



March-April 1998 Family Life Newsletter
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Mentor (men't r, -tor) n. [Mentor, friend of Odysseus] 1. wise advisor; 2. a teacher or coach.

For today's youth, life is an odyssey. Even in popular cartoon scripts the classical hero emerges as a person of cleverness, confidence, and courage. Odysseus' exploits reflect the legacy of an elder who encouraged those qualities, even beyond the nurture of his exceptional parents. Such Mentor-s provide encouragement, guidance, and skill training today--relatives, neighbors, youth leaders, teachers, counselors, clergy, coaches and others--to millions of youth across the nation. Poverty and violence, geographic mobility, busyness, age segregation, and a host of other factors discourage growth of mentoring relationships, more common in closer-knit communities.

Saito and Blyth's (1992) definitive study of mentoring programs discussed the keys of successful efforts:
*appropriate screening, matching, and training
*adequate structure for communication and mentor support
*opportunities for program-supported social activities
*a good match between program goals and mentor expectations

While a supportive context is important, perhaps the essence of a successful relationship is in the one-to-one dynamics of mentoring bonds. The process of mentoring "works" because...
*A mentor is not a parent. Caring parents are always in demand. Yet voluntary caring is serendipitous and luxurious: "special" in a way that family love--or discipline--is ordinary. Other adults (or older youth) bring less "baggage" to partnership (what happened years ago, how you embarrass me/make me proud, what you'll turn out like) which supplies a fresh perspective...for the child and the parent. Just so, mentors bring different

talents to enrich the life of a child...and a novel personality with which the child can give, take, and grow.

*Mentoring provides a multiplier effect. He or she magnifies whatever positive parenting and teaching, nurture and discipline, a child receives. The more frail the light of the home life, the more significant its augmenting and refraction. By sharing more light, children are less apt to fear or curse the darkness.

*Attention at any time promotes healthy development. Growing children need doting grandparents to foster trust and attachment to others...day care workers who celebrate a free spirit of exploration and enjoyment...neighbors who invite them to plant seeds or tell stories of imaginary friends...project leaders who help them discover "how to" and "I can"...teachers who listen and affirm the awkward feelings and ideas which step toward adulthood. Each builds on the other or, if they walk alongside long enough, may see themselves in the mirror of the child's face.

*Individualizing affirms identity and cultivates talent. Each person needs another person, each moment's experience another to match; each lesson an echo in a more distant corner to shape the unique personality he or she becomes. Those who understand, share, and nurture our stories, who challenge and test our potential, share in the bloodstream of our humanity.

R.N. Saito & D.A. Blyth. (1992). Understanding mentoring relationships. Minneapolis: Search Institute.

"In teaching it is the method and not the content that is the message...the drawing out, not the pumping in."--Ashley Montagu

ROUNDUP ON THIS EDITION

Table with 2 columns: TOPIC and PAGE. Includes entries for Research and Theory (2), Stats and Facts (3-4), Just in Time (5-8), and Catch the Wind (9-10).

Feedback or requests for resources or training welcomed. For more resources on family life education check out the UW Extension Family Life World Wide Web site,

"Dramcatcher" at www.uwyo.edu/ag/ces/family/dream.htm

Research Briefs

News on Mentoring

Effective Mentoring- It's Critical

A study was conducted of 10th grade students considered at risk of not staying in school who were mentored by volunteers. The students were classified into two groups based on the students' evaluation of the mentoring process: effectively mentored students and ineffectively mentored students. Approximately 25% of the ineffectively mentored group dropped out, while 100% of the effectively mentored group returned to school the following fall. *Slicker, E.K., & Palmer, D. J. (1993). Mentoring at-risk high school students: Evaluation of a school-based program. The School Counselor, 40, (5), 327-34.*

Ineffectively mentored students in another study actually showed a decline in academic achievement. *Brown, Robert. (1996). Challenges and Potential of Mentoring At-Risk Students: A Literature Review. Spectrum: Journal of School Research and Information, 14, (2), 17-28.*

