Introduction
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

**Project Director:**
- Lisa Bottomley, Senior Mentoring Specialist, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development

**Project Managers:**
- Molly Frendo, Associate Program Leader, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Anna EldenBrady, Extension Program Worker, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Christine Sisung, Eaton County 4-H Program Coordinator, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Jillian Tremonti, Extension Program Worker, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development

**Lead Authors:**
- Kea Boyd, Wayne County 4-H Extension Educator, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Susan Fenton, Ottawa County 4-H Program Coordinator, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Missy Olgine, AmeriCorps Member, Midland/Isabella Department of Human Services
- Kristy Oosterhouse, Extension Program Worker, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Laura Schleeede, Ottawa County 4-H Extension Educator, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Ed Scott, Wayne County 4-H Extension Educator, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Lisa Snider, AmeriCorps Member, ACCESS Mentoring at Alma College

**Contributors:**
- Dequindre Bell, Macomb County 4-H Program Instructor, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Alexandra Boyd, Macomb/Oakland County 4-H Program Instructor, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Barb Brow, Ottawa County 4-H Program Instructor, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Adrien Brzoznowski, Iron County Program Instructor, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Rachel Calcaterra, Macomb County 4-H Program Instructor, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Dawn Clark, AmeriCorps Member, Clinton County P.A.S.S. Mentoring
- Jenna Converse, AmeriCorps Member, Ottawa County MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Frank Cox, Muskegon County 4-H Extension Educator, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- BettyBeth Johns, Extension Program Worker, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Dee Miller, Kalkaska County 4-H Extension Educator, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Kendra Moyes, Associate Program Leader, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Betty Jo Nash, Ingham County 4-H Extension Educator, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Tricia Schell, AmeriCorps Member, Presque Isle County MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Jodi Schulz, Bay County 4-H Extension Educator, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Barb Steele, Montmorency County 4-H Program Worker, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development
- Kelly van Frankenhuysen, AmeriCorps Member, Clinton County P.A.S.S. Mentoring
- Mia Waugh, Wayne County 4-H Program Instructor, MSU Extension 4-H Youth Development

**Editing and Design:**
- Patricia Adams, Editor, MSU Agriculture and Natural Resources Communications
- Rebecca McKee, Editor, MSU Agriculture and Natural Resources Communications
- Marian Reiter, Graphic Artist, MSU Agriculture and Natural Resources Communications

**Pilot Sites:**
- 4-H Mentoring Weekend
- ACCESS Mentoring at Alma College
- Baldwin STRIVE Mentoring
- Clinton County 4-H Youth Mentoring
- Clinton County Peer Assisted Student Success Program
- Eaton County 4-H Tech Wizards
- Eaton County STOMP 4-H Youth Mentoring
- Grand Rapids Public Schools
- Henry Ford Community College
- The HOPE Mentoring Program at Midland/Isabella Department of Human Services
- Kentwood Public Schools
- Luce County 4-H Peer Mentoring
- Macomb County 4-H Mentoring
- Mars Hill KidsHOPE USA
- Montmorency County 4-H Youth Mentoring
- Mt. Olive Baptist Church
- Muskegon County Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring
- Orchards Children Services
- Ottawa County 4-H Tech Wizards
- Ottawa County Journey 4-H Youth Mentoring
- Wayne County 4-H Tech Wizards
- Wayne County 4-H Youth Mentoring

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The name “4-H” and the emblem consisting of a four-leaf clover with stem and the “H” on each leaflet are protected under Title 18 U.S.C. 707.
In 2009, while training staff to train mentors, we realized Michigan State University Extension lacked existing processes to help new mentoring staff and AmeriCorps members gain skills and resources for mentor training. Our mentoring curriculum project team completed a literature review of current training materials in mentoring and found a lack of hands-on mentoring training tools. As a result, we created Ready to Go: Mentor Training Toolkit to provide mentoring professionals with a customizable mentor training curriculum, support for using the curriculum and a toolkit to ensure that all mentors in planned youth mentoring programs have access to evidence-based training.

The team studied the latest mentoring research, and based on that research, divided materials into focus areas: cultural competency, communication, youth development, and relationship building and boundaries.

Initially, we targeted Extension professionals with mentoring responsibilities as writers for new activities and module background sections. As the project grew, we recruited partners from other organizations to write activities based on their expertise in areas in which the team identified unmet curriculum needs.

As writers submitted activities and module background sections and we reviewed them internally, we piloted them at professional development trainings throughout 2010 and 2011. We recruited pilot sites through a variety of means, making efforts to engage training groups that used a variety of program models, showed variety in the number of mentors trained at one time and included diverse populations.

As we conducted pilots, project staff members gave activities a final review and sent them to the peer review team for closer critique. Peer reviewers consisted of mentoring and other youth development professionals with content-area expertise in training topics specific to the activities they reviewed.

We submitted the curriculum for editing and design, and after a final review, we completed and published the curriculum in October 2012.

We hope this curriculum will meet the needs of mentoring professionals and other professionals who train volunteers to work with young people.

Lisa Bottomley
Project Director
Ready to Go: Mentor Training Toolkit
Welcome to Ready to Go: Mentor Training Toolkit, developed by the Michigan 4-H Youth Mentoring initiative through Michigan 4-H Youth Development. This curriculum assists mentoring programs in the training of new and existing mentors with a highly customizable menu of training activities that can be used to tailor trainings to the specific needs of the program.

Mentoring programs may use the activities to train mentors in community and site-based programs and in programs using group or individual mentoring with adult or peer mentors. Designed to be flexible, the activities often suggest variations on use with special populations or in certain settings.

Research recommends a minimum of 2 hours and ideally 6 or more hours of pre-match mentor training (Rhodes, 2002; DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002). To determine the length of the training programs, develop a list of skills mentors will need to succeed in your program. Sometimes programs screen potential volunteers to ensure they possess some of these skills. The final training should include activities that build the needed skills that are not prerequisites for volunteers.

