

# “THEY ALWAYS COME AND THEY NEVER SAY GOODBYE:” UNDERSTANDING HEALTHY CLOSURE IN YOUTH MENTORING

The Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series

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The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) is proud to facilitate the Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series, supported by The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and in partnership with the following *Mentoring Partnerships*: **Indiana Mentoring Partnership, Kansas Mentors, the Mentoring Center of Central Ohio, the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, Institute for Youth Success**(formerly Oregon Mentors), **and the Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania.**

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## **“They always come, and they never say goodbye:” Understanding Healthy Closure in Youth Mentoring**

The way that a relationship ends can have a big impact on a young person. When done with care and intention, closure can be healthy and positive. Join this webinar to hear from leading mentoring researcher Renée Spencer, Boston University, on how to close mentoring relationships the healthy way. We'll review research on closure, types of relationship endings, when and how to facilitate closure, as well as approaches to closure across programs and settings.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Examine new research on mentoring relationship endings including why relationships end and how attachment theory relates to healthy closure
2. Learn principles of healthy closure
3. Uncover strategies to determine when and how to close youth mentoring relationships

# New Benchmarks & Enhancements in the *Elements of Effective Practice* 4th Edition

## ***STANDARD 6: CLOSURE***

*Facilitate bringing the match to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of both the mentor and the mentee, and offers both individuals the opportunity to prepare and assess the experience*

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The content of this packet and webinar reinforce many of the best practices around closure featured in the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*<sup>™</sup>. This new edition will be released in late-summer and features many new research-informed Benchmarks and Enhancements on the topic effective match closure.

This new guidance for programs:

- Emphasizes planning and procedure development for the many different scenarios that can lead to match closure
- Recommends specific topics to address during the closure process
- Provides perspectives on rematching youth whose original matches have ended prematurely
- Honors the potential for preparing mentees to find their next mentors outside the context of your program

This new edition also offers a brand new justification section that explains the research basis for all Benchmarks and Enhancements, as well as an “exceptions” section that provides additional clarity on how different program models might meet or modify the recommendations.

***More information on the entire 4<sup>th</sup> Edition to come over the summer!***

## Healthy Closure Program Quiz

1. Does your program provide participants including youth, mentors, and parents information on the expected length of mentoring relationships and how you support relationship closure?

**YES**

**NO**

2. If you answered yes, how does your program support closure?

3. Does your program identify varying options for closure and/or relationship transitions?

**YES**

**NO**

4. If you answered yes, when does your program plan and facilitate closure?

5. Does your program have a process in place to identify if matches nearing their initial program commitment plan to continue the relationship or participation in the program?

**YES**

**NO**

6. If you answered yes, please describe the process.

7. Does your program re-match youth and/or adults whose initial relationship ended?

**YES**

**NO**

8. If so, when and under what circumstances?

9. Does your program conduct an exit interview for volunteers, youth and parents?

**YES**

**NO**

10. Does your program utilize a relationship closure agreement and/or continued contact form?

# Relationship Endings

In the field of mentoring we call the process of ending or transitioning youth and adult relationships, closure.

Before we dive into research related to relationship closure try completing the reflection exercise below.

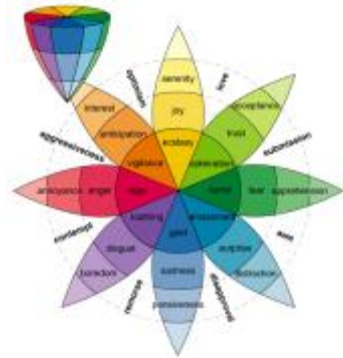
## Ending a Close Personal Relationship:

Using the space below reflect on your experience ending a close personal relationship. The relationship ending you choose is completely up to you. Examples include: saying goodbye to close friends after a major life transition like leaving your hometown or college; ending a close friendship or marriage; or dealing with the death of a friend or loved one.

In the space provided please answer the following questions related to your experience ending a close personal relationship.

1) How was the relationship ending handled by you?

Reflection Exercise



2) How did your response make you feel?

3) How was the relationship ending handled by the other person?