Giving Mentors Ownership

Two schools selected for a mentoring training program had a 60% population of high risk students and utilized similar mentoring guidelines. One school had a hierarchical approach with a central office that dictated the mentors activities; the second school used a team approach that allowed the mentors to develop their own program. An ending evaluation indicated that the second school utilizing the team approach was more successful, according to reports obtained from the mentors. *Einolf, L. (1995). Mentoring to prevent school drop outs. Journal of Behavior Education, 5, (4), 447-459.*

Emotional Bonds and Mentoring

Regular patterns of interactions between mentors and youth are important to the relationships and mentoring effectiveness. Ratings of emotional closeness were associated with greater reported levels of mentor and youth contacts, which were linked to greater perceived youth benefits. Accordingly, the availability of appropriate supports is necessary for a mentoring program to insure that adult volunteers spend time with youth on a regular basis and in ways that are likely to foster close emotional bonds. Such supports might include training and on-going staff supervision, structured opportunities for mentoring interactions and monitoring procedures to insure regular patterns of contact between mentors and youth. *DuBois, D.L. & Neville, H.A. (1997). Youth mentoring: Investigation of relationship characteristics and perceived benefits. Journal of Community Psychology, 25, (3), 227-234.*

Peer Mentoring

In a residential youth setting, popularity was a better predictor of peer mentoring helpfulness than was similarity, like-ability, and competence. These factors were measured across a variety of problem situations. However, peer competence was the most significant predictor of perceived helpfulness for preventing a problem behavior such as running away. This supports the notion that popularity is a major determinant of the quality of adolescent peer relationships and mental health. The results of this study indicated that popularity with peers was a better predictor of long-term success than the quality of staff relationships. (Refer to chart in Stats section). *Vincent, J., Houlihan, D, and Mitchell, P. (1992). Predictors of peer helpfulness; Implications for youth in residential treatment. Behavioral Residential Treatment, 7, (1), 45-53.*

Keeping Expectations Realistic

While there are some examples of "heroic intervention," (a drug dealer leaves the gang, enrolls in college, earns a 4.0. grade point average, and starts his own company), researchers warn against expecting too much change in a mentee's life. Mentoring can work, but it needs to be viewed as "modest intervention." Don't inflate the extent to which mentoring can make a difference. For example, don't expect a young person to quit smoking because of his mentor's influence; instead, focus on building his self esteem. *Freedman, Marc. (1992). The Kindness of Strangers: Reflections on the Mentoring Movement. New York: Public/Private Ventures.*

Theory Base

Benefits for Mentors

According to Erikson, the term "generativity" is the sense of immortality derived from older persons contributing their experience, skills, and wisdom to younger people, or proteges. Erickson theorized that in order to pass to the next stage in life and avoid stagnation, people needed to gain generativity. The mentoring process helps avoid stagnation by proteges rejuvenating their mentors' careers and improving their job performance by providing a fresh, creative perspective on job functions.

Stats: Benefits for Mentored Kids

*How Youth Benefitted from Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Comparisons of Mentored Youth with a Group of Youth on a
Waiting List over an Eighteen Month Period*

Outcomes	Changes
Antisocial Activities	
Initiating Drug Use	-45.8%
Initiating Alcohol Use	-27.4%
Number of Times Hit Someone	-31.7%
Academic Outcome	
Grades	+3.0%
Scholastic Competence	+4.3%
Skipped Class	-36.7%
Skipped Day of School	-52.2%
Family Relations	
Quality of the Relationship	+2.1%
Trust	+2.7%
Lying to Parents	-36.6%
Peer Relations	
Emotional Support	+2.3%

p<.10% for all variable

Source: Grossman, J.B. & Garry, E.M. (1997). *Mentoring- A proven delinquency prevention strategy.* U.S. Department of Justice, office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Predictors of Peer Mentoring Success						
	Most Helpful	Least Helpful	Popularity	Similarity	Likability	Competence
Most Helpful	.000					
Least Helpful	-.53**	.000				
Popularity	+.87**	-.46**	.000			
Similarity	+.61**	-.27	+.50**	.000		
Likability	+.68**	-.45**	+.71**	+.58**	.000	
Competence	+.78**	-.53**	+.70**	+.47**	+.52**	.000

