



# **Mentor Guidebook**

**Training Material for all Mentors**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>MENTORING OVERVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WHAT IS MENTORING</b>	<b>1</b>
TYPES OF MENTORING	1
LOCATIONS OF MENTORING	1
MENTORING STATISTICS	2
<b>BENEFITS OF MENTORING</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BENEFITS TO MENTORS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>BENEFITS TO MENTEES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE MENTORING</b>	<b>5</b>
KEY MENTOR FUNCTIONS	5
RESPONSIBLE MENTOR TIPS	6
FOUR PRIMARY TASKS OF MENTORS	6
MENTOR RESPONSIBILITIES	7
MENTOR CODE OF ETHICS	7
A MENTOR'S PLEDGE	8
A YEAR'S WORTH OF MENTORING ACTIVITIES	9
MENTORING SESSION TIPS & STRATEGIES	10
SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES	14
<b>THE MENTORING LIFE CYCLE</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>B.E.S.T. METHOD</b>	<b>16</b>
STAGE 1 – BUILDING TRUST	17
STAGE 2 – EXPLORING GROWTH POSSIBILITIES	19
STAGE 3 – SUSTAINING THE RELATIONSHIP	20
STAGE 4 – TRANSITIONING OR CONTINUING THE RELATIONSHIP	21
<b>CLARIFYING YOUR ROLE</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>UNDERSTANDING THE “C’S” OF MENTORING</b>	<b>24</b>

---

**COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR MENTEE 25****ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS 25**

LISTENING 25

LOOKING 25

LEVELING 25

**HELPFUL COMMUNICATION SKILLS 26**

ACTIVE LISTENING 26

"I" MESSAGES 27

PARAPHRASING 27

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS 28

**COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR MENTEE 29**

BODY LANGUAGE 29

USING VOCABULARY 29

GIVING FEEDBACK 30

**SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION OUTCOMES 30****COMMUNICATION ROADBLOCKS 31**

---

**BUILDING YOUR MENTEE'S SELF-ESTEEM 33****THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF SELF-ESTEEM 34****SELF-AWARENESS 35**

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION 35

STRIVING FOR A SOUND FOUNDATION: EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING 36

CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING 36

SELF-ESTEEM: THE PARTS TO THE WHOLE 37

**COMMON BEHAVIORS OF HIGH AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM 38****KEYS TO INCREASING SELF-ESTEEM 39****ACTIVITIES TO HELP BOLSTER SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-WORTH 40**

---

**EXPLORING AND VALUING DIVERSITY 43****DEFINING DIVERSITY 43****ETHNIC DIVERSITY 44****SOCIOECONOMIC DIVERSITY 45****YOUTH CULTURE 46****SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESSFULLY HANDLING DIVERSITY 47****CULTURAL RECIPROCITY 49**

CONSIDERATIONS 50

<b>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>SUBSTANCE ABUSE</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>CHILD ABUSE AND FAMILY VIOLENCE</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>PEER PRESSURE</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>EMERGING SEXUALITY AND TEENAGE PARENTING</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>AGES AND STAGES OF YOUTH</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>5 TO 7 YEAR-OLDS</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>8 TO 10 YEAR-OLDS</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>11 TO 13 YEAR-OLDS</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>14 TO 18 YEAR-OLDS</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>SCENARIOS</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>CASE SCENARIOS</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION SCENARIOS</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>BOUNDARY SCENARIOS</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>GOAL-SETTING</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>IMPORTANCE OF GOALS</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>S.M.A.R.T. GOALS</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>SAMPLE GOALS</b>	<b>67</b>
MENTOR – MENTEE RELATIONSHIP	67
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	68
OUT-OF-SCHOOL PERFORMANCE	68
<b>DECIDING ON GOALS</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>FAILED GOALS</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>MENTEE WANTS</b>	<b>70</b>
ADVICE	70
ACCESS	71
ADVOCACY	71
<b>SUGGESTED RESOURCES</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>MUSEUMS, HISTORICAL PLACES, AND OTHER AREA ATTRACTIONS TO VISIT</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>MENTORING REFERENCES</b>	<b>73</b>
WEBSITES	73
BOOKS	74

**GUIDEBOOK REFERENCES**

---

**76**

CREATION REFERENCES

76

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

76

# What is Mentoring?

To understand mentoring, you first have to know the definition of a Mentor. A Mentor is someone who imparts wisdom to, and shares knowledge with, a less experienced colleague. A Mentor is a wise and trusted friend and guide.

Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support, and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee. The essence of mentoring is the one-on-one relationship that shows a child that s/he is valued as a person and is important to society. The quality of the relationship you build directly influences the life and future of the mentee.

As a Mentor, you are a:

- Positive Role Model
- Friend
- Coach
- Advisor
- Self-Esteem Builder
- Career Counselor
- Advocate

## Types of Mentoring

Responsible mentoring can occur in these forms:

- Traditional mentoring: one adult to one young person
- Group mentoring: one adult to up to four young people
- Team Mentoring: several adults working with small groups of young people
- Peer mentoring: caring youth mentoring other youth
- E-mentoring: mentoring via e-mail and the internet

## Locations for Mentoring

Mentoring can take place in a wide array of settings, such as these:

- Community settings
- Faith-based organizations
- Workplace

- School
- Juvenile corrections facility
- “Virtual community” where e-mentoring takes place

Mentoring is a time-proven strategy for helping young people of all circumstances to achieve their potential. Along with parents, guardians, and other influential individuals, Mentors provide support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement, and a constructive example to mentees.

Mentoring is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. Every young person who would benefit from a mentoring relationship has individual needs. Effective mentoring programs offer enough flexibility to help meet each mentee’s personal needs while also allowing mentoring relationships to flourish within a safe structure.

Mentored young people see 59% improve their grades.

*(Source: Career Beginnings)*

86% went on to higher education.

*(Source: Proctor & Gamble)*

80% of youth involved in the juvenile detention system who received a mentor did not return to that system.

*(Source: Prison Fellowship)*

*“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.”*

*-- Steven Spielberg, Director*

# Benefits of Mentoring

Over two decades of research has shown that the number and intensity of high quality relationships in young people's lives is linked to a broad range of positive outcomes, including increased student engagement, improved academic motivation, better grades, higher aspirations for the future, and a variety of other positive engagement in their own life and their communities. High-quality relationships are characterized as caring, supportive, meaningful, reciprocal, and resulting in young people's sense of agency, belonging, and competence.

## Benefits to Mentors

Mentors perceive the experience of being identified as a mentor and the process of mentoring in highly positive terms. Many report that their experiences provided them with a form of "cultural capital" that helped them to make sense of their own past experiences (sometimes difficult) and current challenges. They also gain insight into the day-to-day lives of youth and develop positive, more reciprocal relationships with youth. Mentoring is an opportunity to give back to your community and to participate in shaping its future.

## Benefits to Mentees

The most notable benefits for mentees are better academic performance, better school attendance, and positive attitudes.

Based on the Big Brothers Big Sisters Public/Private Ventures study, it was found that students who meet regularly with Mentors are 52% less likely to skip a day of school, and 37% less likely to skip a single class. This means Mentors keep students in school. The help Mentors provide with homework leads to improved academic skills for the mentees and decreases the feelings of failure that cause mentees to want to skip.

Mentors also help to improve their mentees' self-esteem. This boost in self-worth aids in keeping mentees away from alcohol and illegal drugs. Mentees who believe in themselves are more likely to care about themselves and the community in which they live.

Another key benefit to mentees is the strengthening of their communication skills. They learn to think through challenges and explain their reasoning, which in turn helps them to look inward and identify both their good and bad motivations for their behavior.

Mentors can also help mentees to set long term career goals and plan the short term steps they'll need to take to achieve their dreams. Mentors can also assist mentees in finding internships and job possibilities within the community.

Mentoring is a bridge. Thousands of children in our communities are eager to connect with adults who are willing to listen and be available to them. There are many options and opportunities in mentoring. In fact, mentoring is one of the most powerful ways to combat the generational, racial, cultural, and financial gaps between people in our society.

*"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and  
a push in the right direction."  
-- John C. Crosby (1859-1943),  
Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Justice*

# Responsible Mentoring

## Key Mentor Functions

### **A Mentor Builds on the Positive**

Whenever possible, approach the goals, issues and/ or problems of your mentee in a positive light, building on related strengths that your mentee may have demonstrated. You can be the one to help your mentee see the connection between their actions of today and their dreams and goals of tomorrow. Be as concrete and relevant as possible.

### **A Mentor Encourages**

Mentors can help their mentee build self-confidence, self-esteem and cultural pride to last a lifetime by focusing on the talents, assets and strengths of the mentee.

### **A Mentor Models Behavior**

Words consistently reinforced by behavior are unbelievably powerful. What you do is as important as what you say, so use your behavior to promote learning and positive development in your mentee. You are competing against numerous negative influences (for example, television, advertising and peers), so be persistent and patient. Find creative solutions to problems your mentee brings up, encouraging discussion and the seeking out of alternatives. Engage your mentee in a discussion in which you explain the reasoning behind your behavior. The discussion, it is hoped, will prompt your mentee to discuss the reasoning behind their behavior.

### **A Mentor Turns Everything into a Learning Experience**

Keep an eye out for learning opportunities and teachable moments. If your mentee expresses an interest in someone or something, no matter how slight, take advantage of the situation and help them develop the interest further. Over time, they may learn to be aware of and creative with their own potential.

## **Responsible Mentor Tips**

- Keep realistic expectations
- Return calls promptly
- Confirm and keep meetings/appointments as scheduled
- Plan new activities
- Will not ask to borrow or loan money
- Listen closely and learn from your mentee
- Be positive and supportive whenever possible
- Respect your mentee's point of view and his/her opinions
- Keep in regular contact with the Program Coordinator/case worker
- Remain patient
- Wait for the right opportunity to ask personal questions
- Identify your mentee's talents, strengths, and assets
- Provide recognition for effort or improvement
- Show appreciation for contributions of your mentee
- Demonstrate confidence and faith in your mentee
- Suggest small steps in new or difficult tasks
- Show your mentee how to use mistakes as learning experiences

## **Four Primary Tasks of Mentors**

Establish a positive, personal relationship with mentee:

- Establish mutual trust and respect;
- Maintain regular interaction and consistent support; and
- Make your meetings enjoyable and fun.

Help mentee to develop or begin to develop life skills:

- Work with your mentee to accomplish specific program goals (e.g., drop-out prevention, general career awareness); and
- Instill the framework for developing broader life-management skills, (e.g., decision-making skills, goal-setting skills, conflict resolution, money management).

Assist mentee in obtaining additional resources:

- Provide awareness of community, educational and economic resources available to youth and their families, and how to access these resources. Act as a resource broker as opposed to a resource provider;
- Act as a guide and/or advocate, coach and/or model; and
- Avoid acting as a professional case manager. View the role of a mentor as a friend rather than a counselor.

Increase mentee's ability to interact with people/groups/things from various backgrounds (cultural, racial, socioeconomic, etc.):

- Respect and explore differences among people/groups from various backgrounds. Do not promote values and beliefs of one group as superior to those of another; and
- Introduce mentee to different environments, such as workplace vs. school setting; discuss differences in behavior, attitude and style of dress.

## **Mentor Responsibilities**

- Listen
- Be consistent
- Encourage school attendance
- Work on goal-setting and decision-making
- Help your mentee find resources

## **Mentor Code of Ethics**

- Respect your mentee
- Confidentiality at all times except when there is a threat to your mentee or others
- Offer possible solutions, not advice
- Contact your Program Coordinator if there is a problem

## **A Mentor's Pledge**

I commit to **making a difference**, to support, guide and be a **role model**.

I commit to being **consistent**, to be a steady figure over time, to be persistent and to help another persevere.

I commit to **encouraging** another by listening, by understanding, by fostering strengths and by showing empathy.