Modules in this curriculum offer a broad scope of training activities to give mentors the skills needed to succeed in their matches. Each activity gives training facilitators the tools needed to successfully carry out their trainings without the need for supplemental research. All modules include a background section that briefs trainers on the basics of the subject covered in that module as well as details about the activities in the module. After reading through the background section for a module, facilitators will want to select the activities from that module that best serve the needs of their training group.
Activities follow the following format:

**DESCRIPTION:**
The description gives a brief summary of the activity.

**OBJECTIVES:**
A bulleted list of concrete items outlines what the participants will learn by participating in the activity. Objectives may also include learning how to use tools provided in an activity to support issues such as goal planning or problem solving in their matches.

**MATERIALS:**
All activities contain a list of items a training facilitator will need to successfully use the activity to train mentors. You may accomplish many activities by substituting similar materials if you can’t find those specifically listed in this section. This section will also list handouts needed for the activity.

**TIME:**
The time listed is the approximate length of time the activity should take if done in full. You can shorten or lengthen many activities depending on the amount of time you need for your group to discuss and process each activity.

**SETTING:**
Each section provides a suggested location for which this activity is best suited such as a room with tables and chairs for mentors to work at or an open space mentors can easily move around.

**AUDIENCE:**
This section lists the intended audience as some activities focus on adult mentors, others aim to reach peer mentors and still others involve both.

**PROCEDURE:**

**Before the activity:**
This section lists preparations needed to best carry out the activity, beginning with reading the related background section. It will also list tips for arranging the presentation room, preparing any flip chart paper or other visual aids for the training, copying and distributing handouts, and placing basic supplies in the most efficient location for distribution and use during the activity.

**During the activity:**
Numbered sections in this “During the Activity” segment guide training facilitators through the activity. Each section is broken down into instructions in plain type for the facilitator and bolded and italicized sections he or she reads aloud or paraphrases. Instructions on when to distribute handouts and other materials or when to pause for questions or responses are in plain type and interspersed within the script.

Activities guide participants in the training step by step to an understanding of the concepts introduced or expanded in the training activities. The steps involve hands-on learning. Instead of learning from a facilitator’s lecture, participants learn from conversations and thought processes that contribute to the process of self-discovery of the concepts. The “During the Activity” section is highly detailed to allow first-time training facilitators to confidently tackle training on concepts they may find advanced.

**PROCESSING:**

**Discussion questions:**
Training facilitators may want to ask participants these suggested questions to generate discussion and to create opportunities for reflection on the activity and related concepts. The questions may also provide opportunities to think beyond the concepts and apply them to other situations.

**Key points:**
Facilitators will want to bring these main points up in the discussions as well as use this additional information to highlight important concepts and situations. Key points may also expand on the information presented in the activity, giving those involved in the training the opportunity to think beyond the basic understanding of the principles presented.
**VARATIONS:**

Variations include adaptations of the activity concerning constraints on time, the needs of special populations, or different mentoring program types and training situations. This section may also describe alternate activity arrangements or ways to adapt the training activity in certain situations as discovered through the initial piloting of the activity.

**MODULES AND ACTIVITIES**

Facilitators need not present the activities in the order they appear in this curriculum. Activities are grouped by subject in modules. Module subject headings include “Building the Mentoring Relationship,” “Setting Boundaries,” “Communication,” “Youth Development” and “Cultural Competency.” Each module contains a variety of activities to allow programs to choose activities that best serve their needs according to their youth and mentor population.

Activities in the “Building the Mentoring Relationship” module focus on defining the role of a mentor. They prepare mentors for the task of connecting with young people and planning activities with them to meet match needs.

The “Setting Boundaries” module discusses the appropriate boundaries between mentors and mentees. It explores the importance of these boundaries, including boundaries set by programs and by the families of mentees, in keeping both mentors and mentees safe in relationships. Activities also touch on how to recognize when boundaries are crossed and what to do in those instances.

The “Communication” module introduces mentors to basic communication skills as well as tools to allow mentors to more smoothly communicate with mentees and mentees’ families from differing backgrounds. This section also includes activities that teach problem solving skills, goal setting and teamwork.

The “Youth Development” module introduces mentors to the various issues important to young people and communicates how young people develop their skills. Though these skills may not always be academic and adults at school or home may not value them, they still are important to a young person. These in-depth activities tackle subjects such as bullying, exploring youth interests, cultivating safe spaces for youth and thinking through decision making in an age-appropriate way.

“Cultural Competency” training activities touch on issues of difference by helping mentors to acknowledge and appreciate the various backgrounds they may encounter during mentoring. This section also introduces mentors to ways to interact with people different from themselves. It encourages mentors to celebrate differences and acknowledge how differences can be a learning opportunity for both mentor and mentee.

**REFERENCES:**


Sample Training Menus

Sample training menus to use when planning mentor training for specific program models and audiences follow. We recommend that programs hold two or more sessions for training when the training length is more than two hours for peer mentors or more than three hours for adult mentors. Each menu includes extra time for introductions and setting ground rules.

PEER MENTOR TRAINING MENUS:

**AUDIENCE:** Site-based, peer mentors  
**TIME:** 2 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweet as Candy</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Mentor Is, A Mentor Is Not</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross the Line</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unseen Artists</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbreakable</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
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**AUDIENCE:** Site-based, peer mentors  
**TIME:** 4 hours

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<tr>
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<th>TIME</th>
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<td>Sweet as Candy</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Mentor Is, A Mentor Is Not</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross the Line</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unseen Artists or Tree Problem Solver</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Right Stuff</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Tossup</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unbreakable</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure Blowup</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step In, Step Up</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Me</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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### Adult Mentor Training Menus:

**Audience:** Site-based mentoring, adult mentors  
**Time:** 3 hours

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentors Are Like . . .</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
<td>30 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross the Line</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules: What Good Are They?</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>30 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are You Listening?</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Problem Solver</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>35 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s It Like to Be a Young Person?</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrambled Eggs</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>30 min</td>
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**Audience:** Site-based mentoring, adult mentors  
**Time:** 6 hours

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweet as Candy</td>
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<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor Web</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
<td>30 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors Are Like . . .</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
<td>30 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross the Line</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>20 min</td>
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<td>30 min</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<td>What’s It Like to Be a Young Person?</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>15 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scrambled Eggs</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>30 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Tossup</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>15 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>25 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Millennials</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>60 min</td>
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**READY TO GO: MENTORING TOOLKIT | INTRODUCTION**

