

MENTORING

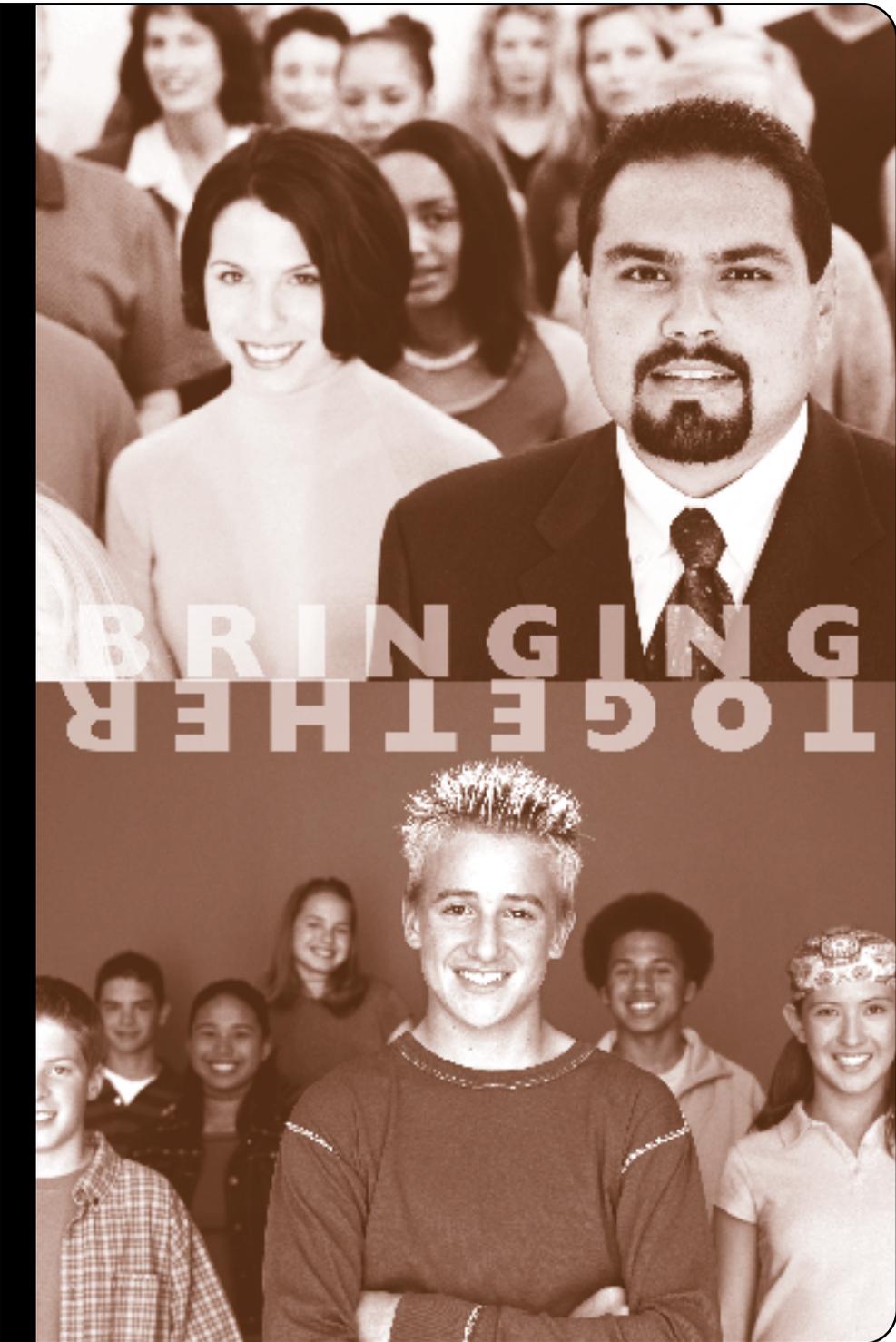
Tactics

This Issue

**Designing and Implementing
a Group Mentoring Program**

changing a life forever

MENTORING



DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING A GROUP MENTORING PROGRAM

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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PURPOSE

A recent Public/Private Ventures study estimated that approximately 20% of mentoring organizations use a group mentoring model for at least part of their mentoring services.* This percentage is growing, as there are many agencies that wish to develop a one-to-one program but do not initially have the necessary staff, financial resources, or access to a large number of volunteer mentors. Although the body of research on group mentoring is limited, many organizations understand that this model can be utilized to touch the lives of underserved youth and to gain experience in mentoring without making the intense commitment needed to implement a one-to-one program. With so many new organizations moving into the group mentoring arena, it is surprising that there are relatively few materials available which address the design and implementation of group mentoring. This mentoring tactic was created in response to requests from the field asking for information about site-based group mentoring.

* Sipe, Cynthia, and Roder, Anne. (1999). *Mentoring School-Age Children: A Classification of Programs*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

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I. GROUP MENTORING: POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES AND DRAWBACKS

There are advantages and disadvantages to any mentoring model. Programs may want to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of group mentoring compared with one-to-one models.

