research and Training for Action  
[www.prttaonline.org/PDF Files/Ten Tips to Mentoring YWD.pdf](http://www.prttaonline.org/PDF%20Files/Ten%20Tips%20to%20Mentoring%20YWD.pdf)

### Screening

- Child Sexual Abuse Risk Exposure Matrix, adapted from, *Screening Volunteers to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse: A Community Guide for Youth Organizations*, National Collaboration for Youth, 1997  
[www.mentoring.org/risk\\_matrix](http://www.mentoring.org/risk_matrix)
- *Screening Volunteers to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse: A Three-Step Action Guide*, National Collaboration for Youth, 1997  
[www.nassembly.org/nassembly/NAPublications.htm](http://www.nassembly.org/nassembly/NAPublications.htm)
- *Criminal History Record Checks*, John C. Patterson, Nonprofit Risk Management Center, 1998  
[www.nonprofitrisk.org/csb/csb\\_crim.htm](http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/csb/csb_crim.htm)
- *Mentoring Essentials: Risk Management for Mentoring Programs*, Dustianne North, MSW, and Jerry Sherk, MA, 2002  
[www.emt.org/userfiles/RiskManagement.pdf](http://www.emt.org/userfiles/RiskManagement.pdf)
- *More Than a Matter of Trust: Managing the Risks of Mentoring*, Nonprofit Risk Management Center, 1998  
[www94311.temp.w1.com/pubs/mentor.htm](http://www94311.temp.w1.com/pubs/mentor.htm)

### Mentor Orientation and Training

- *Learn to Mentor Online Training*, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership  
[www.mentoring.org/mentor\\_training](http://www.mentoring.org/mentor_training)
- *Learn to Mentor Tool Kit*, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership  
[www.mentoring.org/mentor\\_toolkit](http://www.mentoring.org/mentor_toolkit)

- *Community Mentoring for Adolescent Development Manual*, Baylor University and MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2004  
[www.mentoring.org/training\\_manual](http://www.mentoring.org/training_manual)
- *A Training Guide for Mentors*, National Dropout Prevention Center, 1999  
[www.dropoutprevention.org](http://www.dropoutprevention.org)
- *Mentoring Answer Book*, Big Brothers Big Sisters of McHenry County  
[www.mentoringanswerbook.com](http://www.mentoringanswerbook.com)
- *Mentor Guide, For People Working with Children of Promise*, National Crime Prevention Council, 2004  
[www.mcgruffstore.org](http://www.mcgruffstore.org)
- 40 Developmental Assets, Search Institute  
[www.search-institute.org/assets/forty.html](http://www.search-institute.org/assets/forty.html)

### **Mentee Orientation and Training**

- *Preparing Mentees for Success, A Program Manager's Guide*, Dustianne North and Jerry Sherk, The EMT Group, Mentoring Plus, Workshop Series 6  
[www.emt.org/userfiles/MenteeSeries6.pdf](http://www.emt.org/userfiles/MenteeSeries6.pdf)

### **Activities**

#### ***Publications***

- *My Mentor and Me*, (2000) by Dr. Susan G. Weinberger, published by The Governor's Prevention Partnership for the Connecticut Mentoring Partnership Three versions, for elementary, middle and high school ages. Outlines weekly mentoring activities. Cost: \$5.00 each.  
<https://secure.entango.com/donate/dvCLgqAxDXF>
- *The Nine Winning Practices™ iPractice Workbook*, ReBrilliance  
Cost: \$3.50 each plus tax and S&H  
[www.rebrilliance.com/9page.html](http://www.rebrilliance.com/9page.html)
- *Encouraging the Spirit of Mentoring—50 fun activities for the ongoing training of teacher-mentors, volunteer mentors and youth workers*, Robin Cox  
[www.essentialresources.co.nz/newrelease](http://www.essentialresources.co.nz/newrelease)
- *McGruff® and Scruff®'s Stories and Activities for Children of Promise*, National Crime Prevention Council, 2004  
[www.mcgruffstore.org](http://www.mcgruffstore.org)

#### ***Web sites***

- Mentoring Activity Links, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership  
[www.mentoring.org/mentors/support/activity\\_links.php](http://www.mentoring.org/mentors/support/activity_links.php)
- World of Work Activities for Mentoring Pairs, New York City Department of Education's New York City Mentoring Program  
[www.owenconsulting.com/resources.office.php](http://www.owenconsulting.com/resources.office.php)
- Yahoooligans, the Web Guide for Kids  
<http://yahoooligans.yahoo.com/>

- Preparing for the Future Web Links, Owen Consulting  
*[www.owenconsulting.com/resources.php](http://www.owenconsulting.com/resources.php)*
- The World Factbook (for cultural activities), Central Intelligence Agency  
*[www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html)*

**Recognition**

- Mentor Store, MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership  
*[www.mentoring.org/store.php](http://www.mentoring.org/store.php)*



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# TIPS FOR RECRUITING AND RETAINING YOUR MENTORS

## RECRUITING YOUR MENTORS

### Target and Inform Your Audience:

- Identify internal and external target audiences;
- Craft a powerful message and talking points;
- Send a packet of information and FAQs for use during National Mentoring Month (January); and
- Enlist a celebrity spokesperson.

### Build Community Commitment:

- Make presentations to local organizations;
- Check media editorial and community calendars for best times to publicize;
- Publicize stories and testimonials of local mentors;
- Ask local media for public service announcements and coverage during National Mentoring Month;
- Set up media interviews for print media, TV, and radio;
- Ask local businesses, hospitals and state agencies to help you recruit employees; and
- Ask churches, schools, community-based organizations, nonprofits and local businesses to publish articles.

### Mobilize Community Action:

- Create a call to action;
- Create a media blitz;
- Host special events to recruit volunteers and increase community awareness;
- Celebrate milestones during the year;
- Compile reports, testimonials, photos, achievements, media clippings and coverage;
- Publicize numbers of recruits and good-news stories as the year progresses; and
- Debrief on successes and need for improvements as you plan next year's celebration.

## RETAINING YOUR MENTORS = CARE

### Communication

- Mentors should receive appropriate information from the provider organization regarding any special needs the mentee might have. And mentors should feel free to mention any problems they are experiencing so that your organization and your volunteers can work together to solve them.

