

Essentials of Quality Mentoring Practices



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES



Our mission: MENTOR Washington promotes, supports, and expands quality mentoring that fosters positive youth development, academic success, and job and career readiness.



Pamila Gant, Sr. Program Officer



Essential Practices for Mentoring

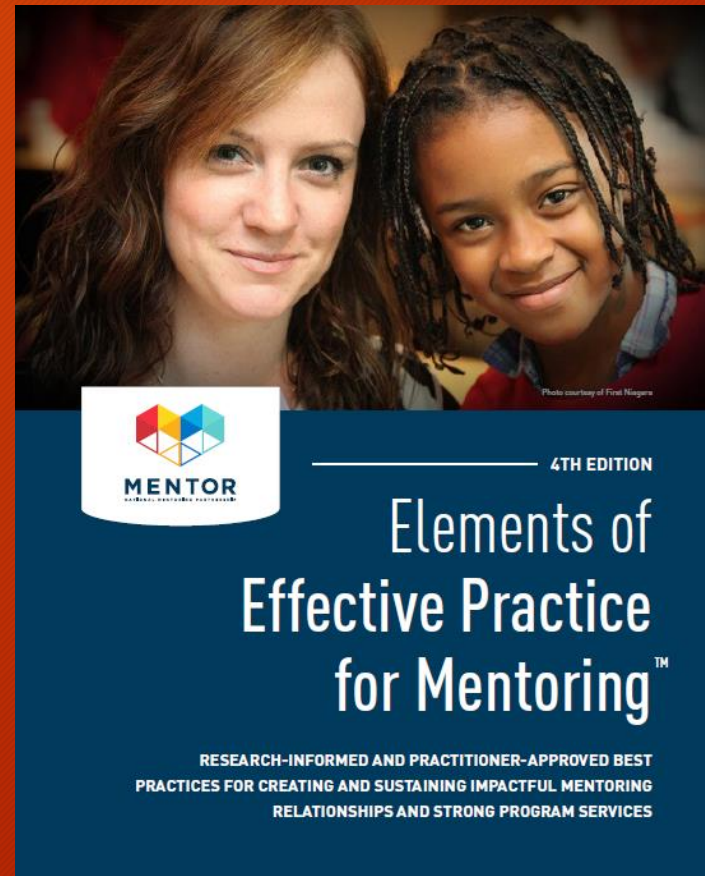


The path to creating a quality
mentoring program

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

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- 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
- What are their assets?
- 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

Effective Screening Reduces Risk

- Identifying those who would create an un-acceptable 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)

