



Effective Mentoring Strategies



*Office of Strategic Partnerships
Family & Community Relations
Pinellas County Schools*

WELCOME



Children Learn What They Live

*If a child lives with criticism
He learns to condemn.*

*If a child lives with hostility
He learns to fight.*

*If a child lives with ridicule
He learns to be shy.*

*If a child lives with shame
He learns to feel guilty.*

*If a child lives with tolerance
He learns to be patient.*

*If a child lives with praise
He learns to appreciate.*

*If a child lives with fairness
He learns justice.*

*If a child lives with security
He learns to like himself.*

*If a child lives with acceptance and friendship
He learns to find love in the world.*

*If a child lives with approval
He learns to find love in the world.*

— Dorothy Law Holte



MENTORING VILLAGE

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The term mentor is an old one. It is derived from ancient Greece. Mentor was the name of a loyal friend of Odysseus. When Odysseus left his homeland to fight in the Trojan War, he entrusted his son Telemachus to Mentor. Since that time the term has come to mean a wise and loyal advisor, teacher or coach.

Another example of mentoring from ancient Greece can be found in the relationship between the philosophers Plato and Socrates. Plato’s writings reveal that Socrates was a dearly-loved, older friend, who contributed to the younger man’s moral development by challenging his ideas and fostering his growth.

Today, the word mentor means any caring person who develops an ongoing, one-on-one relationship with someone in need. A mentor encourages, listens, gives advice, advocates, acts as a role model, and shares information and experience.

Mentor Match

The mentor will be matched one-on-one with a student, and usually will meet for about an hour, once a week, for one school year. These meetings must be held on the school grounds, during the school day, unless the mentor and student are participating in a Pinellas County Schools approved field trip or activity.

MENTORING VILLAGE

Take Stock In Children/Doorways Scholarship Program

The Pinellas Education Foundation, in partnership with Take Stock in Children/Doorways, provides scholarships to economically disadvantaged students. Students elected for the program receive a Florida Prepaid College Scholarship for 2 years tuition at a public community college and 2 years tuition at a public college or university. Take Stock In Children/Doorways recipients meet with a mentor on a regular basis and receive closely monitored guidance throughout their school years to help them be successful.

5000 Role Models of Excellence

The 500 Role Models of Excellence Program is a program designed to boost the self-image, increase social skills, and academic performance of targeted males, in part, by motivating them to interact with respected and successful men whose real-life accomplishments can inspire young males to succeed. Students are paired up with mentors and they meet bi-weekly to discuss academics, current teen issues, and world-wide issues. Students are recommended by their teachers, peers, counselors, and administrators.

Girlfriends of Pinellas

Girlfriends of Pinellas is a program designed to empower young ladies through academic support and mentorship. Students are provided with the resources, tools and guidance necessary to encourage self-discipline, positive behaviorism, and to cultivate high self-esteem and self-reliance. Mentors, community leaders, teachers and school administrators work closely with students to foster a supportive relationship through social growth.

Born Eagles

Born Eagles is a program that strengthens the youth to foster the holistic development of young people through effective leadership training. Students are empowered to organize and represent themselves when it comes to policies and practices that influence their interests.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Program

In this program, volunteers meet with their Little Brother or Little Sister one hour a week at a near-by school or after-school site.

Mentoring Village

Mentoring Village is an interactive digital environment in addition to face-to-face meetings. Mentors are provided additional "email/chat" capabilities to interact with their students to continue discussing topics from previous meetings and to plan and prepare for future meetings.

Pinellas County School Mentoring Program – Student Selection Process

Student Referrals

When a student is referred for a mentor, input is gathered from the referring staff and/or faculty member to insure that the referral is valid and the student is in need of the service. The referred student should also show an interest in receiving help and be willing to make the necessary commitment.

Training

All new mentors must attend a two-hour Effective Mentoring Strategies workshop. This workshop is offered throughout the year at locations across the county by the Office of Strategic Partnerships, Family and Community Relations.

Mentor discussion group meetings are offered several times during the school year at various school sites. School personnel will provide on-the-job advice and be available for technical assistance when needed.



"It is from numberless, diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

— Robert F. Kennedy

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

Adolescent Growth and Development

Early Adolescence

(Begins at age 10 or 11 and merges with mid-adolescence at age 14 or 15)

Physically

- Girls' growth begins and peaks earlier than boys
- Reproductive system developing
- Secondary sex characteristics begin to develop

Intellectually

- Beginning to move from concrete thinking (what is) to abstract thinking ("formal operations" – what might be true if...)
- Can't always perceive long-range implications of current decisions
- Expanded interest: intense, short-term enthusiasm

Socially and Emotionally

Self

- Preoccupation with rapid body change
- Self-absorption, self-consciousness
- Diminished self-esteem

Family

- Redefining relationship with family, moving toward more independence while still looking to family for guidance and values
- Few major conflicts over parental control

Peers

- Increasing importance
- Seeking to become part of group to hide insecurities from rapid changes

- Comparing own normality and acceptance with same-sex peers
- Moving toward more intimate sharing of feelings

Sexuality

- Defining self in terms of maleness and femaleness
- Learning how to relate to opposite sex (what to say and how to behave)