### Appreciation

- Mentors should be thanked often and effusively, by both their mentees and your organization.

### Respect

- Mentors should be greeted warmly and with respect each time they come to mentor.

### Enjoyment

- Mentors should have a good time mentoring and should look forward to being with their mentees.

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Courtesy of Texas Governor's Mentoring Initiative.

## PROVEN GUIDELINES TO INCREASE RESPONSE TO PROMOTIONS AND RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS

- 1. Ask your mentors to recruit their friends and colleagues to mentor.** Mentors are the best people to sell your program and volunteer opportunities. Research has shown that personally asking people to mentor or volunteer is one of the most effective recruitment strategies.
- 2. Use testimonials.** Your audience will likely pay attention to a message from current mentors—people who have enjoyed mentoring and would be willing to recommend it to others—or from mentees themselves. Ask a mentor or mentee (or both) to write a sentence or two describing what they've gained from or enjoy about their mentoring relationship, and ask for permission to use the statement in your promotions. Place such testimonials in quotes prominently at the beginning or top of a letter or flyer, centered in bigger, bolder type.
- 3. Be concise!** Keep it to one or two pages, whether it's a letter or a flyer.
- 4. Be clear! Avoid complex words or sentences.** Vague “50-cent” words and long sentences disrupt the reader's attention. Use short sentences with everyday words that get to the point.
- 5. Use informal, plain English.** Use language that your audience will recognize and feel comfortable with. Stick to concrete, straightforward words and terms.
- 6. Make it stand out.** If you can, use a splash of color. Use bright, colored paper for flyers and use a color other than black for important phrases or words in a letter. However, avoid creativity that will distract the audience from the message.
- 7. Be concrete.** Use statistics or accomplishments of your program to bring your message to life.
- 8. Use sales principles.** First, briefly identify the problem or need, then focus specifically on what you want the reader to do. Identify the value/benefits to the reader of participating in your program.
- 9. Don't forget the call to action!** Always clearly spell out the action you want readers to take (call, write, join, etc.). Include the call to action at the beginning of the document and repeat it at the end. Using words such as “now” or “today,” as in “call now,” gives the need a sense of urgency.

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Courtesy of MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership.

# FOR PARENTS WITH CHILDREN IN MENTORING PROGRAMS: GUIDELINES AND GROUND RULES

Following are some basic guidelines and ground rules for helping to make the mentoring relationship a success. They are followed by common questions parents may have about both their role and that of the mentor. Neither are intended to replace or supersede the rules developed by your mentoring program. If you have questions at any time, please contact your program coordinator.

## GUIDELINES AND GROUND RULES

- Please do not ask your child's mentor to provide transportation, buy presents, be the disciplinarian, or babysit for your family. The mentor's role is to be a companion to the mentee.
- Please don't discuss your child with the mentor in the presence of your child. If you think there is something the mentor should know, call him/her when your child is away.
- Try to let the mentor know, once in a while, that his/her efforts are appreciated, and please help your child be considerate of the mentor (e.g., remembering his/her birthday, making occasional phone calls).
- Remember, the relationship that exists is between your child and the mentor. Please don't ask that you or siblings be included on outings, and try to avoid excessive quizzing about their visits, so that your child can enjoy having his/her special friend. However, if you feel uncomfortable with any aspect of the match, or if something about the relationship concerns you (i.e., your child is acting secretive or unusual in regard to the match), contact your caseworker immediately.
- The agency strictly discourages overnight stays for the first three months of the match. Exceptions to this include agency-sponsored activities, such as campouts and raft trips. These activities are supervised by staff members of the agency.
- Forgive minor mistakes in judgment. The mentor is neither a trained professional nor perfect. You will probably disagree with him/her sometimes.
- Please don't deprive your child of the weekly visit with his/her mentor as a means of discipline.
- The mentor will tell you when he/she plans to pick up and return your child. Please make a point of being home at these times and call the mentor if your plans change.
- Mentors are encouraged to plan activities that are free or low cost, but we ask that you contribute what you can to the cost of your child's visit with his/her mentor.
- Scheduling the times for the weekly visit can sometimes be difficult, so please be flexible.
- The mentoring relationship needs time to develop—at least three months—so don't judge it too quickly; give it time.
- Notify the agency when you have a change of phone number or address.

- Please keep in mind that all information is confidential and should be shared only with your caseworker.
- The success or failure of a match depends on the cooperation of all the individuals concerned. It is important to discuss your child's match with your caseworker periodically to prevent problems and to keep the caseworker updated. We want your child to have fun and to grow positively from the match.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **What should I do if my child cannot attend a meeting with the mentor?**

To encourage responsibility in your child, have him/her call the mentor when a meeting must be rescheduled. If your child is very ill, you may want to call yourself. Be sure you have the phone numbers to reach the mentor at home and at work.

### **What if family plans conflict with a meeting?**

Time with the mentor is not intended to displace time with the family. You should continue your normal family plans, including get-togethers, special trips and vacations. As much as possible, the mentor and your child should plan their time together around your normal schedule. It may be helpful to let the mentor and your child know about planned family events. The mentor and your child should let you know when they are planning special activities. Good advance communication will help avoid conflicts.

### **Can I or other family members go with my child and the mentor?**

A mentoring relationship is special, in part, because it is a one-to-one relationship. Even teens who feel very close to their parents sometimes need to talk with friends outside the family. The mentor is an adult friend with whom your child can talk about things that concern him/her.

The mentor and your child will inform you about their plans each week. If at any time you are uncomfortable with their plans, please let them know. Mentors will be sensitive to parent concerns and will try to find an arrangement that is acceptable to you.

### **How can I be sure that the mentor will support my rules and regulations?**

Talk with the mentor about rules or regulations that you expect to arise in his/her relationship with your child. If you have strict rules about bedtimes, places the youth may not go or foods he/she may not eat, please discuss these with the mentor. By making this information known at the beginning, you can help avoid misunderstandings later.

### **What if the mentor says things with which I do not agree?**

No matter how carefully we match mentors and mentees, you may find some areas where your beliefs or ideas differ from your mentor's. If these are important to you, let the mentor know. You can request that the mentor *not* question your most important beliefs or values when with your child.

