



**NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FOR FOSTER CARE
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at the Hunter College
School of Social Work

INFORMATION PACKET: *Mentoring*

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Information Packet
Benefits of Mentoring Programs for Youths and Young Adults
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Mentoring has been a valuable tool in assisting the daily lives of children, teens, young adults, and adults for centuries. In Greek mythology, the term mentor derives from when Odysseus asked his friend Mentor to teach and watch his son Telemachus as he went off to fight the Trojan War. Mentor and Telemachus developed a relationship that was unlike a parent/child relationship. The relationship thrived on advice, education, and friendship.

Mentoring is a special kind of caring, supportive relationship or partnership between two people that is based on trust and respect. Mentors share their knowledge and experience with mentees to help them define and reach their goals.

There are two different kinds of mentoring relationships. One is formal and the other is informal. Formal mentoring is a structured relationship between mentor and mentee that is supervised through a specific program. Informal Mentoring is less structured and could be as simple as a family friend and a child meeting a few hours a month for meaningful advisement.

The mentoring relationship is usually between an adult (the mentor) and a teenager (the mentee). The relationship focuses on the teen's needs. The statistics are overwhelming that provides reason for mentoring programs through the eyes of child welfare. Although this mentoring phenomenon does focus a great deal on the mentee, there is a lot to be examined and said about the person fulfilling the role of mentor. McLearn, Colasanto, Schoen, and Shapiro conducted a survey (1998) that questioned a sample population of people who had mentored at least one person between the ages 10 to 18 in the previous five years. One of the questions they asked if the mentors would participate

again and 84% of the mentors responded that they would most likely participate again and 91% would recommend mentoring to a friend. 73% percent of the mentors reported that the mentoring experience was a positive one.

The mentoring relationship can come in different age settings rather than adult to child. Sometimes the relationship can be between student to student, peer to peer, child to child, employee to employer, and adult to adult. There are many factors that come into play when developing the mentor/mentee relationship. One factor could be race and its role within the relationship. A study of mentoring relationship in the field of social work conducted by Collins, Kanya, and Tourse (1997) explored the possibility of mixed race mentoring relationships. The sample was small but the outcome created an awareness for more study for mixed race mentoring relationships and the positive reception within the field demonstrating that mixed race mentoring relationships are positive, meaningful, and currently practiced.

The following information packet contains facts about mentoring that may serve as a guide for further exploration, the need, and benefit of having a mentoring program available for children when other aspects are missing from their daily lives.

Benefits of Mentoring Programs for Youths and Young Adults

Fact Sheet

GENERAL STATISTICS

(The following statistics have been compiled from the websites listed in the resources section)

- More than 50% of New York City public elementary school students can not read at grade level.
- Mentoring programs assisted with the largest welfare caseload decline in welfare's history. There were 14.1 million welfare recipients in January 1993 opposed to 10.7 million welfare recipients throughout the United States in May 1997.
(<http://www.aphsa.org/publicat/w2work.htm>).
- Students who spend no time in extracurricular activities are 49 percent more likely to have used drugs and 37 percent more likely to become teen parents than those who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities.
- Nearly eight in 10 teens who participate in after-school programs are high achieving students. Children and youth who regularly attend high-quality, after-school programs have: better grades in school, more academic and personal growth opportunities, better peer relations and emotional adjustment, and lower incidences of drug-use, violence and pregnancy. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site <http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>.)
- On the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading assessment—a national test that gauges states academic progress at 40 % of white 4th graders scored at or above proficient, compared to only 12 percent of their African American

counterparts. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site.

<http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>).

- In math, African American achievement also lagged—34 percent of white fourth graders scored at or above proficient, and just five percent of African Americans scored as high achievers. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site. <http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>).
- Hispanic children often don't attend school until they reach mandatory school age. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site. <http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>).
- Hispanic children have the highest dropout rates of any group in the country—more than 30 percent of Hispanic students drop out. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site. <http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>).
- On the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading assessment, 40 percent of white fourth graders scored at or above proficient, compared to only 16 percent of their Hispanic counterparts. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site. <http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>).
- In math, Hispanic achievement also lagged: 34 percent of white fourth graders scored at or above proficient. Just 10 percent of Hispanics scored as high achievers. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site. <http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>).
- On the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading assessment, 40 percent of white fourth graders scored at or above proficient, compared to only 17

percent of their Native American counterparts. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site. <http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>).