Mid-Adolescence

(Begins at age 14 or 15 and merges with late-adolescence at about age 17)

Physically

- Growth slowing, stature reaches 95 percent of adult height
- Secondary sex characteristics well advanced

Intellectually

- Growing competence in abstract thinking
- Capable of perceiving future implications of current acts and decisions, but not always applied
- Reverts to concrete thinking under stress

Socially and Emotionally

Self

- Reestablishing body image as growth slows
- Preoccupation with fantasy and idealism as abstract thinking and sense of future develops

Family

- Major conflict over control (rules, homework, curfew)
- Struggle for emancipation, greater autonomy

Peers

- Strong identification with chosen peer to affirm self-image
- Looking to peers for behavioral codes

Sexuality

- Testing ability to attract and parameters of masculinity and femininity
- Developing sexual codes of behavior, personal value system

Source: Robert L. Johnson, M.D., associate professor of Pediatrics and director of Adolescent Medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, New Jersey Medical School; and **Opportunities for Prevention: Building After-School and Summer Programs for Young Adolescents**, Children's Defense Fund, 1987.

Developmental Stages of Children and Youth

5- to 7- Year-Olds

General Characteristics

1. Eager to learn; easily fatigued; short periods of interest.
2. Learn best when they are active while learning.
3. Self-assertive, boastful; less cooperative, more competitive.

Physical Characteristics

1. Very active; need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are energetic and fun for them.
2. Need rest periods – good quiet activities include reading books together or doing simple art projects.
3. Large muscles are well developed. Activities involving small muscles (for example, building models that have small pieces) are difficult.
4. May tend to be accident-prone.



GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT



Social Characteristics

1. Enjoy organized games and are very concerned about following rules.
2. Can be very competitive – this may lead them to cheat at games.
3. Very imaginative and involved in fantasy-playing.
4. Self-assertive, aggressive, boastful, want to be first; becoming less cooperative.

Emotional Characteristics

1. Alert to feelings of others but unaware of how their own actions affect others.
2. Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
3. Inconsistent in level of maturity; regress when tired; often less mature at home than with outsiders.

Mental Characteristics

1. Very eager to learn.
2. Like to talk.
3. Can be inflexible about their idea of fairness.
4. Difficulty making decisions.

Suggested Mentor Strategies

1. Be patient, encouraging and flexible.
2. Give supervision with a minimum amount of interference.
3. Give praise, opportunities for successful competition, and suggestions about acceptable behavior.

Developmental Stages of Children and Youth

8- to 10-Year-Olds

General Characteristics

1. Interested in people; aware of differences; willing to give more to others but also expect more.
2. Busy, active, full of enthusiasm; may try too much; accident prone; interested in money and its value.
3. Sensitive to criticism; recognize failure; have capacity for self-evaluation.
4. Capable of prolonged interest; may make plans on their own.
5. Decisive; dependable; reasonable; strong sense of right and wrong.
6. Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion; often outspoken and critical of adults, although still dependent on adult approval.

Physical Characteristics

1. Very active and need frequent breaks from tasks to do things that are energetic and fun for them.
2. Early matures may be upset about their size – as their adult supporter, you can help by listening and explaining.
3. May tend to be accident-prone.

Social Characteristics

1. Can be very competitive.
2. Are choosy about their friends.
3. Acceptance by friends becomes very important.
4. Team games become popular.
5. Often idolize heroes, television stars, and sports figures.

Emotional Characteristics

1. Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
2. Because friends become very important, can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules- your honesty and consistency can be helpful.

Mental Characteristics

1. Can be inflexible about their idea of fairness.
2. Eager to answer questions.
3. Very curious; collectors of everything, but may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.
4. Want more independence while knowing they need guidance and support.
5. Wide discrepancies in reading ability.

Suggested Mentor Strategies

1. Recognize allegiance to friends and "heroes".
2. Remind child of responsibilities in a two-way relationship.
3. Acknowledge performance.

4. Offer enjoyable learning experience – for example, this is a good age to teach about different cultures.
5. Provide candid answers to questions about upcoming physiological changes.

Developmental Stages of Children and Youth

11- to 13-Year-Olds

General Characteristics

1. Testing limits; a "know-it-all" attitude.
2. Vulnerable; emotionally insecure; fear of rejection; mood swings.
3. Identification with admired adults.
4. Bodies going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

1. Good coordination of small muscles; interest in art, crafts, model and music.
2. Early matures may be upset about their size – as their adult supporter, you can help by listening and explaining.
3. Very concerned with their appearance; very self-conscious about their physical changes.
4. May have bad diet and sleep habits and as a result, low energy levels.

Social Characteristics

1. Acceptance by friends becomes very important.
2. Cliques start to develop.
3. Team games become popular.
4. Often have "crushes" on other people.
5. Friends set the general rules of behavior.
6. Feel a strong need to conform; dress and behave like their peers in order to "belong."

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

7. Very concerned with what others say and think about them.
8. Have a tendency to try to manipulate others to get what they want.
9. Interested in earning own money.

Emotional Characteristics

1. Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
2. Because friends are very important, can be conflicts between adults' rules and friends' rules.
3. Caught between being a child and being an adult.
4. Loud behavior may hide their lack of self-confidence.
5. Look at the world more objectively; look at adults more subjectively, and are critical of them.