### **Who will pay for the activities for the mentor and youth?**

Mentors always pay their own expenses but are not responsible for the child or the family. If the planned activities involve fees, you or your child will be asked to pay for the youth's share. You need not pay for activities you feel are too expensive. The most important part of the mentoring program is the relationship between the mentor and the youth, not a lot of costly activities.

However, because activities help build competence, we hope all mentor/youth pairs can do special things occasionally.

The youth should not expect the mentor to buy things for him/her. As with any friend, gifts should be appreciated when and if they are given, not expected on a regular basis.

**If my child has misbehaved, should I allow him/her to see the mentor?**

The mentor's weekly visit should *not* be used to discipline your child. Time with the mentor is a pleasure but it is also a time of learning and growth. Punishing your child by denying time with the mentor puts you in opposition to the mentor instead of emphasizing your mutual concern to build your child's competence. Even if your child is grounded, the mentor should be allowed to see him/her.

**How often should I be in contact with the mentor, and how much should I say about family problems/concerns?**

Get to know the mentor well enough to feel comfortable with him/her being with your child. Before each meeting, discuss plans and time for returning home. Try talking directly with the mentor and your child in front of your child. If there is something the mentor should know, call when your child is not around.

**What if there are concerns or questions I don't want to discuss with the mentor?**

Please feel free to call the program coordinator. He/she is here to help make the program work for mentees, mentors, and parents. He/she will call you several times during the year to see how things are going. But don't wait for him/her to call; we want to know about anything that concerns you.

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Courtesy of "For Parents with Children in Mentoring Programs, Guidelines, Ground Rules, and Answers to Questions,"  
The Resource Center, August 1996.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD MENTOR?

Many people feel that being a mentor requires special skills, but mentors are simply people who have the qualities of good role models.

Mentors listen.	They maintain eye contact and give mentees their full attention.
Mentors guide.	Mentors are there to help their mentees find life direction, never to push them.
Mentors are practical.	They give insights about keeping on task and setting goals and priorities.
Mentors educate.	Mentors educate about life and their own careers.
Mentors provide insight.	Mentors use their personal experience to help their mentees avoid mistakes and learn from good decisions.
Mentors are accessible.	Mentors are available as a resource and a sounding board.
Mentors criticize constructively.	When necessary, mentors point out areas that need improvement, always focusing on the mentee's behavior, never his/her character.
Mentors are supportive.	No matter how painful the mentee's experience, mentors continue to encourage them to learn and improve.
Mentors are specific.	Mentors give specific advice on what was done well or could be corrected, what was achieved and the benefits of various actions.
Mentors care.	Mentors care about their mentees' progress in school and career planning, as well as their personal development.
Mentors succeed.	Mentors not only are successful themselves, but they also foster success in others.
Mentors are admirable.	Mentors are usually well respected in their organizations and in the community.

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Courtesy of The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership and the Business and Legal Reports, Inc.—*Best Practices in HR*, Issue 653, September 30, 1999.

## QUALITIES OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORS

- **Personal commitment to be involved with another person for an extended time—generally, one year at minimum.** Mentors have a genuine desire to be part of other people’s lives, to help them with tough decisions and to see them become the best they can be. They have to be invested in the mentoring relationship over the long haul to be there long enough to make a difference.
- **Respect for individuals and for their abilities and their right to make their own choices in life.** Mentors should not approach the mentee with the attitude that their own ways are better or that participants need to be rescued. Mentors who convey a sense of respect and equal dignity in the relationship win the trust of their mentees and the privilege of being advisors to them.
- **Ability to listen and to accept different points of view.** Most people can find someone who will give advice or express opinions. It’s much harder to find someone who will suspend his or her own judgment and really listen. Mentors often help simply by listening, asking thoughtful questions and giving mentees an opportunity to explore their own thoughts with a minimum of interference. When people feel accepted, they are more likely to ask for and respond to good ideas.
- **Ability to empathize with another person’s struggles.** Effective mentors can feel *with* people without feeling pity *for* them. Even without having had the same life experiences, they can empathize with their mentee’s feelings and personal problems.
- **Ability to see solutions and opportunities as well as barriers.** Effective mentors balance a realistic respect for the real and serious problems faced by their mentees with optimism about finding equally realistic solutions. They are able to make sense of a seeming jumble of issues and point out sensible alternatives.
- **Flexibility and openness.** Effective mentors recognize that relationships take time to develop and that communication is a two-way street. They are willing to take time to get to know their mentees, to learn new things that are important to their mentees (music, styles, philosophies, etc.), and even to be changed by their relationship.

## RECOMMENDED MENTOR SCREENING STANDARDS/GUIDELINES FOR MENTORING PROGRAMS

Mentoring programs are strongly encouraged to utilize these guidelines during the mentor screening process.

Mentor Screening Process	COMMUNITY-BASED Unsupervised Match Activities	SITE-BASED Unsupervised Match Activities	SITE-BASED Supervised Match Activities
Written application	Required	Required	Required
Reference check: personal and professional (not relatives)	Three Required	Two Required	One Required
Criminal history check (fingerprint check)	Required	Required	Required
Driving record review	Required	Recommended	Recommended
In-person interview	Required	Required	Required
Home assessment	Strongly Recommended	Optional	Optional
Interview of significant others residing in home	Required	Optional	Optional
Check of prior volunteer experience	Optional	Optional	Optional
Written mentor–mentee matching criteria	Required	Required	Required
Mentor training	Required	Required	Required

Note: Site-based programs include school-based, workplace and other facility-based programs. In supervised activities, the program coordinator is present to observe the mentor–mentee interaction. In unsupervised, site-based programs, a program coordinator is usually in the building but not always in the same room where the mentoring is taking place.

Courtesy of The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership, *Business Guide to Youth Mentoring*, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service.

# MENTOR APPLICATION/SCREENING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Once a prospective mentor is recruited, the formal application process begins. Prior to acceptance in the program, it is critical that applicants be properly screened. While volunteers have the best of intentions, it is the responsibility of the mentoring program to ensure maximum protection for the mentoring experience. Steps in the application/screening process include the following:

**1. Applicants complete an application**, which includes their choices of days and times for their meetings with youth and the preferred grade level, age and gender of young person with whom they wish to work. Some programs match mentors only with individuals of the same gender and ethnic group. Others do not. You will decide this early in your program design. The application will include:

- Statement of the applicant's expectations;
- Special interests, which are helpful in matching mentors with youth;
- A complete list of personal references; and
- Employment history.