**AUDIENCE:** Community-based, adult mentors  
**TIME:** 3 hours

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<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mentors Are Like . . .</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships: Where Do They Stand?</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundaries Brainstorm</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw Me for Your Leader or I FeelWhenBecause</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s It Like to Be a Young Person?</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding Adultism: Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Youth-Adult Relationships</td>
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**AUDIENCE:** Community-based, adult mentors  
**TIME:** 6 hours

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<td>Mentor Web</td>
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<td>Reality Check</td>
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<td>Mentoring Activity Planning Tools</td>
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<td>30 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships: Where Do They Stand?</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Youth-Adult Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>What Do You Value?</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
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**AUDIENCE:** Community-based, adult mentors  
**TIME:** 9 hours

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<td>Mentoring Activity Planning Tools</td>
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<td>Traveling the Relationship Road</td>
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<td>Relationships: Where Do They Stand?</td>
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<td>Boundaries Brainstorm</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
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<td>Draw Me for Your Leader</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are You Listening?</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>What’s It Like to Be a Young Person?</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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<td>Understanding Adultism: Building Positive Youth-Adult Relationship</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
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<td>Building a Developmental Assets* Toolbox</td>
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<td>Golden Ticket</td>
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**AUDIENCE:** Group mentoring, adult mentors  
**TIME:** 3 hours

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<td>Stormin’ Norman</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boundaries Brainstorm</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Untangled</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take Your Best Shot</td>
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<td>Unbreakable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take Your Best Shot</td>
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<td>Let Your Fingers Do the Talking or Face Time</td>
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<td>Unmasking Life Skills</td>
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<td>Stand for Your Values</td>
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<td>Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules: What Good Are They? or This Is a Test</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundaries Brainstorm</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untangled</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are You Listening?</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Your Best Shot</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let Your Fingers Do the Talking or Tree Problem Solver</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>35 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbreakable</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by Doing</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmasking Life Skills</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Puzzle</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s in a Name?</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand for Your Values</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>25 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Millennials</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>65 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## IN-SERVICE TRAINING MENUS:

### IN-SERVICE: Generational Differences
**TIME:** 2–2.5 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet My Generation</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>60 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Millennials</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>60 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IN-SERVICE: Cultural Competency
**TIME:** 3–3.5 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Culture Map</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>50 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand for Your Values</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Beyond Stereotypes</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>50 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconventional English</td>
<td>Cultural Competency</td>
<td>60 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IN-SERVICE: Setting Boundaries
**TIME:** 2–2.5 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pushing the Envelope</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, White and Shades of Gray</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>105 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IN-SERVICE: College Access/Career Prep
**TIME:** 2–2.5 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A New Kind of Intelligence</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>60 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Path You Traveled</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>30 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charting Goals</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>30 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IN-SERVICE: Issues in Technology
**TIME:** 1.5–2 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Interactions 101</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>15 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Are You Online?</td>
<td>Setting Boundaries</td>
<td>30 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step In, Step Up</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>45 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**IN-SERVICE:**  Mentor and Mentees: Getting to Know You  
**TIME:**  2–2.25 hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tower of Questions</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring Activity Planning Tools</td>
<td>Building the Mentoring Relationship</td>
<td>30 minutes (Use selected tools rather than the full activity.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaming Up for Service</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLANNING HANDOUT:

*Mentor Training and Inservice Checklist*

Use this checklist as a guide for planning mentor and staff inservice training sessions. Add sheets as necessary.

**2 TO 4 WEEKS BEFORE TRAINING**

Date(s): __________________________ Location: __________________________

☐ Make room and space reservations. Reservations made by __________________________ on ________________

☐ Confirm presenters, including paid and volunteer staff and outside presenters.
  - Presenter 1: __________________________
  - Presenter 2: __________________________
  - Presenter 3: __________________________

☐ Identify presenter needs for equipment such as computers, screens and flip charts.
  - Presenter 1 contacted by: __________________________ on ________________
    - Item 1: __________________________
    - Item 2: __________________________
    - Item 3: __________________________
  - Presenter 2 contacted by: __________________________ on ________________
    - Item 1: __________________________
    - Item 2: __________________________
    - Item 3: __________________________
  - Presenter 3 contacted by: __________________________ on ________________
    - Item 1: __________________________
    - Item 2: __________________________
    - Item 3: __________________________

☐ Send mail or email confirmation to participants including the following:
  - Date
  - Time
  - Location
PLANNING HANDBOOK (CONTINUED):

- Directions
- Parking
- Participant expectations (forms or anything else to bring to the event)
- Meal or snacks provided
- RSVP contact name, number and email address
- RSVP deadline date
- Who to contact with questions

☐ Date first participant notification sent ___________________. Notified by _______________

☐ Signup sheet created and posted

2 WEEKS BEFORE TRAINING

☐ Inventory training and meal or snack supplies.
☐ Order additional supplies, if needed.
☐ Print handouts and manuals.
☐ Check in with presenters about last-minute needs. If they request additional handouts, arrange to make copies.

1 WEEK BEFORE TRAINING

☐ Arrange for food and food supplies.
  - Person who will bring or arrange for food delivery: ________________________________
  - Menu (consider the needs of vegetarians, people with food allergies and others with special dietary needs)
  - Disposable napkins, utensils, cups, plates
  - Beverages
  - Serving dishes and utensils (including an ice bowl, if necessary)
  - Ice

☐ Contact participants who haven’t registered by phone. Contacts made by _____________ on _________________.

☐ Confirm room and room set up. Confirmation made by __________________________ on _________________.

☐ Confirm presenters, including:
  - Day, date and time of event
  - Directions to event site
  - Technical needs
PLANNING HANDOUT (CONTINUED):

- Room layout
- Agenda
- Time for any program needs and housekeeping details
- Number of registered participants
- Other important information (registrants with special needs, space limitations, group dynamics, etc.)

☐ Gather supplies, including:
  - Name tags
  - Markers
  - Masking tape
  - Pens or pencils
  - Flip charts, newsprint or other large paper
  - Easels (optional, if newsprint sheets can be taped to walls)
  - Writing paper
  - Training manuals
  - Paperwork (if needed)
  - Sign-in sheets
  - Directional signs to meeting building and room

☐ Meet with event staff to clarify expectations and responsibilities.