**p<0.01

Source: Vincent, J., Houlihan, D, and Mitchell, P. (1992). Predictors of peer helpfulness: Implications for youth in residential treatment. *Behavioral Residential Treatment*, 7, 91), 45-53.

Facts: Match-Making

Making the Match

A study of one-on-one mentoring programs found that the following practices allow for better mentor matches:

1. Hard screening procedures (police checks, personal references, employment status) to determine volunteer eligibility
2. A consistent system of supervision
3. A matching process that includes the child's preference, as well as the child's family's preferences.

Source: Ferano, K., et al. (1993). *Big Brothers/Big Sisters: A Study of Program Practices*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

Sustaining Relationships

Failure rate of mentor matches is high: up to two thirds of mentoring relationships fail. Researchers make the following recommendations for sustaining effective mentoring relationships:

1. Increase the number of new volunteers gradually so that they can familiarize themselves with the system without overburdening the professional staff.
2. Screen out adults who are too busy to maintain their visiting schedule.
3. Increase the length, content, and practicality of training
4. Provide consistent supervision and support to volunteers.
5. While still maintaining security, adjust the rules to allow for more privacy for mentoring meetings, options for activities, and flexibility in meeting times.

Sources: Brown, Robert. (1996). *Challenges and Potential of Mentoring At-Risk Students: A Literature Review*. *Spectrum: Journal of School Research and Information*, 14, (2), 17-28.

Guentzloe, Eleanor. (1997). *The Power of Positive Relationships: Mentoring Programs in the School and Community*. *Preventing School Failure* (41), 3 p100-104.

Characteristics of Effective Relationships

Many studies have found that effective mentoring relationships are characterized by continuity and consistency in mentor-youth contacts. But many barriers to meetings exist; schedule conflicts, time constraints, transportation problems, communication problems (especially unreturned phone calls), and unclear explanations about the role of a mentor need to be addressed so that the mentoring relationship is not jeopardized. Researchers recommend that mentoring programs make available appropriate supports to insure that volunteers spend time with youth on a regular basis. Such supports might include training, on-going staff supervision, structured opportunities for mentor/youth interaction, and monitoring procedures to insure regular patterns of interaction.

Sources: Dubois, David L. and Helen A. Neville. (1997). *Youth Mentoring: Investigation of Relationship Characteristics and Perceived Benefits*. *Journal of Community Psychology*, (25), 3, 227-234.

Brown, Robert. (1996). *Challenges and Potential of Mentoring At-Risk Students: A Literature Review*. *Spectrum: Journal of School Research and Information*, 14, (2), 17-28.

Teens Need mentors

***Mentored teens are 46% less likely to get into drugs; 59% get better grades; and 73% raise their goals.**

Source: Tierney, Joseph. (1995). *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

***Participants in Big Brothers/Big Sisters skipped half as many days of school, felt more competent about doing their homework, and showed gains in their Grade Point Averages.**

Source: Tierney, Joseph. (1995). *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

***For 6-12th grade youth**

--49% have non-parent adults they can turn to for advice and support
--42% have frequent, in-depth conversations with non-parent adults

Source: Benson, Peter L. (1993). *The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth*. Minneapolis: Search Institute.

***Several researchers have identified potential dropouts as early as 3rd grade with 75% accuracy, using as criteria parents' occupation, marital status, gender, ethnicity, achievement scores, IQ, and discipline problems.**

Source: Turner, C.R. (1993). *Factors that Put Students at Risk of Leaving School Before Graduation*. Toronto: Scarborough Board of Education.

just in time...