4) How did the other person's response make you feel?

5) What if anything could have made this a more positive experience for you?

6) What if anything could have made this a more positive experience for the other person?

Decline and dissolution are two common types of relationship endings identified by mentoring researcher Tom Keller Ph.D.<sup>i</sup>

### **Decline**

- Passive drifting apart
- Happens over time
- Levels of importance and closeness decrease

### **Dissolution**

- Active
- Happens instantly/in a short amount of time
- Intentional ending

In a formal youth mentoring relationship we hope the relationship ending occurs when the relationship's relevance has diminished, after the initial commitment. In reality mentoring relationships end for variety of reasons and unfortunately, as many as half end before the initial time commitment.<sup>ii</sup>

Regardless of the reason(s) for a mentoring relationship's end, research demonstrates the importance of carrying out a "positive and growth-promoting" closure process for youth.<sup>iii</sup>

## **Research on Closure in Youth Mentoring Relationships**

### **Breaking Up is Hard to Do: How & Why Mentoring Relationships<sup>iv</sup>**

In this qualitative study researchers learned that strong mentoring relationships predicted planned, less damaging transitions while weaker relationships predicted poor endings –sometimes planned but not carried out, or not planned and not carried out.

#### Reasons for Relationships Endings:

1. Changes in life circumstances
2. Youth dissatisfaction or disinterest
3. Mentor dissatisfaction
4. Gradual dissolution
5. Mentor abandonment

#### Types of Procedural Endings:

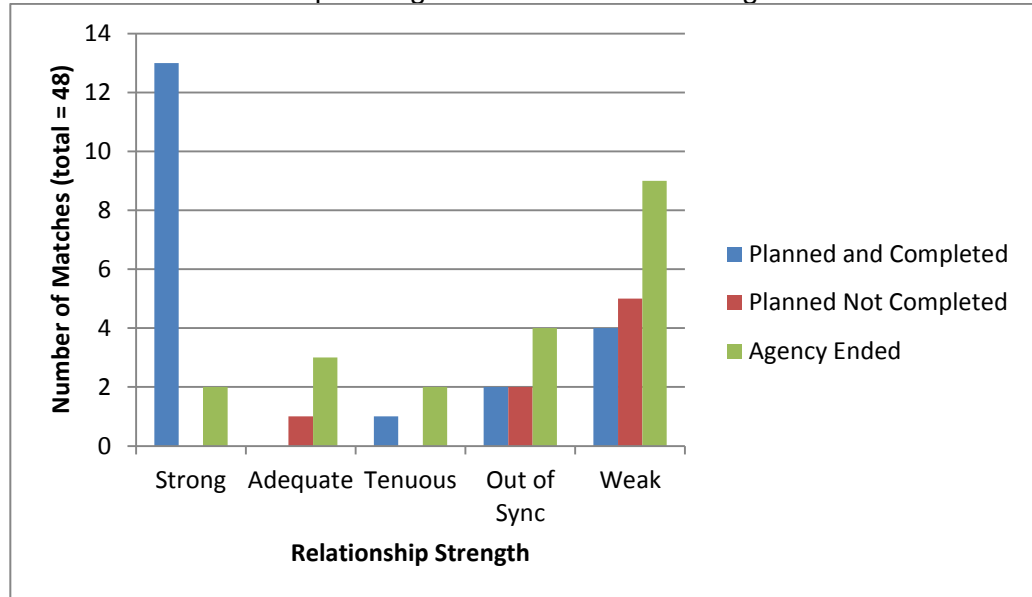
- a. Planned & completed formal ending
- b. Planned but not completed
- c. Agency ended

#### Variations of Match Strength:

- Strong
- Adequate
- Tenuous

- Out of Sync
- Weak

FIGURE 1. Relationship Strength and Reason for Ending



### Breaking bad: an attachment perspective on youth mentoring relationship closures<sup>v</sup>

The ending of a mentoring relationship can spark strong emotions that influence the outcome of the entire relationship. In this article researchers examine how to apply attachment theory to relationship endings to help programs understand how to prevent premature and poorly handled relationship transitions.