DAY OF TRAINING

☐ Ensure that the meeting room is clearly marked or signs directing participants to it are posted.

☐ Make sure the meeting room is unlocked.

☐ Confirm delivery of meals, snacks and beverages, if needed.

☐ Set up the registration table.

☐ Set up for any meals or snacks being served.

☐ Check technical equipment.
**ACTIVITY:**

**Mentor Web**

**DESCRIPTION:**
This activity will encourage participants to think about the formal and informal mentors in their own lives and will help them identify qualities a good mentor should possess.

**OBJECTIVES:**
After completing this activity, the participants will be able to:
- Explain the roles that formal and informal mentors have played in their lives.
- List the positive qualities of these informal mentors.
- Name the benefits of mentoring by examining the roles that mentors have played in their own lives.
- List the characteristics of successful mentors.

**MATERIALS:**
- Pens or pencils (one per participant)
- “Mentor Web” handout (one per participant)
- Flip chart paper
- Markers
- Tape

**TIME:**
40 minutes

**SETTING:**
Room with tables and chairs or desks arranged for work in small groups

**AUDIENCE:**
Adult and peer mentors

**PROCEDURE:**

**Before the activity:**
1. Review the “Developing and Building Mentoring Relationships” background section and the activity directions.
2. Print one copy of the “Mentor Web” handout for each participant.
3. Gather the other materials you will need for the activity.
4. Prepare a sample mentor web using flip chart paper and markers. Display it where everyone in the group can see it easily.

**During the activity:**
1. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:
   
   Many people volunteer to be mentors because they had formal or informal mentors in their own lives who greatly shaped who they are today. In this activity we’re going to make mentor webs that will help us examine what made these individuals so influential.

   First write your name in the center circle of the web. In each of the circles that are connected to your circle, write the name of someone who acted as your mentor at some point in your life, along with the approximate age you were when that person first became your mentor.

   Note that there are lines attached to each of your mentors’ circles. On these lines, write a few of the qualities that person displayed that made them someone you admired or saw as a role model. You don’t have to fill in every line.

   Point out the sample mentor web on the flip chart paper, then tell them they’ll have about 10 minutes to complete this part of the handout. Answer any questions the group may have.
4. After 5 to 10 minutes, or when everyone seems to have completed their webs, bring the group back together. Ask for volunteers to talk about their mentors. Continue until everyone who wants to has had a chance to share. Next ask the following questions. Record the group’s answers on flip chart paper, then display the sheet where everyone can see it easily.

- What are some of the positive attributes you listed for your mentors?
- Did any of you have mentors with similar qualities?

5. Continue by reading aloud or paraphrasing the following:

**You may have realized that some of the best qualities your mentors had were very basic. In most mentoring relationships, it’s not the extraordinary talents or accomplishments of the mentor that young people will remember. Instead, it’s the simple way that the mentor showed that he or she cared.**

It’s also important to note that the word “perfect” and the phrase “never makes mistakes” rarely, if ever, show up in these mentor webs. Just like all of you, your mentors weren’t perfect and probably didn’t always know the right thing to do. Still, they seemed to know that the most important thing was to offer consistent friendship and support when you needed guidance. **It’s OK to make mistakes as a mentor. You may take the wrong approach from time to time. As long as your mentee knows that you had his or her best interests at heart, he or she will likely understand your mistakes for what they are.**

6. Read or paraphrase the following:

**As you become a mentor, keep the people you listed on your mentor web in the back of your mind. They probably didn’t try to “fix” or change you and they didn’t expect you to change the entire course of your life after just a few hours with them. (Many people identify qualities such as patience and caring as particularly helpful traits of mentors.) Maybe they helped you develop your sense of humor or passions in life. Looking back over your list, consider for a moment how many of these people you’ve personally thanked for playing the role of mentor in your life. It’s likely that you didn’t know how influential they had been in your life until you grew older. If you haven’t thanked them, consider letting them know about this new role you’re taking on and how they helped inspire you to be the best mentor you can be.**
PROCESSING:

Conclude the activity by leading the group in a discussion using the following questions and key points as a guide. Be sure to give participants time to think about and respond to the questions.

Discussion questions:

- What traits that your mentors displayed had the strongest influence on you?
- When did you first realize the impact your mentors had on your life? Did you know how important they were when you were younger?
- What events in your life did your mentor help you navigate through? Was there a specific something that happened that made having a mentor important? How did your mentor help you navigate that situation or support you through it?
- What expectations did you have of your mentors? Did you expect them to be superheroes?
- Did your mentors ever let you make decisions that weren’t the best so you would learn from them?
- Did you ever disappoint your mentor? How did that person react to your disappointing act?
- Did your mentor ever tell you that something you were doing was inappropriate for the time and place you were in? How did it feel? Was your mentor patient and forgiving with you as you learned how to navigate the adult world?

Key points:

- While discussing the roles of mentors in their lives, participants may name people who mentored them who possessed traits not usually expected of mentors in a program such as yours. For instance, someone may list a grandparent as a mentor and indicate that the grandparent took them on a special vacation. It’s important to acknowledge the influence this person had on the life of the person sharing. Point out, too, that informal or natural mentors may take on roles that are not expected or appropriate for mentors in formal, structured programs. Discuss with the participants what roles mentors are not expected to play if these traits come up in the discussion time. You might consider following up with an activity that more closely defines the roles a formal mentor plays in the life of a young person.

- Of all the traits that good mentors have, a few rank above others in importance, and are probably traits that participants listed on their mentor webs. First, mentors need to be honest – mentors are there to show mentees that they want to support them, be a friend to them, and respect them as individuals. Mentors also need to be patient and forgiving. Most mentees will disappoint and hurt their mentors at some point, just as many of the participants probably did with their own mentors. A mentor who
wants to make a difference in a young person’s life needs to hang in there and be forgiving. Keep in mind that, when working with young people, one rarely sees the results of what one is doing. That doesn’t mean there are none. Results are sometimes evident after ten or fifteen years, when the now grown mentee is looking back and is grateful for all the mentor did for him or her. Practice patience.

▷ It’s often said that mentors plant and nurture seeds. The mentor can’t choose which seeds thrive and they may never get to see the end result – they merely care for the seeds while they are able.