POTENTIAL ADVANTAGES

- **Is Less Time-Intensive:** It is much easier to implement a group mentoring program than a one-to-one program because staff do not have to recruit, orient, screen, train, and match one mentor for each mentee. Since these primary tasks will take less time, a new group effort can be implemented more quickly and immediately serve a large number of mentees.
- **Attracts More Volunteers:** Group mentoring programs have been shown to attract volunteer mentor applicants who might otherwise be uncomfortable with the level of intimacy and commitment needed for one-to-one matches.
- **Costs Less to Implement:** Because group mentoring takes less staffing time, it is less expensive: the cost per mentee is estimated to be about half that of traditional one-to-one mentoring. This occurs because one-to-one mentoring staff typically carry a caseload of up to 30 matches, while group mentoring staff may need to spend just 20% to 25% of a full-time equivalency to serve the same 30 mentees.
- **Contributes to Program Experience:** Agencies that eventually want to provide a one-to-one mentoring program can start with group mentoring to “get their feet wet.” This can be a good learning experience as staff design the program’s structure, recruit and screen mentors, and develop materials and trainings.
- **Reduces Risk Factors:** The risk factors in site-based group mentoring programs are greatly reduced since all mentoring is done in the presence of staff. This means that the staff will not have to worry about mentors driving their mentees or matches being alone together in the community. Furthermore, most group mentoring programs do not allow mentors and mentees to make outside phone or have e-mail contact, making for a safer program.
- **Lessens Chances of “Mentee Letdown:”** If a mentor misses a session, other mentors can step in and run the group. This can reduce the feelings of loss and betrayal that mentees may feel when their mentor misses a meeting.

- **Uses the Power of Peer Relationships:** Mentors facilitating group sessions can use peer-to-peer relationships to empower mentees and influence them in positive ways. Group mentoring also helps young people build camaraderie and social skills.
- **Assesses Mentees:** If a program is planning to initiate a one-to-one program in the future, the group mentoring process can help in assessing the needs of mentees and in determining which mentees should be the first to be matched with an individual mentor.
- **Creates a History:** Most funders are hesitant to finance a program that has not been implemented. Even small group mentoring programs are creating a history of providing mentoring services, and this history can be useful when applying for funding. For example, donors are more likely to fund an existing program with experience serving youth than one that has not yet provided any services.

Consistent mentee participation during school hours is typically not a problem since mentees generally enjoy missing class. It is in after-school programs that mentee attendance is often a challenge. When running an after-school program, staff need to double their efforts in making the program fun and interesting by providing frequent program incentives, including food, school supplies, speakers, or field trips.

POTENTIAL DRAWBACKS

- **Is Not One-to-One:** Although it can be highly beneficial, group mentoring can never take the place of one-to-one mentoring. A one-to-one mentoring program is much more likely to provide mentees with the type of individual support that best helps youth thrive.
- **Challenge of Keeping the Program Fresh:** In a one-to-one mentoring program, a huge incentive for mentee participation is the ability to develop a close, supportive relationship with an adult, as well as traveling together to different locations for activities. As this is unlikely to occur in site-based group mentoring, the challenge is to keep things new and exciting so that mentees and mentors will not become bored and drop out of the program.
- **Developing Curriculum:** While the development of mentoring relationships is important, group mentoring is generally considered to be more “curriculum-based.” This means that there is a constant challenge for program staff to generate new lessons and learning activities so that participants will continue to be interested and motivated.

- **Need for Experienced Staff:** For some organizations, the decision to implement a group mentoring model might be due to a lack of experienced program staff. In practice, however, a program will have a much better chance of succeeding if it is run by a seasoned staff person. In a one-to-one mentoring program, a child's "acting out" behaviors will likely be minimized because young people thrive on the attention provided by a personal mentor. Conversely, that same young person may have the urge to act out in front of his or her peers in a group setting. If the mentees referred have behavioral issues, an experienced program coordinator will be needed to manage disruptions that may arise during the group sessions.

Programs focused on serving mentees with intense behavioral issues can face significant challenges since it is difficult to manage these youth in a group setting. New programs should consider serving a diverse population that includes a few "healthy egos" in each group to help sessions run more smoothly. When beginning a program, consider including mentees who do not have behavioral problems (as it is important for new efforts to experience success). Programs can always add youth who may be more difficult to serve after the first mentoring cycle.

II. MODELS OF GROUP MENTORING AND GROUP RATIOS

Adult-to-Youth: In adult-to-youth group mentoring, adults mentor young people who usually range from 9 to 17 years old.

Peer-to-Peer: Peer-to-peer group mentoring brings together mentors and mentees who are relatively close in age, such as

- college students with high school students,
- older high school students with younger high school students,
- older junior high school students with younger junior high school students, or
- junior high school students with elementary school students.

For peer mentoring, it is best to have at least a two-year age difference between mentors and mentees. Mentees need to be able to look up to their older, more experienced mentors: when participants are at the same developmental level, it is difficult for mentors to maintain a leadership role.