Mental Characteristics

1. Tend to be perfectionists; if they try to attempt too much, may feel frustrated.
2. Want more independence but know they need guidance and support.
3. May have lengthy attention span.

Suggested Mentor Strategies

1. Offer alternative opinions without being insistent.
2. Be accepting of different physical states and emotional changes.
3. Give candid answers to questions.
4. Suggest positive money-making opportunities.
5. Share aspects of your work life and rewards of achieving in work.
6. Do not tease about appearance, clothes, boyfriends/girlfriends, sexuality. Instead, affirm them.

Developmental Stages of Children and Youth

14- 16-Year-Olds

General Characteristics

1. Testing limits; a "know-it-all" attitude.
2. Vulnerable; emotionally insecure; fear of rejection; mood swings.
3. Identification with admired adults.
4. Bodies going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

1. Very concerned with their appearance; very self-conscious about their physical changes.
2. May have bad diet and sleep habits and, as a result, low energy levels.
3. Often a rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence/enormous appetite.

Social Characteristics

1. Friends set the general rules of behavior.
2. Feel a strong need to conform; dress and behave like their peers in order to "belong."
3. Very concerned with what others say and think about them.
4. Have a tendency to try to manipulate others to get what they want.
5. Go to extremes; often appear to be unstable emotionally while having a "know-it-all" attitude.
6. Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
7. Strong identification with admired adults.

Emotional Characteristics

1. Very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
2. Caught between being a child and being an adult.

3. Loud behavior may hide their lack of self-confidence.
4. Look at the world more objectively; look at adults more subjectively, and are critical of them.

Mental Characteristics

1. Can better understand moral principles.
2. May have lengthy attention span.

Suggested Mentor Strategies

1. Give choices and don't be afraid to confront inappropriate behavior.
2. Use humor to defuse testy situations.
3. Give positive feedback – and let them know your affection is for them, not for their accomplishments.
4. Be available and be yourself – with your true strengths, weaknesses, and emotions.
5. Be honest and disclose appropriate personal information to build trust.

[Used with permission from "Child Development Seminar." Volunteer Education and Development Manual. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America]



DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

“Developmental Assets” are factors – both internal and external – which decrease the likelihood that young people will engage in risky behavior and increase the chances that they will grow up to be healthy, caring, and responsible adults.

The following framework, developed by Search Institute (a research and training organization in Minneapolis), identifies assets or factors that are critical for young people’s growth and development. The first of these assets are external – positive experiences that children and youth should be receiving. The next are internal – qualities that young people should (with the help of adults, communities, and institutions) be developing within themselves.

External Assets

The first 20 developmental assets focus on positive experiences that young people should receive from the people and institutions in their lives. Four categories of external assets are included in the framework:

1. Support

Young people need to experience support, care and love from their families, neighbors and many others. They need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments. These developmental assets include:

- **Family support:** Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- **Positive family communication:** Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).
- **Other adult relationships:** Young person receives support from non-parent adults.
- **Caring neighborhood:** Young person experiences caring neighbors.
- **Caring school climate:** School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
- **Parent involvement in schooling:** Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young persons succeed in school.

2. Empowerment

Young people need to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secure. The assets include:

- **The community values youth:** Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
- **Youth as resources:** Young people are given useful roles in the community.
- **Service to others:** Young people serve in the community one hour or more per week.
- **Safety:** Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.



3. Boundaries and Expectations

Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are “in bounds” or “out of bounds.” The developmental assets in this category include:

- **Family boundaries:** Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person’s whereabouts.
- **School boundaries:** School provides clear rules and consequences.
- **Neighborhood boundaries:** Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior.
- **Adult role models:** Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
- **Positive peer influence:** Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior.
- **High expectations:** Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

4. Constructive Use of Time

Young people need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs, congregational involvement, and quality time at home.

The developmental assets in this category include:

- **Creative activities:** Young person spends three or more hours a week in lessons or practice music, theater or other arts.
- **Youth programs:** Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
- **Religious community:** Young person spends one hour or more a week in activities in the religious setting/activity.
- **Time at home:** Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Internal Assets

A community's responsibility for its youth does not end with the provision of external assets. There needs to be a similar commitment to nurturing the internalized qualities that guide choices and create a sense of purpose and focus. Four categories of internal assets are included in this framework:

1. Commitment to Learning

Young people need to develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning. The developmental assets include:

- **Motivation for achievement:** Young person is motivated to do well in school.
- **School engagement:** Young person is actively engaged in learning.
- **Homework:** Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
- **Reading for pleasure:** Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

2. Positive Values

Young people need to develop strong values that guide their choices. The developmental assets include:

- **Caring:** Young person places high value on helping other people.
- **Equality and social justice:** Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
- **Integrity:** Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
- **Honesty:** Young person "tells the truth – even when it is not easy"
- **Responsibility:** Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
 - **Restraint:** Young person believes it is important not be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

3. Social Competencies

Young people need skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices to build relationships and to succeed in life. The development assets include:

- **Planning and decision-making:** Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- **Interpersonal competence:** Young person has empathy, sensitivity and friendship skills.
- **Cultural competence:** Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- **Resistance skills:** Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- **Peaceful conflict resolution:** Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

4. Positive Identity

Young people need a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth and promise.