TEACHING TOOLS FOR FAMILIES

How to get started on mentoring

FOR YOUTH...

How can you find a mentor?

A mentor is an adult that you already know or want to get to know.

- Someone who believes in you
- Someone who's not afraid of hard work
- Someone who cares about doing what's right
- Someone you can trust

You can find a mentor if you know what to ask and to look for.

- Teacher
- Coach
- Neighbor
- Family friend

It's okay to have more than one mentor. In fact it's smart. Assemble a team of experts; that's what most successful people do.

How do I ask someone to be my mentor?

First think about all of your different needs. Schoolwork? Career? Someone to talk to? Good Advice?

What do you want to get out of a mentoring relationship?

- Its easier to ask someone for help if you know what you are asking for.
- Make a list of all the people you know who might help you find a mentor or who might be one.

Ask them to be your mentor or help you find a mentor.

- Tell them what you want from a mentor.
- Tell them why you chose them.
- Ask if they would be willing to be your mentor.
- If they say yes, set up a time.
- If at first you don't succeed, try again. Don't give up and don't get discouraged. Babe Ruth struck out 1,330 times, but he also hit 714 home runs.. Don't worry about failing. Worry about the chances you miss when you fail to try.

Source: (<http://www.mentoring.org/organizations.html>).

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FOR MENTORS....

Here's how to get started.

Consider:

- The types of activities that interest you.
- The age and number of youth you want to work with.
- The amount of time you have for a youth.

Talk to other members of service clubs, civic groups, fraternities, sororities, or professional associations.

- Rotary Club
- Kiwanis
- Lions Club
- Schools

Think about organizations in your community that might have mentoring opportunities that match your interests.

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Boys/Girls Clubs
- Junior Achievement
- The Volunteer Center
- YMCA/YWCA

What to Ask:

- What kind of training and support do you offer?
- How do you match young people with mentors?
- What happens if I need to stop mentoring?
- What are the different mentoring options?

Tips for Beginning a Mentoring Relationship

- Don't expect too much right away. Relationships do not develop overnight. There will be much testing and frustration before a secure trusting friendship can develop.
- In the course of your first meeting, without prying, find out 20 facts about people, places, and things important to your mentee: who is their teacher? what is their dog's name? do they like chocolate or vanilla?
- Set rules immediately and follow through with them.
- Make initial meetings casual. If you do fantastic things immediately, they will expect it always.
- Share your hobbies and interests.
- Look them in the eyes, use their name frequently, listen and REMEMBER DETAILS! Nothing is more flattering than realizing someone has listened to you.
- Respect is the key. A child will not open up if you do not respect them first.
- Don't fall into the Santa Clause Syndrome. Your time together is worth more than any amount of money.

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Tips for Helping the Mentoring Relationship Grow

- ◆ Think of yourself as your mentee's greatest resource. Be an effective listener, friend, and confidant.
- ◆ Use terms like, "What do you think about..." "Tell me more..." Try not just asking yes or no questions.