Mentor-to-Mentee Ratio: This term refers to the number of mentors and mentees in each group. Some literature proposes a one-mentor-to-four-mentees model. If a program decides to conduct groups with only one mentor per group, it is advisable that this individual has a great deal of experience and confidence. While this ratio may be appropriate, programs should consider having at least two mentors in each group. In this way, if one mentor is absent, the other mentor is still available so the mentees will not be disappointed. The two-mentor system also allows mentors to provide support and feedback to each other. With two mentors in a group, the number of mentees can expand to five or perhaps six. However, having more than eight people in a group (such as two mentors and six mentees) can be unwieldy. During a sharing exercise, for example, there might not be adequate time for all group members to share. Having multiple mentors in a group often helps with group management: one strategy for improving group management is to add to the number of mentors or reduce the number of mentees within each group.

Providing two mentors for each group comes with a caution: some mentors may become lax in their participation if they know that there is an alternate facilitator. When one mentor begins to miss multiple meetings, there is also a "domino effect" on the drop-out rate of mentees. This is dangerous to the group mentoring dynamic because it can lead to the disintegration of the program. During the recruiting and training process, staff must help group mentors understand that they need to uphold their commitment, just as if they were participating in a one-to-one match.

III. NEED AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

Before designing and implementing a mentoring program, it is helpful to conduct an assessment to determine if there is truly a need for the program and if the intended program will be able to secure adequate resources.

The following questions may be useful in determining whether there is a need for the program:

- Does this population really need such a program? Why?
- What are the intended changes (outcomes for mentees) that might be facilitated by such a program?
- Would this program duplicate existing efforts? For example, would this program be serving children within the same geographical area as another program?

Similarly, several questions may be helpful in determining whether the intended program will be able to secure adequate resources:

- Are resources available for the hiring of staff now and in the future?
- Is there a safe, clean, and dependable program site available?
- Are there several individuals who feel strongly enough about this cause to work on the program's design and search for resources? (Details regarding Advisory Teams is included in **Section IV: Program Design Process** within this tactic.)
- Are there referral sources that can help to identify mentees?
- Is there a strong potential for the recruitment of caring adults who will commit to the program for several months at a time?

Personnel costs are typically the main expenditure for group mentoring programs. In addition to hiring one or more staff members, expenses might include the following:

- **Room rental**
- **Utilities**
- **Furniture, computers, and other office equipment**
- **Phone and Internet costs**
- **Food and program incentives (such as school supplies)**
- **Fingerprint and criminal background checks**
- **Transportation for fieldtrips**
- **Insurance**
- **Printing or copying costs**
- **Office supplies**
- **Postage**
- **Board games and sports equipment**
- **Stipends for guest presenters**

IV. PROGRAM DESIGN PROCESS

Development via an Advisory Team: The initial development process of group and one-to-one mentoring programs is very similar. In both, it is best to bring together an Advisory Team to assist with the design. This “team approach” is useful for several reasons since team members can

- Provide valuable input for the program's design (beyond the vision of just one person),
- Promote the program within their individual circles of influence,
- Assist in recruiting mentors and obtaining other resources, and
- Sometimes even volunteer to become mentors.

Temporary Commitment for Advisory Team Members:

Consider bringing together four to seven individuals who want the program to be successful. Because of busy schedules, ask them if they would consider attending four 90-minute meetings. Later, if they are enjoying the process, you can ask them to consider extending their service.

The Mentor Training Manual as a Program Design Strategy:

One proven method for creating a new program's initial design is to utilize a mentor training manual from a successful existing program. A mentor training manual is typically the most comprehensive document within a mentoring program: when completed, it should fully describe the program. In general, only 20% of a mentor training manual is specific to the particular program, with approximately 80% being “generic” material which can apply to any mentoring program. The Advisory Team's time can be reduced if two lead volunteers work together to create a rough draft of the new program's Mentor Training Manual. Begin by developing the “Brief Program Overview” which should include

- A mission statement;
- Program goals and objectives;
- Referral criteria for mentees;
- Eligibility requirements for mentors;
- Mentor-to-mentee ratios;
- A program theme and curriculum focus;
- The duration of the program and the length of each session;
- A description of program staff and duties; and
- A description of collaborative partners, including funding sources.

During the first meeting, present this information to the Advisory Team for their feedback. Before the second meeting, the two lead volunteers can develop a preliminary version of the program's rules, including confidentiality, child abuse reporting processes, and boundary issues. All of this information will be integrated into the Mentor Training Manual and used to train mentors during the

initial mentor training. (Additional information on Mentor Training Manuals is included in **Section VI: Recruitment, Screening, Training, Matching, Monitoring, and Logging** of this tactic.)

Program Duration: While most one-to-one efforts ask for a nine-month or twelve-month commitment, a ten- to twenty-week “mentoring cycle” is more common in group mentoring programs. Participants tend to become bored if they are asked to meet for 40 consecutive weeks. One strategy for keeping participants excited about the program is to provide long breaks between mentoring cycles, often for several weeks.

Meetings Per Week: Most group mentoring programs meet once a week for approximately one-and-a-half to two hours per session. Meeting for more than one session per week can be taxing for mentors and boring for mentees.

Although this tactic suggests that groups meet for six to eight hours per month, programs facilitated by teachers (who are often paid a stipend for their efforts) or by college students (who receive classroom credit for their service) typically meet for twenty or more hours per month. Programs facilitated by these types of mentors also have a tendency to incorporate longer mentoring cycles.

V. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

As group mentoring programs are “curriculum-based,” it is important to include lessons that are fun and inspiring.