- In math, Native American achievement also lagged: 34 percent of white fourth graders scored at or above proficient. Just 14 percent of Native Americans scored as high. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site. <http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>).
- In New York City, the Big Brother Big Sisters foundation discovered the impact their mentoring program had on the youths it served: 73% of the previously arrested teens in the program were able to stay out of trouble with the law, 96% of the children with cross-race mentor matches are more accepting of other races, and 71% of the children involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program said that the mentoring program gave them a chance to have a new and trusted friend. (<http://www.bigsny.org/giving/donate>.)
- In a landmark study conducted by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), 1000 young people on the waiting list of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America were randomly assigned to two groups. Members of one group were assigned a mentor; members of the other group remained on the waiting list. Comparing the two groups 18 months later, the children with mentors were: 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs; 27% less likely to begin using alcohol; 53% less likely to skip school; and 33% less likely to engage in violence. P/PV also found that young people with mentors: felt more competent about their ability to do well in school; reported more positive relationships with friends and parents; had better attitudes toward school and the future; and had better attitudes toward their family and communities.

- According to Mentoring USA, located in New York City, more than 215,000 children in New York City are labeled “latch-key” children coming home to empty homes after school.

MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT MENTORING

(Compiled of a five year question and response done by Peer Resources-Navigation Tolls for the Mind and Soul, Copyright 2000 by Peer Consulting Group)

Myth: You need to wear a toga to be a mentor.

Fact: Gone are the days of proteges sitting at the feet of the wise one; you never know who might be a powerful learning influence.

Myth: Mentoring only happens on a one-to-one, long-term, face-to-face basis.

Fact: With modern technology mentoring can take place by e-mail, telephone, or fax and may only need a few hours.

Myth: Taking time to mentor decreases productivity.

Fact: Mentoring improves productivity through better communication, goal clarity, increased commitment, and succession planning.

Myth: A mentor needs to be 5-10 years older than the person he/she mentors.

Fact: Innovations happen so rapidly or personal experience is such a great teacher that younger people often have opportunities to mentor older workers; peers are often effective mentors.

Myth: Mentoring is a rare experience and only occurs for a few great people.

Fact: Informal mentoring is probably the most frequent method of transmitting knowledge and wisdom in society; virtually everyone has experienced it.

Myth: Mentoring requires a greater time commitment than most workers can afford.

Fact: Being mentored or being a mentor does not guarantee career advancement, but it does significantly increase on-the-job learning, accelerating career opportunities.

Myth: Effective mentoring can take place just by matching an experienced adult with a novice.

Fact: Matching without monitoring jeopardizes the value of mentoring for all parties.

Myth: Young people who have poor attitudes, minimal work habits or few skills do not need mentors.

Fact: Many successful people started this way, but virtually all of them needed an older guide that listened to and respected them.

Myth: The person being mentored is the only one who benefits from the relationship.

Fact: For mentoring to be effective, all parties must perceive benefits; this is the principle of mutuality.

PROGRAM MODELS

There are various models of mentoring programs that can be accessed through the web and through readings. Any form of mentoring has proven to be effective therefore to distinguish one exemplary model would be difficult. The following are a few mentoring program models that offer a lot to the practice of mentoring:

- **Elder to Child:** This model looks at the interaction between an elder adult working with a child in a formal, supervised mentoring program. Research done by Newman, Morris, and Streetman (1999) examined this relationship to uncover its effectiveness. Much like other mentoring programs, the elder-child program had the anticipated results of other programs: an increase in students' self-management skills, interest in schoolwork, and improvement with peer relationships.

- **Foster Care:** Not all mentoring programs are designed for young children. A 15-state survey of 29 different child welfare programs examined various mentoring methods in use. The idea of the programs was to support transitional living arrangements for foster care children leaving the agencies. In this survey conducted by Mech, Pryde, and Rycraft (1995) five models of mentors emerged: Transitional Life Skills Mentors, Cultural Empowerment Mentors, Corporate/Business Mentors, Mentors for Young Parents, and Mentor Homes. In each of the models, the majority of mentor/mentee matches were white female mentors to non-white youths. All models in this survey act as a bridge to higher education and employment.
- **Mentoring via the Web:** "Eyes to the Future" is a multi-age mentoring program that supports middle-school girls as they make the transition to high school and make informed choices about the opportunities available to them in high school and beyond. "Eyes to the Future" uses the Web to link middle-school girls with high-school girls in their school districts who have stayed interested in math and science and with women who use science, math, and technology in their careers. The mentoring relationships that result help middle-school girls see how their work at school relates to "real life" -- before they have chosen or ruled out possible futures for themselves (National Science Foundation at TERC, Inc. <http://www.nsf.gov/>).

MENTORING AND CHILD WELFARE

Mentoring is a promising method for reaching individuals in need of support, education, and socializing. Any intervention with children can prove viable for the development of a child. On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The Act is the most sweeping reform of the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act (ESEA) since ESEA was enacted in 1965. It redefines the federal role in K-12 education and will help close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. It is based on four basic principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work.