I commit to **building** a mutual relationship; to enter the world of someone else, to hear about new dreams and challenges, to share my own stories and to respect the differences between us.

I commit to **asking for assistance** when I need my own support, when the struggles of a child are bigger than I can handle, when I am unsure.

I commit to **recognizing** that change often comes in small steps that barely leave footprints, that victories are often unseen or unspoken, and that obstacles will always be present.

I commit to **remaining sympathetic** to the storms weathered, to the adversity faced and to the experiences that occurred long before this child entered my life.

I commit to **realizing** that my actions carry new weight and **responsibility**, that my role can never be taken lightly, that my life will also change with this experience.

**I commit to being a mentor.**

# A Year's Worth of Mentoring Activities

*52 ideas, one for each week of the year – Cross them out as you complete them  
Courtesy of California Governor's Mentoring Partnership*

- |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|
| 1  | Set your mentoring goals together      | 27 | Talk about how to look for a job       |
| 2  | Make dinner together                   | 28 | Talk about where to find a job         |
| 3  | Make popcorn and talk                  | 29 | Find a summer job                      |
| 4  | Go to a concert                        | 30 | Set up a work internship               |
| 5  | Tackle some homework                   | 31 | Talk about making connections          |
| 6  | Go out to dinner together              | 32 | Talk about what it takes to get ahead  |
| 7  | Go to a movie                          | 33 | Talk about health insurance            |
| 8  | Shoot some hoops                       | 34 | Talk about taxes                       |
| 9  | Go to the library together             | 35 | Talk about balancing a checkbook       |
| 10 | Just hang out                          | 36 | Talk about work and life               |
| 11 | Figure out how to program your VCR/DVD | 37 | Talk about credit cards                |
| 12 | Learn about pop music                  | 38 | Talk about savings and investments     |
| 13 | Talk about life                        | 39 | Go bargain hunting                     |
| 14 | Give a tour of your current job        | 40 | Plan a week's worth of meals           |
| 15 | Talk about your first job              | 41 | Go holiday shopping                    |
| 16 | Talk about planning a career           | 42 | Learn to write a thank-you note        |
| 17 | Plan a career                          | 43 | Go to a house of worship               |
| 18 | Get together with friends from work    | 44 | Celebrate a friend's religious holiday |
| 19 | Visit a community college              | 45 | Talk about relationships               |
| 20 | Visit a local technical school         | 46 | Talk about personal values             |
| 21 | Talk about college                     | 47 | Talk about the future                  |
| 22 | Work on applications together          | 48 | Visit a convalescent hospital          |
| 23 | Explore financial aid options          | 49 | Discuss politics                       |
| 24 | Work on a resume                       | 50 | Share your culture and background      |
| 25 | Talk about dressing for success        | 51 | Go hiking                              |
| 26 | Do a pretend job interview             | 52 | Do some volunteer work together        |

## **Mentoring Session Tips & Strategies**

Below is a partial list of some tips and strategies for your mentoring sessions. Check to see that they are age appropriate. Remember to ask youth what they would like to do. Plan together. Don't be too structured, though. Spontaneity is important! Add some good ideas of your own. Make a list of the ideas that you really liked and share them with other mentors. Good luck!

- Start by telling your youth why you decided to become a mentor.
- Engage in games such as chess, checkers, Monopoly and crossword puzzles.
- Select books you like and read them together. Get to an exciting part and finish it next time you are together.
- Start a book club.
- Exchange favorite recipes. Put them in a book and use it as a neighborhood fundraiser for the program.
- Research the history of music and learn to play a musical instrument together.
- Teach the beginning alphabet, words and phrases of a foreign language.
- Create a scrapbook of memories that last the entire year.
- Use a disposable camera to capture special moments.
- Work on the computer. Create calendars, write poems and search the Web.
- Set up e-mail correspondence between mentors and youth if you are permitted and if your youth has e-mail access where the mentoring program is located. Write to each other and touch base between visits.
- Construct a kite together and fly it.
- Build and launch a rocket. Don't forget to take photos.
- Create a design and carve a pumpkin on Halloween.
- Help research and design an extra credit project.
- Create a time capsule and bury it. Determine when it should be opened.
- Create a holiday, get well, or greeting card for a special occasion.

- Discuss safety precautions such as wearing helmets when riding bikes and fire safety in the home.
- Write an original storybook together.
- Discuss personal hygiene, health, exercise and healthy habits. Remember that we are what we eat! Manage a diet plan together.
- Teach how to give a good handshake. Practice makes perfect!
- Discuss proper etiquette and social graces. Plan a field trip to a fine restaurant after youth pass all the tests. Make sure to get permission and invite a chaperone. Get approvals from the program first!
- Connect with the community. Research what after-school programs are offered in the community in which youth might engage.
- Encourage your youth to try out for school activities such as the band, chorus, drama and sports.
- Play sports. Shoot basketballs in a school or organization's gymnasium.
- Explore what to do in an emergency. Create a contact list and discuss 911 procedures.
- Plan for a sound financial future. Discuss opening savings and checking accounts and the concept of good credit and the meaning of credit cards. Invite a banker to speak with youth.
- Plan for future careers. Conduct mock interviews for a job, read the want ads, discuss dress codes and fill out a sample job application.
- Discuss opportunities for post-secondary education. Research two- and four-year colleges and technical schools and the meaning of financial aid. What does it take to get to college? What high school courses should be taken? It is never too early to begin.
- Take a career interest inventory. Discuss entry-level positions.
- Decide on a community service project together with mentors and youth and carry it out. Plant a garden in front of the local school, remove graffiti from school walls or collect food and deliver it to the homeless. Take credit for the project as part of your mentoring program. Ask the program what their needs are.

- Start a pen pal project with a group of young people in another country.
- Talk about friends — those that your youth has and those he or she would like to have.
- Decorate T-shirts and wear your creations proudly.
- Discuss what your youth wants to be when he or she grows up. Invite guest speakers in who represent the careers of choice.
- Arrange to shadow corporate executives on Groundhog Job Shadow Day, a national event in February.
- Have a game of basketball, football or volleyball with mentors playing against youth.
- Help your youth to craft a personal mission statement.
- Design and paint a mural on the wall of the school.
- Act out a scene from a favorite book and make a production out of it. Invite the school to attend.
- Discover ways to make spelling fun. Use alphabet cereal or flashcards.
- Play Hangman.
- Discuss the positive activities youth can get involved in during the summer.
- Walk outside on a nice day; sit under a tree and just talk.
- Research and talk about famous people who use their abilities to get ahead.
- Read the newspaper and discuss current events.
- Share your life experiences.
- Share your career experiences. How did you get to where you are today?
- Remember your youth on his or her birthday with a card.
- Share your school experiences when you were the same age as your mentee is now.
- Share a proverb each time that you meet.
- Build a model.

- Swap photos of youth and mentors.
- Bring a scrapbook or photo album from home and share photos of your family, travels and pets.
- Share thoughts and feelings between meetings in a small journal.
- Practice the answers to the questions for a driver's license.
- Help your youth write a resume.
- Discuss people you admire. Compare heroes and research your favorites.
- Discuss leisure activities.
- Plan a leadership project with your youth and carry it out.
- Tell your youth — if you could go back to high school, what would you do differently?
- Complete a personality inventory to find out who your youth is.
- Help your youth to design a unique and original calling or business card.
- Ask your youth where they hope to be in five years and in 10 years.
- Help your youth to get organized. Write out what your youth does every day and what he or she would like to change.
- Practice how to get a point across.
- Research volunteer opportunities and adopt a project. Giving back through community service is so important.
- Discuss travel and dream vacations.
- Discuss the pillars of character including pride, punctuality, honesty and responsibility.
- Help to arrange a mini career fair and invite other youth to attend.
- Cook a meal together if it is allowed. Ask to use the school kitchen or home economics classroom if there is one at your local school.
- Explore careers over the Internet.
- Teach how to ask a boss for a raise.

- Invite a guest from the local labor market office to discuss market requirements and the fastest growing jobs today.
- Share your dreams.
- Help with homework. Make sure that your youth takes the lead in making this decision.
- Plan a random act of kindness.
- Learn about how newspapers write the news and invite a reporter to a session.
- Usher at the school play or musical concert.
- Arrange a field trip to visit a senior citizen home. Read to the seniors.
- Hold a spelling bee and crown the winner.
- Try clay modeling.

### **Suggested Follow-Up Activities**

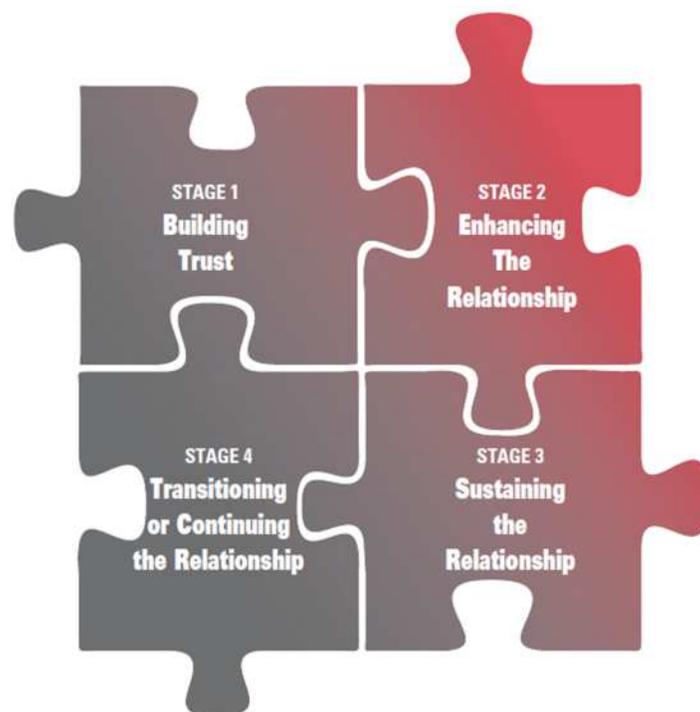
Mentors, as a follow-up to this training we recommend that you connect with your program coordinator to become familiar with the following:

- Understand your program's statement of purpose and long-range plan.
- Talk to your program coordinator about how you may be able to assist them in recruiting other mentors.
- Participate in the program orientation for mentors.
- Become familiar with the eligibility and screening process for mentors so that new mentors know what to expect.
- Ask your program coordinator for additional information and training opportunities designed to support mentors.
- Be honest with your program coordinator about your current and new interests. This will help them during the matching process.

- Check in with your program coordinator to see when they have scheduled meetings for staff and mentors. This is a great way to receive program updates and information. This might also include newsletters and other mailings.
- Identify ways to provide feedback on your mentoring experiences to the program coordinator. Programs need to hear from you about what is working and what can be improved upon.

# The Mentoring Life Cycle

Every mentoring relationship cycles through phases as it matures. These phases tend to come in order, but there are many times when you'll feel you've looped back or jumped ahead. Remember that all relationships go through stages: beginnings, middles, and endings. The time spent in each one of these areas will differ from relationship to relationship, but the progression is uniform. Likewise, all relationships are based on reciprocity and it is essential that both parties find the mentoring beneficial. In most cases, those who are willing to move through the unsettling beginning phase will find that their relationship will progress and bonds will be forged. Remember that mentees tend to be standoffish until they learn their mentors are sincere and trustworthy. Also, remember that your Program Coordinator is only a phone call away if you need help.



Most mentoring relationships go through four stages known as the B.E.S.T. stages:

**B**uilding Trust

**E**nhancing the Relationship

**S**ustaining the Relationship

**T**ransitioning or Continuing the Relationship

## **Stage 1 – Building Trust**

During this phase, you will experience one of the most exciting parts of the relationship — communicating with your mentee for the first time. This is the phase in which you get to know one another, set ground rules for your relationship, and most importantly, build trust.