Applicants are asked to sign a release statement, agreeing to a background check and to abide by the rules and regulations of the program and fully discharging the program from liability and claims.

**2. Applicants sign an agreement to:**

- Make a one-year (or school year) commitment;
- Attend training sessions;
- Engage in the relationship with an open mind;
- Be on time for scheduled meetings;
- Keep discussions with youth confidential (except where youth's safety or well-being is at risk);
- Ask for help when needed;
- Accept guidance from program staff or their mentee's teacher;
- Notify staff if they are having difficulty in their mentoring relationship;
- Notify the program coordinator if they are unable to keep their weekly mentoring session;
- Notify the program coordinator of any changes in their employment, address and telephone number;
- Notify the program coordinator of a significant change in their mentee; and
- Refrain from contacting or seeing the mentee outside of the established parameters and supervised sites where the program takes place.

**3. Applicants are invited for a personal interview with the mentoring program staff.** This is an opportunity to get to know the applicant better. Discussion includes questions that will provide information about:

- The applicant's family relationships and history;
- Interests and leisure time activities;
- Attitudes and belief system;
- Experiences working with children and adults;
- Reactions to stressful situations;
- Use of alcohol and drugs;
- Level of flexibility, time commitments and ability to sustain relationship;
- Education;
- Transportation requirements; and
- Strengths and weaknesses.

4. **Mentoring program staff conducts a check on all employment and personal references.** Some programs require that each mentor secure a tuberculin test from their place of employment or, in the case of a school-based program, from the school nurse. Mentors may be required to sign a driver affidavit and provide proof of current driver's license and registration. Some programs require mentors to complete and sign field trip forms, if supervised field trips will take place.
5. **Criminal background checks, conducted by the local or state police or private companies, should be performed on all prospective mentors.** Applicants must sign a release agreeing to have these checks done. Results of these checks are reviewed by the mentoring program coordinator, who keeps them confidential.
6. **Applicants who pass all the screening processes are notified,** congratulated and invited to become mentors in the program.

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Courtesy of The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership, *Business Guide to Youth Mentoring*.

# PROSPECTIVE MENTOR REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Task	Date
Attended orientation	
Submitted application	
Submitted fingerprints	
Fingerprint report received	
Submitted current DMV printout	
Submitted proof of auto insurance	
Signed code of conduct and responsibilities	
Interview done	
References contacted	
Attended training	

## VOLUNTEER STATUS

Accepted?	Date
Letter sent	
Matched	

Rejected?	Date
Rejection letter sent	

Adapted from materials provided by Friends for Youth, ©1999; [www.friendsforyouth.org](http://www.friendsforyouth.org).

## DEVELOPING AN ORIENTATION PLAN

Separate orientations should be held for volunteer mentors and mentees and their parent(s) or guardian. Below is a guide to what should be included in these orientation sessions.

### **An Orientation for MENTORS Should Include the Following:**

- Program overview, mission, goals and objectives;
- What mentoring is and how it can benefit both mentors and youth;
- Mentor expectations and restrictions;
- Mentor roles and responsibilities;
- Level of commitment expected (time, energy, flexibility, frequency);
- The nature of the mentor–mentee relationship and level of personal involvement;
- Description of eligibility, screening process, logistics and suitability requirements;
- Safety and security, especially around use of the Internet;
- Information on how to handle a variety of situations;
- Summary of program policies, including those governing privacy, reporting, communications and evaluation;
- Collection of applications, consent forms and other paperwork; and
- Schedule of upcoming mentor training, matching of mentors with young people and group activities.

### **An Orientation for MENTEES and Their Parent or Guardian Should Include the Following:**

- Program overview, mission, goals and objectives;
- What mentoring is and how it can benefit both mentors and youth;
- Why the youth were chosen for this program;
- Mentee roles and responsibilities;
- Level of commitment expected (time, flexibility, frequency);
- The nature of the mentor–mentee relationship and level of personal involvement;
- Information on how to handle a variety of situations;
- Collection of applications, consent forms and other paperwork;
- Summary of program policies, including those governing privacy, reporting, communications and evaluation; and
- Schedule of upcoming mentee training, matching of mentees with mentors and group activities.

# MENTOR GUIDELINES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

**CONGRATULATIONS!** As a mentor, you are now about to begin one of life's most rewarding and fulfilling experiences. Your commitment indicates that you believe in young people. You recognize the magnitude of the responsibility that you accepted in choosing to work with youth and agree to interact appropriately with your mentee according to the highest ethical standards at all times.

Be yourself! Please read the following guidelines carefully.

## **Your Role as a Mentor:**

- At the initial stages of the match, your mentee may appear to be hesitant, unresponsive, and unappreciative of the mentor relationship. This guarded attitude is simply a manifestation of his/her insecurity about the relationship. The mentee's attitude will gradually take a positive turn as he/she realizes your sincerity about being a friend. *Be patient!* Don't try to speed up the process by going out of your way to accommodate your mentee, such as seeing your mentee more than the prescribed one hour per week.
- Remember that the mentor–mentee relationship has an initial phase. During this phase the mentee is more interested in getting to know how “real” you are and how much he/she can trust you. Establish how you can reach your mentee: by phone, e-mail, or fax or at a designated meeting location. Experience proves that calling or e-mailing your mentee at school is usually the best way to make contact. Establish a time and phone number where you can usually answer calls or make contact. Mentees need encouragement to leave messages on your voicemail to confirm meetings as well as to cancel them.
- Don't try to be teacher, parent, disciplinarian, therapist, Santa Claus or babysitter. Experience demonstrates it is counterproductive to assume roles other than a dependable, consistent friend. Present information carefully without distortion and give all points of view a fair hearing. Listen carefully and offer possible solutions without passing judgment. Don't criticize or preach. Think of ways to problem solve together rather than lecturing or telling the mentee what to do. Never “should have” your mentee.
- Respect the uniqueness and honor the integrity of your mentee and influence him/her through constructive feedback. The mentor empowers the mentee to make right decisions without actually deciding for the mentee. Identify the mentee's interests and take them seriously. Be alert for opportunities and teaching moments. Explore positive and negative consequences.
- Set realistic expectations and goals for your mentee and make achievement for them fun. Remember there is a big difference between *encouraging and demanding*. Encourage your mentee to complete his/her secondary education and pursue higher learning or vocational goals; provide access to varying points of view. Assist in making the connection between his/her actions of today and the dreams and goals of tomorrow. Don't get discouraged if the mentee isn't turning his/her life around or making great improvements. Mentors have a great deal of impact; it's not always immediately evident. Look for signs such as increased school attendance, improved grades, showing up for meetings and expressing appreciation.
- As a friend you can share and advise, but know your limitations. Problems that your mentee may share with you regarding substance abuse, molestation and physical abuse are best handled by professionals. If you have any concerns, *contact the mentor coordinator immediately*.
- Be supportive of the parent, even when you may disagree. Don't take sides or make judgments concerning any family conflict or situation. Leave the parenting to the parent.