The developmental assets include:

- **Personal power:** Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
- **Self-esteem:** Young person reports having high self-esteem.
- **Sense of purpose:** Young person reports that "my life has purpose."
- **Positive view of personal future:** Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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STUDENTS' STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

What Students Need

ALL students have these basic needs:

- To be accepted unconditionally.
- To have limits set.
- To feel approval from peers and adults.
- To be reassured, when making mistakes and failing, that this is normal (and can provide another learning opportunity).
- To have opportunities to laugh.
- To express frustration (but without hurting self or others).
- To have consistency in their lives.
- To be respected.
- To be listened to with understanding.
- To experience some success.

Motivating Young People

Students vary tremendously in the characteristics they bring to the learning situation.

Three concepts to consider when motivating young people:

1. They need successful experiences.
2. They need to be involved.
3. They must receive immediate feedback.

"Children must have at least one person who believes in them. It could be you. You never know when a little love and support will plant a small seed of hope."

Marian Wright Edelman

The best motivators:

- Believe young people are competent and trustworthy.
- Avoid labeling.
- Avoid sarcasm.
- Expect everyone to succeed.
- Listen!!!
- Avoid over-emphasis on competition.
- Focus on future successes, not failures.
- Set clear goals for success.

(Information provided by Neila Connors, Assistant Professor, Valdosta State College)

"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being."

— Goethe

Reasons for Becoming a Discouraged Student

Academic Demands

Research shows that most students who are going to have problems in school can be identified when they are in second, third or fourth grade. The students are usually behind the other students in math, reading or science, are frequently absent, and have difficulties dealing with interpersonal relationships.

Many discouraged students are interested in vocational and nonacademic classes, but are having difficulty in finding alternatives to the increased academic demands.

Difficulties with the School Environment

Many discouraged students:

- Drop out of school due to lack of interest and boredom.
- Feel that they "don't belong" and are not involved in any extra-curricular activities.
- Hang out with "kids that understand them," other dropouts.
- Are former dropouts who need extra support when they return to school.
- May be over-age for their current grade level.

Difficult Home Life

Many discouraged students:

- Come from homes where parents or siblings were school dropouts.
- Are children of divorced or remarried parents.
- Come from families with an alcohol or drug abuse problem.
- Take drugs to reduce emotional pain and feelings of low self-esteem.

Changing Life Styles

- Some students lack self-confidence due to poor parent and adult relationships. Effects of changes in American family life styles in the past twenty years include the following:
 - Parents under stress show little support or interest in their child's education. A student whose needs are not being met at home may either be withdrawn at school or may act out their problems.
 - Children of divorce may have feelings of guilt, rejection, depression and anxiety.
 - Many students work long hours at after school jobs, take care of younger siblings and share household jobs, as well as attend school.

STUDENTS' STRENGTHS AND NEEDS



Societal and Economic Factors

- Some students lack self-confidence due to poor parent and adult relationships.
- Poor nutrition and lack of rest have a negative effect on academic performance.
- Many teenage girls drop out of school when they marry or become pregnant.
- Many males who identify themselves as fathers also drop out of school.
- Many students hold jobs. Some work more than 21 hours a week.
- Many students who receive failing grades are those with after school jobs.
- A large percentage of working students say they are often too tired to go to school.

Facts

- If students are retained once, there is a 70% chance they will drop out of school.
- If students are retained twice, there is a 90% chance they will drop out of school.

Self-Esteem and Students

Social workers and psychologists who work with discouraged students say they all have one thing in common – low self-esteem.

A student can have superior intelligence but have low self-esteem, which may result in poor academic performance. Students who have only average intelligence but have high self-esteem can be highly successful.

Students learn who they are from how people react to them. If they are told they are bad, irresponsible or stupid, they will believe that this behavior is expected of them. However, if students are encouraged and recognized when they do well, they will feel that they are worthwhile. Students with good self-esteem have the ability to succeed in learning and develop healthy human relationships.

Students with High Self-Esteem:

- Take pride in their own accomplishments.
- Act independently.
- Assume responsibility easily.
- Approach new challenges enthusiastically.
- Believe in themselves and their capabilities.
- Show a broad range of emotions.
- Handle frustration well.
- Display a sense of humor.

Students with Low Self-Esteem:

- Avoid situations that are uncomfortable.
- Play down their own abilities and strengths.
- Think others don't value them.
- Blame others for their weaknesses.
- Are easily influenced by others.
- Do not handle frustration well.
- Are overwhelmed with feelings of helplessness.
- Show a narrow range of emotions and feelings.

"No one has yet fully realized the wealth of sympathy, kindness and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true education should be to unlock that treasure..."

— Emma Goldman

STUDENTS' STRENGTHS AND NEEDS

The Role of Mentor in Dropout Prevention

The school dropout problem in this country is well documented. Each year, an average of 1,000 young people in Pinellas County leaves school before graduation. Some continue their education in other district programs, but others do not. It is a problem that goes beyond the individuals involved, ultimately affecting our schools, communities and society.

Mentors, whether they are teachers, business people, or community volunteers, are in a unique position. They have opportunities to relate to students in ways that parents and schools usually do not. Mentors can be friends, rather than authority figures, and in this way can create informal and personal interaction to build self-esteem and encourage growth and development. Students benefit from a close adult/peer role model who is someone other than a family member.