As the mentor, you should take the initiative to explore mutual interests and find common ground. Keep in mind that the relationship is filled with anxiety and uncertainty on both sides. Also, trust can be very fragile during this time and it is common for mentees to test the limits of their relationships. Take your time and be patient. Young people sometimes question why adults want to mentor them and though they won't tell you this, they need to be reassured that you are doing this for sincere and genuine reasons.

*“Trust is the glue of life. It’s the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It’s the foundational principle that holds all relationships.”*  
-- Stephen Covey, Educator & Author

Early on, you and your mentee will be testing the water with each other. Your mentee may feel nervous or wary, and may be on their best behavior for you. They may also get frustrated if things don't go as expected. You, on the other hand, may want to “fix” everything. You may find yourself adjusting your initial expectations about being a mentor once you've experienced it for real. Both of you may also be trying to bridge age, cultural, and lifestyle differences, as well as finding things in common.

### ***Getting Acquainted with your Mentee***

- Introduce yourself to your mentee and let him/her know how to address you; be confident and smile.
- Learn how to pronounce your mentee's name.
- Use an icebreaker activity to tell about yourself and allow your mentee to tell about him/her self.

- Be nonjudgmental and maintain composure if he/she initially acts in a shocking manner. The mentee may try to test your limits – do not engage in negative conversation.
- End session (and every session) on a POSITIVE NOTE!

### ***Strategies for Building Trust***

- Be patient.
- Expect setbacks.
- Create a mutual foundation of trust and respect
- Approach problems with an open mind
- Never assume the role of the parent/caretaker
- Be dependable, responsive, and highly consistent
- Fulfill your promises
- Be involved, yet keep perspective.
- If you think your mentee is becoming too dependent, set limits around the frequency and duration of visits and encourage him to broaden his support network. Refer to the handout entitled “Tools For Mentoring Adolescents #6 – Setting Mentoring Boundaries”.
- Show you are willing to listen.
- Focus on doing things *with* rather than *for* your mentee.
- Be aware of your own feelings about age, cultural, and lifestyle differences.
- Be nonjudgmental.
- Be open and honest about what you can, cannot, or have to do.

### ***Suggestions***

Research shows that empowering your mentee to select activities you’ll do together is one factor that contributes to a strong, successful match. At your next visit create two “idea” jars, one filled with low-cost things that you’d like to do, the other filled with low-cost things that your mentee would like to do. On each subsequent session, draw an “idea” and share in that activity together.

Another thing to keep in mind is that research shows only 20% of young people believe adults in the community value youth. You can strengthen your

mentoring relationship by demonstrating how much you value your mentee's ideas, perspectives, and companionship.

## **Stage 2 – Exploring Growth Possibilities**

In this stage, both the mentor and mentee are often somewhat confused about their roles. Conversation topics are becoming a mutual decision. Trust is still building, but not complete yet. This would be a good time to begin setting goals. Your mentee should begin to see you as a resource and be taking a more active role in the relationship.

*“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.”*  
*-- Plutarch, Greek Historian, Biographer, & Essayist*

Goal-setting is a powerful technique for helping a mentee develop a solid foundation for future planning and organization. By knowing what he/she wants to achieve in life, a mentee may know where they want to concentrate and what to improve. If mentees can set well-defined goals, they can measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals. This is a good time to work through the **Goal-Setting & Decision-Making With Your Mentee** program with your mentee.

Another area you can focus on with your mentee is Life Skills. What are Life Skills? Very simply put, life skills are tools everybody needs to survive, and can be as simple as learning the proper way to brush teeth or tie a tie, and as complex as knowing how to prepare for a college interview.

Examples of life skills include:

- personal appearance and hygiene
- goal-setting
- understanding/appreciating differences
- money management
- perseverance and dedication
- communications
- time management

- teamwork
- critical thinking
- decision making
- importance of education
- accountability

### **Suggestions**

Work with your mentee to complete the **Goal-Setting & Decision-Making With Your Mentee** program. Encourage your mentee to include some of the life skills listed above as their goals. Remember to encourage gently! If your mentee feels pressured, he/she may become more concerned with pleasing you rather than setting goals they truly want to accomplish.

### **Stage 3 – Sustaining the Relationship**

In this phase, trust has been established and conversation is more comfortable, personal and open. Both parties are actively contributing to the relationship; feedback (both negative and positive) is given and received without fear of rejection. Goal setting takes center stage as you and your mentee do some serious work together. In other words, things are running smoothly.

You may find your mentee becoming less dependent on you and finding other sources of support. On the upside, you might see an increased self-worth in your mentee. However, setbacks are still possible during this stage as your mentee may take bigger risks in life and in the relationship. Keep in mind the following:

- Expect some setbacks as a natural part of this stage.
- Continue to support your mentee while encouraging independence.
- Point out the shifts you are observing in behavior and reinforce your mentee's efforts to seek support from others.

*"I think part of being a mentor is you have to have confidence  
in the people you're guiding and mentoring."*

*-- Sidney Sheinberg, Lawyer and American Entertainment Executive*

Sometimes, despite the positive flow of the relationship, your mentee may present you with challenges that they are facing. They see you as a resource, you have established trust, and you may appear to them to be the ideal problem solver at this point. In this stage it is important to remember that if the trust is compromised in any way, it will slow the progression of the relationship.

Ways to help:

- Guide the mentee (and their family if appropriate) toward the community, educational, and economic resources that are available and explain ways to utilize them.
- Problem solving – help your mentee assess the problem, identify solutions, review pros and cons of the choices, and make a decision. Review the Goal-Setting and Decision-Making forms you filled out together in Stage 2.
- Discuss what resources and academic preparation are needed to pursue and achieve his/her goals. This may include SAT preparation, college and financial aid applications, scholarship research, etc.
- Avoid acting as professional case manager; view your role as a friend, guide, and advocate.

## **Stage 4 – Transitioning or Continuing the Relationship**

Transitions – or any change, for that matter – can be frightening, but you can ease the fears and make transitions smoother by preparing for them. Research tells us that it is essential that mentors and mentees discuss the end of their relationship and mutually decide whether to continue or conclude your time together. It's important to talk with your mentee about the time you spent together, the experiences you had, things you learned, what you liked and didn't like, and so on.

Ideally, you and your mentee will explore the topic of transitioning long before the likely endpoint of the relationship and at that time, you can decide to continue the match or end the relationship. This will give you the opportunity to reflect on your relationship with each other (accomplishments, setbacks, etc.) and freely discuss whether or not to continue the relationship.

When a relationship is about to end, it is important that you 'close the match' or end it well. Many times, closure is a celebration for matches that have successfully completed the program or reached the maximum age limit. Whether the closure is the result of the program ending or due to unforeseen circumstances that require you to end the relationship, it is critical that you spend time to plan a final activity/meeting with your mentee.

*"When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us."*

*-- Alexander Graham Bell, Scottish Scientist, Inventor,  
Engineer, & Innovator*

When it's time to end your relationship, it's best if you can do so on a positive note. Some suggestions to help you include:

- Celebrate the positive growth in the relationship and the completion of mentee goals. Involve staff and parents in the celebration, if appropriate.
- Celebrate when your match goals are reached. Evaluate if this a natural ending or do you both need to renegotiate new goals?
- Talk to your mentoring support staff if you see things coming to a natural point of closure.
- Taper off visits over time. Transition from weekly visits to less frequent interactions.
- Communicate the reason for closure and ensure everyone is on the same page.
- Use pictures and other mementos to create a visual remembrance of your relationship, if appropriate.
- Reflect on how you have each changed and grown because of your time together.

Transitions are part of every relationship. Make sure the natural transitions in your relationship with your mentee are handled with insight and care. And just like every aspect of a mentoring relationship, an ending handled well becomes another life lesson for your mentee to learn from.

# Clarifying Your Role

## Understanding the Five “C’s” of Mentoring

Although mentors should prepare themselves to handle various situations, there may be times when mentors are not sure what to do or say to their mentee. As you begin to understand more about your role as a mentor, you will see there are five “C’s” which contribute to the successful development of the mentoring relationship.

**Commitment:** Any person who decides to become a mentor (or a mentee) must be committed to the process. First and foremost, you must have a clear understanding of the commitment you are making.

**Consistency:** Once you have committed to the process, you must be consistent with that commitment. It is important that you regularly attend the mentoring sessions and participate fully.

**Concern:** You should have a sincere concern for your mentee and/or issues raised as part of your mentoring relationship. Mentors are there as a guide, to be supportive and show compassion.

**Connection:** Finding that connection to another individual is difficult! However, mentors and mentees alike have told us that the phrase “you get out of it what you put into it” could not be truer when we think of mentoring. Think of ways to share your expertise and build a respectful rapport. It can make a world of difference.

**Confidentiality:** Recognize that confidentiality between mentor/mentee should be respected at all times. Whatever is discussed should stay within that relationship as a courtesy to your mentee. However, in the case of potential harm to the mentee or another person, confidentiality must be broken. (In some cases, it is a legal requirement.) Confidential information about the student should only be discussed with the Program Coordinator, no one else.

# Communicating With Your Mentee

## Enhancing Communication Skills

Talking and communicating are not the same. There are three basic skills to master for effective communication.

### Listening

- Pay attention
- Don't think ahead to what you are going to say (ignoring the speaker while rehearsing your own comments)
- Don't interrupt — let your mentee finish what he/she is saying
- Listen for feelings underneath the words — read "between the lines"
- Keep an open mind — don't judge immediately
- Encourage the speaker to continue and clarify what has been said

### Looking

People communicate both verbally and with body language, pay attention to the whole person. Take note of facial gestures and body movements. There are clues that will help you more fully understand what the person is saying. Some helpful tips:

- Make eye contact
- Show that you are listening by leaning forward in your chair, saying "Uh huh" or "Go on"
- Make sure you understand what your mentee is saying — repeat back what you think you heard
- Don't be afraid to ask your mentee for clarification on what they said
- Keep an open posture — don't cross arms.

### Leveling

Leveling means being honest about what you are feeling and thinking. Tips include:

- Be honest in what you say.
- Speak for yourself. Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements.
- Deal with the other person's feelings. Don't give unwanted advice or try to change someone's feelings. Just listen and try to understand.

## **Helpful Communication Skills**

The following four communication skills are very helpful for mentors to develop and practice. These skills are particularly useful when your goal is to open up communication with a young person. They are also useful skills that you can help your mentee develop:

### **Active Listening**

Active listening is an attempt to truly understand the content and emotion of what the other person is saying by paying attention to verbal and non-verbal messages. The task is to focus, hear, respect and communicate your desire to understand. This is not the time to be planning a response or conveying how you feel.

Active listening is not nagging, cajoling, reminding, threatening, criticizing, questioning, advising, evaluating, probing, judging or ridiculing.

Skills to Use:

- Eye contact;
- Body language: open and relaxed posture, forward lean, appropriate facial expressions, positive use of gestures; and
- Verbal cues such as "um-hmmm," "sure," "ah" and "yes."

Results of Active Listening:

- Encourages honesty — helps people free themselves of troublesome feelings by expressing them openly;
- Reduces fear — helps people become less afraid of negative feelings;
- Builds respect and affection; and
- Increases acceptance — promotes a feeling of understanding.

When you actively listen, you cooperate in solving the problem — and in preventing future problems.

## **“I” Messages**

These messages give the opportunity to keep the focus on you and explain your feelings in response to someone else’s behavior. Because “I” messages don’t accuse, point fingers at the other person or place blame, they avoid judgments and help keep communication open. At the same time, “I” messages continue to advance the situation to a problem-solving stage.

For example: “I was really sad when you didn’t show up for our meeting last week. I look forward to our meetings and was disappointed not to see you. In the future, I would appreciate it if you could call me and let me know if you will not be able to make it.”