**Discipline:**

There may be instances when your mentee's behavior is unacceptable. Again, remember the parent is responsible for the child's discipline. The following guidelines are to be used if the parent is not around to assume the responsibility for the child's behavior. Don't forget to inform the parent about the steps you took and why you took them.

- Never physically discipline.
- Never use abusive language.
- Don't use ultimatums.
- Most children will listen and respond to reason. Explain to your mentee why you find his/her behavior unacceptable.
- Don't give your mentee the silent treatment to solve the problem. Discuss your concerns.
- On very rare occasions, your child may need to be taken back home because of unacceptable behavior. Before taking this action, tell him/her what you are doing and why you made the decision. Taking your mentee back home because of his/her behavior doesn't necessarily mean the match (relationship) has ended. Before you leave make sure the child understands he/she will see you again and that you are not using his/her behavior as a pretext to abandon the relationship.

**Health and Safety:**

Protect the health and safety of your mentee and seek advice from school faculty or program staff whenever in doubt about the appropriateness of an event or activity and inform school or program staff of any persons, situations or activities that could affect the health and safety of the child.

- Do not use alcohol, tobacco or drugs when with your mentee.
- Do not have firearms or weapons present while with your mentee.
- Always wear seat belts while in the car.
- Have adequate personal liability and automobile insurance coverage.
- Ensure your mentee has all the necessary protective items and is well supervised on outings.
- Do not leave your mentee alone or with strangers.
- If you have become aware that your mentee's safety or the safety of another is in jeopardy through disclosure (e.g., child abuse, sexual abuse), report your concern to the mentor coordinator or teacher immediately. Let your mentee know that you are required to do so. This requirement should always be discussed at the beginning of the relationship to inform the mentee of your obligation to report safety concerns.

**Activities and Money:**

Taking the first step in planning activities is primarily your responsibility; however, ask your mentee to help make decisions or have him/her plan an activity.

- The mentor-mentee match is a one-on-one relationship that takes time to build. Try to avoid bringing someone else when you are with your mentee. However, you may include others (e.g., spouse, friends, other mentees/mentors and relatives) from time to time.

- Whereas this program is mainly to assist your mentee with career exploration, tutoring, and self-esteem, there may be activities that you want to attend that cost money. Consult with your mentee about cost and find out how he/she will pay. You can assist him/her in paying his/her share, but we encourage you to discuss costs of activities with the parents.
- Entertainment is not the focal point of your relationship. Do not spend an exorbitant amount of money for activities, birthday presents, and so on.
- Always call your mentee before your scheduled meeting or appointment to remind him/her. Be sure you have parental approval for activities that take place away from school premises.
- Return your mentee home at the agreed-upon time. If you are unable to or there is a change in plans, always call the parent to let him/her know.

**Program Rules:**

- No overnight stays.
- Discussions between you and your mentee are considered confidential. Be careful about sensitive personal issues. The mentee’s personal or family life may be difficult to discuss, particularly early in the relationship. Your mentee may be ashamed of poor school performance, family culture and religion, financial problems and so on. It is important not to measure the success of the relationship by the extent of the mentee’s disclosure.
- If you have a concern you feel is beyond your ability to handle, call the mentor coordinator even if it seems trivial. There is no reason to feel helpless or hopeless.

**Your Measure of Success:**

- Your success is measured by many milestones.

Your mentee may realize for the first time that he/she . . .	Good indications:
✓ has potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ setting goals</li> <li>✓ developing new skills</li> <li>✓ aware of time management</li> </ul>
✓ is confident and self-assured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ increased cooperation with parents, teachers, and peers</li> <li>✓ behavioral changes</li> </ul>
✓ values education and the learning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ increase in school attendance</li> <li>✓ improved grades</li> <li>✓ respect for teachers</li> </ul>
✓ is a capable young person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ a willingness to help others</li> <li>✓ ability to see the future</li> <li>✓ ability to plan for college</li> </ul>

- Your mentee will reward you through notes, e-mails or simply conversation. He/she may tell you how “great” you are, how you might have helped him/her with a specific problem, and so much more. It may be big or small. Whatever the compliment, know that what you are doing has had a significant impact on the future of this child.

- You will work with your mentee to establish mutual respect, friendship, motivation and measurable goals. Please don't hesitate to ask questions if you find any part of the guidelines unclear or confusing. The mentor coordinator is available to assist you in any way possible.

Your commitment and dedication to your mentee may be the most profound opportunity that you experience. The quality of the relationship you build directly influences the life and future of the child. Please exert every effort to maintain professional standards, improve your mentor skills and exercise good judgment when engaged in any activity involving your mentee.

Mentoring is not a panacea for all the problems/decisions facing your mentee and his/her family. The essence of mentoring is the sustained human relationship: a one-on-one relationship that shows a child that he/she is valued as a person and is important to society.

**YOU ARE A:**

POSITIVE ROLE MODEL  
FRIEND  
COACH  
ADVISOR  
SELF-ESTEEM BUILDER  
CAREER COUNSELOR  
ADVOCATE

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Courtesy of California Governor's Mentoring Partnership.

# MENTOR/VOLUNTEER PROCEDURES

## CONFIDENTIALITY

All the information you are told about your student is confidential and sharing that information with others is prohibited. However, you are required to report certain things. Do not promise a student that you will keep confidential information secret. Tell the student that he/she is free to share confidential information with you but that you are required to report certain things. It is critical, not only for the welfare of the student, but also to protect yourself that you adhere to these exceptions:

1. If a student confides that he or she is the victim of sexual, emotional or physical abuse, you *must* notify ( name of program coordinator ) immediately.