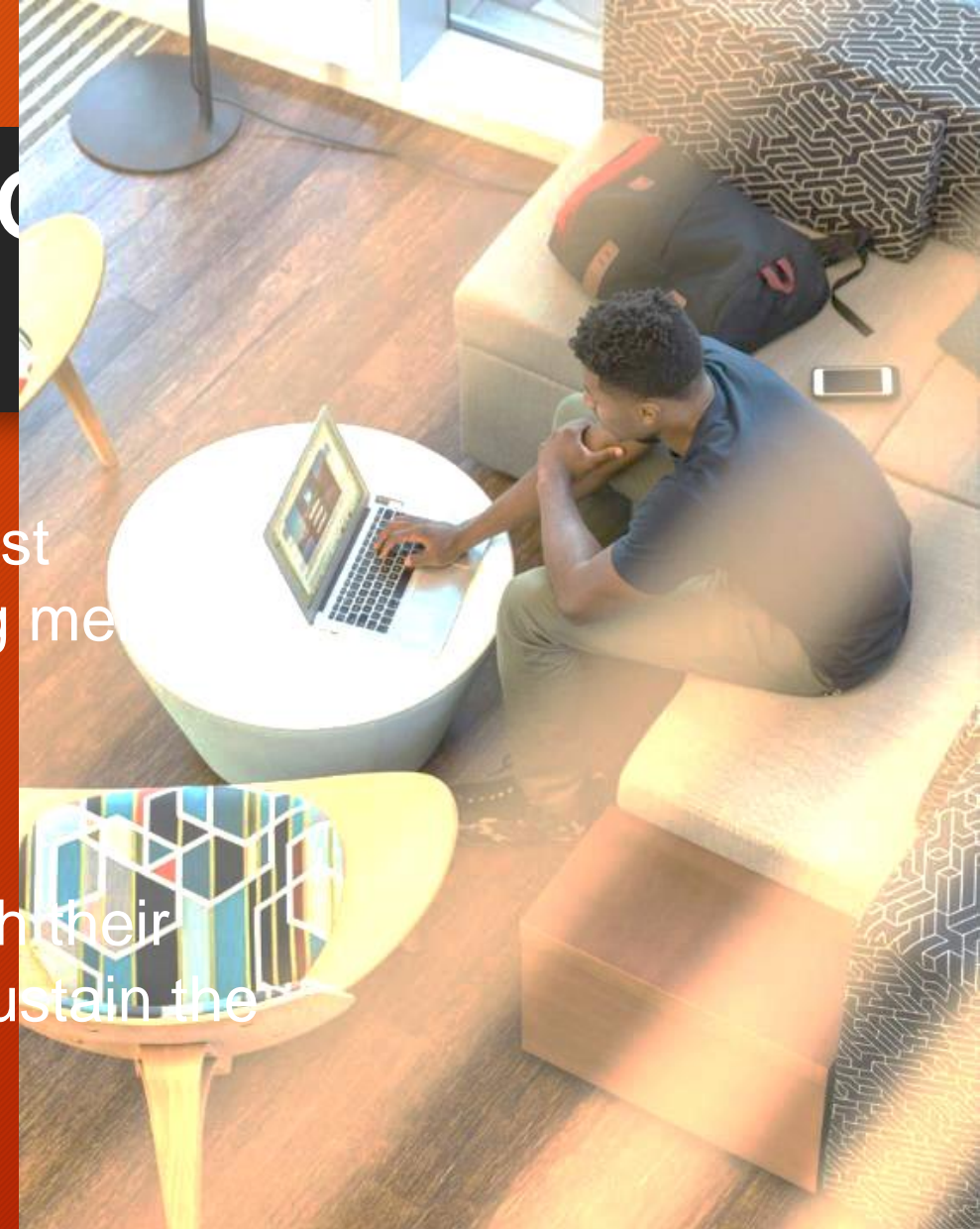
Mentor Training Research

DuBois Meta Analysis (2002)

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

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.”

-Rhodes, J.E. (2002)

“Early termination of mentor-mentee relationships may have a negative impact on youth.”

- Grossman & Rhodes

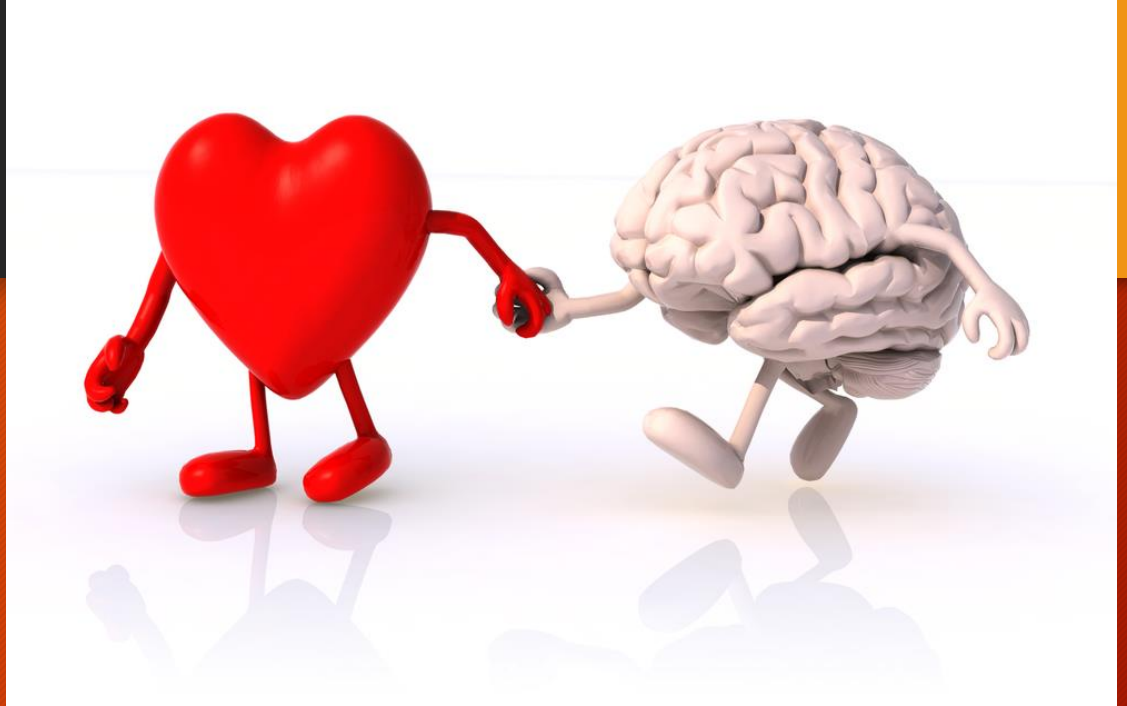


Gathering Matching Criteria

- 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



Launching Matches

- 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



Don't let it catch you

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**

Why is Support so Important?

- **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

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

Grossman & Rhodes (2002)



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

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

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

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