Avoid: “You didn’t show up, and I waited for an hour. You could have at least called me and let me know that you wouldn’t be there. You are irresponsible.”

Take care that the following actions and behaviors are congruent with an honest, open heart:

- Body language: slouching, turning away, pointing a finger;
- Timing: speaking too fast or too slow;
- Facial expression: smiling, squirming, raising eyebrows, gritting teeth;
- Tone of voice: shouting, whispering, sneering, whining; and
- Choice of words: biting, accusative, pretentious, emotionally laden.

Results: “I” messages present only one perspective. Allowing the other person to actually have a point of view and hearing it doesn’t mean that he or she is right. “I” messages communicate both information and respect for each position. Again, this skill moves both parties along to the problem-solving stage.

## **Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing focuses on listening first and then reflecting the two parts of the speaker’s message — fact and feeling — back to the speaker. Often, the fact is clearly stated, but a good listener is “listening between the lines” for the “feeling” part of the communication. Using this skill is a way to check out what you heard for accuracy — did you interpret what your mentee said correctly? This is particularly helpful with youth, as

youth culture/language change constantly. Often words that meant one thing when mentors were young could have an entirely different meaning for youth today.

Examples of fact:

- "So you're saying that . . ."
- "You believe that . . ."
- "The problem is . . ."

Examples of feeling:

- "You feel that . . ."
- "Your reaction is . . ."
- "And that made you feel . . ."

Paraphrases are not an opportunity to respond by evaluating, sympathizing, giving an opinion, offering advice, analyzing or questioning.

Results: Using active listening skills will enable you to gather the information and then be able to simply report back what you heard in the message — the facts and the attitudes/feelings that were expressed. Doing so lets the other person know that you hear, understand, and care about his or her thoughts and feelings.

### **Open-Ended Questions**

Open-ended questions are intended to collect information by exploring feelings, attitudes and how the other person views a situation. Open-ended questions are extremely helpful when dealing with young people. Youth, teenagers especially, tend to answer questions with as few words as possible. To maintain an active dialogue without interrogating, try to ask a few questions that cannot be answered with a "yes", "no", "I don't know", or a grunt.

Examples:

- "How do you see this situation?"
- "What are your reasons for . . . ?"
- "Can you give me an example?"

- "How does this affect you?"
- "How did you decide that?"
- "What would you like to do about it?"
- "What part did you play?"

Caution: Using the question "Why did you do that?" may sometimes yield a defensive response rather than a clarifying response.

Results: Because open-ended questions require a bit more time to answer than close-ended questions (questions that can be answered by "yes", "no", or a brief phrase), they give the person a chance to explain. Open-ended questions yield significant information that can in turn be used to problem solve.

## **Communicating With Your Mentee**

### **Body Language**

Body language (also known as non-verbal language) is a powerful way to communicate, though many people don't realize it. It is many times more powerful than the words we say. For example, if someone is telling you that she is really glad to have met you, but her arms are folded across her chest and she is looking behind you at someone else, do you believe what she is saying, or do you doubt her sincerity?

Make it a point to give your mentee your undivided attention — that means stop checking your watch, responding to e-mails or phone calls, or twiddling your thumbs. Let your mentee know that you are interested in what they have to say. Young people will be watching you and judging your sincerity, and if your actions are contrary to your words, you will lose what you have tried to build with your mentee.

### **Using Vocabulary**

Think back to when you were a teen. Do you remember the language you spoke? Remember how adults criticized your language, dress and music? The same is true today. Does that mean that you should be trying to talk like your mentee? Absolutely

not! If you do you will probably look foolish and lose your credibility with your mentee. Also, every job has its own jargon. Make sure you don't confuse your mentee with words only you know. What words/terms do you use in your job that others might not understand? In our daily lives our language may vary based on our audience (i.e. we may speak differently to a friend or family member than we would with a supervisor at work). As a mentor, we have an opportunity to help youth understand that we use different languages in different environments.

### **Giving Feedback**

- Feedback should be well-timed. Do not embarrass the young person or make an issue of something in front of other people. Even positive feedback needs to be timely. Hugging an adolescent or commenting on school performance in front of peers could be embarrassing. Remember, don't let too much time pass "looking" for the right moment.
- Be Specific. Whether praising or working through problems, always be specific. For example: You may say "your math grade has gone up, you are really working hard and putting forth effort in math." That is something specific that the student will remember — and build from rather than saying "you're doing a good job."
- Be Empathetic. Mentees are not looking for sympathy. As a mentor, offer an opportunity to have someone willing to listen with a sensitive ear who will also try to understand their perspective.
- Eliminate Distractions. Make sure your mentee understands that he/she has your undivided attention.

### **Successful Communication Outcomes**

Every person has different ideas about what "ideal" communication looks like and consists of in a group mentoring relationship. However if the following statements are expressed at the end of the mentoring program, chances are you probably exercised effective communication on a regular basis.\*

S/He Listened to Me!

S/He Respected Me!

S/He Was Demanding, But Realistic!

S/He Helped Me!

S/He Was Firm, But Fair!  
S/He Was Consistent!  
S/He Set a Good Example for Me!  
S/He Made Me Stretch and Grow!  
S/He Was Interested in What I Had to Say!

## **Communication Roadblocks**

Thomas Gordon, in his book *Parent Effectiveness Training*, identifies several styles of communication that discourage and cut off communication. These are often styles exhibited between parents and their children and can develop in the mentor-mentee relationship. Here are examples of each style to help you avoid them:

1. Ordering, directing and commanding – telling the person what should be done.  
“Don’t stay out past midnight!”
2. Warning, admonishing, threatening – pointing out consequences that will occur if the young person does something he/she is not supposed to do. “If you don’t get at least a B on your test, you can just forget about the football game this weekend.”
3. Moralizing, exhorting, preaching – telling a person what to do. “You shouldn’t even consider having sex until you are married.”
4. Judging, criticizing, disagreeing, blaming – giving negative judgment or feedback.  
“That’s a very immature and selfish way of looking at things.”
5. Discounting feelings with feigned compliments, giving misleading, distracting feedback. “I think you are good looking. I don’t know why having braces bothers you.”
6. Name calling, ridiculing, shaming: embarrassing a person, putting a person down.  
“You are acting like an idiot.”

7. Reassuring, sympathizing, consoling, supporting – trying to make a person feel better by denying his/her feelings or convincing the person that the situation isn't as bad as he/she thought. "So you broke up with your girlfriend. Do you know how many times I got dumped when I was your age? Tons!"
8. Probing, questioning, interrogating – searching for causes, motives, and reasons to help you find a solution to another person's problems. "What's going on in your classes? Are you worried about your grades? Are you thinking about dropping out of school?"

*"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."*

*-- Tony Robbins, Motivational Speaker*

## Building Your Mentee's Self-Esteem

Young people need a mentor to create opportunities for them to enhance their self-esteem. Foster their self-esteem by valuing your mentee and by showing commitment and concern on a consistent basis. Expose the youth to positive experiences — choose activities that are guaranteed to provide a sense of success and accomplishment.

Have you ever had a bad self-esteem day? Maybe your hair doesn't look good or your pants are too tight. Think about how you feel. Just like you, young people will have bad days. Perhaps an outing that you thought would be wonderful is not well received by your mentee. Do not take it personally. Their reaction may have nothing to do with you or your role as a mentor. We all have bad days. Your challenge as a mentor is to help the young person work through those times and learn how to cope appropriately.

Self-Esteem is a sense of ...

- Belonging
- Competency
- Worthiness

At this time in their lives, adolescents are just beginning to challenge the information they receive as well as testing a person's commitment to their word. Again, it is critical that as mentors we follow-through and remain consistent. We stand to lose credibility with youth if we are not consistent with what we say and what we do. Mentees will be testing the character of their mentors. Young people are very perceptive and will know when you are being honest and sincere. Resist the temptation to say what you think they want to hear because you hope to make them happy. Be honest. If you are uncomfortable with a question or don't know the answer, just say so. In some cases, the experience could be used as a learning opportunity.

Factors that help build self-esteem include:

- Finding work you love or developing the capacity to love your work
- Developing an open mind, tolerance and respect of others
- Keeping an open mind to learn more; being receptive to learning from others
- Addressing basic needs, including staying physically healthy

- Being able to communicate with others without either one of you feeling “put down”

### **The Four Principles of Self-Esteem©**

1. Errors are one of the best ways human beings have of learning and growing better. We must always endeavor to:
  - a. Be ready to admit them;
  - b. Be willing to accept the consequences of them;
  - c. Persist in our efforts to correct them; and
  - d. Remember the correction, and do not dwell on the error.
2. To maintain self-esteem, human beings must always try to recognize and properly use the differing roles of emotion and reason. Emotions are internal signs that tell us of our well-being according to the values we hold. Emotions are not always proper guides to action.
3. To maintain self-esteem, we all must strive to fulfill the things in our lives for which we truly are responsible. Distinguishing between those that are our responsibilities and those which are not is crucial.
4. To be a person of genuine self-esteem, one must always seek to act in accordance with principles that give equal respect and weight to one’s own rights and to the rights of all others. A human right, if it is a right, should be the same for every human being on earth.

At the apex of this theory of self-esteem is found the idea that each human life should be of immense good and great value. Every human being becomes his or her own custodian of that valuable goodness. Thus, one’s own life, welfare, happiness and fulfillment become a trust that is worthy of the highest degree of respect. This inner respect and this inner striving for good, we call self-esteem.

*©Copyright 1984, Sue N. Teel, The Teel Institute 3801 Southwest Trafficway, Kansas City, MO 64111, All Rights Reserved*

## Self-Awareness:

### Emotional Well-Being, Self-Esteem and Self-Actualization

Adolescence is typically a time of great stress and strain on the body, mind and emotions. G. Stanley Hall referred to the period of adolescence as a time of “sturm und drang” or storm and stress (LeFrançois, 1996). This is explained by the fact that adolescents experience more lifechanging external and internal factors, and situations than pre-adolescents (Mullis, et al., 1993). The flood of hormones through the body and the internal changes that are experienced during this period are major contributors to stress. Some of the external changes, which can happen at any age, could be family related, sickness, death, divorce or trouble with the law. Some of the other changes that occur during this period can be labeled as school-based, such as trouble with grades, breaking up with a girlfriend or boyfriend, or being cut from a sports team. Overall, there is more of a daily connection to negative events during the period of adolescence than during the periods of pre-adolescence (LeFrançois, 1996). Adolescents begin to “break free” from their parents to find their own identities, and in some cases that break creates a loss of childhood reality or the protective nature of childhood.

However, it is important to note that the theory of “sturm und drang” has been seen in a different light due to the research of Buchanan, Eccles, and Becker. They reexamined the work of G. Stanley Hall and found the supposition that adolescence is a time of stress and strain because of the flood of hormones to be untrue. Buchanan, et al., also asserts that adolescents are not victims of hormones but rather fall victim to non-biological, external events just as other-aged individuals. They contend that adolescents are not victims of raging hormones but are individuals that find themselves to be content, happy, and full of vigor (Buchanan, et al., 1992).

LeFrançois (1996) offers definitions for significant self-awareness terms:

- **Self-esteem** is the positive or negative way an individual views himself or herself. It also entails the desire to be held in high esteem by others.
- **Self-concept** is the concept that an individual has of himself or herself. Notions of self are often linked to an individual’s beliefs about how others perceive them.

- **Self-actualization** is the process or act of becoming oneself, developing one's potential, achieving an awareness of one's identity and fulfilling oneself.

### **Striving for a Sound Foundation: Emotional Well-Being**

To deal with the forms of stress and overall life changes created by the onset of adolescence, individuals must have a strong grasp of their own emotional well-being. Emotional well-being can be defined as one's ability to relate to other people, feel comfortable with self, cope with disappointments and stress, solve problems, celebrate successes and make decisions. (Page & Page, 1992). Emotional well-being is built upon the foundation of a positive and healthy self-esteem. Self-esteem can be viewed as an evaluative component of self-image. Self-esteem is the positive or negative manner in which people judge themselves. It is also the degree to which an individual sees himself or herself as competent, belonging and worthwhile to society.