Supporting academic achievement is an important mentoring role. Mentors can help students achieve a mastery of basic skills in order to graduate from high school and get a job, or assist students in reaching a higher standard of academic achievement. Teaching basic skills, helping with homework, and developing communication skills are an important part of successful mentoring.

Mentors can also acquaint students with a broader range of values, customs and resources from people of different occupational and social levels. Goal setting, making personal decisions, and resolving family problems is another way in which mentors can assist students. Offering moral support and a sense of caring can make a difference in a student's attitude and progress in school.

Finally, the mentor is a role model. Mentors are people who are successful and motivated. They are in a position to pass on these qualities to students by spending time with them. Mentors make it possible for students at a critical stage in their growth and development to identify with them and imitate their behaviors.



WHAT DOES A MENTOR DO?

A mentor is a special type of school volunteer, committed to helping a student experience greater success academically, socially, mentally and physically.



Mentors' roles generally fall into two categories:

- Enhancing students' self-confidence and self-awareness
- Helping students achieve educational or career goals

It is common for a student to describe a mentor as a:

- Friend
- Teacher
- Trainer
- Listener
- Positive role model
- Hero
- Sponsor
- Advocate
- Motivator

Responsibilities

Any and all of the following are important activities for mentors in the lives of their students.

Academic Support

- A mentor can help with homework or missed class work and should encourage good attendance.
- A mentor can encourage young people to stay in school and graduate, along with helping them evaluate educational choices and then explore appropriate resources.

Role Modeling

A mentor can point out, demonstrate and explain actions and values that offer the best chances for success and happiness; a mentor should help students see and strive for broader horizons and possibilities than they may see in their present environment.

Attention and Concern

Many students do not receive enough attention from the adults in their lives. Mentors can fill in these empty spaces with dependable, sincere and consistent attention and concern.

Listening

The other adults in the young person's life may not have the time, interest or ability to listen. Mentors can encourage young people to talk about their fears, dreams and concerns. Remember: A mentor may be the **ONLY** adult in a student's life who really listens.

WHAT DOES A MENTOR DO?

Accountability

A commitment made to a student for a meeting, activity or any kind of appointment should be a mentor's first priority, barring emergencies. This consistent accountability has several benefits:

- Cements trust between mentor and student.
- Sets a good example (role modeling) for students to follow.
- Creates mutual expectations that can be met.

What a Mentor is Not

There is no expectation that mentors will take on the role of parent, professional counselor or social worker. But some of those role traits will also be part of the mentor's role: listening, nurturing and supporting.

Through the mentors' sustained caring, interest and acceptance, students may begin to think of themselves as worthy of this attention. They may apply this new, stronger sense of self-confidence to other relationships and experiences.

Mentoring is not a cure-all for all the problems and deficiencies facing the students and their families. The essence of mentoring is the sustained human relationship.

Helpful Hints

Be prompt. Your student is waiting! Confer with the teacher/coordinating person to determine focus areas or activities and to check on the progress of your student.

- Know where you will be meeting with your student.
- Give your student time to talk about himself/herself or any experiences he/she had since your last meeting.
- Sometimes repeating what the student just said or restating what you think was said will clarify issues; solutions can be found by asking questions.
- Be patient, respectful, and honest in working with your student. Honor your commitment to confidentiality.
- Students make mistakes and need to know this is part of the learning process. Do not be afraid to share your mistakes or to say, "I don't know."
- Use encouragement tactics with your student. Be creative and authentic.
- Support the school's rules regarding behavior. Be prepared for the session, but be flexible if the student has different needs.
- Listen! Pay attention to body language.
- Work in short meaningful steps toward an achievable goal.
 - Always end the time spent with your student on a positive note.
 - Smile and recognize every success no matter how small.

For Mentors Who Also Tutor

- To work with an individual student on materials or activities prescribed by the teacher; to assist students with specific skill needs.
- To help build a positive self-image by providing a friendly and supportive environment within which a student can enjoy learning.
- To follow directions and provide input on the student's performance.
- To communicate to the teacher your concerns regarding your student, his/her work and the program.
- To be reliable with attendance.
- To enjoy the experience.



"I want it said of me, by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow."

— Abraham Lincoln

LISTEN!

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked. When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you have to do something to solve my problem, you have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked was that you not talk. Advice is cheap. A quarter will get you both Dear Abby and Billy Graham in the same newspaper. And I am not helpless—maybe discouraged and faltering, but not helpless. When you do something for me that I can do and need to do for myself, you contribute to my fear and weakness.

But when you accept as a simple fact that I do feel, what I feel no matter how irrational, then I can quit trying to convince you and get about the business of understanding what's behind this irrational feeling.

And when that's clear, the answers are obvious and I don't need advice. Irrational feelings make sense when we understand what's behind them.

So, please listen and just hear me; and if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn and I'll listen to you.



Effective Listening

Interesting Information

- Poor listening is a 20th century epidemic.
- Most people use only 25% of their natural ability for listening.
- The average person's attention span rarely last more than 45 seconds.
- Today's average adolescent spends 13 minutes a day talking to a parent.
- Listening is not a natural art, but a learned art and therefore can be improved.
- It is important to remember that we do not deliberately choose to "not listen". We merely forget sometimes how to listen well, or we don't take the time to listen well.