### It's not What I Expected<sup>vi</sup>

This qualitative study of early relationship endings in mentoring programs (Spencer, 2007) points to other factors which contribute to premature relationship endings. An analysis of in-depth interviews with 31 adult and youth participants in two community-based mentoring programs revealed the following patterns as to why mentoring relationships end early:

1. Mentor or mentee abandonment
2. Perceived lack of mentee motivation
3. Unfulfilled expectations
4. Deficiencies in mentor's relational skills including cultural competency
5. Family interference
6. Inadequate agency support



### **The Test of Time<sup>vii</sup>**

In 2002, Jean Grossman and Jean Rhodes partnered for this important study to examine the influence of relationship length on youth outcomes. Dr. Grossman and Dr. Rhodes studied 1,138 youth in eight BBBS agencies, plus a control group. Several important concepts were explored, including the impact of match duration and relationship quality on youth outcomes, as well as the youth and parent relationship, and the youth's feelings about scholastic competence, grades, attendance, and self-worth. This study discovered a link between the length of relationship and positive outcomes for youth.

- Youth matched 12 months or more showed significant improvements in self-worth, parent relations, feelings of social acceptance and scholastic competence, and decreases in drug and alcohol use.
- Youth matched less than three months showed significant decreases in self-worth and feelings of scholastic competence.
- Match duration's biggest predictor was relationship quality

### **Mentoring At Risk Youth (MARY)<sup>viii</sup>**

In this 2013 study researchers examined the benefits of mentoring for youth with varying risk profiles. During the study they found that 40% of youth experienced a premature relationship ending –the relationship did not meet the minimum program expectations. In more than half of these cases, the relationship was ended by the adult for the following reasons:

- 33% cited terminating the relationship early because the youth did not show enough interest.
- 17% cited terminating the relationship early because of the impression that the youth did not need a mentor.
- In only 10% of the cases did mentors report closing prematurely because the youth's needs were too severe.
- 37% of youth participants reported symptoms of clinical depression.

### **TRUE OR FALSE**

In the above referenced study, mentors often ended the relationship early or quit unexpectedly because they believed the youth's needs were too severe.

Considering the reasons for relationship endings found in Renee Spencer's (2014) qualitative findings, which if any do you believe cause premature relationship endings in your program or organization?

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***First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships<sup>ix</sup>***

Leading youth mentoring researchers Jean Rhodes and Renée Spencer published an article in 2002 on ethical principles in mentoring in response to one of the most significant findings demonstrated by their research –nearly half of all mentoring relationships terminate prematurely.<sup>x</sup> This evidence is even more troubling when we consider research also demonstrates that youth involved in mentoring relationships that end prematurely show increases in problem behavior.

The ethical principles defined in this article combine to establish the premise that mentoring relationships should first and foremost do no harm. The principles summarized below were developed in collaboration with the code of ethics of the American Psychological Association (APA), mental health professionals, and formal mentoring program administrators.

1. Model behavior that benefits the good of another and helps them avoid harm
  - Report Abuse
  - Don't create disappointments
2. Keep one's word
  - Ratchet down expectations
  - Keep commitments
  - Plan transition
3. Act with integrity/avoid setting up false expectations
  - Do not encourage false expectations
  - Communicate issues and concerns
  - Avoid financial commitments
4. Practice good judgment and do not engage in unfair discrimination
  - Explore and address biases and prejudices
  - Be conscious of and sensitive to your level of power and authority in the relationship. Do not reinforce oppression.
5. Respect young person's right to self-determination
  - Maintain confidentiality
  - Honor youth and family's right to self-determination.

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## Timing of Closure:


Qualitative research from youth mentoring researcher Renée Spencer Ph.D., demonstrates that failing to provide some sort of resolution or closure ritual at the end of a relationship can be damaging for youth, particularly for those who've been let down in their relationships with adults in the past. These children may be more likely to become vulnerable to negative feelings resulting from poor relationship endings.

When examining relationship endings psychotherapy literature refers to the concept of psychological separation. This term refers to a kind of individual transformation that occurs when the nature of a relationship changes.