Self-esteem is the foundation for emotional well-being. There are activities and more information in this section to assist the mentor in helping his/her mentee build self-esteem and address problems caused by low self-esteem. Self-esteem is also the source of many ills a person can perpetrate against himself/herself or others. It is the one of the most fragile of human elements. It is important for mentors to observe their mentees' self-esteem, to talk to them about how they feel about themselves, and to help them find a way to see their own self-worth.

### **Characteristics of Emotional Well-Being**

- I feel comfortable with myself.
- I am not overwhelmed by my emotions.
- I can take life's disappointments.
- I can accept my shortcomings.
- I have self-respect. I can laugh at myself.
- I feel good about the relationships I hold with other people.
- I am able to give love and to consider the feelings of others.
- I respect the differences I find in other people.
- I feel a sense of responsibility to others.
- I am able to meet the demands of my life.

- I welcome new experiences and new ideas.
- I set realistic goals for myself.
- I am able to think for myself and make my own decisions.
- I put my best effort into everything that I do. (Page & Page, 1992)

These characteristics are a picture of emotional health. Most people would not score perfectly if rated against this list. It is important for mentors to explain to their mentees that most everyone struggles in some way at some time with their self-esteem. The next section will give the components of self-esteem and how to adjust and improve them.

### **Self-Esteem: The Parts to the Whole**

The components of self-esteem vary depending on the source. The following explanation is easily understood.

- The Self-Image. How we see ourselves.
- The Ideal-Self. How we want to be.
- The Pygmalion-Self. How we perceive that others see us. (Page & Page, 1992)

A sense of competency, worthiness and belonging is formed by a combination of these three elements. The foundations of self-esteem are created early in childhood. For instance, if an individual's interactions with parents and others were for the most part positive (mutually caring, happy, and sound relationships), the individual's self-esteem would likely be high. However, if parental and other primary interactions were mainly negative, an individual's self-esteem could be lacking.

It is important for mentors to be able to recognize the signs and behaviors of high and low self-esteem. For example, academics can deliver a damaging blow to a student's self-esteem. As early as age 5, students begin to realize that perhaps they are not as "smart" as some of the others in the class. This realization hurts their self-esteem and begins to cause changes in their everyday classroom behavior in relating to subject matter, teachers and peers. It is advisable for a mentor to talk to their mentee's teachers to get an informed opinion from people who observe the student daily and also to understand how the mentee acts and reacts to classroom settings. (Page & Page, 1992)

## Common Behaviors of High and Low Self-Esteem

The following chart will help mentors as they work with mentees in the academic setting:

<b>Behaviors Commonly Seen in Students with <u>High</u> Self-Esteem</b>	<b>Behaviors Commonly Seen in Students with <u>Low</u> Self-Esteem</b>
Active, curious about surroundings; makes wide variety of contacts.	Mildly passive, tends to avoid new experiences, has limited contacts.
Makes friends easily, talks and laughs; gets in trouble now and then.	Shy, bashful, quiet and withdrawn.
Has a sense of humor, is a good sport, can laugh at themselves.	Tends to be overly serious, Hypersensitive; afraid to be laughed at.
Asks questions, defines problems, willingly does his part in planning for solutions and carrying out plans.	Avoids getting to the problem, grumbles that what is wanted is not clear, plans in terms of wishful thinking.
Willing to take risks in a classroom. Contributes to discussions and is able to stand up for what they think.	Unsure, backs down easily, frequently asks others: "Do you think this is right?" "What do you think?"
Takes modest pride in own contributions; is not overbearing, and does not cheat.	Aggressively asserts own ability and contributions, finds it difficult to share; undermines others when possible.
Works and plays well with others. Cooperates easily and naturally.	Overly competitive, finds it difficult to share. Undermines others when possible.
Usually happy, confident; does not whine for what cannot be had.	Usually gloomy and fearful, worries as a matter of course, complains a lot.

For adolescents, self-esteem is fragile and is easily wounded outside the academic realm as well. Physical attractiveness has a powerful impact on self-esteem during the adolescent years. During this period, rapid changes occur in the body's appearance, form and size. With the development of sexual hormones, adolescents become fixated on the appearance of their bodies and the bodies of others.

Concurrently with these massive changes, adolescents are moving away from their families and toward their own peers. Peer pressures and conformities are intense and adolescents are not very tolerant of differences, shortcomings or aberrations. Another strain is the pressures imposed by media and society. Today, children and adults are bombarded with what the “perfect guy” or “perfect girl” is supposed to look like. It is difficult for many students to grasp the idea that not everyone in the world can look as though they stepped off the set of Baywatch. It is especially difficult for adolescents to realize that everyone has their own size and shape, and that is all right.

### **Keys to Increasing Self-Esteem**

- **Listen to Self-Talk:** Do you ever listen to those negative thoughts in your head? Replace the negative thoughts with positive thoughts. An example would be, “I can do this because I’ve studied hard for this test” or “I’m proud of myself for the way I handled that situation.”
- **Recognize Accomplishments:** Make a list of your accomplishments, no matter how small or minor they may seem to you. This will help to build a sense of self-worth.
- **Be Assertive:** Say what you mean and respect what others say. Practice clear communication.
- **Be Tolerant:** Be tolerant of others and especially of yourself. Nobody is perfect. Try not to criticize others or yourself. Do not be afraid to admit a mistake; just learn from it.
- **Build a Support System:** Spend time with people that appreciate you for who you are. Value your friends and let them value you.

### **Increasing Self-Esteem**

Feelings of self-worth come from both external and internal influences. External feelings of self-worth arise from such things as appearance, group acceptance, school awards, and social recognition. The external aspects of self-esteem are largely based on personal achievement, which creates conditional self-esteem. In other words, this kind of self-esteem is solely based on a person’s achievement rather than on his or her inner character qualities. Individuals who base their feelings of self-worth on external factors are more likely to have an unhealthy self-esteem. (Page & Page, 1992)

Internal feelings of self-esteem come from being a unique individual, with inner character or personality qualities such as resourcefulness, sense of humor, or sense of integrity. These are considered forms of unconditional self-esteem because they are based on the individual, not on his or her achievements. Persons who base their self-esteem on internal factors (i.e., resourcefulness, responsibility, loyalty, sense of humor, or integrity) are more likely to have a healthier self-esteem. (Page & Page, 1992)

## **Activities to Help Bolster Self-Esteem and Self-Worth**

The following activities will help both the mentor and the mentee get to know themselves and each other better. One of the fundamental steps to building a strong sense of self, self-esteem and self-concept is to know oneself. The exercise will help in that process of getting in touch with personal desires, feelings, likes and dislikes. Have fun!

1. Describe How I Look
  - a. Have your mentee describe in writing each of his/her physical features in detail, beginning at the head and progressing to the feet, and then evaluate how they feel about each feature. After the first two steps are completed, have the mentee talk about how they feel about their entire body, and thus, their body image.
  
2. Getting to Know Me: have your mentee complete the following prompts. Encourage honesty and depth.
  - a. I hate ...
  - b. I wish ...
  - c. I fear ...
  - d. I love ...
  - e. I hope ...
  - f. I'm embarrassed when ...
  - g. The thing that bothers me most ...
  - h. The thing I am most afraid of ...
  - i. I want most to be ...
  - j. Regarding myself, I feel ...

- k. I am most cheerful when ...
  - l. My greatest interest in life is ...
  - m. I have great respect for ...
  - n. My hero is ...
  - o. When I am the center of attention, I feel ...
  - p. I feel awkward when ...
  - q. When I am angry, I ...
3. Strengths and Weaknesses
- a. Discuss the Wise Man's Prayer: "God grant me the strength to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."
  - b. Discuss the Following Prompts:
    - i. My most important strengths are ...
    - ii. My most serious handicaps are ...
    - iii. Things I can change for the better are ...
    - iv. Things I am going to have to accept are ...
4. Pygmalion-Self: have your mentee complete each phrase with at least two answers with honesty and depth.
- a. My closest friend truly thinks I am ...
  - b. My classmates think I am ...
  - c. My parents honestly think I am ...
  - d. A stranger's first impression of me might include ...
5. Roles I Play: discuss how different people can view the same person differently. Then discuss the following prompts.
- a. To me, I am ...
  - b. To my family, I am ...
  - c. To my peers, I am ...
  - d. To a special friend, I am ...

## 6. Self-Talk

- a. Discuss how words can affect our emotions and thus our self-esteem. Discuss how the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me" does not exactly apply in real life. Ask the mentee to help you compile a list of self-put-downs and self-praise. And discuss their impact on self-esteem and self-worth.

*"Self-esteem is as important to our well-being as legs are to a table. It is essential for physical and mental health and for happiness."*

*-- Louise Hart, Author & Psychologist*

## Exploring and Valuing Diversity

How we associate with other people and express ourselves is diversity. There are all kinds of assumptions and stereotypes based on gender, size, clothes, etc. As much as we all try to be objective, we all have some theories about people based on stereotypes. Try to be aware of your thoughts, responses, and assumptions as you work with others and recognize that others will be encouraged to do the same. Supporting an environment that welcomes differences in abilities, individual attributes, and personalities allows people to contribute their best every day.

Young people need a mentor to help them see that diversity goes beyond race and gender. Diversity includes all of the wonderful things that we put on the walls. Personal expression is a form of diversity. How we associate with our peer group and express ourselves is diversity. Think back to when you were a teen. What did adults think about your clothes, hairstyle, or the music that you listened to? Many young people have not had much exposure to other communities. Expand their world. Encourage youth to go outside their immediate neighborhood to experience other cultures.

This section addresses one of the most critical training needs that has surfaced in surveys of mentors and volunteer coordinators: the need to help mentors deal with diversity. Some mentors talked about “culture shock” in reference to their initial apprehension and lack of familiarity with, and/or understanding of, the world from which their mentees came. When you think about it, it is normal and natural to feel a certain amount of apprehension about meeting someone for the first time, especially if it’s expected that you will become a trusted friend. Add to that a significant difference in age, in socioeconomic status and/or in racial and ethnic background and it is easy to understand why this is such a critical issue for mentors.

Many mentor programs prefer to match mentees with mentors who come from similar backgrounds in terms of race, socioeconomic status, etc. Often this is not possible, and mentors are matched with young people who may look and act very differently than they do and whose backgrounds and lifestyles may be dissimilar to their own.

Culture, in this sense, is more than race or ethnicity. It encompasses values, lifestyle and social norms, and includes issues such as different communication styles, mannerisms, ways of dressing, family structure, traditions, time orientation and response to authority. These differences may be associated with age, religion, ethnicity and socioeconomic background. A lack of understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity can result in mentors becoming judgmental, which may prevent the development of a trusting relationship.

As in many other situations, knowledge is the key to understanding. Below are descriptions and examples of different diversity issues. Each has the potential to cause misunderstandings between a mentor and a mentee. However, cultural understanding is not something you can learn exclusively from a textbook. Talk to your mentee about his or her background and ancestry, about what life is like at school or home, or with his or her friends. Find out the reasons for what he or she does. Your Program Coordinator, other mentors, friends, and coworkers may also have insights into cultural differences.

As you begin to learn and understand more about your mentee, you will be less likely to make negative value judgments. We hope that these examples will help you become more knowledgeable about and encourage you to explore your mentee's cultural background.

## **Ethnic Diversity**

If your mentee comes from a different ethnic background, learn about the values and traditions of that culture. Such things as the role of authority and family, communication styles, perspectives on time, ways of dealing with conflict and marriage traditions vary significantly among ethnic groups.