- ◆ Listen. In your eagerness to relate to children, resist the impulse to interrupt with a similar story of your own.
- ◆ Encourage even small successes. Use positive reinforcements.
- ◆ Be flexible. Do it their way once and your way the next, e.g. lunch first and video arcade after; museum this time and movie next time.
- ◆ Be consistent. If your mentee has suffered lots of disappointments, this can be the most crucial quality you can offer.
- ◆ Give reasons. You increase your credibility if you can say why something is or isn't appropriate- "do this because..." "don't do that because your mom will..."
- ◆ Show affection. There is a natural tendency for children to want and need affection. You should model appropriate behavior and can show affection by letting your mentee know you've been thinking about them during their absence.
- ◆ Model appropriate behavior. Be conscious of your own behavior and what self-concept you are projecting.
- ◆ Have fun. Find opportunities to be silly. Find nicknames and private jokes.
- ◆ Acknowledge accomplishments. In day to day activities, note when your mentee tries and succeeds: balancing on a railroad tie, correctly spelling a hard word, helping an older person open a door.
- ◆ Give encouragement. Remind them of previous successes when something seems difficult. Tell them, "You can do it!"
- ◆ See your mentee as an individual. Identify what is unique about the child and acknowledge it.
- ◆ Practice anticipatory empathy. Although you may not have been in the same situations that the child has, reach down and remember how you felt about a similar situation.
- ◆ Respect boundaries. If you see that a question you've asked is touchy, back away. Children who have been "burned" need to protect their vulnerability.
- ◆ Don't criticize the past. Avoid bringing up past mistakes: "Well, you were late last time so I thought you'd be late again."
- ◆ Don't generalize negative behavior. Avoid words like "you always" or "you never."
- ◆ Don't share your personal problems. You are there for the child. Only when there is a lesson to be learned is it appropriate to share personal problems.
- ◆ Don't pass judgements. Wait to be asked before you offer your opinion.
- ◆ Don't criticize family. It is inappropriate to criticize the child's family even if you disapprove. Don't voice your opinion; rather, help the child problem-solve issues involving their concern about their family.
- ◆ Don't criticize friends. Likewise, don't voice your opinion about behavior or "style" of the child's friends.
- ◆ Don't punish honesty. Even if you don't like or approve of reported behavior or ways of perceiving, don't let your disapproval become punishment for your mentee's telling you what is happening or how they feel.
- ◆ Don't set unrealistic expectations. Understand that you are the one force among many in the child's life and be patient. Be aware of very small changes appropriate to the child's capacity: eye contact maintained, evidence of listening, following instructions, etc.

From: Being a Big: A Guide to Volunteering with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Southeast Wyoming. June, 1997.

just in time...

TEACHING TOOLS FOR FAMILIES

Suggested Topics for Mentor Training

<u>Module Title</u>	<u>Awareness</u>	<u>Knowledge</u>	<u>Skills</u>
Relationship Building	Becoming aware of personal expectations about being a mentor	Roles and responsibilities; intro to match life cycle; steps to successful volunteering	Practicing techniques to build a good foundation for the match.
Communication skills	Remembering characteristics of “approachable adults”	Communication Skills: -active listening -”I” statements -body language -roadblocks	Adapting communication skills to personal style and to specific situations with children.
Values clarification	Identifying personal values and becoming aware of the role of values in day-to-day life.	Defining Values: origins; role; areas of conflict.	Practicing how to handle value conflicts.
Child development	Remembering what it was like to be the age of the child.	Developmental stages and tasks of childhood: social; emotional; physical; mental; moral.	Practicing age/stage appropriate responses to typical situations involving children.
Family Systems	Recognizing the importance of one’s family of origin and its lasting influence.	Family Issues: one parent families; functional vs. dysfunctional families; cultural context.	Practicing behaviors that support children and their roles in the family.
Child Abuse	Becoming aware of personal feelings and attitudes regarding abuse.	Child Abuse: prevalence, indicators, reporting procedures.	Practicing appropriate responses and interventions when abuse occurs or is suspected.
Sexuality	Remembering messages from adults, peers and society about sex and sexuality and recognizing the enduring impact.	Facts about sexual development, clarification of myths about sex and sexual development.	Practicing how to communicate healthy messages.
Substance abuse	Recognizing feelings and values regarding drug and alcohol use and abuse.	Definitions, incidence, resources, prevention strategies.	Practicing ways to communicate healthy messages.
Problem solving	Assessing problem solving strengths and weaknesses.	Problem solving model.	Practicing use of the Problem Solving model in typical situations involving children.
Refocus and Recharge	Recalling personal motivation for volunteering; recognizing the role of expectations in a relationship.	The Match Life Cycle: the nature of relationships	Identifying new strategies for match; brainstorming new activities and resources.