Flow of Activities: Program staff can develop group mentoring sessions much like a teacher plans school lessons. Some group mentoring staff view this “lesson plan” as the “flow of activities.” Below is a sample schedule for a typical 90-minute group mentoring session. Using this type of matrix, staff can use the “Description” column to fully describe what is planned for each time slot.

Icebreaker: Also known as a “warmer,” icebreakers are a way for program staff to set a positive, fun tone for the day. A wide variety of icebreakers and other training exercises are available on the Internet, at libraries, in bookstores, and by talking with others who provide trainings. Program staff should work to develop an ever-expanding file of potential exercises.

TIME	ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
4:00	Icebreaker	
4:15	Standard Sharing Exercise	
4:40	Educational Module	
5:15	Program Incentives	
5:25	Closure	
5:30	Adjournment	

The Actor’s Interview Exercise

This icebreaker can be used the first time that mentees come together. For this exercise, have participants interview their partner and write down the following items:

- My (first and last) name is: _____
- Something interesting about my name (or nickname) is: _____
- I was born (where): _____
- When I was five, I: _____
- I now live (where): _____
- What I do now is: _____
- In my free time I enjoy: _____
- My least favorite word is: _____
- My favorite word is: _____
- What most people do not know about me is that I (what I’m good at): _____

Once the interviews are complete, invite participants (one at a time) to stand behind the seated person they have just interviewed. It is called “The Actor’s Interview” because each mentee is asked to become the person they interviewed. For example, if a person has interviewed Joanie Smith, he or she might say, “Hi, everyone. My name is Joanie Smith, and my nickname is ...”

Standard Sharing Exercise: Although participant relationships are not typically as close in group mentoring as in one-to-one mentoring, the quality of mentor/mentee relationships improves when mentees have an opportunity for open conversations with their mentors. It is essential to provide an opportunity for mentees to express themselves each week. Without opportunities to share what is happening in their lives, group mentoring sessions could become just another activity-filled program. This sharing aids in the development of relationships and offers a setting in which mentees can vent. In addition, sharing during these group sessions allows young people to receive support and advice for problems they are facing.

Good News/Bad News Exercise

This is an excellent sharing exercise which can be used each time a group meets. The first time you introduce “Good News/Bad News,” you might say the following:

“Today we are going to do a sharing exercise called ‘Good News/Bad News.’ As we’ve all seen each day on T.V. and in newspapers, there is both good news and bad (or not so good) news. Every group meeting I’d like us to talk about what’s happened to each of us since the last time we saw one other. During the week, think about what you will share with the group. You can begin with either your good news or your bad news. I’ll start off by sharing mine. My good news is that on Saturday I got to see a movie that I really wanted to see, and I really liked it. The name of it was _____, and it was about _____. My bad news is that I got a flat tire last week, and it made me late for an appointment. Now, who wants to be first to share their good and bad news?”

As program staff, it is important not to delve too deeply into your own bad news, such as talking about problematic relationships ... or you will have mentees trying to solve your problems. Sharing is best done in smaller group settings where mentees can discuss their week with a handful of people: it can be intimidating (and too time-consuming) to share with larger groups.

Educational Module: The educational component of the program can also be thought of as the “lesson.” The main theme of these lessons sometimes (but not always) depends on the funding source (e.g., education, pregnancy prevention, substance abuse prevention, or crime/gang prevention). The lessons might be led by program staff, outside speakers, or even mentors. Many group mentoring programs include a “leadership development” theme that can encompass a variety of subjects. Promoting leadership development is a “strengths-based” approach which allows staff and mentors to look for positive attributes instead of negative ones. This leadership approach can also help mentees recognize that they are making a positive difference in the world, rather

than merely “receiving services.” Examples of leadership subjects include the following:

- Developing Your Personal Mission Statement
- Finding Your Gifts
- Making a Difference
- Designing a Community Service Project
- Conflict Resolution
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Citizenship
- Friendship
- Emotional Intelligence
- Goal-Setting
- Working with “Personal Triggers”
- Developing Effective Habits
- Improving Memory Skills
- Identifying Your Values
- The Importance of Education
- Career Awareness
- Identifying Your Talents

Each of these subjects can be developed into an “educational module” and be integrated into the lesson plan of a particular group session. Each lesson should consist of interactive exercises that reinforce learning, with curriculum delivery which might include videos or other presentation tools.

Sessions should be held in clean, bright surroundings. This sends a message to both mentees and mentors that the staff cares about them.

Unstructured Activities and Mentee Input: In addition to following a lesson plan, programs often choose to include “unstructured activities,” such as time for free play, artwork, or recreational pursuits. These types of activities often make the program more enjoyable for the mentees. In group mentoring, as in one-to-one mentoring, it is also important to give mentees an opportunity to provide their input on the types of activities in which they would like to be involved.

Some programs provide their mentees with personal workbooks (consisting of a three-ringed binder) to keep all their completed exercises and learning activities in one place. This is a good way for mentees to track their daily, weekly, or monthly goal-setting activities. These workbooks might also include a journal section. Note that most programs gather the workbooks at the end of each meeting because mentees often forget to bring them to the sessions.