For example, people from Scandinavian and Asian cultures typically are not comfortable dealing directly with conflict. Their approach to problems or disagreements is often more subtle and indirect. Consequently, a mentee from one of these cultures may find it difficult to discuss a problem with candor. Similarly, many Asian and Hispanic families emphasize respecting and obeying adults. For them, disagreeing with an adult, particularly a family member — or in this case a mentor — is forbidden. Conversely, the

role and style of communication of some African Americans is much more direct and assertive.

Many Asian cultures have unique courtship and marriage traditions. For example, a Hmong girl typically marries before age 18 and most often is expected to marry a Hmong man of her parents' choosing. She may have no choice about whom she marries.

Ethnic groups can also vary in terms of their beliefs about and orientations toward time. For instance, some Native Americans may follow an inner clock, which they believe to be more natural, rather than adhering to a predetermined agenda or timetable.

Families that have recently arrived in this country often develop distinct reaction patterns. Children of recent immigrants typically react negatively to their parents' insistence that they follow the "old ways." These children are often ashamed of their culture and their traditions. They may even be ashamed of their parents. Mentors can help their mentees celebrate the uniqueness of their culture by showing curiosity and interest in the history and traditions of their mentees' cultures.

Obviously, these are gross stereotypes. They are used here only to demonstrate the range of diversity among different ethnic groups. It is your task as a mentor to learn about ethnic diversity from your mentee, from your observations and from discussions with program staff so that you can better understand the context of your mentee's attitudes and behavior.

## **Socioeconomic Diversity**

Often, mentors come from different socioeconomic backgrounds than their mentees. While one may have grown up on a farm, the other may never have been outside of the city. One may own a house, while the other may not know anyone personally who owns a new car, let alone a house. A mentee's family may move frequently, perhaps every few months, and may not have a telephone. A mentee may have to share a very small apartment with many people. A mentor must learn that many things s/he may have taken for granted are not necessarily common to all. These types of cultural differences

are common between mentor and mentee and require time and understanding for an appreciation of their significance. Remember, however, that poverty is color-blind, i.e., many white people are poor, many people of color are not, and dysfunction can occur regardless of income, geographic location, or level of education. Try not to make assumptions.

It is important to realize that there are psychological effects of chronic poverty. Some mentees may develop a short-term “culture of survival” attitude. A mentor may comment that her mentee, who comes from a very poor family, spends large sums of money on things she considers frivolous (the example she gives is \$100 jeans). Poverty often prevents people from believing that their future holds any promise of getting better. Saving money and investing in the future is a luxury they don’t believe they have. Buying a pair of \$100 jeans when you don’t have enough food to eat may very well be a function of the “take what you can get while you can get it” perspective of chronic poverty.

## **Youth Culture**

Many of the characteristics of adolescence are normal, common, developmental traits and consequently don’t vary significantly from one generation to the next. For instance, while many adults believe that, in general, teenagers are exceedingly more rebellious than they themselves were as young people, rebellion is a common (and perhaps necessary) ingredient in an adolescent’s transition into adulthood. Most of us, as teenagers, dressed very differently — perhaps even outrageously — by our parents’ and grandparents’ standards. We did things our parents didn’t do, spoke differently, etc.

Take the time to remember what it was like to be your mentee’s age. If you think about the following questions, you’ll find that much of what you went through at that age, your mentee is also going through:

For example, when you were in \_\_\_\_\_ grade:

- What was a typical day like?
- What was really important to you at that time?
- What was your father/mother like? Did you get along? Were you close?

- Think of your friends. Were friendships always easy or were they sometimes hard?
- In general, did you feel as though adults typically understood you well?

However, it is also important to remember that some things, particularly sociological trends, do change dramatically and result in very different experiences from one generation to the next. There is significantly more alcohol and drug abuse today than there was when you were growing up (although, to be sure, alcohol and drug abuse have always existed); sexually transmitted diseases are more common and more dangerous; crime and violence have drastically increased throughout the country, particularly in urban areas; single-parent families have become more common and greater demands are being placed on all families.

For example, one mentor had a conversation with his mentee about school dances, which for the mentor were filled with fond memories of discovering dating and dancing. For the mentee, on the other hand, school dances were dangerous, since gunfire was a common occurrence. Obviously, it is important to be aware of these generational changes in lifestyle and children's coping responses to their life circumstances.

### **Suggestions for Successfully Handling Diversity**

- Keep in mind that you are the adult — you are the experienced one. Imagine, for a moment, what your mentee might be thinking and feeling. In general, young people of all ages, but particularly teens, believe they are not respected by adults and worry about whether a mentor will like them or think they're stupid. They are coming to you for help and may already feel insecure and embarrassed about the problems in their lives. Thus, it is your responsibility to take the initiative and make the mentee feel more comfortable in the relationship.
- Be yourself. Sometimes, with the best of intentions, we try to "relate" to young people, use their slang and be like "one of the gang." Mentees can see through this facade and may find it difficult to trust people who are not true to themselves.

- You may learn a lot about another culture, lifestyle or age group, but you will never be from that group. Don't over identify with your mentee; s/he realizes you will never know exactly what s/he is feeling or experiencing. A mentee may actually feel invalidated by your insistence that you know where s/he is coming from. There is a big difference between the statements, "I know exactly what you're feeling" and "I think I have a sense of what you're going through." It is helpful to paraphrase what you think your mentee has said or is feeling and to give examples of similar situations that you have experienced.
- If something about your mentee is bothering you, first determine whether the behavior is simply troubling to you because you would do it differently or it is truly an indication of a more seriously troubled youth.

If, in fact, you feel that a troublesome situation is harmful to your mentee or others, you have an obligation to discuss this with your Program Coordinator. The Coordinator will know when and where to refer the young person for professional help. For example, if it is a serious problem — your mentee's abuse of alcohol and/or drugs, for instance — the Coordinator may refer the mentee to an adolescent drug abuse program.

It's important to know what you should and should not do or say to your mentee. You are not expected to solve the problem or to be a therapist, but there may be situations where you can help. For instance, your program coordinator might suggest that you actively support your mentee's attendance and participation in support groups, or s/he might suggest that you talk with your mentee about similar situations that you have either experienced or heard about and the ways in which these problems were successfully overcome. Get suggestions from your program coordinator about ways in which you can be helpful and supportive.

Some behavior is not necessarily indicative of a serious problem but can nonetheless be troublesome. For example, being chronically late for appointments, adopting certain styles of dress or excessive swearing may have negative consequences. While your mentee has the right to make decisions about dress, speech and other behavior, you can help by letting him or her know:

- How the behavior makes you feel;

- What judgments others may make about the mentee as a result of the behavior; and
- The reactions and consequences s/he might expect from others.

Example: Let's say your mentee usually wears torn jeans and a leather jacket with signs and symbols on the back, and is quite proud of his or her unusual hairstyle. Although these outward differences made you uncomfortable at first, you (being the great mentor that you are!) have gotten beyond these "troubling" aspects and realized that in this case "different" does not mean "bad."

Now your mentee is looking for a job. Initially, you had decided to say nothing about the importance of appearances during job interviews, but your mentee is having trouble getting a job. You might ask him or her something like:

- Why do you think you didn't get the job?
- What do you think was the interviewer's first impression of you? What do you think gave him or her that impression?
- Do you think the impression you gave is one that is helpful in getting a job? What can you do about this?
- If you were 30 years old and owned a business, would you be hesitant to hire someone who looked and dressed in a way that was completely foreign to you?

You might also discuss ways in which your mentee could keep his or her individuality and identity (both very important needs in adolescence) yet make a more favorable impression. A typical response from a young person might be to refer to the "hypocrisy" and "material values" of the adult culture. Don't mislead or misrepresent the truth — the fact is, like it or not, there are standards and norms in certain situations with which one is expected to comply.

## **Cultural Reciprocity**

An important but often forgotten aspect of cultural diversity is the mutuality of the mentoring relationship, which is what we call cultural reciprocity. This phrase refers to the fact that mentors and mentees alike can benefit from their increased understanding of others who may at first seem unfamiliar. For the mentor, a greater breadth and depth

of understanding of others can facilitate better relationships at work, at home and in other social situations. As your mentee begins to trust and know you, s/he will begin to learn about life outside a limited circle of peers and discover new opportunities and ways of doing things: you can be a model for your mentee. The more options we have, the better off we'll be.

*"We need to give each other the space to grow, to be ourselves, to exercise our diversity. We need to give each other space so that we may both give and receive such beautiful things as ideas, openness, dignity, joy, healing, and inclusion."*  
-- Max de Pree, American Author & Businessman

## Considerations

As mentors, please remember to consider the following:

- **Youth culture has unique rules.** Young people often experiment with dress and behavior. You will need to distinguish typical, rebellious adolescent behavior from broader cultural differences.
- **You will encounter differences.** Mentees often differ from their mentors in age, racial or ethnic background and/or in socioeconomic status.
- **Diversity is a two-way street.** You may represent a different world to your mentee. For example, your mentee may know of no one else who has a career like yours.
- **Be understanding and nonjudgmental.** Your mentee may come from a world very different from your own. Taking time to share your world and learn about theirs is a win-win.
- **Share your culture.** Young people are curious. Answer their questions with patience, using this questioning and answering as a means to build trust.

What other issues are raised when young people become adolescents and what are the most effective ways to address these issues? While mentoring programs are not

intervention programs, they can help young people to make decisions or seek professional help regarding serious issues that they may be facing.

Mentors, remember that communication styles can vary from culture to culture. For example, in some cultures people opt for a subtle approach to resolving conflict. Other cultures encourage direct confrontation. Some frown upon contradicting adults altogether.

## **Other Considerations**

### **Substance Abuse**

Peer pressure, family history and popular culture can all contribute to a young person's experimentation with alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Encouraging young people to discuss and ask questions about substance abuse is an important step towards engaging their trust and allowing them to educate themselves regarding its dangers. Your role as a mentor is to make literature and other resources available to them and help them to use those resources. By explaining to them why it is not healthy to use/abuse these substances and by taking the time to listen, you will give him/her the perspective of a trusted friend.

### **Child Abuse and Family Violence**

Abuse, whether it is physical, sexual or emotional, detracts from a youth's self-esteem in ways that sometimes only professionals can help change. A youth may become withdrawn or turn to peers for support and away from authority figures — no matter how well meaning. The youth may recreate a family history of violence or abuse in other relationships, thus continuing a cycle of self-hatred, shame and hatred or suspicion of others. These problems require professional help, and mentors should contact program coordinators to find such help, without breaking the youth's trust in the mentor. A mentor may need to say: "I'm concerned for you and I have to report what is happening to you."

### **Depression and Suicide**

Depression and suicide are often related to one or more of the issues above, compounded by a young person's inability to find answers to serious questions or emotional support for difficult problems. It is important, first of all, to acknowledge the seriousness and the difficulty of their issues because adolescents are often encountering such problems for the first time. Telling them "It's just a phase" or "You'll grow out of it" only verifies any beliefs they may have that you just don't understand. Suicide counseling is a matter for professionals, and mentors should contact program coordinators for referrals, with the adolescent's knowledge. In addition to seeking

professional help for the youth, mentors can listen, provide resources and help the youth to use them, and provide a support system while the youth and professional counselor seek answers.

In a case where a young person's friend or school mate has committed suicide or has died unexpectedly, counseling and emotional support are necessary to prevent others from following suit for many reasons: as a "solution" to problems, as a cry for help or attention, as a form of "revenge," or as a way to resolve feelings of helplessness over the first death. School counselors, psychologists and social workers can organize and implement school-wide or area-wide counseling in such cases.

## **Peer Pressure**

Today, youth are gathering information, advice, ideas and signals from people other than their parents and teachers. They look to their peers for approval, comparison, a source of self-esteem and their own identity. It is important to instill a sense of self into young people if they are to learn to make educated decisions in situations without input from authority figures or their peers. Scolding or playing savior will hinder trust-building, while transferring the source of approval from the mentee's peers to yourself will end up making you partly responsible for the mentee's decisions should they backfire, and will detract from the mentee's ownership of his/her successes when those decisions prove effective.