▷ Mentors may need to confront inappropriate behavior in their mentees. There is a difference between being supportive and letting a mentee get away with behavior that is harmful or inappropriate. The behavior should be confronted directly, but carefully, emphasizing that the behavior is the problem, not the mentee. Explain to your mentee that, like it or not, there are standards of behavior in the world to which adults are expected to comply. Participants may have had mentors in their lives explain to them that there is a time and a place for everything, but the particular time and place they were in was not the appropriate time and place for their behavior.

▷ Be mindful that there are roles that mentors are not expected to play (such as parent, therapist, social worker).

VARIATIONS:
If no one in the group feels comfortable sharing about specific mentors in their lives, have them brainstorm about what qualities an ideal mentor in each of the following roles might possess.

▷ A coach
▷ A mentor in a Big Sister or Brother program
▷ A teacher
ACTIVITY:

**Relationships: Where Do They Stand?**

**DESCRIPTION:**
This brief activity will encourage participants to think of people in their lives in context of emotional proximity. It is an exercise designed to begin a conversation about the range of boundaries that exist and to begin to explore how boundaries influence interactions.

**OBJECTIVES:**
The participants will:
- Determine the level of closeness they’ll want to seek with their mentees.

**MATERIALS:**
- “Relationships: Where Do They Stand?” handout (one per participant)
- Writing utensils
- Flip chart paper and markers (optional)
- Tape

**TIME:**
15–30 minutes (Note that this activity has the potential to run significantly longer if the facilitator encourages a deep discussion of the discussion questions and the key points.)

**SETTING:**
A room with chairs and tables with a surface to write on

**AUDIENCE:**
Adult or peer mentors or both

**PROCEDURE:**

**Before the activity:**
1. Review the background information at the beginning of the “Setting Boundaries” module.
2. Review activity directions.
3. Gather the other materials you will need for the activity.
4. Print one copy of the “Relationships: Where Do They Stand?” handout for each participant.
5. Prepare a list of suggested people for participants to think about on flip chart paper (optional) and post it where participants can see it during the activity. Some suggested individuals include a significant other, children, parents, siblings, neighbors, clergy or spiritual leader, coach, teacher, scout leader, supervisor, store clerk, librarian, specific friends, and taxi or bus driver. Change this list as is suitable for the activity audience (adult or peer mentors or both).

**During the activity:**
1. Ensure that each participant has a copy of the “Relationships: Where Do They Stand?” handout and a writing utensil.
2. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

   *This activity will help us begin a conversation about boundaries. As you look at the handout, you’ll notice you’re in the center of the innermost circle. The next circle represents the people in your life who are in your inner circle – those who mean the most to you. Each circle moving outward represents an additional layer of emotional distance. Think about the various people in your life and where they fall in the circles. Consider the following: your significant other, your children, your parents, your siblings, your neighbors, your clergy and religious or spiritual leader, a coach, your teacher, your scout leader, your supervisor, the store clerk, the librarian, specific friends, and taxi or bus driver. Try to envision the variety of people you interact with daily, and chart them on the circle graph according to how emotionally close you are to them. We call this level of closeness your “emotional proximity” to these individuals. Make sure you write at least one person in each circle.*
3. Allow participants time and ensure that they have at least one person in each circle.

4. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

   *Now, place an X on the circle graph to identify where you will place your mentee.*

5. Allow participants time to reflect upon how they arranged people on their circle graph.

**PROCESSING:**

**Discussion questions:**
Conclude the activity by leading the group in a discussion using the following questions and key points as a guide. Be sure to give participants time to think about and respond to the questions.

- Who did you put in your
  - Inner circle?
  - Middle circle?
  - Outer circle?

- Is anyone outside of your circles? Who are these people and why did you put them there?

- Where is your mentee? Why?

- Do you see your mentee’s position within your circle changing over time? Why or why not?

- Would anyone have found it helpful to have more layers in their circle?

- How do your actions with the people you charted change as you move from the inner to the outer circle? Who are you the most formal with? Who are you most likely to share personal information with?

- How would you react if someone from your outer circle hugged you? Would you feel comfortable? Why or why not? Would you initiate a hug with one of these people? Does your comfort level change as you move from one circle to another?

**Key points:**

- Caution mentors about keeping too much distance from the mentees (outer circle). Mentoring involves relationships, and they will need to let their mentees in. Conversely, mentees are not family and should not be in the inner circle, particularly early in the match. This can make the mentee and his or her parents uncomfortable and may cross their boundaries.

- People have different standards and behaviors when interacting with different people. For example, topics such as religion or politics are appropriate for conversation with people with whom you are close. These same topics may be inappropriate to bring up when interacting with people you do not know as well.
Our level of comfort in a situation is influenced by a variety of factors including:

- The type of relationship (professional, romantic, family, peer and other types).
- The length of the relationship.
- Differences in power (supervisor, teacher, parent and other relationships).
- Societal expectations.
- Culture.

Unspoken rules often exist regarding behavior expectations. A mentor can help a young person understand these unspoken rules.

Some people in the group may say that they do not have many differences in how they interact with people in each of these groups. Mentors need to be mindful that they need to honor other people's preferences in social and professional situations. For instance, physical contact (hugging, patting someone on the back, or squeezing an arm or shoulder) can negatively affect a relationship if one party is not comfortable with it.

Boundaries are often fluid, and individuals may move from one circle to the other as their relationships change, becoming more distant or deeper.

Boundaries also exist as a protective measure used to keep sensitive topics and potentially difficult situations in a mentee or mentor’s life private. Boundaries also keep individuals safe from criticism or exclusion by others. Mentors need to understand that just as there are parts of their lives they may be uncomfortable sharing with others, their mentees may also have boundaries in place as a protective measure. Mentees may have experienced sharing something with someone that led to that person hurting them or telling someone else in a betrayal of trust.
RELATIONSHIPS: WHERE DO THEY STAND HANDOUT:

Relationships: Where Do They Stand?

