Essential Practices for Mentoring
What are the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™*?

- Research-informed practices
- Evidence-based Standards and Benchmarks
- Enhancements that can promote relationship quality and strong outcomes
- Recommendations on program management, leadership, evaluation, and core principles youth mentoring organizations
Mentor & Mentee Recruitment

Targets a specific audience that will best match with the goals of the program

Realistically portrays the benefits, requirements, supports and challenges *upfront*
Who Are Your Mentees?

Demographics

Interests/hobbies

Challenges/Barriers
Who Are Your Ideal Mentors?

Demographics?

Life experiences?

Areas of Expertise/Career?

Interests/Hobbies?

Motivations for mentoring?
Mentor Benefits

What are the benefits of being a mentor in your program?

- **Tangible Benefits** (Learning specific skills, specific excursions and activities; transportation reimbursement)

- **Intangible Benefits** (Increased sense of purpose; building relationships)
Top Volunteer Motivators

- Enhancing career
- Enriching personal development
- Learning new skills
- Conforming to norms of others
- Escaping negative feelings
- Putting altruistic beliefs into practice
Screening for Safety and Attitude
Standard 2: Screening
Effective Screening Reduces Risk

Identifying those who would create an unacceptable risk given unsupervised access to youth

Preventing placement of individuals who lack time, judgment or necessary skills and attitudes

Reducing liability exposure

Ruling out potentially dangerous individuals with a history of violent or exploitative behavior
Unsafe applicants are wondering...

What is the agency’s screening process?

What are the demographics of children served?

How many staff members are dedicated to monitoring the match?

How often do program staff contact mentors?

When will monitoring end?

Do I really need to meet with my mentee every week?
Screen to discover... how a mentor will:

Deal with adversity
Manage conflict
Manage their time
Solve problems
Approach communication
Manage stress
Adapt to new situations

...And more based on your mentees and program model
Standard 3: Mentor Training
Why do mentoring relationships fail?

Why do mentoring relationships fail?

- Mentor’s perceived lack of mentee motivation
- Mentor’s unfulfilled expectations
- Deficiencies in mentor's relational skills including culture competency
- Family interference
- Inadequate agency support

(Spencer, 2007)
Mentor Training Research

Effects are “enhanced significantly” when more best practices are utilized, including initial and on-going mentor training.

The Role of Risk (2013)
Mentors that received early match training met with their mentee more frequently and were more likely to sustain the relationship for at least 12 months.
Mentee & Parent/Guardian Training Research

**Kasprisin et. al. (2008)**
Training contributes to the mentees’ understanding of their roles and responsibilities and can enhance their commitment to mentoring.

**Dubois et. al. (2012)**
Parent training is particularly important, because parent involvement in, and support of, the mentoring relationship is associated with positive youth outcomes.
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Standard 4: Matching and Initiating

WELCOME!
The Importance of Successful Matches

“As many as half of volunteer mentoring relationships terminate within the first few months.”

“Early termination of mentor-mentee relationships may have a negative impact on youth.”
– Grossman & Rhodes
Gathering Matching Criteria

Applications
Input from parents/guardians, school staff, and others
Inventories/assessments (interests, motivations, personality)
Interviews
Observations (calls, in-person, at training, with peers)
Building relationships with mentors and mentees
Group/activity-based matching
Making Matches

Staff chooses

Mentor chooses

Mentee chooses
  - Youth-directed matching

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) choose(s)

Mutual

Activity- or group-based matching
Start with a structured, supported first meeting or contact between mentor and mentee (and possibly others) facilitated by staff in order to:

- Reduce anxiety and help matches begin their relationship in a positive way (i.e., icebreakers)
- Review policies, set expectations and address common issues
- Provide process to outline clear goals and activities
- Lay out next steps for the match, including suggestions for match activities
- Obtain signed statements of understanding
Matching Issues

Waitlists

Re-matches

Match relationships challenges
Monitoring and Supporting the Relationship

Herrera, DuBois, Gross (2013):
- Early training increases match length
- Regular support calls to mentors increase frequency of match meetings
- Regular support calls to parents and youth increase frequency of match meetings
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- Early training increases match length
- Regular support calls to mentors increase frequency of match meetings
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Support, Supervision, and Monitoring

Clear process for checking in, seeking feedback, and handling problems
Communicate regularly with program participants on an individual basis
Help matches find ways to reach goals
Address concerns that arise and manage expectations
Bring mentors together for peer support
Provide ongoing training activities
Document all contacts (and attempts)
Recognize mentors and mentees
Match Closure
Relationship Endings

Reflect on a relationship ending

Discuss with a partner, “How did the ending make you feel?”
Impact of Match Endings

Zilberstein, K., & Spencer, R. (2014)

Youth
- Disappointment, sadness for lost opportunities, activities
- Reticence about re-matching
- Confusion
- Wanted chance to say goodbye

Parents/Guardians
- Dissatisfaction, anger
- Wanted chance to say good-bye
- Longed for clarity for child about ending
- Concern about failed relationship for child

Mentors
- Disappointment, guilt, relief
Impact of Match Endings


Youth matched less than three months showed significant decreases in self-worth and feelings of scholastic competence
Impact of Match Endings

Spencer et al (2014)

strong mentoring relationships predicted planned, less damaging transitions

weaker relationships predicted poor endings, sometimes planned or not planned, with damaging effects for vulnerable youth
Why Do Matches End?

Spencer (2007)

- Mentor’s perceived lack of mentee motivation
- Mentor’s unfulfilled expectations
- Deficiencies in mentor's relational skills including culture competency
- Family interference
- Inadequate agency support
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