Things That Hinder Effective Listening

- Few people listen objectively to others. They tend to anticipate the message and begin thinking of an answer instead of listening to what is being said.
- The views expressed by the student are different from yours.
- The environment around you is noisy or frequent interruptions occur.
- The dress and appearance of the student is distracting.
- The student is telling you something you don't want to hear.
- The thoughts or feelings being expressed shock you or cause you anxiety.
- You are preoccupied with problems of your own and find it difficult to pay attention to what the student is saying.
- You do not have enough time to spend with the student and "hurry through" what the student is saying to you.

Three Types of Non-Listening

- 1) **Listening with "half an ear"** Example: You're preoccupied with another activity while you're attempting to listen to someone who is talking to you.
- 2) **The "scene stealer"** Example: Taking the attention away from the person who is talking and centering the attention on yourself.
- 3) **The "guru" or "know-it-all"** Example: Giving quick, easy advice to a person with a difficult problem instead of helping the person make his own decision.

Note: the "guru" response is used in more than 75 percent of responses

In reviewing the three types of non-listening, consider the following:

- Has anyone ever "listened" to me this way? How did it feel?
- Have I ever used any of these types of non-listening?
- It's important to remember that we do not deliberately choose to not listen to others. We simply forget to take the time to listen well.

COMMUNICATION

Communication Skills

Attending Behavior

This involves connecting with a person through being in “synch” with them – their breathing, posture, voice tone and volume, etc. It also involves being aware of non-verbal behavior and its meaning, such as eye contact and when breaks in eye contact occur, etc.

Open Invitation to Talk

Open questions begin with words such as “What”, “How”, “Could” and “Why.” They encourage people to talk at more length and thus invite them to take more responsibility for the conversation. However, be wary of using the word “Why” too often. For some reason, the person asked “Why” finds it very easy to imagine he/she is being interrogated by a parent and often becomes defensive – this is not a good medium for connecting with them.

Closed questions begin with words such as “Is”, “Are” and “Do” and can usually be answered with one or two words – and that’s it.



Encouragers

Encouragers are expressions such as “I see,” “Really?” or “Wow!”, sometimes accompanied by a nod of the head or other non-verbal signal that shows you are listening.

Paraphrasing

A paraphrase is your shortened version of what the person has just said to you. You listen for the basic message and restate it in fewer but similar words.

Example:

Student: “I hate recess! The other kids laugh because I can’t hit the ball, I don’t want to go out to play.”

Mentor: “You don’t want to go out because the children make fun of you.”

Clarifying

You can also paraphrase when you try to clarify the student’s message. You restate what the student said but in a different form. Sometimes this is needed to sort out a confused statement with many elements. When you are trying to clarify the student’s message, you might admit your own confusion and ask the student for help.

Example:

Student: “I’ll never be able to learn all this. I’m just too dumb.”

Mentor: “I’m not sure how you feel. Earlier you said you didn’t have enough time to finish the assignment? Can you tell me more?”



COMMUNICATION

Responding to Feelings

One of the most important elements in active listening is called Responding to Feelings. This is how you let the student know that you are hearing his/her emotions as well as his/her words.

Example:

Student: "I'm so fat. Everybody hates me."

Mentor: "Sounds like you're feeling pretty left out of things right now."

Student: "I hate Math! It's dumb."

Mentor: "That math's really got you down, huh?"

Communication Skills

"I" Messages

Sometimes the student will upset you. That's a time when "I" Messages will help you to sort out your feelings and let the child know about them. You are still being open and truthful, and you are not threatening him/her, but you are telling him/her how you feel about the situation. The basic form of an "I" Message is:

"I feel _____ when you _____ because _____."

Example:

"I feel disturbed when you tune me out because I want to help you."

You'll get your message across and won't lose ground in working out the relationship and developing better communication.

"I" Messages are also appropriate when you feel good about what the student has done:

"I feel happy when you say you like to meet with me because I like to spend time with you, too."

"Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is of you."
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Communication Tips

Talking and communicating are not the same! You probably learned to talk when you were one or two; most people don't ever really learn to communicate. Now is your chance. There are three basic skills: listening, looking and leveling.

Roadblocks to Communication

- Ignoring (not responding at all)
- Name-calling or put-downs
- Comparing ("Why can't you be more like...")
- Advising ("If I were you...")
- Coulda, woulda and shoulda ("You ought to know better.")
- Speaking for someone else ("Oh, she doesn't mind.")
- Saying "you" when you mean "I" ("You shouldn't do that" when you mean "I want you to stop that.")

