

Resources to Improve Cultural Competence in Mentoring Relationships

There are several online resources available to help programs strengthen services to youth from diverse backgrounds. This article highlights three key publications that examine issues of race, ethnicity, culture and sexual orientation in mentoring relationships. By familiarizing yourself with tips and strategies found in these materials, your program will take an important first step toward cultural competence.

Race and Ethnicity

What are the benefits of same-race matching? Do mentors and mentees in cross-race matches require additional support? In issue Number 9 of MENTOR's *Research in Action* series, Dr. Belle Liang examines the role of race and ethnicity in mentoring relationships, highlighting mixed research findings on the benefits of same-race and cross-race matches. Several suggestions for programs are offered: 1) Be sure to include family preferences around race and ethnicity in matching; 2) Develop and implement pre-match and ongoing cultural competence training for mentors in cross-race matches; 3) Strengthen volunteer recruitment practices to target mentors with strong relational qualities; and 4) Implement policies and procedures that reflect research on cultural characteristics of diverse youth. In addition to an overview of research findings, this publication also offers training exercises for program staff around issues related to matching based on race, gender, culture and similarity.

Youth Mentoring: Do Race and Ethnicity Really Matter?

http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_390.pdf

Culture

MENTOR recently released *Mentoring Immigrant and Refugee Youth: A Toolkit for Program Coordinators*. This publication includes step-by-step instructions for how to plan and design, manage, operate and evaluate mentoring services for immigrant and refugee youth. Training exercises, tools and templates, and case studies of high-quality programming are described. Additionally, federal and national advocacy organizations are listed to help program staff learn more about unique needs and strengths, as well as support agencies that are available to assist in creating more inclusive programming for youth from different cultures and countries of origin.

Mentoring Immigrant and Refugee Youth: A Toolkit for Program Coordinators

http://www.mentoring.org/find_resources/immigrant_toolkit/

Sexual Orientation

The importance of developing an inclusive program climate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth is described in the National Mentoring Center's technical assistance packet: *Mentoring Sexual Minority Youth*. Included in this resource, program staff will learn more about issues

of homophobia and heterosexism that create difficulties for many sexual minority youth as they attempt to define their identity. This resource provides training, reference materials, information about the "coming out" process and tips and suggestions for mentors and mentoring programs to strengthen relationships for youth who have been marginalized due to sexual orientation.

By taking the time to familiarize yourself with these important resources, your program can develop strategies and research-based effective practices to make sure that all youth, regardless of background, can benefit from caring mentoring relationships.

Mentoring Sexual Minority Youth

<http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packtwo.pdf>

Additional Reading and Reference Materials

*National Mentoring Center at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Technical Assistance Packet #7: Same-Race and Cross-Race Matching (2002)*

<http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packseven.pdf>

Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS)

www.brycs.org

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

www.glsen.org