The early childhood educator academies will feature researchers and experts on early childhood cognitive development and educators who have designed high-quality pre-kindergarten programs. As part of President George W. Bush's commitment to strengthening the nation's early childhood education programs, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige on April 4, 2002 announced two new projects to support early childhood educators and recognize exemplary early childhood education initiatives throughout the country. (Official U.S. Department of Education web site.

<http://www.ed.gov/PressRelease/04-2002/04042002a.html>).

What are the Key Elements of Successful Models of Mentoring Programs?

During the fall of 1995 a project was undertaken to gather information about mentoring programs that were deemed to successfully serve the needs of educators. A "successful program" was defined to be a program that had enjoyed some longevity or the prospect of longevity based upon new program results. (Dagenais, 1995)

<http://www.mentors.net/OcassPapers/MStandards.html>

- Engagement between mentor and mentee.
- Consistent meeting times within the relationship.
- Activities promoting the development of a youth.
- Guidance and role modeling.
- Drug and violence prevention programs.

- Counseling and support.
- Longevity of the program.

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Best Practice Tips

(Peer Resources-Navigation Tolls for the Mind and Soul, Copyright 2000 by Peer Consulting Group)

- Literally hundreds of decisions can be made in designing a mentoring program. There is no one right way. The key is to design the program so that it fits the culture of the organization or setting in which it will operate. Mentoring experts call this: cultural fit.
- Closely related to cultural fit is clarity of goals. What is the purpose of the mentoring? What will it achieve or accomplish? What results ought to occur if a mentoring program is successful? Once the goals are identified it is much easier to make decisions regarding various program elements and it is possible to use the goals as a way of determining whether the program detail is on track or off track.
- Connecting mentors with the person(s) being mentored is a crucial element of any program. In general, however, the key to a successful match is NOT the degree of similarity between the mentor and the partner. The key is the mentor's ability to tune in to, understand and accept what the partner is experiencing. This kind of ability to communicate can be enhanced with training. Therefore, training mentors is typically more important than finding mentors with similar characteristics.
- The success of the mentoring match is dependent on MONITORING that relationship that develops between the partners. In other words, it is not helpful to just match people up, and let whatever happens happen. Therefore, someone has

to take responsibility to check regularly with each partner to determine how it is going, what each one is getting and not getting from the connection.

- In addition to training and monitoring, it is essential to do a needs assessment with those persons who have been through recovery/growth/career advancement (both successfully and unsuccessfully) to determine their perspectives on what they needed from others that helped (or hindered) their recovery/growth/career advancement. This assessment typically forms the basis of the CONTENT of the training sessions for mentors and may also give clues as to whether any training might be necessary to prepare the new partners for mentoring
- The sixth program tip is that the persons who volunteer as mentors must be assured in action (not just in words) that they will be getting something valuable out of being a mentor; that their time will be well-spent, that they will grow or learn, etc. Mentors need to experience value when they interact with their partners. It cannot be a one way relationship where the mentor does all the giving.

These orientation tips let you know that there are some generic aspects to mentoring. You may be able to apply these ideas right away or at least determine how well they might apply to your client population since you are more familiar with their characteristics, setting, and circumstances

Benefits of Mentoring Programs for Youths and Young Adults

References

Collins, P.M., Kanya, H.A., & Tourse, R.W. (1997). Questions of racial diversity and mentorship: An empirical exploration. Social Work, *42*(2), 145-151.

McLearn, K.T., Colasanto, D., Schoen, C., & Shapiro, M.Y. (1998). Mentoring matters: A national survey of adults mentoring young people, in J.B. Grossman (Ed.) Contemporary issues in mentoring. Philadelphia, P.A. Public/Private.

Mech, E.V., Pryde, J.A., & Rycraft, J.R. (1995). Mentors for adolescents in foster care. Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, *18*(4), 317-328.

Newman, S., Morris, G.A., & Streetman, H. (1999). Elder-child interaction analysis: An observation instrument for classrooms involving older adults as mentors, tutors, or resource persons. Child & Youth Services, *20*(1/2), 129-145.

Suggested Readings

Blechman, E. (1992). Mentors for high risk minority youth: From effective communication to bicultural competence. Journal of Clinical Psychology, *21*(2), 160-169.

Gablo, J. (1986). Adolescents' perceptions of significant adults: Implications for the family, the school and youth serving agencies. Children and Youth Services Review, *8*, 37-51.

Irvine, J. (1988). Aftercare services, in E.V. Mech (Ed.), Independent-living services for at-risk adolescents (pp.91-98). Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America.

Rothenberg, P.S. (1995). Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study. (3rd ed.). New York: St. Martin's Press.

Benefits of Mentoring Programs for Youths and Young Adults

Websites

The following are websites focusing on the need, benefits, and structure for mentoring programs.