(Adapted from **"Bridging the Gap: What's Happening Now?"**, Printed Matter, Inc. Atlanta GA, 1983)



DO'S AND DON'TS OF HELPING

- Do take time to establish rapport. Academics can come later.
- Do focus on one area, subject or problem.
- Do keep the student's information confidential, as long as she/he is not planning to hurt himself/herself or others.
- Do arrange for a time to speak with the student's teacher or counselor periodically if you have a problem.
- Do be aware of limitations. You cannot change the student's home situation.
- Do remember that everyone has strengths. Give positive reinforcement when possible.
- Do remember that everyone needs to feel valued in order to act responsibly.
- Do listen. It is the supreme act of caring.
- Do be aware that the student's value system may be different from yours (i.e.: hair style, dress fads and use of profanity.)
- Do become aware of school policy concerning a student leaving school grounds.
- Do realize that with all your efforts some students may drop out or not make progress. Responsibility for change lies with the student, not you.
- Do communicate to the student the advantages of a high school diploma. Responsibility for change lies with the student, not you.
- Don't get discouraged if the student's progress fails to meet your expectations.
- Don't feel awkward with silence. Use silence to allow the student to make choices.
- Don't expect the student to make quick changes in attitude or make dramatic progress in academic achievement.
- Don't take ownership of the problem: The problem belongs to the student.
- Don't hesitate to ask for help: If the student begins to talk about life not being worthwhile, appears depressed (looks sad, lacks energy, grades have dropped, cries easily) or talks openly about suicide.
 - If the student threatens to harm someone.
 - If the student mentions being either physically or sexually abused.
 - If the student begins to "act strange," such as talking without making sense or mentions hearing or seeing things that are not there.



*Responsibility for change lies
with the student, not you.*

DEALING WITH DIVERSITY



One of the most critical training needs expressed by mentors and volunteer coordinators is 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 understanding their students. 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 trusting friends. Add to that a significant difference in age, in socio-economic status and/or in racial and ethnic background, and it is clear why diversity is such a critical issue for mentors.

A Definition of Cultural Diversity

Many mentor programs prefer to match students with mentors who come from similar backgrounds in terms of race, socio-economic status, etc. Often this is not possible and mentors are matched with young people who may look and act very differently from themselves and whose backgrounds and lifestyles may be dissimilar to theirs.

Culture, in this sense, is more than race or ethnicity; it encompasses values, lifestyle and social norms, including such things as different communication styles, mannerisms, way of dressing, family structure, traditions, time orientation and response to authority. These differences may be associated with age, religion, ethnicity and socio-economic background. A lack of understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity can result in mentors becoming judgmental, thus foreclosing the opportunity to develop a trusting relationship.

What Can You Do?

As in many other situations, knowledge is the key to understanding. Talk to your student about his or her background and ancestry, about what life is like at school, at home and with his/her friends. Find out why he/she does and says the things she/he does. As you begin to learn and understand more about your student, you will be less likely to make negative value judgments, to you because you would do it differently, or whether it is truly an indication of a more seriously troubled youth. If, in fact, you feel the troublesome situation facing your student is detrimental or harmful to him/herself 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.

It’s also important to remember to be yourself. Sometimes, with the best of intentions, we try to “relate” to young people and try to use their slang and be like “one of the gang”. Students can see through this facade and may find it difficult to trust people who are not true to themselves.

Youth Culture

Many of the characteristics of adolescence are normal developmental traits and consequently don’t vary significantly from one generation to the next. For instance, while many adults believe that 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 than did our parents and grandparents. We did things our parents didn’t do; we talked differently than our parents.

It is 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 in previous generations; sexually-transmitted diseases are more common and more dangerous; crime and violence have drastically increased throughout the country; single-parent families have become more common while greater demands are being placed on all families.

Dealing with Diversity Remember...

Here are some suggestions which may help you successfully deal with diversity: Keep in mind that you are the adult. You are the experienced one. Imagine, for the moment, what your student must be thinking and feeling. In general, young people of all ages, but particularly teens, believe they are not respected by adults. They worry about whether a mentor will like them or think they’re stupid. They are coming to you for help and many already feel insecure and embarrassed about the problems in their lives.

DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

Thus, it is your responsibility to take the initiative and make the student feel more comfortable in the relationship.

It is helpful to paraphrase what you think your student has said, or is feeling, and give examples of similar situations which you have had.

If something about your student is bothering you, first determine whether the behavior is simply troubling to you because you would do it differently, or whether it is truly an indication of a more seriously troubled youth. If, in fact, you feel the troublesome situation facing your student is detrimental or harmful to him/herself 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,

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 both mentors and students alike can benefit from their increased understanding of others who may at first seem unfamiliar.

Furthermore, even though you may learn a lot about another culture, lifestyle or age group, you will never be from that group. Don't over-identify with your student; she/he realizes you don't know exactly what she/he is feeling or experiencing. A student may actually feel invalidated by your insistence that you truly know from where she/he is coming. 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."

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 student begins to trust and know you, she/he will begin to learn about life outside his/her limited circle of ways of doing things and that she/he can discover new opportunities and alternative ways of doing things that she/he never knew existed. You can model diversity for your student.



A MODEL FOR GOAL SETTING



A Goal Must Be:

1. **Conceivable** – You must be able to have a general understanding of the goal and be able to identify what the first step or two would be in achieving the goal.
2. **Believable** – In addition to being consistent with your personal value systems, you must believe you can reach the goal. There is a need to be positive. Few people can believe a goal that they have never seen someone else accomplish. This can be a problem for goal-setting in culturally-deprived areas.
3. **Achievable** – The goals you set must be accomplished with your own strengths and abilities.