From: *Volunteer Education and Training Manual*, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America. 1991.

Catch the Wind: Programming Resources, Public Policy, Key Issues

Programming Resources

--In addition to those cited above--

The National Mentoring Partnership is "an advocate for the expansion of mentoring; a resource for mentors and mentoring initiatives worldwide." Resources, news articles, and information on mentoring initiatives are available at their homepage, www.mentoring.org. Their address is 1400 I Street NW Suite 850, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 729-4345.

Search Institute is an independent, nonprofit, non sectarian organization whose mission is to "advance the well-being of adolescents and children by generating knowledge and promoting its application." Encouraging mentoring and equipping mentors is one way they attempt to accomplish their mission. Their website is www.search-institute.org and their address is Thresher Square West Suite 210, 700 South 3rd St, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

Children, Youth and Families Consortium was established in 1991 at the University of Minnesota. It consists of over 8000 individuals who share information and exchange ideas. Information about mentoring can be found on their electronic clearinghouse at www.cyfc.umn.edu.

For Parents and Youth Leaders...Read More

Newman, Michael. (1990). Beginning A Mentoring Program. Pittsburgh, PA: PLUS.

-National Mentoring Working Group. "Mentoring: Elements of Effective Practice". Washington D.C.: One to One. (202) 338-3844

- Freedman, Marc. (1992). The Kindness of Strangers: Reflections of the Mentoring Movement. New York: Public/Private Ventures.

-- "The Two of Us: A Handbook for Mentors". Baltimore: The Baltimore Mentoring Institute. (301) 685-8316

It's the Law: A Bill to Fund Mentoring Programs

The JUMP Ahead Act of 1997 was introduced to the Senate in July, 1997. It is a bill that amends the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (Juvenile Mentoring Program, or JUMP) The goal of the bill is to establish youth mentoring programs by authorizing the Department of Justice to make youth mentoring program implementation and evaluation grants to national organizations or agencies serving youth. The text of the bill states that "rigorous independent studies have confirmed that effective

mentoring programs can significantly reduce and prevent the use of alcohol and drugs by young people, improve school attendance and performance, improve peer and family relationships, and reduce violent behavior. Unfortunately, despite recent growth in public and private mentoring initiatives, it is reported that between 5,000,000 and 15,000,000 additional children in the United States could benefit from being matched with a mentor. Although great strides have been made in reaching at-risk youth since the inception of the JUMP program, millions of vulnerable American children are not being reached, and without an increased commitment to connect these young people to responsible adult role models, our country risks losing an entire generation to drugs, crime, and unproductive lives." The bill was referred to the Subcommittee on Youth Violence on May 15, 1998. Contact your congressman to voice your support of this bill.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MENTORING PROGRAMS

Big Brothers/Big Sisters is the oldest and largest mentoring program in the country. Contact them at Big Brothers/Big Sisters 230 North 13th Street Philadelphia, PA 19107 (215) 567-7000 www.bbbsa.org

YMCA's of the USA are community based, designing programs to meet specific community needs. Mentoring programs are offered at 144 YMCA's, and programs targeted to at-risk youth are offered at 628 YMCA's. Their address is YMCA of the USA 101 North Wacker Drive Chicago, IL 60606 (312) 977-0031 www.ymca.net



Paradoxes: Ten Reasons Not to Mentor

Makes no difference, kids don't pay attention.
Kids pretty much raise themselves.
That's a job for the parents.
That's a job for the police (forget the parents).
My time is too valuable.
I have nothing in common with kids.
What would I have that they want?
It's not safe to know young people.
You never know what harm they might do.
Kids in this town are good-for-nothing.
These kids will only move out anyway.

Right; they hate attention
How?
Pity the parents
Rather buy a jail?
Than a few minutes with a kid?
(You'd be surprised)
(A lifetime of experience?)

(Especially if they think nobody cares)
It's up to you to make them good-for-something
Why not, if no one cares- if no one shows them a future?

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