Consider the various people in your life. Each circle represents a level of closeness. Write the name or relationship of who you feel the closest to in the circle nearest the center. Continue writing names or relationships in each level of the circle. The outermost ring will include people you see frequently but do not have a strong emotional connection with. Consider children, spouse, parents, siblings, coworkers, neighbors, clergy, coaches, supervisor, store clerk, friends, strangers and other relationships.
ACTIVITY:

Unseen Artists

DESCRIPTION:
In this fun and interactive activity, participants sit back to back with a partner. One partner uses a variety of craft supplies to create an object and then provides directions for his partner with the goal of having the partner create an identical object. Participants explore a variety of communication skills.

OBJECTIVES:
The participants will:
- Be able to define and explain the importance of active listening.
- Identify the importance of giving clear directions.
- Understand the importance of feedback and of nonverbal communication.
- Further develop their communication skills.

MATERIALS:
- Small container of play dough for each participant
- Pipe cleaners, Popsicle sticks, paper clips or other items that could be used to build an item (Each participant will need the same amount of each of these building supplies. The amount will vary depending on the item.)

TIME:
30–45 minutes, including discussion

SETTING:
Room with seating that can be turned back to back

AUDIENCE:
Adult and peer mentors

PROCEDURE:

Before the activity:
1. Review the background information at the beginning of the “Communication” module and review the “Types of Communication” handout. Pay close attention to the sections on listening, active listening, feedback and nonverbal communication.

2. Review the activity directions.

3. Gather the materials you will need for the activity.

4. Set up the room so that pairs can sit back to back.

5. Have building materials grouped together for each participant.

During the activity:

1. Read or paraphrase the following:

   In this activity, we’re going to spend time exploring some important parts of communication. After we rearrange our chairs, I’ll hand you each a set of building supplies. Don’t build anything until I give you the next set of instructions.

2. Have the participants sit in back-to-back pairs so they cannot see each other. Give each person a container of play dough and the other building supplies. Each pair needs to have the same amount of identical building supplies. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

   You each have building materials. Using the building materials, one partner in each group is going to build an object and not show it to his or her partner. After about 5 minutes of construction time, the builders will describe their objects to their partners. Their partners will attempt to replicate the buildings. The listening partner is not allowed to turn around to see the object being described and not allowed to ask questions to clarify directions. The partner giving directions is not allowed to turn around to see how the listening partner is doing. Does anyone have any questions?

   Pause to answer any questions participants may have. Then give the building partners 5 minutes to create their objects. Facilitators may want to have riddles, brainteasers, trivia or short games
on hand so that the listening group is not sitting in silence for the 5 minutes. After 5 minutes, or earlier if all the builders have finished their objects, tell the builders to begin describing their objects to the listeners. The listeners will begin building the objects based on instructions from the builders. The person receiving directions is not allowed to ask questions, and the person giving directions needs to keep his or her back turned.

3. When listeners complete the objects they created according to the builders’ instructions, have partners show one another their objects. Let participants compare and contrast the differences of each object. Ask if anyone in the group would like to show the other participants what they began with and what the listening partner created.

4. Have the participants switch roles. The person who was listening will now build and instruct while the person who was building and instructing first must now listen. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

_Those of you who were listening before will now get to build your own objects that you will get to describe to your partners. We’re going to change the directions a little bit, though. Builders and listeners still have to sit back to back, but the listener can ask questions this time around. Does anyone have any questions?_

5. Answer any questions that may come up.

6. Give the former listeners who are now builders approximately 5 minutes to build a different object.

7. Once the builders complete the objects, they will give directions to their listening partners. Listening partners may ask clarifying questions this time. However, the partners still need to keep their backs turned.

8. Once the listeners complete what the builders instruct them to make, partners should compare and contrast the two objects. Once all groups have finished, ask if any pairs would like to share their objects.

**PROCESSING:**

Guide the whole group through a discussion, using the questions and key points listed in the following section as a guide.

**Discussion questions:**

- What do you think is the purpose of this activity?
- What were some things that made this task difficult?
- What could have made it easier?
- What did you feel while doing this task? Why?
How similar were your sculptures during your first try? Was there a difference between the first time and the second time? What changed between the two trials?

Was it easier with or without questions being asked? Why?

Was it easier for you to give directions or receive directions?

Did you wonder if your partner was listening? How could you have known if they were listening?

When your partner was able to give feedback about the clarity of your questions, did you change how you gave directions? Why or why not?

Do you usually follow directions given to you? Why or why not?

Do people listen to you when you give directions?

Why is it important to be able to listen to others and to know how to follow directions given to you?

What is the difference between hearing something or someone and listening to something or someone?

Was it difficult to interpret directions without being able to see your partner? Why?

What is nonverbal communication? How is it important to communication?

How does this activity make you listen?

How does this activity help you understand listening skills?

**Key points:**

- Active listening is an important part of communication. Questions allow for a person to gain further insight when someone is confused or frustrated in a conversation.
- Nonverbal communication can illuminate other layers of meaning to words in a conversation or can give a speaker insight into the emotional reactions of someone he or she is speaking to.
- Questions, feedback on the clarity of directions and nonverbal communication allow someone to gauge how well you are listening when they are talking.
- Communicate clearly and verify the interpretation of your words so that mentees and their parents or guardians know what to expect during the mentoring relationship, from setting boundaries to arranging outings with your mentee.
- Because of differences in experiences, people interpret words differently. The speaker’s meaning may not match the listener’s interpretation. By speaking as clearly as possible and clarifying intent when needed, we move from personal meaning to shared meaning, exposing people to more accurate information so they can make better decisions.
- When we are respectful and thoughtful in how we speak and listen, we open up a way for everyone to add to the discussion at hand.
- Both the mentor and the mentee should work together to make sure they understand one another when communicating.

**VARIATIONS:**

- Have participants give directions using predrawn pictures or having participants draw their own pictures.
- Modify the activity to teach mentees about the importance of communicating clearly with their mentors.
- Use the following ideas to make the activity more challenging for participants:
  - Participants describe the object using shapes, not representations of the actual item. (For example, the participant will say, “build a circle with sticks” instead of “make a human stick figure.”)
  - Participants cannot describe the object using shapes. (For example, the participant will say, “connect one end of a pipe cleaner to its opposite end” instead of “make a circle with the pipe cleaner.”)
ACTIVITY:

Unbreakable

DESCRIPTION:
This activity will provide a visual demonstration of the importance of the Five Cs of Positive Youth Development (PYD). Participants will use craft sticks and markers to depict their mentees, and then using more craft sticks they will write or draw examples of the Five Cs. After a discussion, the group will brainstorm ways mentors can help young people better develop each “C.”