Example:

An overweight teenager, setting a goal of running the four-minute mile in the next six months, would not be likely to achieve such a goal.

4. **Controllable** – If your goal includes involving someone else, get permission from the person that will be involved.

Example:

If your goal is to take someone to an event on a specific night, there is a possibility that the person would not accept your invitation to attend. However, if the goal is only to invite someone to a party, it would be acceptable.

5. **Measurable** – Your goal should be measurable in time and quantity.

Example:

Suppose your goal was to work on your term paper this week. You should specify your goal by saying, "I will write 20 pages by 3 p.m. next Monday."

6. **Desirable** – Your goal should be something you really want to do, rather than something you feel you should do. There are many things in life that a person has to do, but doing things one wants to do provides a balance.
7. **Stated With No Alternative** – You should set one goal at a time. If alternates are specified, the person often accomplishes neither. This does not restrict goal setting. Even though you may set out to accomplish one goal, you can stop at any time and drop it for a new one.
8. **Growth-Facilitating** – Your goal should never be destructive to yourself, to others or to society. If a student is seeking potentially destructive goals, an effort should be made to encourage him to consider a different goal.

"Blessed is the person who sees the need, recognizes the responsibility, and actively becomes the answer."

— William Arthur Ward

A MODEL FOR GOAL SETTING

Goal Setting

One of the most important tasks of the mentor is to assist the student in setting short and long term individual goals. There are several important factors to consider before beginning the task of goal setting with your student:

Time should be spent with your student in establishing a relationship of trust and confidentiality before you attempt goal setting.

- Involve your student in the goal setting process. Each goal must be set by your student with your guidance. It must be the student's goal – not yours.
- A short term goal which can be immediately achievable is a good starting point.

Example:

Joe will complete and turn in all math assignments for the next week.

- You should ask the student for a commitment that she/he will make an attempt to meet the goal.

Example:

Confirm the commitment with a written agreement or a handshake.

- If your student fails to achieve the goal, look at the following points:
- The goal may have been too difficult for the student to achieve.
- The goal may have been developed without the active involvement and commitment of the student.
- The student may be fearful of achieving a self-enhancing goal. Many discouraged students perceive themselves as “losers” and are accustomed to making poor choices that reinforce their negative self-image. You may need to talk about this with your student.

A long term goal may need to be established before a short term goal can be explored with a student. The student may not see the need to work toward a short term goal unless he sees the relationship between the two goals.

Example:

Graduating from high school may be the motivating factor in helping a student work toward short term goals.

“You will find, as you look back upon your life, that the moments that stand out, the moments when you have really lived, are the moments when you have done things in the spirit of love.”

— Henry Drummond



CLOSURE



Letting Go / Moving On...

How and When to Dissolve the Relationship

Letting go starts with the first session when you tell the student how long you will be meeting with him/her. The student needs to be aware that this is a time limited relationship. The time will vary with each mentor and student relationship, four or more sessions prior to termination; you will need to begin the separation process in a positive, honest and supportive manner.

The message must be positive, i.e. "I am very proud of how far you have come. You have grown and matured, etc. You are ready for your next important life step – becoming a middle school student or high school student. How grand this achievement will be as you grow into a young adult."

Be honest about the separation. "Our last meeting will be (date). Although we will not be seeing one another next school year, I will be thinking of you and pulling for you, etc."

Encourage the student to talk about his/her feelings of separation and moving to the next level.

You may need to look for non-verbal clues about the student's feelings. He/she may become more attached or more withdrawn.

Transition to the Next Level

Transition to Middle School

Some very practical things you can do are the following:

- Review the middle school handbook (if available).
- Review the grading policy (a report card will be received every six weeks).
- Review school administrative structure (6th, 7th and 8th grade level concept).
- Get a school map; discuss changing classes.
- Help your student learn to use a lock.
- Physical Education issues (showers, changing clothes, etc.)

Transition to High School

Some very practical things you can do are the following:

- Review the high school handbook (if available).
- Review absence policy.
- Review requirements for graduation.
- Discuss clubs, sports, other school activities and areas of interest.
- Be sure he/she knows where to turn for help – guidance counselor, social worker, etc.



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Confidentiality

Please remember to talk with your student early about the boundaries and expectations of your relationship. Assuring them that your conversations will be kept confidential unless the student is going to injure themselves, injure someone else or someone is injuring them. We ask that you inform a school official immediately if you discuss any of these issues or see signs that a student has been subject to abuse or neglect.

Reporting Abuse

Anyone who suspects child abuse or abuse of a disabled adult or elderly person is ethically obligated to report that abuse. But under Florida Statutes 39.201 and 415.1034, those persons who are legally obligated to report include physicians, nurses, local hospital personnel, medical examiners, mental-health professionals, school teachers and other school personnel, social workers, day-care workers, foster care workers, residential and institutional workers, and law enforcement officers. Those persons are required by law to give names when reporting suspected abuse. Any professional failing to report or knowingly preventing another from doing so is guilty of a first-degree misdemeanor and may be prosecuted.

FLORIDA ABUSE HOTLINE

1-800-96ABUSE

(1-800-962-2873)

FAX 1-800-914-0004

“It’s not who you are that holds you back, it’s what you think you’re not.”
— Anonymous

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