[Big Brothers Big Sisters of America](#)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the nation's oldest and largest youth mentoring organization. Since 1904, From: <http://www.bbbsa.org/>

[Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Programs](#)

This document was developed at the Illinois Staff Development Council meeting on April 30, 1998, which was focused on the Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Programs. From: <http://www.mentors.net/3M.PurposeGrid.html>

[Creative Mentoring - Become a Creative Mentoring Partner](#)

Creative Mentoring supports in-school mentoring programs throughout the state of Delaware. Provides quality training to volunteer in-school mentoring programs. From: <http://www.creativementoring.org/>

[Eyes to the Future](#)

Eyes to the Future is a multi-age mentoring program that uses the Web to connect middle-school girls with high-school girls who have stayed active with math and science. From: <http://www.terc.edu/etf/>

[Mentoring](#)

[Education Consumer Guide] Number 7 October 1993 Mentoring WHAT IS IT? Mentoring--from the Greek word meaning enduring. From: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ConsumerGuides/mentor.html>

[MENTORING](#)

Mentoring What is Mentoring? Why Establish a Mentoring Program? Benefits of Mentoring Programs What Mentoring is not. From <http://mbhs.bergtraum.k12.ny.us/mentor/what.html>

[Mentoring & Induction Programs by Each of the United States](#)

mentoring and induction in the US, state mandated induction and mentoring ... What's Happening in Mentoring & Induction in Each of the United States. From:

<http://teachermentors.com/MCenter%20Site/StateList.html>

[MentorGirls.org | Home](#)

Take action Welcome! MentorGirls.org is a grass roots, community outreach program connecting women in industry with girls in our communities. From:

<http://www.mentorgirls.org/>

[Mentoring in Schools](#)

An Information Brief on establishing mentoring programs and promising practices in mentoring from the Creating Safe and Drug-Free Schools. From:

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS/actguid/mentor.html>

[Mentoring Programs](#)

State Human Service Mentoring Programs On April 29, 1997, Vice President Al Gore announced the creation of the Welfare-to-Work Partnership. From:

<http://www.aphsa.org/publicat/w2work.ht>

[Mentoring Program for Teens](#)

Mentoring program. This twelve-week program is designed to equip teens with the life skills necessary to reach their full academic potential. From:

<http://www.michaelbostonmentoring.com>

[Mentoring Program Standards](#)

library of mentoring resources ... MLRN's Recent "Mentorings" Return to The Mentor Network Home Page - Return to the MLRN "Library" Page. From:

<http://www.mentors.net/OcassPapers/MStandards.html>

[Mentoring Skills: Effective Ways of Helping -A LearnWell Online Course.](#)

Explore your needs, find a mentor, follow a plan. Consider E-Mentors. A LearnWell online course for Continuing Education. From: <http://www.learnwell.org/mentor.shtml>

[NEA: Minority Mentoring Programs in Higher Education](#)

NEA's Higher Education Web site provides NEA members, leaders, and staff with information about higher education. Site Map Calendar. From:

<http://www.nea.org/he/pgms.html>

[Peer Resources - Starting and Maintaining a Mentor Program or Service](#)

Starting, maintaining and evaluating a mentor program in business, education, and community, including matching mentors, examples of best practices. From:

<http://www.peer.ca/mentor.html>

Program Areas

CHILD HEALTH MENTORING MAKES A DIFFERENCE - Findings from The Commonwealth Fund 1998 Survey of Adults Mentoring Young People Kathryn Taaffe McLearn. From:

<http://www.cmwf.org/programs/child/mclea277.asp>

Survey of Mentoring Programs in Canada ~1998

PARTNERS IN PRACTICE Survey of Mentoring Programs In Canada Skip to Inventory Listing As Partners In Practice From: <http://www.partnersinpractice.org/Inventory.html>

The National Mentoring Partnership, Advocate and Resource for Mentors and Mentoring Programs

The National Mentoring Partnership is an advocate for the expansion of mentoring and a resource for mentors and mentoring initiatives nationwide. From:

<http://www.mentoring.org/>

The Role Model Project References: Mentoring Programs

The Role Model Project for Girls Mentoring or Role Models The Backyard Project for high school girls exploring a career in computer science. From:

<http://www.womenswork.org/girls/refs/mentor.html>

National Organizations and Associations

Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York
223 East 30th Street
New York, New York 10016
(212) 686-2042
help@bigsnyc.org

Green Chimneys Triangle Tribe Mentors
456 West 145th Street
New York, New York 10031
(212) 491-5911
Mkelley1@nyc.rr.com

Mentoring USA (MUSA)
113 East 13th Street
New York, New York 10003
(212) 253-1994

musa@mentoringusa.org

The National Mentoring Partnership

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