A simple way to visualize psychological separation is to imagine a relationship as a bridge. Both parties to the relationship represent pillars to the bridge that support the connecting roadway, the relationship.

When either party to the relationship experiences psychological separation, which can result from a number of factors, the pillar (individual) no longer functions in the same way to support the bridge (relationship). As a result the shape or structure of the relationship changes; disappearing, transforming, collapsing, or becoming obsolete.

The key to functional closure lies in an appropriately timed closure ritual. Even under non-ideal or unexpected circumstances a closure process can remain functional when it provides the youth an opportunity to prepare for the changed level of support and reflect on the relationship.



	<b>Early Relationship Ending</b>	<b>Well-Timed Relationship Ending</b>	<b>Overdue Relationship Ending</b>
<b>Functional</b>	Unexpected but Structured (unplanned, but completed ending) <i>sadness, pensiveness</i>	Expected and Structured (planned and completed ending) <i>Satisfaction, admiration</i>	Delayed but Structured (unplanned, but completed agency ending) <i>frustration, acceptance</i>
<b>Dysfunctional</b>	Unexpected and Unstructured (unplanned and not completed ending) <i>abandonment, fear, anger</i>	Expected and Unstructured (planned and not completed ending) <i>anticipation, confusion</i>	Delayed and Unstructured (unplanned, and not completed agency ending) <i>resentment, dissatisfaction</i>

Considering the psychological impacts associated with dysfunctional relationship endings, the following recommendations for mentoring programs help participants prepare for healthy closure.

### **Mentoring Programs Should Aim For**

- Clear program goals & expectations for the relationship commitment (duration & frequency)
- Regular communication with participants to learn when goals are reached, celebrate achievement, and establish new goals/expectations

### **Mentoring Programs Should Avoid**

- Early terminations and unmet program expectations
- Letting matches carry on until they eventually drift apart

#### *Considerations for closing a mentoring relationship*

- How relevant is the relationship to both parties?**
  - Neither party is engaged
  - One or both parties are somewhat engaged.
  - Both parties are consistently engaged.
- What is the quality of youth and adult interactions?**
  - Poor –the adult doesn't employ a positive, youth directed approach and the youth doesn't respond to the mentor.
  - Adequate –the adult applies elements of a positive, youth directed approach and the youth is somewhat responsive.
  - Strong –the adult consistently builds positive, youth directed interactions and the young person is highly responsive.
- What's the youth and adult's level of commitment to pre-established program expectations?**
  - Unmet: not meeting program guidelines for the length and frequency of interactions, frequent cancellations or missed meetings.
  - Satisfactory: Meeting program guidelines for the length and frequency of interactions with few rescheduled meetings.
  - Exceeding: Exceeding program guidelines for the length and frequency of interactions with meetings rarely rescheduled.

## Hypothetical Scenario

A 10 year old boy from a single parent household has been matched with a 24-year-old male mentor in your program for 6 months. The volunteer wanted to mentor to learn more about working with kids.

- The pair meets fairly consistently, the mentor's re-scheduled twice.
- They generally spend time together playing basketball at the local community center.
- When the youth is asked about how it's going with his mentor he says; "fine." Similarly, when the mentor is asked about the relationship's progress he states; "good I guess."
- On his way out of the community center last week you overheard the mentor express relief to another volunteer, "I'm half-way done with this."

How would you handle this situation?

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## Principles of Healthy Closure



Based on his research of relationship endings in Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring relationships, Kevin Jones, Ph.D. developed the following 3 principles to healthy closure.

1. Be clear & honest about closure
2. Make it positive!
3. Develop appropriate and realistic plans for continued communication

### 1. Be clear & honest about closure

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Make it positive!

