


Across Ages: From Research to Practice

Engaging Age 50+ Adults in Mentoring
MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership
Research and Policy Council

April 11, 2007





Across Ages

- ❑ Funded originally in 1991 by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP/SAMHSA)
 - ❑ Designed as demonstration and research project
 - ❑ Target Population: Youth ages 10 to 13
 - ❑ Goal: Prevention of substance abuse
 - ❑ Model Project: 75 replications in U.S.
 - ❑ Cost per match: Approximately \$1500
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Across Ages

- Core feature:
Youth mentoring by adults age 50+
 - Social Competence Promotion Program for Young Adolescents (Weissberg et.al, 1992)
 - Community Service Projects
 - Family Activities
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Theoretical Framework

- Social Development Theory (Hawkins, Lishner & Catalano, 1985)
 - Generativity (Erikson, 1968)
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Research Based

- Werner et. al. (1982, 1984, 1986);
 - Hawkins & Catalano (1988, 1990); and
 - Hawkins & Weiss (1985)
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Across Ages Research Design

**Classic randomized pretest/posttest
with a control group design
(Campbell & Stanley, 1966)**

- Group MPS: Full intervention**
 - Group PS: Limited intervention**
 - Group C: No intervention**
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Outcomes for youth

(statistically significant at the .05 level)

- Improvement in knowledge about and reactions to drug use**
- Decrease in substance use (e.g. alcohol and tobacco)**
- Improvement in school-related behavior**
- Improvement in attitudes toward school and the future**
- Improvement in attitudes toward adults in general and older adults in particular**

The level of mentor involvement was positively related to improvement on various outcome measures.



Benefits for Youth

(qualitative)

- **Appreciation of youth by an older adult had positive impact on parents/caregivers;**
 - **Mentor's life experience and "survival strategies" resonated with youth;**
 - **Families willingness to accept an older mentor helped facilitate relationship with youth;**
 - **Mentors had "time to listen"; and**
 - **Willingness to understand (or attempt to) youth culture.**
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Benefits for Mentors

(qualitative)

- ❑ **Increased feelings of self-worth when appreciated by youth;**
 - ❑ **“Leaving a legacy” and sharing life experience;**
 - ❑ **Understanding of youth culture;**
 - ❑ **Connection with youth’s parents/caregivers; and**
 - ❑ **Unanticipated enjoyment in activities with youth.**
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Outcomes for Families

(qualitative)

- ❑ **Increased participation in school related activities**
 - ❑ **More positive communication with children**
 - ❑ **Engaged in more activities (positive) as a family**
 - ❑ **Gained access to community resources**
 - ❑ **Expanded support networks**
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| Practice | Theory- Based | Empirically- Based |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Monitoring of Program Implementation | X | X |
| Setting for Mentoring Activities (Community-based) | | X |
| Screening of Prospective Mentors | X | |
| Mentor Background: Helping Role or Profession | | X |
| Mentor/Youth Matching | X | |
| Mentor Pre-Match Training | X | |
| Expectations: Frequency of Contact | X | X |
| Expectations: Length of Relationship | X | |
| Supervision | X | |
| Ongoing Training | X | X |
| Mentor Support Group | X | |
| Structured Activities for Mentors and Youth | X | X |
| Parent Support/Involvement | X | X |



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Effective Program Practices

- ❑ Vigilant weekly monitoring of matches
 - ❑ School and community-based activities
 - ❑ Rigorous five step screening of mentors
 - ❑ Qualities of mentors critical (not all have been in helping professions)
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Effective Program Practices

- ❑ Ten hour mentor pre-service training
 - ❑ Pre-match training for youth
 - ❑ Mentor-youth activities prior to matching
 - ❑ Require one year commitment (mentors and youth)
 - ❑ Require weekly face-to-face contact minimum of two hours
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Effective Program Practices

- ❑ Monthly in-service meetings for mentors for supervision, training and support
 - ❑ Weekly phone calls to mentors/Weekly meetings with youth
 - ❑ Mentors and youth engage in structured activities and goal setting
 - ❑ Shared goal setting with caregivers
 - ❑ Monthly activities for families
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Lessons Learned from Replications

- ❑ Programs must be adequately funded
 - ❑ Programs must be realistic with regard to numbers of youth served
 - ❑ Programs must adhere to fidelity guidelines
 - ❑ Practitioners need to understand the theoretical and empirical framework
 - ❑ Programs that seek out technical assistance are more effective
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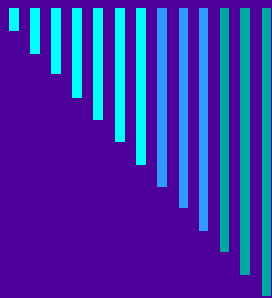
The Challenges

- ❑ Mentor recruitment
 - ❑ Consistency and longevity of matches
 - ❑ Sustainability
 - ❑ Realistic expectations (e.g. mentoring is not a panacea)
 - ❑ Mentoring is hard work, requiring both patience and tenacity
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Mentor Recruitment: Some Challenges

- ❑ Competing family demands (grandchildren and elderly parents);
 - ❑ Desire for episodic and project focused volunteer opportunities;
 - ❑ Increased competition among non-profits for age 50+ volunteers;
 - ❑ Delayed “retirement”/need for employment
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