Note on your calendar when this information was reported and to whom it was given. Remember this information is extremely personal and capable of damaging lives, so *do not* share it with anyone except the appropriate authorities.

2. If a student tells you of his/her involvement in any illegal activity you *must* tell (name of program coordinator) immediately. Again, note on your calendar when this information was reported and to whom it was given.

## SUMMARY

These procedures are designed to protect the students from harm and to prevent even the appearance of impropriety on the part of (name of program) and its participating mentors, volunteers and students. One accusation could, at the very least, seriously damage the reputation of all those participating and endanger (name of program).

Please know that we appreciate your participation in the (name of program) and that we appreciate your adherence to these procedures. If you have any questions, please call (name of program) at (phone number).

I have read, understand and agree to strictly abide by the (name of program) Mentor/Volunteer Procedures. I understand that failure to adhere to these procedures may result in my removal from participation in the program.

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Signature

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Print Name

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Date

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Courtesy of Florida Governor's Mentoring Initiative, *Mentor Tool Kit for Faith-Based Organizations*.

# MENTORS WANT TO KNOW

## **Logistics:**

- How is a match made?
- What things are considered?
- How much time/how often do I spend with my mentee?
- Will there be training so I know what activities I can do with them?
- What if the match doesn't seem to go well?

## **The Mentees:**

- What are the mentees like?
- What challenges do they face?
- What are their backgrounds?
- Why are they in this program?

## **The Relationship:**

- What roles will I play—parent, teacher, friend?
- Am I doing or saying the right things?
- Why am I not feeling satisfied with my work with this mentee?
- What do I do if I'm going on vacation?
- Can I give my mentee money or a gift?
- How do I answer questions about sensitive issues (e.g. sexuality, drug use, etc.)?
- What should we talk about?
- Why doesn't my mentee open up to me?

## **The Family:**

- How do the parents feel about their child getting a mentor?
- How might the family respond to me?
- Do I contact the mentee's parent?
- How can I know I'm helping them when I feel their parents are telling them the opposite of what I am telling them?

# TIPS FOR BUILDING A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

## 1. Be there.

When you show up for every meeting with your mentee and strive to make things work out you send your mentee a strong message that you care and that he or she is worth caring about.

## 2. Be a friend, not an all-knowing authority.

Be the adult in your mentee's life who is just there without having to fix him or her. Hanging out and talking is surprisingly helpful to a young person's healthy development. Young people learn more conversing with adults than they do just listening to them. In the words of a mentee:

*"My parents lecture me all the time. Why would I want my mentor to be the same way? I have the best mentor in the program, but sometimes he tries too hard to be a mentor instead of just being himself.*

*What I mean is that he thinks he always has to share some wisdom or advice, when sometimes I would rather just kick it and joke around."*

Of course, when your mentee comes to you for help or advice, it is appropriate to help them develop solutions. It's also okay to check in with them if you suspect that they are struggling with something. They just don't want non-stop advice. So, take the pressure off of yourself and just enjoy your mentee's company.

## 3. Be a role model.

The best that you can do is to lead by example. By becoming a mentor, you've already modeled the most important thing a human being can do: caring about another. Here are some other ways you can be a positive role model for your mentee:

- Keep your word: Call when you say you will. Do what you say you will. Be there when you say you will;
- Return phone calls and e-mails promptly;
- Have a positive outlook;
- If your program has group sessions, participate fully;
- If you enter a competitive activity with your mentee, keep it in perspective and by all means do not cheat (or even fudge a little) to help your mentee win, get a better place in line at an event, etc.; and
- Let your mentee see you going out of your way to help others.

## 4. Help your mentee have a say in your activities.

Some mentees will have a lot of suggestions about what you can do together, but most will need a little guidance on your part. If your mentee doesn't have any preferences, start by giving them a range of choices. "Here are some things we can do. Which ones sound good to you?"

## 5. Be ready to help out.

When your mentee lets you know that he or she is struggling with a problem, you can help out by following these tips:

- Be there for your mentee and make it clear that you want to help;
- Be a friend, not an all-knowing authority: Don't fix a problem. Ask questions and help your mentee figure out how to come up with answers;
- Model ways to solve problems. You can also be a role model by describing how you overcame a similar problem in your life. Metaphor is a great teacher;
- Give your mentee a say: Once he or she comes up with a solution, don't try to come up with a better one, but help explore all the possibilities and offer support; and
- Be ready to help out by checking back and seeing how things worked out.

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Courtesy of California Governor's Mentoring Partnership and Los Angeles Youth Mentoring Connection.

# STAGES OF A MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

## STAGE 1: DEVELOPING RAPPORT AND BUILDING TRUST

The “getting to know you” phase is the most critical stage of the relationship. Things to expect and work on during Stage 1 include:

- **Predictability and consistency**  
During the first stage of the relationship, it is critical to be both predictable and consistent. If you schedule an appointment to meet your mentee at a certain time, it’s important to keep it. It is understandable that at times things come up and appointments cannot be kept. However, in order to speed up the trust-building process, consistency is necessary, even if the young person is not as consistent as you are.
- **Testing**  
Young people generally do not trust adults. As a result, they use testing as a coping or defense mechanism to determine whether they can trust you. They will test to see if you really care about them. A mentee might test the mentor by not showing up for a scheduled meeting to see how the mentor will react.
- **Establish confidentiality**  
During the first stage of the relationship, it’s important to establish confidentiality with your young person. This helps develop trust. The mentor should let the mentee know that whatever he or she wants to share with the mentor will remain confidential, as long as (and it’s important to stress this point) what the young person tells the mentor is not going to harm the young person or someone else. It’s helpful to stress this up front, within the first few meetings with the mentee. That way, later down the road, if a mentor needs to break the confidence because the information the mentee shared was going to harm him or her or someone else, the young person will not feel betrayed.
- **Goal setting (transitions into Stage 2)**  
It’s helpful during Stage 1 to take the time to set at least one achievable goal together for the relationship. What do the two of you want to get out of this relationship? It’s also good to help your mentee set personal goals. Young people often do not learn how to set goals, and this will provide them with the opportunity to set goals and work toward achieving them.