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Develop appropriate and realistic plans for continued communication

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_

# Managing Healthy Closure

## Anticipated & Unanticipated Closures

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## When to Consider Re-Matching

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## Performing Exit Interviews

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## Formal Closure Agreement/ Continued Contact Form

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## When to Talk About Closure

- Orientation
- Pre-enrollment Training
- On-going Support / Periods of Transition
- On-going Trainings

*Examples of closure in varying program models*

**School-based:** Generally in school-based mentoring programs relationships are expected to last the length of the school year, typically 9 months. Sometimes students are not matched with a mentor until mid-way through the school year causing reduced relationship durations, in some instances as short as 6 months. Closure in these programs is typically described in the beginning of the relationship, discussed throughout program involvement, and often facilitated as a large group with a formal celebratory closure event for all participants at the end of the school year.

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**Community-based:** Closures are generally much more dynamic in community-based, one-to-one mentoring programs as the needs of participants vary widely. Many community-based mentoring programs ask for a one year commitment from both youth and volunteers. Closure is discussed in the beginning of the relationship and throughout engagement. Approximately two months prior to match's one year anniversary a program coordinator speaks with both the mentor and mentee to learn their interest and availability in continuing the relationship. Depending on these conversations a new program commitment is defined or a closure process is planned and facilitated.

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**Group mentoring programs:** Most group mentoring program define a clear beginning and end to group interactions. Though some programs do establish an admissions phase where youth can join for a period of weeks until the group is officially established. In a group mentoring program the closure process is often incorporated into the theme of the group and the purpose for meeting. For example, in a Lego Robotics group mentoring program closure might occur alongside the culminating competition and celebration.

*Innovations in Closure*

Today programs are incorporating innovative practices around the time of closure that support youth to identify and build natural mentoring relationships.

- For example in addition to a formalized closure process Youth Build, USA also provides youth participants training and resources on how to tell their story, identify healthy adult supports, and make a request for natural mentoring support.

*Finding Mentors Finding Success: A Guide to finding and engaging supportive adults throughout your life*  
[http://youthbuildmentoringalliance.org/webfm\\_send/723](http://youthbuildmentoringalliance.org/webfm_send/723)



- Other programs support youth with eco-mapping –helping young people identify existing, healthy adult supports in their lives and then providing opportunities for youth to develop and apply relationship building communication skills.
- Some site-based programs incorporate elements of closure into every interaction between youth and adults, helping both youth and adults practice critical reflection and communication skills. This consistency supports clear expectations from day one and throughout a final closure celebration. See Michael Karcher’s 3,2,1 Activity Reflection below.<sup>xi</sup>

### **Touching Base: 3-2-1 Weekly Reflection at the Start of Meeting**

#### **Step 1: Mentor Models**

- Mentor shares 3 good things that happened this week
- Mentor shares 2 bad things that happened this week
- Mentor shares 1 thing they are hopeful about

#### **Step 2: Mentee does the Same**

- Mentee shares 3 good things that happened this week
- Mentee shares 2 bad things that happened this week
- Mentee shares 1 thing they are hopeful about

**Step 3:** Mentor takes the lead in sharing ideas for problem solving an issue that may come up during the activity.

### **Touching Base: 3-2-1 Activity Reflection at the End of the Meeting**

#### **Step 1: Mentor Models**

- Mentor shares 3 good things that happened this day together or activities you enjoyed doing
- Mentor shares 2 bad things that happened this day together or activities you did not enjoy doing
- Mentor shares 1 thing they might do differently in the future

#### **Step 2: Mentee does the Same**

- Mentee shares 3 good things that happened this day together or activities you enjoyed doing
- Mentee shares 2 bad things that happened this day together or activities you did not enjoy doing
- Mentee shares 1 thing they might do differently in the future

Consider the top two reasons why youth and adult relationships in your program end prematurely, and use the space below to share one or two strategies your program can employ to nurture healthy relationship closures.