Handling Shy or Reluctant Mentees: Many mentees are extremely sensitive about talking in front of others, so programs should train mentors to never force a young person to share or participate. One way of handling someone who is not speaking up when it is their turn is to offer a light, positive comment (“Okay, why don’t you think about it, and we’ll come back to you if you want to share later.”) and then move on to the next person. Very often, when the pressure is off, a shy mentee will open up spontaneously. Be careful not to say, “I can see that you are shy, and that’s okay ...” Describing someone as “shy” puts a label on them, making it even more difficult for them to share in the future.

VI. RECRUITMENT, SCREENING, TRAINING, MATCHING, MONITORING, AND LOGGING

Mentee Recruitment: It is important to set criterion for mentee eligibility and referral based on your program’s mission, goals, and objectives, as described by the Advisory Team. Most group programs receive assistance recruiting mentees from school counselors, teachers, or other community-based organizations.

Mentor Recruitment: What types of mentors should a program recruit? It is best if volunteers have experience working with youth, especially if the program is serving mentees with multiple risk factors (such as children of prisoners or adjudicated, foster, or gang-affiliated youth). Many programs recruit from local colleges, focusing on students who are studying to be teachers, social workers, counselors, or child development specialists. While older mentors are appreciated for their wisdom and their life experiences, college-age mentors have a great deal of energy and are considered “cool” by the mentees.

Mentor Screening: The screening process for group mentors should be the same as for one-to-one mentoring programs, including applications, fingerprinting and criminal background checks, interviews, and reference checks. For a list of Recommended Best Practices, including screening processes, visit the California Governor’s Mentoring Partnership (included in **Section IX: Resources** of this tactic).

Initial Mentor Training: Mentors should be required to participate in an intensive initial mentor training. The length and subject matter covered by the training is dependent upon both the risk factors of the mentees and the

experience and confidence levels of the mentors. For example, programs should provide a more comprehensive initial mentor training when serving high-risk youth populations or when engaging mentors with minimal mentoring experience. If staff members are not confident about teaching group facilitation skills, consider asking a child therapist to assist since they are experts at managing youth groups. Beforehand, be sure to brief the therapist on the differences between group mentoring and group counseling. A typical agenda for an initial mentor training includes the following:

- Introduction and Icebreakers
- History and Background of Mentoring (including Group Mentoring)
- Brief Program Overview
- Mentoring Concepts and Practices (with an Interactive Exercise)
- Break
- Child Development Topics
- Description of Population to be Mentored
- Program Rules (including Confidentiality, Reporting, and Boundary Issues)
- Break
- How to Facilitate Group Mentoring

The How to Facilitate Group Mentoring module should include at least two hours of training on subjects specific to this topic:

- The Benefits and Objectives of Group Mentoring
- Group Facilitation Skills
- Communication and Problem-Solving Skills within the Group Setting
- Handling Disruptive Mentees

All subjects included in the initial mentor training should be fully described in the program’s Mentor Training Manual. Therefore, the agenda for the initial mentor training should be very similar to the Table of Contents for the Mentor Training Manual. There are many more possible topics which can be useful to group mentors, such as diversity issues, child development, empowering youth, goal-setting, developmental assets, and problem-solving skills. Depending on the focus and priorities of the program, these may be included in the initial training, or they might be addressed in ongoing trainings. During this initial training, it is also helpful if programs using the two-mentor program model can pair mentors who will be working together so they can discuss working together to facilitate group discussions.

USING PEERS' SUGGESTIONS FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING

Facilitating groups works best if mentors cultivate suggestions from other youth in the group rather than immediately offering their own recommendations. Young people are constantly told what to do by adults, so they tend to listen better to their peers. The following is an example of a discussion in which a mentor encourages peer suggestions:

- James:** I hit my sister again last week, and my mom says that I'm grounded until the weekend.
- Mentor:** I bet you're bummed that you are grounded – and it's because you hit your sister?
- James:** Yep! She came into my room, and she kept bugging me. I couldn't take it any longer.
- Mentor:** How did she bug you?
- James:** This time, she came in while I was doing homework, and she started reading a book out loud, and she just got louder when I asked her to stop.
- Mentor:** Sounds like this has happens to you quite a bit. Has something like this happened to anyone else in the group? How do you handle a situation like this?
- Larry:** My brother bugs me all the time.
- Mentor:** What do you do about it?
- Larry:** Sometimes I tell my mom. Sometimes I prop a chair against the door so he can't get in.
- Bobby:** I try to ignore my sister until she gets bored and goes away.
- Mentor:** Those sound like good things to do. James, what do you think about what Larry and Bobby do when someone is bugging them? Would something like that work for you?

This example illustrates how a mentor can generate solutions from peers since their suggestions tend to hold more weight with young people than advice that comes from adults.

Ongoing Training: It is a good practice to provide monthly ongoing mentor trainings. To facilitate the attendance of mentors, schedule these trainings either immediately before or after their regularly-scheduled group sessions. Also known as “mentor roundtables,” such gatherings will provide mentors with the opportunity to

- Discuss the obstacles and successes they have experienced;
- Receive support from fellow mentors and from staff;
- Describe the social interactions within their respective groups;
- Discuss the dynamics of each mentee, as well as their progress; and
- Brainstorm and suggest new exercises, activities, curriculum, and ideas for speakers and field trips.