## STAGE 2: THE MIDDLE—REACHING GOALS

Once trust has been established, the relationship moves into Stage 2. During this stage, the mentor and mentee can begin to start working toward the goals they set during the first stage of the relationship. Things to expect during Stage 2 include:

- **Closeness**  
Generally, during the second stage the mentor and mentee can sense a genuine closeness in the relationship.
- **Affirming the uniqueness of the relationship**  
Once the relationship has reached this stage, it’s helpful to do something special or different from what the mentor and mentee did during the first stage, which helps affirm the uniqueness of the relationship. For example, go to a museum, sporting event, special restaurant, etc.

- **The relationship may be rocky or smooth**

All relationships have their ups and downs. Once the relationship has reached the second stage, there will still be some rough periods. Mentors should be prepared and not assume that something is wrong with the relationship if this happens.

- **Rely on staff support**

### **STAGE 3: CLOSURE**

If the rough period continues or if a mentor feels that the pair has not reached the second stage, he or she shouldn't hesitate to seek support from the mentoring program coordinator. Sometimes two people, no matter how they look on paper, just don't "click." Some mentor/mentee pairs don't need to worry about this stage until farther down the road. However, at some point all relationships will come to an end—whether it's because the program is over, the mentor is moving or for some other reason. When this happens, it's critical that the closure stage not be overlooked. Many young people today have already had adults come and go in their lives and are very rarely provided the opportunity to say a proper goodbye.

- **Identify natural emotions, such as grief, denial and resentment**

In order to help mentees express emotions about the relationship ending, mentors should model appropriate behavior. The mentor should first express his or her feelings and emotions about the end of the relationship and then let the mentee do the same.

- **Provide opportunities for saying goodbye in a healthy, respectful and affirming way**

Mentors shouldn't wait for the very last meeting with their mentees to say goodbye. The mentor should slowly bring it up as soon as he or she becomes aware that the relationship will be coming to a close.

- **Address appropriate situations for staying in touch**

Mentors should check with the mentoring program coordinator to find out the policy for staying in touch with their mentees once the program has come to an end. This is especially important if the program is school-based and mentors and mentees meet during the school year but the program officially ends before the summer starts. If mentors and mentees are *mutually* interested in continuing to meet over the summer, they may be allowed to, but with the understanding that school personnel may not be available should an emergency arise. Each mentoring program may have its own policy for future contact between mentors and mentees. That's why it's best for mentors to check with program personnel during this stage.

# MATCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

## **FOR THE VOLUNTEER:**

- Statements made by the volunteer about the volunteer's desire for a type of client, including preferences regarding religion, race, age, client family lifestyle and type or extent of problem behavior of client;
- Geographic location;
- Skill levels of volunteer;
- Interests and hobbies; and
- Overall personality.

## **FOR THE CLIENT:**

- Statements made by the parent/guardian about volunteer's religious, racial, age and cultural background preferences;
- Geographic location;
- Identified needs of client for adult intervention;
- Interests and hobbies; and
- Overall personality.

## **MATCH DETERMINATION:**

- Similarity of proposed match participants;
- Compatibility of values and attitudes;
- Mutuality of interests; and
- Geographic proximity (a potential key to the success and longevity of a match).

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Courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

# TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE MATCHING PROCESS

## **Considerations Prior to Matching**

- Comprehensive assessments of families, clients and volunteers.
- Awareness of one's own stereotypes and assumptions.
- An interviewer trained in dealing with diversity.

## **Parental Approval**

- At each step of the standard screening process.

## **Common Interests**

- Vocational, educational and recreational.

## **Goals for the Client**

- Educational enrichment, self-esteem enhancement, cultural enrichment, family and peer relationship improvement.

## **Backgrounds**

- Childhood upbringing, culture, religion.

## **Life Experiences**

- Absence of parent in household, growing up as the oldest child in a large family, death of a parent, raised by a grandparent.

## **Expressed Preferences**

- Race, gender, culture, sexual orientation, age.

## **Acceptance of Cross-Gender or Alternative Types of Matching**

- Agreement by volunteer, youth and parent/guardian.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses of Volunteer and Client**

- Personality types, academic level, open-mindedness, energy level.

## **Client and Volunteer Willingness and Ability to Travel**

- If the program is community-based, will the volunteer pick up the child at the home? Is the child able to travel alone? Are the client and volunteer within a reasonable, commutable distance?

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Courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

# RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

## HOW OFTEN SHOULD MY PROGRAM CHECK IN WITH THEIR MENTORS?

Many programs have found that the following approach works well:

1. Contact the mentor within the first two weeks of the match. Use this contact to make sure the pair is meeting, to find out what activities they have done together and to assess how the mentor feels about the match thus far.
2. During the next few months, continue to check in with the mentor every two weeks. These ongoing contacts will help ensure that the mentor and youth meet regularly and are also important for uncovering any start-up problems that require program staff's immediate assistance. (Many school-based mentoring programs keep track of how frequently each pair is meeting by having a logbook at the school where mentors sign in. However, it is still essential to have regular telephone or face-to-face contact to discuss the match.)
3. For at least a year, continue to check in monthly with the mentor. The check-in discussion during this period should be focused on monitoring the quality of the mentoring relationship, assessing whether it is making progress toward its goals, learning whether the mentor or youth is losing interest in the match, and helping to address problems that may be arising between the pair. Your program should also make sure that mentors know how to contact staff, whenever necessary, for advice and support.

## WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD WE ASK DURING THE CHECK-INS?

Possible questions for the mentor include:

- How is your match going? How do you feel about being a mentor?
- Do you and your mentee enjoy spending time together?
- What kinds of activities do you do when you are together?
- How do you decide what activities to do together? Do you and your mentee have trouble thinking up things to do together?
- Do you spend much time talking?
- How often do you see your mentee? How much time do you spend together at each meeting?
- Does your mentee keep appointments with you? Does he or she show up on time?
- When was your last meeting? What did you do together?
- Do you talk to your mentee on the telephone? How often? (for community-based programs)
- Do you need help with anything? Is there anything interfering with your match?
- How would you describe your mentee's behavior? Does your mentee exhibit any behavior that you do not understand?
- How are things going with the parents and other family members? Is the parent of your mentee cooperative? (or, for school-based programs: How are things going with the teacher?)
- Are you satisfied with how things are going?
- Is there any training you think would be helpful for you?
- Is there anything else we should be aware of?
- Is there anything we can do to help?