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## Closure Resources

1. Avoiding Early Termination Factsheet. US Department of Education Mentoring Resource Center.  
[http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm\\_send/287](http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/287)
2. Grossman, J.B., Chan, C.S., Schwartz, S.E.O., & Rhodes, J.E. (2011). The test of time in school-based mentoring: The role of relationship duration and re-matching on academic outcomes. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. Advance online publication. DOI 10.1007/s10464-011-9435-0.
3. Match Closure Summary from Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual [http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm\\_send/174](http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/174)
4. Karcher, Michael. Termination Rituals. Assistant Professor, Counseling & Educational Psychology (CEPAHE), College of Education and Human Development, University of Texas, San Antonio.  
[http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring\\_605.doc](http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_605.doc)
5. Kremer, Sarah. Friendship Review. Friends for Youth Mentoring Journal.  
<http://www.friendsforyouth.org/MentorJournal.html>
6. Quality in Action Webinar: Why Youth Mentoring Relationships End from the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota.  
<http://www.slideshare.net/traininginstitute/septembers-quality-in-action-webinarwhy-youth-mentoring-relationships-end>
7. Rhodes, J. & Spencer, R. "First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships." *American Psychological Association*. Vol. 40, No5, 452-458. (2009)
8. Rhodes, J. *Stand By Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (2002).
9. Weinberger, Susan. Termination Contracts. Mentor Consulting Group.  
[www.mentorconsultinggroup.com](http://www.mentorconsultinggroup.com)

# Appendix

## Closure Policy/Procedure

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This sample closure policy was compiled by staff at Institute for Youth Success using our knowledge and examples from the field. This sample policy can be modified to fit the context of your specific mentoring program. Your closure policy should be detailed in writing in your employee and volunteer handbooks. The policy should be reviewed for new staff, volunteers, and youth participants during program orientations and throughout the life of the mentoring relationship.

### Ending the Mentoring Relationship

#### *Research Informed Practice:*

Research in the field of youth mentoring demonstrates that youth involved in mentoring relationships that end prematurely show increases in problem behavior.<sup>xii</sup> This research informs a program best practice of emphasizing expectations for both adult and youth participants around the expected length of the relationship, frequency of interactions, and process for healthy closure. These practices are particularly important for programs supporting youth who may have been let down by their relationships with adults in the past, as these children are more likely to become vulnerable to negative feelings resulting from poor relationship endings.<sup>xiii</sup>

#### *Agency Statement:*

*(Insert name of agency)* has adopted a consistent policy and process for managing both anticipated and unanticipated relationship closure among mentoring program participants. Regardless of the reason for relationship closure, it is the policy of our agency that all mentors and mentees participate in a closure process when their match ends to help them debrief their experience and attain healthy relationship closure. Neither the youth nor mentor is expected to continue the relationship beyond *(Insert name of agency's)* commitment of one year. If a match decides to continue in the program beyond the defined period, they will receive ongoing support and supervision until they notify the program of their interest in formally closing the relationship. *(Insert name of agency)* will follow the closure procedure outlined below as closely as possible; however, this process may vary depending on the circumstances surrounding the match ending.

#### *Anticipated Closure:*

Closure, or the formal ending of the mentoring relationship, can occur for any number of reasons including: “the contracted match duration has ended, one or both participants do not want to continue the match, there are changes in life circumstances of either the mentor or mentee, or an individual no longer meets the requirements for program participation. Hence, the match may end at the discretion of the mentor, mentee, parent/guardian, and/or program coordinator.”<sup>xiv</sup> In the case of anticipated closure, a mentor coordinator should employ the following process:

1. Discuss reasons for the match ending with youth, mentor, and parent individually, prior to facilitating a closure meeting. This conversation should first occur with the party initiating relationship closure. During this conversation the mentor coordinator should also learn if the pair would like to participate in a celebratory closure activity in addition to the program closure meeting such as visiting their favorite park or creating a collage.
2. Learn the adult's intention for continued contact and confirm whether this plan works for the youth and his or her family. Here the mentor coordinator should ask the mentor and youth to be honest regarding their continued expectations and availability.
3. Prior to an in-person closure meeting, the mentor coordinator should encourage both the youth and adult to brainstorm highlights and challenges of the mentoring relationship, which they are willing to share during an in-person meeting. The mentor coordinator can provide feedback to help both the youth and adult frame their feelings and reflections in a constructive light during the closure meeting.
4. If the match is not participating in a celebratory activity prior to the closure meeting, the coordinator should encourage both the youth and adult to bring a hand-crafted or symbolic item to the closure meeting to commemorate the experience and share as a gift with their match mate.
5. Summarize all of the above in an in-person closure meeting.