During ongoing trainings, invite each mentor to share his or her recent obstacles and successes with the group. It is important to ask mentors to begin with their “obstacles” and finish by describing their “successes” so that this sharing will end on a positive note.

Initial Mentee Training: Initial mentee trainings are extremely helpful to the success of the group mentoring process. The goals of an initial mentee training are to

- Introduce mentees to each other and create a sense of team;
- Allow staff to begin building relationships with mentees;
- “Normalize” participation, helping mentees feel comfortable with the fact that they are in a mentoring program;
- Help mentees understand the concept of “mentoring;”
- Present the required commitments and program rules; and
- Teach mentees how to benefit from participation.

Initial mentee training sessions can be accomplished in one to two hours. Modules may include

- Introductions and Icebreakers,
- What a Mentor Is and Isn't,

- Build an Ideal Mentor Exercise (below),
- Program Rules (including Confidentiality, Reporting, and Boundary Issues), and
- How to Get the Most Out of Mentoring.

Above all, initial mentee training facilitators should be positive about the program, continually praise mentees for their participation, and ensure that the session is fun and interactive.

Matching: The matching process in a group mentoring program needs to consider many more levels than a one-to-one mentoring program. In a group mentoring program, staff will need to match peers-to-peers (in deciding the make-up of each group), mentor-to-mentor (if there are two or more mentors in each group), and mentors to specific groups of mentees.

To promote the development of relationships, keep the same mentees and the same mentors working within the same groups whenever possible.

- **Peer-to-peer:** It is important not to have all of the youth with behavioral problems in one group, and be careful not to place friends together if they have a tendency to act out with each other. If possible, put a positive leader-type youth in each group. And if the program is serving diverse ages, keep the children that are close to the same age and developmental level in the same groups: in other words, do not put 9-year-olds and 17-year-olds in the same group.

- **Mentor-to-mentor:** If the program uses two mentors in each group, consider offering each group some balance: match experienced mentors with less experienced mentors, confident mentors with those who are relatively unsure, a high energy mentor with one who has low energy, or a talkative mentor with one who is quiet.

- **Mentors-to-groups:** It is best to match your most experienced and confident mentor or mentor team with the group that has the potential to be the most challenging. Conversely, put the less experienced mentor or mentor team with the group of mentees that is the least likely to act out.

Above all, initial mentee training facilitators should be positive about the program, continually praise mentees for their participation, and ensure that the session is fun and interactive.

Build an Ideal Mentor Exercise

This is a great exercise for initial mentee trainings. It not only helps mentees to identify the ideal traits that they want in their mentors, but it is a lot of fun. As they recognize that their peers want the same traits in a mentor, the exercise also helps mentees “normalize” or feel comfortable with the fact that they are in the mentoring program. The exercise works best with three or four groups of approximately five mentees each. The materials needed include a flip chart or poster board, markers of various colors, and tape. To set up this exercise, provide mentees with the following directions:

- After you break up into groups, choose one person to be the “artist.” This individual will draw a full body outline of a person, head to toe, on the flip chart. The drawing does not need to be perfect.
- Next, one at a time, each of you go to the drawing. With the colored markers, draw a symbol for a trait of an ideal mentor on the part of the body where you associate that trait. For example, if you think an ideal mentor is “well-traveled,” draw a worn shoe that represents this quality.
- Try to draw a symbol first. If you cannot, write the name on the part of the body where that trait may exist.
- Keep taking turns, and draw as many symbols as you can think of.
- When your group is finished, turn your drawing over so that the other groups cannot see it.
- Then, decide who is going to share your drawing with the larger group. It could be one or two people or your entire group.

As the facilitator, you can help to put fun and drama into the presentations if, before each group unveils its drawing, you ask everyone for a drum roll (fingers or palms pounding on tables or laps) and then encourage “Oohs!” and “Aahhs!” After all of the groups have presented, praise their work and ask what traits all the drawings have in common: it is typical that they will all have hearts for “caring” and ears for “listening.” Tape these Ideal Mentors on the wall so that mentees can see them for the duration of the training. This exercise can also be used when the curriculum focuses on topics such as Friendship, Leadership, Community Service, or Academics. For example, the activity can be changed to build an Ideal Friend or an Ideal Student.

Monitoring: Monitoring of on-site group mentoring programs is much easier than one-to-one community-based programs because staff will be present to observe the sessions. During on-site monitoring, staff can make sure that