As mentors, our challenge is to help young people see that they have choices and that they can connect with positive rather than negative peer groups. In some instances, your mentee may have an opportunity to become a leader and direct his/her peers into positive groups. As mentors we become a neutral voice, an independent partner, which can have a positive impact or influence.

## **Emerging Sexuality and Teenage Parenting**

Adolescents are discovering who they are, which includes their sexuality. Young people in need of intimacy, emotional support or personal prestige may turn to or seek out sexual relationships to satisfy these needs and curiosities. For these reasons, effective

education on sexual issues should include honesty, skills for making decisions, protection options, setting goals, setting limits for relationships, fulfilling emotional needs without sex and taking responsibility for decisions and their consequences. There are many professional organizations that can provide information to help you with these discussions. Begin by asking the Program Coordinator for guidance!

# Ages and Stages of Youth

## 5 to 7 Year-Olds

### General Characteristics

- Eager to learn, easily fatigued, short periods of interest
- Self-assertive, boastful, less cooperative, more competitive
- Need rest periods. Good quiet activities would be reading books together or doing simple art projects
- Large muscles are well developed. Activities involving small muscles will be difficult (working on models with small pieces)
- May tend to be accident-prone
- Like organized games and are very concerned about following rules
- Can be very competitive
- Are very imaginative and involved in fantasy playing
- Are self-assertive, aggressive, want to be first, less cooperative at seven than at five, and boastful
- Learn best through active participation
- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt
- Inconsistent in level of maturity evidenced; regresses when tired, often less mature at home than with outsiders

### Suggested Mentor Strategies

- Be patient, encouraging and flexible
- Give supervision with a minimum amount of interference
- Give praise, opportunities for successful completion, and suggestions on acceptable behavior

### Suggested Activities

- Bake cookies
- Play UNO, checkers, bingo
- Ride bikes
- Visit the park or zoo
- Read stories

## **8 to 10 Year-Olds**

### **General Characteristics**

- Interested in people: aware of differences, willing to give more to others, but also expect more.
- Busy, active, full of enthusiasm, may try too much, interested in money and its value.
- Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, capacity for self-evaluation.
- Capable of prolonged interest.
- Decisive, dependable, reasonable, strong sense of right and wrong.
- Spend a great deal of time in discussion. Often outspoken and critical of adults although still dependent on adult approval.
- Can be very competitive

### **Physical Characteristics**

- Very active: need frequent breaks from tasks to do fun and energetic things.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Some may mature early, may be insecure about their appearance or size.
- Often accident-prone.

### **Social Characteristics**

- Start to develop close ties with friends outside of the family and start to seek independence.
- Very choosy about friends; acceptance by them is important.
- Can be competitive.
- Team games become popular.
- May try to emulate popular sports heroes and TV and movie stars.

### **Emotional Characteristics**

- Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are hurt easily.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules. Mentors can help with honesty and consistency.

### **Mental Characteristics**

- Fairness is very important to them.
- Eager to answer questions and look for a positive response to their ideas.
- Very curious; like to collect things but may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
- Want more independence but look for guidance and support.
- Reading abilities vary widely.

### **Developmental Tasks**

- Social cooperation.
- Self-evaluation.
- Skill learning.
- Team play.

### **Suggested Mentor Strategies**

- Recognize allegiance to friends and heroes.
- Help them understand responsibilities in a two-way relationship.
- Acknowledge and praise performance and affirm often.
- Offer enjoyable learning experiences; share ideas about different cultures and fun facts about geography to broaden their sense of the world around them.
- Provide frank answers to questions.

### **Suggested Activities**

- Introduce new games that will broaden their concepts of different cultures.
- Video games.
- Board games.
- Craft projects and drawing; remember to display their work.
- Get to know who and what they are interested in and who they are trying to emulate in pop culture.
- Engage in educational games that allow them to see the fun in learning.

## 11 to 13 Year-Olds

### General Characteristics

- Testing limits, “know-it-all” attitude.
- Identify with an admired adult; may reflect examples of that adult.
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

### Physical Characteristics

- Small-muscle coordination is good.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Are very concerned with their appearance and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad or inconsistent, which may result in low energy levels.
- Girls may begin menstruation.

### Social Characteristics

- Acceptance by friends becomes quite important.
- Cliques start to develop.
- Team games are popular.
- Crushes on members of the opposite sex are common.
- Friends set the general rule of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform; may dress and behave alike in order to belong.
- Very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Have a tendency to manipulate others. (“Mary’s mother said she could go. Why can’t I?”)
- Interested in earning own money.
- Starting to develop ideas of their future.

### Emotional Characteristics

- Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are hurt easily.
- Can be hard to balance adults’ rules and friends’ rules.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Need praise as an individual to distinguish themselves from the group.

- Loud behavior hides lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

### **Mental Characteristics**

- Perfectionists. Don't know their own limitations; may try to do too much and may feel frustrated and guilty.
- Want more independence, but often still need guidance and support, which they might reject.
- Attention span can be lengthy.
- Are exploring boundaries and discovering consequences of behavior.
- May seek guidance and advice from a trusted friend.

### **Developmental Tasks**

- Social cooperation.
- Self-evaluation.
- Skill learning.
- Team play.

### **Suggested Mentor Strategies**

- Offer alternative opinions without being insistent.
- Be accepting of different physical states and emotional changes.
- Give frank answers to questions.
- Share aspects of professional life and rewards of achieving in work.
- Do not tease about appearance, clothes, boy/girlfriends, or sexuality. Affirm often.

### **Suggested Activities**

- Trivial Pursuit.
- Help with homework.
- Build a model together.
- Creative writing; this can get them to express their thoughts and ideas in a very beneficial and positive way.
- Watch educational videos about the changes they might experience in adolescence (peer pressure, physical changes, new responsibility).

- Have discussions with them, and actually listen, letting them know that how they feel is important.
- Read plays with them; broaden their horizons while letting them know that learning can be fun.

## **14 to 18 Year-Olds**

### **General Characteristics**

- Testing limits, “know-it-all” attitude.
- Facing challenges of developing mentally and physically.
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Often project competence while lacking full ability.
- Identify with an admired adult, or often reject adults in exchange for friends.

### **Physical Characteristics**

- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance; very self-conscious about growth
- Diet and sleep habits can be uneven, which may result in low energy levels.
- May experience rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence. Enormous appetite.
- Important to learn good personal hygiene and grooming.

### **Social Characteristics**

- Friends set the general rules of behavior.
- Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to “belong.”
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
- Go to extremes; emotional instability with “know-it-all” attitude.
- Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
- Often facing the duality in adolescence between childhood and adulthood.
- Girls are usually more interested in boys than vice versa, because of earlier maturing.

### **Emotional Characteristics**

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Self-confidence is a very important factor in going against peer pressure and concern for success.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, but look at adults subjectively, and may be critical.

### **Mental Characteristics**

- Can better understand moral principles.
- Thought processes are starting to involve more of their own personal voice.
- Attention span can be lengthy.
- Argumentative behavior may be part of "trying out" an opinion.

### **Developmental Tasks**

- Physical maturation.
- Abstract thinking.
- Strong sense of responsibility and consequences.
- Membership in their peer group.
- Developing more defined relationships among their peers.

### **Suggested Mentor Strategies**

- Give choices and don't be afraid to confront inappropriate behavior.
- Use humor to diffuse testy situations.
- Give positive feedback, and let mentee know affection is for them and not for accomplishments.
- Be available and be yourself with strengths, weaknesses and emotions.
- Be honest and disclose appropriate personal information to build trust
- Apologize when appropriate.

### **Suggested Activities**

- Shared community service projects such as volunteering to do a canned food drive before the holidays.
- Help with homework, while stressing the importance of homework as a priority.

- Creative writing and development of poetry.
- Discussion: tap into how they view things and let them know that their points of view are important.
- Ethnic restaurants.
- Long walks and talks.
- Cooking, movies.
- Car Repair.

# Scenarios

## Case Scenarios

- Your mentee is chronically late for your meetings. How would you respond?
- Your mentee is talking about a schoolmate who he doesn't like; he says that the schoolmate "gets on my nerves" and sometimes he'd "like to kill him". Should you take him seriously or brush it off as adolescent melodrama?
- Your mentee is gifted in math and you think he/she should major in mathematics in college. He/she decides to concentrate on elementary education, which you personally think is a waste of his/her talents. Should you say something to him/her?
- Your mentee asks how much money you make. How do you respond?
- Your mentee is unusually shy. He/she does not look you in the eye and never tells you what he/she wants to do. How do you respond?
- You have not yet met your mentee. You have left messages at his/her house but he/she has not returned your calls. How do you respond?
- Your mentee asks you an extremely personal question. You do not wish to answer this question. How do you respond?
- Your mentee dislikes a teacher and is failing the class. What approach do you take to help him/her to overcome the negative feelings and to be successful in the class?

## Communication Scenarios

- Your mentee is 11 years old. You have been meeting for more than two months, and she has never expressed an opinion about how you and she should spend your time together. You always suggest the activities. When you suggest one, she always says, "That'll be OK." When you suggest more than one and ask her to choose, she says, "It doesn't matter which one." When you ask her to suggest what she'd like to do, she says, "Anything will be nice." You know it's important for her to share in the decision making and in your meeting today you've decided to try to deal with this situation.
- Your mentee is 13 years old. This is only your third meeting with him. His family recently moved and, as a result, he started going to this school just last month, after the school year had already started. He hadn't said much about school during your first two meetings. In fact, he hadn't said much about anything. But today when you meet, you immediately see that he has a black eye. You ask him what happened. "Nothing," he says. "I just got into a fight in the cafeteria."
- Your mentee is 7 years old. You have been meeting with him for six weeks and he has always seemed to enjoy your time together. But when you meet with him today, it seems like nothing can make him happy. He doesn't want to play computer games or read a story together, or play catch — all things he usually enjoys. He finally agrees to work on putting together a Super Monsters puzzle with you, but when the puzzle is halfway complete, he knocks all the pieces onto the floor and starts kicking them across the room.
- Your mentee is 12 years old. During the first two months of your relationship, things seemed to be going well between you. But then she didn't show up for your last two meetings. You phoned again and set up another meeting, this time arranging to pick her up in your car. She is home when you arrive there, and she gives you a big smile when she sees you. But you're upset about the missed meetings and feel you have to talk about it.

## Boundary Scenarios

- You arrive at your usual meeting place and your mentee has not arrived. You had previously called your mentee to let her know what time to meet. You both agreed that you would interview the head of the college art museum for a special school project. What should you do or say next time you talk to your mentee?
- You have been matched with your mentee for about six months and you are starting to “bond.” One day, your mentee asks you if you ever experimented with alcohol when you were younger. You did try alcohol in middle school and more often in high school. What do you say?
- Every time you go to pick up your mentee, his father greets you at the door and spends at least half an hour chatting with you. You are glad he likes you, but his long greetings are getting in the way of the time you spend with your mentee. How should you handle this situation?
- During one of the group activities of the mentoring program, you notice that your mentee is being mean to one of the other children. You’ve noticed this behavior in the past, but have not said anything about it. Your mentee’s attitude toward other children makes you feel uncomfortable. What should you do?
- You and your mentee hit it off right away. You were very excited about your match until a few weeks ago when your mentee started calling you a few times a day. You are excited she likes you so much, but are unsure if the amount of time you are spending on the phone is appropriate. You don’t want to hurt her feelings, but you are feeling uncomfortable with the calls at work and tired from all the calls at home. What should you do?

## Goal Setting

Goal-setting is a powerful method for helping your mentee to develop a solid foundation for future planning and organization. A mentee who knows what s/he wants to achieve in life is a mentee who knows where to concentrate his/her time. If your mentee can set measurable, well-defined goals, then s/he can take pride in achieving those goals.