OBJECTIVES:
The participants will:
- Learn about the importance of the Five Cs of Positive Youth Development.
- Understand how mentors can support their mentees in gaining the Five Cs.

MATERIALS:
- Craft sticks (6 per participant and 1 additional for the facilitator)
- Fine-point markers
- Flip chart paper
- Tape
- “The Five Cs of Positive Youth Development” handout (one per participant)

TIME:
30–45 minutes

SETTING:
Participants will need a surface for writing. There should be wall space to post 5 sheets of flip chart paper and room for participants to walk around to each piece of flip chart paper.

AUDIENCE:
Adult and peer mentors

PROCEDURE:

Before the activity:
1. Review the background information at the beginning of the “Youth Development” module and these activity directions.

2. Print one copy of the “The Five Cs of Positive Youth Development” handout for each participant.

3. Write one of the Five Cs of Positive Youth Development (Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character, Caring/Compassion) on the top of each piece of flip chart paper and post throughout the room.

4. Gather the other materials you will need for the activity.

5. Distribute markers throughout the tables.

During the activity:
1. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

   *We’re going to explore the theory of positive youth development or PYD. Has anyone heard of positive youth development before? How would you define it?*

   Allow participants to share their definitions of positive youth development and acknowledge their responses.

   *Positive youth development is defined as the ongoing process of building young people’s assets and strengths through social, emotional, cognitive, physical and moral development as they grow through adolescence. The goal of PYD is for young people to become caring adults, capable of contributing to their communities. Instead of focusing on deficits, PYD builds on the positive. To better understand positive youth development and a related theory that is referred to as the Five Cs of Positive Youth Development, we’re going to do an activity.*

2. Provide each participant with one craft stick. With the fine-point markers provided, ask them to use the craft stick to represent their future mentees. They should draw a face, hair, clothing, and so on on the stick. Encourage them to be as creative as they wish. As they draw, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

   *Imagine this craft stick is your mentee. What assets and strengths might he or she possess currently?*
Which ones might be lacking? As we think about positive youth development, we might consider these assets as a young person’s opportunity to build the skills needed to be successful, happy and productive adults. Adolescence and the period preceding it is one of the most crucial times for young people to build their toolboxes of assets and strengths to face life’s challenges. Often, young people are referred to mentoring programs because fewer natural circumstances exist in their lives to gain these assets and strengths. Mentors can play an important role in exposing young people to new opportunities and in helping them to better develop the Five Cs.

3. Give one copy of the “The Five Cs of Positive Youth Development” handout to each participant. To identify the Five Cs for participants, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Research shows that young people able to display stronger evidence of having the Five Cs are less likely to behave negatively and more likely to be developmentally on target than those who do not. As a mentor, keep these Five Cs in mind and look for ways to continually build them in your mentee. The Five Cs are competence, confidence, connection, character and caring/compassion.

Listen as I read the definitions aloud from your handout.

I’ve posted each of the Five Cs on flip chart paper around the room for you to refer to as we move forward with our activity.

4. Pass out five more craft sticks to each participant.

Each of you received five additional craft sticks. These sticks represent one of the Five Cs. Look at the Five Cs posted around the room. On your craft sticks, write or draw with a fine-tip marker an example of how a young person might demonstrate each “C.” For instance, for “competence,” I might write on my craft stick “showing good decision-making skills.” For caring/compassion, I might draw a picture of two people engaged in conversation or sharing a hug. Take a few minutes and write or draw your own example associated with each “C.” You should have one “C” per craft stick.

Walk around the room as participants are working on their examples. Answer any questions that might arise.
5. Once participants have completed their Five Cs craft sticks, ask them to share with one another what they came up with as examples. Depending on the size of your group, you may have them do this in small groups or you might choose to process with the entire group if time allows. After sharing examples in their small groups, bring the group back together and ask participants to share some examples for each “C” that they discussed with their small group. Thank them for their contributions.

All of you shared some great examples that demonstrate each of our five Cs.

Hold the additional craft stick in your hand. Ask participants to pick up the craft sticks representing their mentees.

We’ve talked about this craft stick representing your mentee. On its own, this craft stick could easily be broken into pieces.

Break the craft stick you are holding in half.

Consider your mentee on his or her own. Without the support of caring adults in his or her life, in what ways is your mentee like this single craft stick?

Get responses from participants. Thank them for their contributions.

Now pick up each of the craft sticks representing the Five Cs: competence, confidence, connection, character and caring/compassion. Stack them up evenly behind the craft stick representing your mentee. It’s very difficult to break six craft sticks when the sticks act as one unit. Much like your pile of craft sticks, a young person who is fully able to demonstrate mastery of the Five Cs is much more likely to gain the assets and strengths needed to become a successful adult who contributes positively to their community.

6. Move on to the flip charts around the room.

I referred to the flip charts posted around the room earlier. Now that we’ve gained a better understanding of what the Five Cs are, let’s brainstorm the various ways that mentors can help young people better develop each “C.” Each of you has a marker at your table. Because you all come to this program with different experiences, interests, talents and ideas, let’s hear your perspective. Please take your marker and on each sheet of flip chart paper, write your ideas for how you plan to help your mentee gain assets related to that
In particular “C”. Once everyone has finished writing their ideas, please take a few minutes to walk around the room and read other people’s responses. After you’re finished, please return to your seat.

PROCESSING:

Guide participants through a discussion, using some or all of the questions and key points that follow. Be sure to give participants time to think about and respond to the questions.

Discussion questions:

- Think back to when you were a teenager. What did adults in your life do to help you develop the Five Cs?
- Peer mentors: What are adults in your life doing to help you and your peers develop the Five Cs? What else could adults do to help you and your peers grow in these areas?
- How long do you think it takes to obtain these characteristics? Do you always have them once you obtain them?
- What factors in a young person’s life can be a barrier to developing these traits?