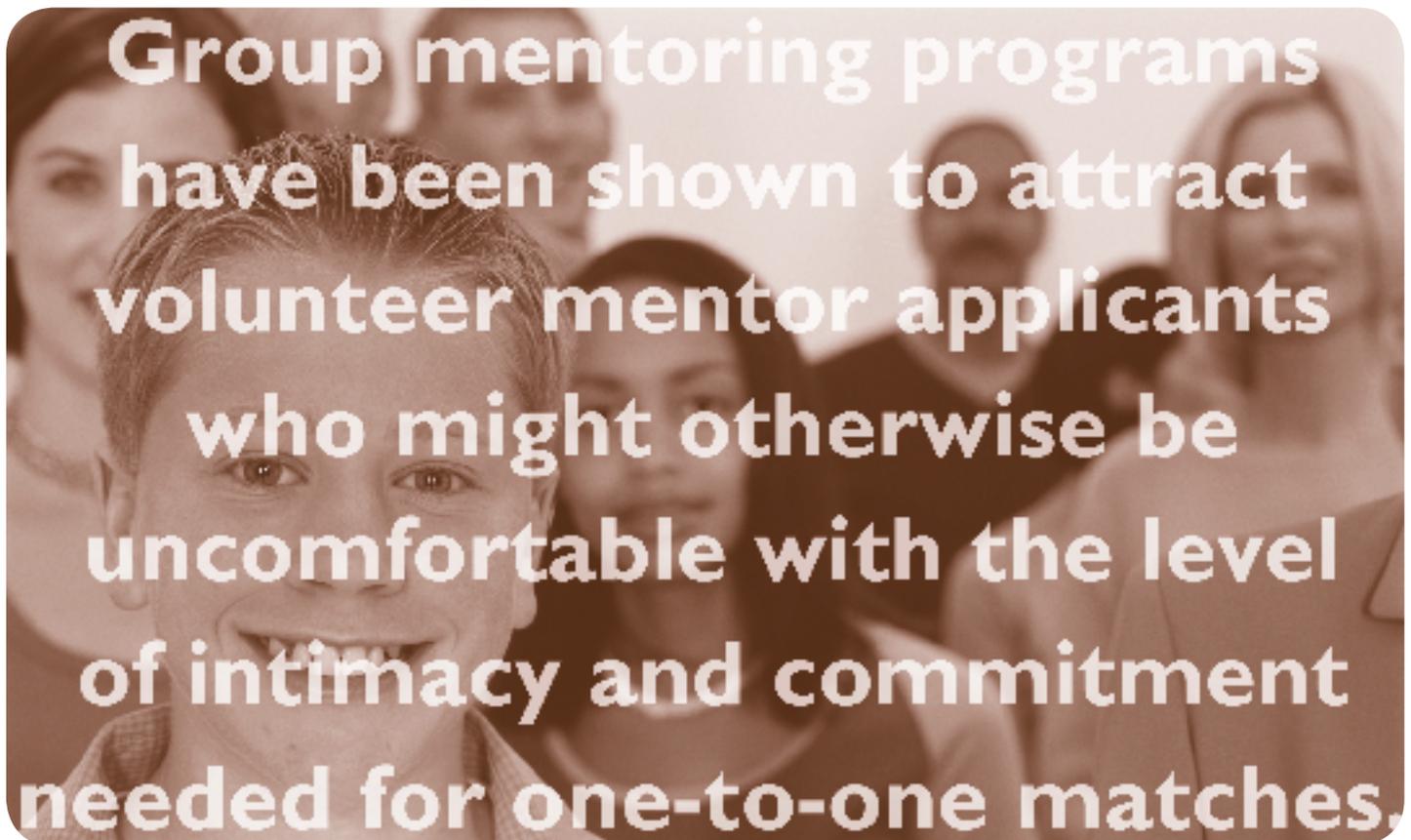
- Participants are attending on a regular basis and are abiding by program rules (such as confidentiality and boundary issues);
- Groups are running smoothly, and mentees are not disruptive;
- Mentees are having fun and are interested in the curriculum; and
- Mentors are comfortable with the mentees assigned to them and with the curriculum they are helping to deliver.

If a mentor is missing from a specific group, the staff person monitoring the program can step in to assist. Staff can also assist with disruptive mentees, taking them aside to address difficulties.

Logging: In addition to staff observations, it is useful to have mentors complete a short weekly logging form. This will provide documentation of each session, urgent needs

of mentees or mentors, and ideas for program activities. A typical logging form may include

- The date of the session;
- The name of the mentor completing the log;
- The name(s) of other mentors present;
- The names of mentees who were present;
- The names of the mentees who were absent (and the reasons for their absence, if known);
- A brief description of the day's activities;
- Details of any behavioral problems with mentees;
- The progress of mentees or successes noted during the session;
- Any mentee issues or problems observed during the session;
- Any marked changes in appearance, behavior, or functioning of any mentees;
- Suggestions for future activities; and
- Any immediate need to discuss issues with a staff member.



VII. EVALUATION

Training Evaluations: After mentor training sessions, staff can provide “satisfaction surveys” which can be used to collect feedback from participants. A simple way to set up a training survey is to ask both open-ended narrative questions, as well as questions that can be rated on a scale of 1 to 5.

Please answer the following questions about today’s workshop. For scaled questions, please circle your response, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

1. What did you hope to learn from today’s training? _____
2. To what degree were your expectations met? Low 1 2 3 4 5 High
3. What was MOST useful to you about this workshop? _____
4. Was there anything that was LEAST useful to you in this workshop? _____
5. Please rate the usefulness of the TRAINING MANUAL. Low 1 2 3 4 5 High
6. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the TRAINERS. Low 1 2 3 4 5 High
7. Please rate OVERALL SATISFACTION with this workshop. Low 1 2 3 4 5 High
8. Would you like to share other feedback or comments? _____

Program Evaluations: Similar instruments can be developed to measure participants’ overall satisfaction with the program. Staff should consider administering these evaluations at the midpoint and end of the program. Possible questions might include the following:

- What have you enjoyed most about the program?
- Which exercises, activities, and fieldtrips have you enjoyed the most? The least, if any?
- Do you have any suggestions for additional activities?
- What could staff have done to make this mentoring experience better for you?
- Do you have other suggestions for overall improvements in the program?