Goal Setting helps your mentee in the following ways:

- Encourages a problem-solving approach to obstacles
- Encourages discipline
- Encourages opportunity
- Facilitates clear conceptualization of what you want to do

One of the most effective ways to build the mentor/mentee relationship is for the pair to participate in activities based on the goals of the mentee:

- If college entrance is a goal, mentor and mentees can tour a campus together
- If higher academic achievement is a goal, tutoring sessions, lessons on note taking and visits to the library are appropriate
- If career education is a goal, the mentor and mentee can visit the mentor's workplace
- The mentor and mentee can work on learning a new skill

In addition to sharing in activities together, mentors can help build the relationship by monitoring attendance and calling with encouragement when mentees are absent. Mentors can also provide feedback on behavior and encourage the mentee to create goals for better behavior.

Goals may include:

- Going to school and improving grades
- Improving relationship with family members
- Taking part in community service
- Learning about college and careers
- Saving \$500 by the end of the year
- Learning how to tie a tie correctly

## **S.M.A.R.T. Goals**

- S** – Specific      A goal of graduating from high school is too general. Specify how this will be accomplished. (Study more in order to receive better grades.)
- M** – Measurable      Establish criteria for how a goal is to be achieved. Measurable does not refer to a timeline; it means determining a way to measure the mentee’s success in completing the long-range goal.
- A** - Action-oriented      Be proactive in taking action that will result in reaching the desired goal.
- R** – Realistic      Strive for attainable goals, considering the resources and constraints relative to the situation.
- T** – Timely      Allow reasonable time to complete each goal, but not so much time the mentee loses focus or motivation.

## **Sample Goals**

- **Mentor/Mentee Relationship**
  - Meet with mentee (face-to-face) for at least two hours per month.
  - Talk with mentee at least once per week on the telephone, two phone calls per month must be initiated by the mentee.
  - If a meeting must be missed, it is the mentor’s responsibility to:

- Contact the mentee prior to the meeting, giving at least two hours' notice if possible.
  - Reschedule the meeting for another time.
  
- **School Performance**
  - Attend school regularly
  - Put forth satisfactory effort (e.g., completes assignments neatly and on time, participates actively).
  - Earn report card notations that indicate acceptable to outstanding behavior (commendations from school staff, absence of office referrals, etc.).
  - Academic performance showing progress in one or more subjects.
  
- **Out-of-School Performance**
  - Establish and maintain good relationship with family.
  - Develop and/or maintain positive personal habits (e.g., refrain from the use of illegal drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, and from early parenthood).

## **Deciding on Goals**

Mentors should help guide mentees when deciding goals, making sure that the mentee considers broadly all aspects of his/her life. For instance, a mentee's goal should take into account the following issues:

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Artistic  | Does your mentee want to achieve any artistic goals? Does he have/need any training to achieve them?   |
| Attitude  | Is any aspect of your mentee's mindset holding him/her back? Are any personal behaviors upsetting to him/her? If so, set goals to improve or cure the problem, even if the goal is only to get help. |
| Education | Is there any specific knowledge that the mentee wants to acquire? What information and skill will the mentee need to achieve other goals?  |

Pleasure	What does your mentee want to enjoy? Mentee should ensure that some time is reserved for personal pleasure or satisfaction!
Social	Does your mentee have any social ambitions?
Physical	Are there any athletic goals that your mentee wants to achieve, or does he/she want good health deep into old age? What steps will your mentee choose to achieve this?
Career	What career is your mentee seeking?
Family	How does your mentee want to be seen by members of his/her immediate family?
Financial	How much does your mentee want to earn and by what career stage?

If your mentee is new to goal-setting, s/he may find it a difficult concept at first, especially thinking about his/her future beyond next week or next month. If they are having trouble getting started, try some of the prompts listed below.

- What do you want to achieve or have by the end of the school term or school year?
- If you could have one wish for school, home, or yourself, what would it be?
- Is there anyone in your life who has a job, skill, hobby, or possession that you would like to have one day? Have your mentee explain what s/he finds appealing about it and ask what s/he thinks they will need to do to achieve similar success.
- Talk to your mentee about making a plan to help realize one of his/her aspirations. Help him/her break it into manageable stages so s/he is motivated by a sense of achievement along the way.
- If your mentee is only talking very generally about what s/he wants in life – for example, “I want lots of money” – try to get him/her to talk about what s/he would use the money for and what jobs interest him/her as a way to earn the money.

If your mentee is not in the habit of talking about what s/he wants in life, it may take a while for him/her to open up. Focusing on your mentee's aspirations can be a powerful motivator for change once your mentee has decided on his/her goals.

## **Failed Goals**

If a mentee fails to achieve his/her goal, examine these possible factors:

- The goal may have been too difficult to achieve.
- The goal may have been developed without the active involvement and commitment of the mentee.
- The mentee may be fearful of achieving a self-enhancing goal. Many at-risk adolescents have low self-esteem and believe they are "losers." They often become accustomed to making poor choices, reinforcing their negative self-image.
- The mentor may need to speak to the mentee about his/her fears of being successful and making self-enhancing decisions.

## **Mentee Wants**

### **Advice**

You bring a wide range of life experiences to your mentoring relationship. As a result, you can be a great source of advice and information. From time to time, your Mentee may need a second opinion or a different perspective. You can provide that! Share your experiences. Were you involved in a similar situation? What did you do? How did it work out? Be willing to share but be sure your mentee is interested first. Remember that you and your mentee are different people. Your mentee has his or her own values, which may be very different from yours. These may lead to very different ideas about what to do.

### **Access**

One of the most valuable things you can do is to help connect your mentee with people, opportunities, and information that are otherwise out of reach. That's what access is all

about — helping your mentee find and get involved in new situations or find new resources. Access to resources is one of the most valuable benefits you can offer.

### **Advocacy**

Has someone written a letter on your behalf? That's advocacy! That's powerful!

If your mentee needs a job reference or a college recommendation, you can help. But remember, to be an effective advocate, you need to know your mentee well..

As an advocate, the mentor speaks up for the mentee in a situation where a caring adult is needed and is missing. In this role, mentors link their mentees to resources to which they have a right to access but might not know exist or be able to take advantage of. As an advocate, you can take advantage of the connections and associations you have in school, in the community, or with businesses.

# Suggested Resources

## Museums, Historical Places, and Other Area Attractions to Visit

- Carroll County
  - Carrollton Cultural Arts Center  
Web: [www.cprcad.org](http://www.cprcad.org)  
Address: 251 Alabama Street – Carrollton, GA  
Phone: (770) 838-1083
  
  - Southeastern Quilt & Textile Museum  
Web: [www.southeasternquiltmuseum.com](http://www.southeasternquiltmuseum.com)  
Address: 306 Bradley Street – Carrollton, GA  
Phone: (770) 301-2187
  
  - Pine Mountain Gold Museum  
Web: [www.pinemountaingoldmuseum.com](http://www.pinemountaingoldmuseum.com)  
Address: 1881 Stockmar Road – Villa Rica, GA  
Phone: (770) 459-8455
  
- Atlanta
  - High Museum of Art  
Web: [www.high.org](http://www.high.org)  
Address: 1280 Peachtree St NE – Atlanta, GA 30309  
Phone: (404) 733-4444
  
  - Atlanta History Center  
Web: [www.atlantahistorycenter.com](http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com)  
Address: 130 West Paces Ferry Road NW – Atlanta, GA 30305  
Phone: (404) 814-4000
  
  - Fernbank Museum of Natural History  
Web: [www.fernbankmuseum.org](http://www.fernbankmuseum.org)  
Address: 767 Clifton Road NE – Atlanta, GA 30307  
Phone: (404) 929-6300

- Center for Civil and Human Rights  
Web: [www.civilandhumanrights.org](http://www.civilandhumanrights.org)  
Address: 100 Ivan Allen Jr. Blvd. – Atlanta, GA 30313  
Phone: (404) 991-6970
  
- Georgia Aquarium  
Web: [www.georgiaaquarium.org](http://www.georgiaaquarium.org)  
Address: 225 Baker St NW – Atlanta, GA 30313  
Phone: (404) 581-4000
  
- CNN Studio Tour  
Web: [www.cnn.com/tour](http://www.cnn.com/tour)  
Address: 190 Marietta St NW – Atlanta, GA 30303  
Phone: (404) 827-2300

## **Mentoring References**

### **Websites:**

- Mentoring Resource Center Publications from the U.S. Department of Education  
<http://www.myprevention.org/?page=MRCpublications>
  
- Mentoring.Org – National Mentoring Partnership  
[www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)
  
- The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania – Mentor Resources  
<http://www.mentoringpittsburgh.org/pages/mentor-resources>

## **Books:**

- **The Mentor Handbook-Second Edition**

- Description: this guide is for adult volunteers, sponsoring companies or organizations and schools involved in a one to one mentoring/support program.
- Author: Susan Weinberger, Ed.D., director of the Norwalk Public School Mentor Program in Connecticut. Published in 1992.
- Copies may be available at:
  - Neva Lomason Memorial Library in Carrollton
  - West Georgia Regional Library in Carrollton
  - University of West Georgia in Carrollton
  - Villa Rica Public Library in Villa Rica
  - Warren P. Sewell Memorial Library in Bremen

- **The Two of Us: A Handbook for Mentors**

- Description: this handbook is designed for individual mentors to guide them in getting the most out of their mentoring relationships, whatever the focus of the relationship; from developing a friendship, to role modeling, to achieving academic goals.
- Author: Abell Foundation. Published in 1991.
- Copies may be available at:
  - Neva Lomason Memorial Library in Carrollton
  - West Georgia Regional Library in Carrollton
  - University of West Georgia in Carrollton
  - Villa Rica Public Library in Villa Rica
  - Warren P. Sewell Memorial Library in Bremen

- **The Power of Mentoring: An Age-Old Strategy Is Helping Today's Youth**

- Description: collection of essays by several professionals, a mentor, and a mentee with an introduction by Lee Iacocca.
- Author: National Media Outreach Center. Published in 1991.
- Copies may be available at:
  - Neva Lomason Memorial Library in Carrollton
  - West Georgia Regional Library in Carrollton

- University of West Georgia in Carrollton
- Villa Rica Public Library in Villa Rica
- Warren P. Sewell Memorial Library in Bremen

### **Other Suggested Reading**

Title: **Effective Teaching and Mentoring**

Author: Daloz, L.A. (1987)

Publisher: San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Title: **Shirt Sleeves Management**

Author: Evered, J.F. (1981)

Publisher: New York: Amacom

Title: **From the Goodness of Our Hearts: The Emergence of Mentoring Programs for Vulnerable Youth**

Author: Freedman, J. (1990)

Publisher: Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures

Title: **Teacher Effectiveness Training**

Author: Thomas, G. (2003)

Publisher: Three Rivers Press

# Guidebook Creation References

## Creation References

- *Mentor Guide* from The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania
- Youth Risk Behavior Summary (YRBS), an anonymous Center for Disease Control (CDC) survey conducted with adolescent volunteers from 39 states.
- *Characteristics of Children and Youth* from The Mentoring Partnership of Long Island, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Child Development Seminar, August 1990.
- Mentoring.Org
- Search Institute: [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org) - Developmental Relationships
- Search Institute: Tools for Mentoring Adolescents, Copyright CD 2007
- Baylor University's *Community Mentoring for Adolescent Development*, pages 75-99
- Mind Tools LTD 1996. *Mind Tools—Planning & Goal-Setting* [online]. Available: [www.mindtools.com/index.html](http://www.mindtools.com/index.html)

## Additional Materials

- Mentoring Village's Goal-Setting & Decision-Making With Your Mentee
- SearchInstitute - Tools for Adolescents #6 Boundaries