Key points:

- A mentor’s role is to help build a mentee up so that they are not easily hurt. Remember the example of the craft stick that was broken.
- The Five Cs are not something that you can give to a young person. They are skills and characteristics that a young person develops based on experiences and relationships. Little things you do can help your mentee develop these characteristics.
- This activity is titled “Unbreakable.” While we never consider a child broken, we often find that mentees come to our programs lacking many or all of the Five Cs. In many ways, they are fragile like the single craft stick with no support. If a mentee has been hurt or discouraged too many times, it will take longer to build the young person back up. Mentors need to practice patience and be a consistent, positive support to their mentees, understanding that change takes time.
- Positive youth development ideas can be very beneficial in mentoring. By focusing on a mentee’s assets and strengths, you can build more. This is much easier than focusing on a weakness and trying to change a negative characteristic.

The Five Cs of Positive Youth Development

**CONFIDENCE:** An internal sense of overall positive self-worth.

**CONNECTION:** Positive bonds with people and institutions reflected in exchanges between the individual and his or her peers, family, school and community in which both parties contribute to the relationship.

**CARING/COMPASSION:** A sense of sympathy and empathy for others.

**CHARACTER:** Respect for societal and cultural norms; possession of standards for correct behaviors; a sense of right and wrong (morality), and integrity.

**COMPETENCE:**
Positive view of one’s actions in specific areas, including social, academic, cognitive, health and vocational. Social competence refers to interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution. Cognitive competence refers to cognitive abilities such as decision making. Academic competence refers to school performance as shown in part by school grades, attendance and test scores. Health competence involves using nutrition, exercise and rest to keep oneself fit. Vocational competence involves work habits and explorations of career choices.

**References:**


ACTIVITY:

What’s in a Name?

DESCRIPTION:
Participants share information and stories about their names that are culturally significant and important to them by making name tents. This activity helps to prime them for conversation about cultural competency and personal values.

OBJECTIVES:
The participants will:
- Share their full names.
- Share information about their names that is important to them, culturally significant or both.
- Explore connections between the stories shared.

MATERIALS:
- Markers (various colors)
- Cardstock in various colors (one per participant)

TIME:
15–20 minutes, depending on the size of the group

SETTING:
A room large enough to accommodate participants seated in small groups at tables or in a circle

AUDIENCE:
Adult or teen mentors

PROCEDURE:

Before the activity:
1. Review the background information at the beginning of the “Cultural Competency” module and these activity directions.
2. Gather together markers and cardstock.
3. Prepare your name tent to use as an example. Fold a sheet of cardstock in half lengthwise. Read the activity directions to find the proper way to decorate the name tent.

During the activity:
1. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

   Our names are one of the first things we share with others about ourselves. Most people have some kind of story about how they got their names or what their names mean to them. These stories help inform what we believe about ourselves and how we present ourselves to the rest of the world. Reflect on your name. Think about what it means to you and what’s important to you about your name. What are things about your name that bring you joy? What are things about your name that are sometimes difficult for you? Maybe you were named for a favorite relative or have a last name from a relationship that you’re no longer a part of. Perhaps you had a nickname that stuck with you throughout life that you loved – or hated. Maybe your last name clearly marks your family’s cultural heritage and you have a lot of pride about that. Are there stories about your name that represent things that are significant to you?

   We’ll use these stories to begin our conversation about culture.

   Culture is made up of who we are based on our ethnicity, gender, race, class and other connections, and aspects of our families and ourselves. I’ll share my name and some things about me to model the kinds of things you may want to think about sharing.

2. Hold up your name tent. It should include your full name on both sides as well as words or pictures that represent you and your
culture. Take a couple of minutes to share information and stories that are culturally significant and important to you.

Examples that people often come up with include ethnic background and stories of how their names connect to their families of origin, or perhaps how their names have been changed or shortened sometimes by choice, sometimes not. People often share being named after grandparents or other family members. Women will sometimes share whether or not they have changed their names due to marriage or divorce and what that has meant to them. Some may talk about endearing nicknames that no one uses but close family. Others share the pain and frustration of constantly having their name mispronounced. Model sharing information about you and your name to help the participants get an idea of what they’ll put on their name tents. If multiple trainers facilitate, have another provide a second example.

3. Hand out a sheet of cardstock and a few markers of various colors to each participant. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*Each of you will make your own name tent. This will help us to introduce ourselves and get to know each other. First, take a piece of cardstock and fold it in half lengthwise. Use a marker to write your full name, in the way you prefer people call you, on both sides of the folded paper. Feel free to get creative by adding pictures to your name tent relevant to your story or playing with the colors you use. Now reflect on your name for a couple of minutes and create your name tent. Be creative and use the various colored markers to draw words and pictures around your name reflecting aspects of who you are.*

4. When you can see that people have finished their name tents, have them share their names and stories in groups of three or four. If your training group is small, or if you have enough time, you can have all participants share their names for the larger group rather than in small groups.

5. Allow about 10 minutes for sharing and make sure that everyone has a chance to speak. When all participants have shared their name tents in their small groups, ask for a few people to volunteer to share names and stories with the larger group.

6. Have the participants put their name tents on the table in front of them so that their tents will help everyone get to know each other throughout the rest of the training. Having names on both sides of the tents helps those sitting next to or behind to also see the names.
PROCESSING:

Guide participants through a discussion, using some or all of the questions and key points that follow. Be sure to give participants time to think about and respond to the questions.

Discussion questions:

- What was it like for you to think about aspects of your name that are important to you and share cultural information about yourself?
- What was it like for you to hear other’s stories?
- What similarities and differences did you notice about the stories shared?

Key points:

- Our names are often very important to us and deeply connected to who we are, our families and our heritage. This is often true for young people as well as adults. You may want to do this kind of activity and sharing with your mentee.
- Some people have easier access to cultural information about themselves than others. Why do you think that is?
- Stories we share and hear about people’s names often include joy and great pride, but they may also include pain and frustration.
- As we spend time together today and in the future, let’s make a special effort to remember each other’s names, pronounce them accurately and use the information we’ve learned about each other to build positive relationships together.

VARIATIONS:

You can use this activity as an icebreaker during mentee training or during the first meeting between mentors and mentees, or to introduce a session on cultural competency.

Adapted with permission from What’s in a Name? by K. Pace, 2009. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Extension.