### Questions to ask the youth include:

- Do you enjoy spending time with your mentor?
- What do you enjoy most about having a mentor? What do you enjoy least?
- When was the last time you met with your mentor? What did you do together?
- How often do you see your mentor? How long do your meetings last?
- Does your mentor keep appointments? Does he or she show up on time?
- Who decides what activities you are going to do together?
- Do you like talking to your mentor?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the visits?
- Is there anything you would like me to talk to your mentor about?

### During the check-ins with parents/guardians, you can ask:

- Is your child happy with his or her mentor?
- Does your child look forward to seeing his or her mentor?
- Do they seem to enjoy being together?
- Is there anything you would like me to discuss with either your child or the mentor?
- How often does your child see his or her mentor? How long do the meetings last?
- Does the mentor usually keep appointments and show up on time?
- Is there anything that concerns you about the relationship?
- How do you think they feel about the mentor?
- What do you think of their weekly activities with the mentor?
- Would you like to see the activities change? How?
- How are they doing in school?
- Have you observed any positive or negative changes?
- Is there anything else we should be aware of?

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Courtesy of The Maryland Mentoring Partnership's *Vision to Reality Mentoring Program Development Guide*.

# RECOGNITION: A CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## **July**

Letter of Invitation for Fall Semester

## **August**

Letter of Confirmation/Schedule

## **September**

Back-to-School Reception

## **October**

Halloween Activities

## **November**

Thanksgiving Card

## **December**

Holiday Card or “Treasure Chest”

## **January**

National Mentoring Month, Mid-Year Survey

## **February**

Valentines

## **March**

Follow-Up Letter

## **April**

National Volunteer Week

## **May**

Awards, Assemblies, Certificates

## **June**

Year-End Survey

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Courtesy of Texas Governor’s Mentoring Initiative.

## MENTEE/MENTOR TERMINATION RITUAL

**Termination may be the result of a variety of situations.**

- Sometimes it may become necessary to terminate a match due to conflicts between the mentee and mentor.
- Sometimes termination may occur because either the mentee or the mentor drops out of the program. The dropouts may occur as a result of relationship conflicts or other factors (e.g., mentor's time limitations, irresolvable problems with the mentee).
- Sometimes it may become apparent that the mentee and/or mentor may work more effectively with another mentor/mentee. In these cases, reassignment may be best.

**Termination should provide closure and opportunities for learning. In order for termination to accomplish this, the program director(s) may follow these guidelines:**

- Identify and verbally clarify the reasons for termination with both the mentee and mentor. If the reasons involve the behavior of either party, this should be presented in a constructive manner. The person who engaged in the behavior (tardiness, rudeness, indifference, absenteeism, etc.) should be asked how that might make others feel, and the person who received the behavior could be asked how s/he might respond or address such behavior in the future. This will serve as practice for the actual meeting between the mentor and mentee.
- Give the mentee and mentor the opportunity to discuss together what worked and didn't work in their relationship and to identify ways to handle future situations more effectively. The program director(s) should facilitate a conversation between the mentee and mentor in order to make sure that both parties express themselves positively and constructively. This information may be critical to successfully rematching the mentee or mentor.
- Both parties should be encouraged to share their feelings about ending their relationship. Mentors who are terminating because of time limitations or other reasons not related to the mentee need to make particularly clear to the mentee that s/he did not do anything to make the mentor leave. The mentor should share with the mentee the things about the mentee that s/he liked. Without this—and often even with it to a lesser degree—the mentee will feel they are unlovable or flawed in some way. The mentor should do all that he or she can to convince the child this is not so.
- Plan the next step. If the mentee is to be reassigned, discuss the new relationship with the mentee alone first. Help him or her to identify mistakes that occurred with the previous mentor and discuss ways to avoid those mistakes in the future. (New behaviors may have been mentioned by the mentor in the mentor-mentee termination meeting.) If the match ended due to factors other than relationship conflict (e.g., mentor's part-time job schedule changed), reassure the mentee that s/he was not to blame and help him or her process any feelings about the termination of that relationship.
- Arrange a meeting between the mentee and the new mentor. Set appropriate time boundaries (e.g., "We will meet weekly for one year and then see if we are able to spend more time together after that.") and guidelines for the relationship (especially if there were problems with the previous match). If a mentee has had significant problems with previous mentors, a trial period may be appropriate.

**Often, termination will become public information to other mentees and mentors in the program. The program director(s) should address this in order to minimize assumptions and rumors.**

- If a mentee leaves the program—Explain to the others that you and the mentee have decided that this is not the best place for him or her to be at this time.
- If a mentor leaves the program—Tell the others that he or she needed to leave the program. If the mentor's reasons for leaving were unrelated to the mentee, remind the other group members of this. If the reasons for leaving were related to the mentee, tell the group that you and the mentor decided that it would be best to find a mentor who had more in common with the mentee and would be better able to connect with the mentee.
- If mentees and mentors are reassigned (which should happen only infrequently)—Tell the group that everyone involved decided that it would be best to rearrange matches. Remind the others that sometimes after getting to know someone a little better, it becomes apparent that you may work better with another person. If this happens, encourage mentees and mentors to approach the program director(s) to discuss reassignment.

Developed by Kimberley Lakes and Michael Karcher for  
Developmental Mentoring: The Children with Adolescent Mentors (CAMP) Program

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Courtesy of Michael J. Karcher, Ed.D., Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Counseling & Educational Psychology (CEPAHE), College of Education and Human Development, University of Texas, San Antonio.

## TERMINATING RELATIONSHIPS

### **When the decision has been made to end the formal mentoring relationship:**

- Set a specific date for your last meeting and inform your mentee of this ahead of time;
- Be honest, candid and supportive, regardless of the reason for the termination;
- Talk about the reasons for ending the relationship;
- Talk about your thoughts and feelings for the mentee and your feelings about the termination;
- Encourage your mentee to do the same;
- Be positive and supportive, especially about what the future may hold for your mentee;
- If it seems appropriate, talk to the liaison about a replacement mentor for your mentee; and
- Don't make promises you may not keep (e.g., that you will keep in touch).

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Courtesy of National Association of Partners in Education, Inc., *Organizing Effective School-Based Mentoring Programs* (1992).  
Source: How to Start a Mentoring Program Fastback 333, Dr. Susan Weinberger, Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.