Mentee Outcome Evaluations: Current and future funding sources (and often school staff) will want to know about positive changes that can be attributed to mentees’ participation in the program. It is important to note that it is very unlikely for a short-term group mentoring program to have a positive effect on mentee grades. It is more likely that changes might occur in other areas, such as

- School attendance (in a school-based program, mentees might attend school more often if they enjoy participating in the group),
- Attitudes (e.g., they feel better about opening up to adults),
- Knowledge and understanding of particular skills (such as specific goal-setting models, leadership strategies, problem-solving tools, or peer mediation skills), or
- Knowledge and awareness of specific subjects (such educational requirements or careers).

Programs might consider creating pre- and post-tests on these or other subjects of interest. Another option is to purchase a standardized psychological test. These are often available on the Internet. Before buying a standardized test, make sure that the content and developmental level are appropriate for your mentee population. It is important to understand that, for an evaluation to be valid, there must be a direct correlation between the program’s activities (such as the experiencing newly-developed relationships or gaining knowledge from the curriculum) and the mentee outcomes to be measured.

VIII. SUMMARY

Although research on the results of group mentoring is somewhat limited, what does exist (and common sense) tells us that this model can be an effective way to expand mentoring services to underserved youth. We recognize that while group mentoring is less intensive than one-to-one mentoring, outcomes for youth will be much improved if program staff utilize best practices. As with traditional mentoring, the effectiveness of group mentoring is dependent upon a variety of factors, including the quality of mentors recruited, screening procedures, activities and incentives provided to the youth, and the amount of time participants spend together. And, as in one-to-one mentoring, implementation of a safe and effective program depends on the dedication, commitment, and overall efforts of program staff.

IX. RESOURCES

California Governor’s Mentoring Partnership

<http://www.mentoring.ca.gov/>

The California Governor’s Mentoring Partnership offers a downloadable file of the Recommended Best Practices, covering all components of establishing and implementing a safe, effective youth mentoring program.

Center for Applied Research Solutions

<http://www.emt.org>

The Web site of the Center for Applied Research Solutions (CARS)/Evaluation, Management, Training (EMT) Associates, Inc., offers a range of group mentoring exercises and activities. Additional training materials cover such topics as building relationships, risk management, discussing difficult subjects, and recruiting mentors. All materials can be downloaded at no cost.

National Mentoring Center

http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/policy_manual.html

The National Mentoring Center’s “Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual” is a must for new programs. The document provides over 100 pages of policies, procedures, forms, and letters which are particularly effective for the program design phase. Additional program materials and mentoring studies are also available.

National Mentoring Partnership

<http://www.mentoring.org>

The National Mentoring Partnership provides considerable information on the design and implementation of mentoring programs, including the “Elements of Effective Practice Toolkit.” This site also offers information on the development of after-school programs.

Public/Private Ventures

http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/I53_publication.pdf

Among the many mentoring studies available through Public/Private Ventures is “Group Mentoring: A Study of Mentoring Groups in Three Organizations.” This free downloadable publication addresses many areas, including effectiveness of group mentoring, mentor-to-youth ratios, program duration, program goals, frequently discussed topics, and outcomes for mentees.

Start Something

<http://startsomething.target.com>

The Tiger Woods Foundation and Target have joined together to provide a no-cost curriculum for young people ages 8 to 17. Although not made specifically for mentoring programs, these materials focus on such useful topics as character development, service learning, and career exploration. The lessons are organized into ten units of two- to four-hours, with a Teacher’s Guide and Student Guide activity books for three age/grade levels. Students who complete the program receive a Certificate of Completion and a scholarship application. The curriculum can be downloaded from the site, or agencies may order the free activity books. Available in English and Spanish.



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MENTORING *Tactics*

Mentoring is an effective and increasingly popular approach for creating positive change in young people's lives. Early results from mentoring programs are promising, suggesting that positive, consistent attention from an adult, even a non-relative, can create change.

The Mentoring Technical Assistance Project provides free technical assistance and training to new and existing community and school-based programs that work with youth. The project also provides free Mentoring Plus workshops and regional trainings. Please contact CARS for more information.

To receive free mentoring consultation services please complete the online application at: www.carsmentoring.org/TA/index.php and fax to CARS at 916.983.5738. Contact Erika Urbani, eurbani@cars-rp.org for further details at 916.983.9506.

LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!

We welcome readers' comments on topics presented.

Call us at 916.983.9506

Fax us at 916.983.5738

**Or send an email to
kheard@cars-rp.org**

Additional copies of this publication are available upon request or online at:
www.cars-rp.org

Mentoring Tactics is published periodically by CARS under its Mentoring Project contract with the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. The purpose of this publication is to help agencies, coalitions, communities and programs in the mentoring field stay abreast of best practices emerging from current research and to provide practical tools and resources for implementing proven strategies.

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Edition 1:4

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Designer: Studio C