*Components of the Closure Meeting:*

- ✓ Coordinator introduces him/herself and sets the tone and purpose for the meeting. Coordinator should begin by highlighting the accomplishments of the match.

*"We're here today to celebrate the mentoring relationship between Joe and Stephen. In the last year, Joe and Stephen spent more than 100 hours together enjoying their favorite pass-times such as playing baseball, going to the movies, and making pizzas. During this time, they participated in 6 group activities, and volunteered 8 hours to help fill food baskets at the Oregon Food Bank. I would like to thank you, Joe and Stephen for your commitment to this program and to each other, and commend you both for setting a wonderful example for our other program participants."*

- ✓ Coordinator should transition the meeting based on the information provided by the mentor and youth during conversations conducted prior to the closure meeting.

*"Joe has shared with me that he is unable to continue his participation in the formal mentoring relationship because he's taking a new job and will not have much time as he transitions into his new position. Joe has also shared that*

*he's thoroughly enjoyed getting to know you, Stephen, and he would like to continue spending time with you on special occasions approximately 4-5 times a year. When we spoke on the phone Stephen you agreed that you'd like to continue to see Joe on special occasions throughout the year. Today you and Joe can develop a plan to decide when you'll spend time together and how you'll be in contact with each other and we will outline this information in a "continued contact form."*

- ✓ Coordinator should have both parties share successes of their relationship. After successes are shared, the coordinator should have both parties share challenges of their relationship.

*"Thank you both for sharing some of the successes and challenges related to your mentoring relationship. Your feedback will help me improve in my role as a mentor coordinator and will help our program better support mentoring relationships like yours."*

- ✓ Coordinator should summarize information shared during the meeting.

*"It sounds like one of the biggest challenges in your mentoring relationship had to do with following through on your commitments. You both shared that there were times in your relationship when one or both of you neglected to follow through on something you said you would do, and this caused some frustration and hurt feelings. On the other hand, when you did follow through on your commitments, you also shared that you always had a really good time together! This made each of you feel good because you understood that you both appreciated your time together. Does this sound right?"*

- ✓ Coordinator should support participants to problem solve challenges related to the relationship to help the pair set a transition plan for future interactions.

*"To help each other improve on following through with your commitments, you've agreed to do the following when you plan an activity together:*

- Share your activity idea and why it's important to you
- Date and time
- Schedule a reminder follow up

- ✓ Coordinator will have parent, mentor, and youth sign a "Termination Agreement" and "Continued Contact Form" and provide signed copies of each form to all parties. Coordinator will verbally reiterate to all parties that future contact between youth and adult will be at the mutual and informal agreement of the mentor, mentee, and the parent/guardian and that *(Insert name of agency)* is no longer responsible for monitoring and supporting the match, and will not be liable for any incidents that occur after the match has closed.

- ✓ Mentor coordinator will ask the youth and mentor to complete an "Exit Survey" and "Program Survey." In the "Exit Survey", both the mentor and youth can further explore their feelings associated with the transition or closure of the relationship. In this document, the youth may offer feedback that he or she was not comfortable stating during the meeting. For younger

children or youth who may have difficulty verbalizing their feelings, the coordinator can offer the participant an opportunity to draw their reflections. The "Program Survey" will collect participant feedback related to their experience with the program, not the relationship. This survey should also be administered to parents/guardians.

- ✓ Lastly, the mentor coordinator will store the signed "Termination Agreement", "Continued Contact" form, "Exit Surveys", and "Program Surveys" in the youth's file and then document his or her observations of the closure meeting in the "Match Closure Summary" form.

*Unanticipated Closure:*

In the event that a mentor or youth disappears or must exit the program abruptly, (*Insert name of agency*) will offer structured relationship transition support to the remaining party. When dealing with unanticipated closure, a mentor coordinator should stick to the anticipated closure process as much as possible while strategizing alternatives where necessary. For example, if a mentee has already moved out of town and has forced the unanticipated closure of the match, the mentor coordinator could conduct a closure meeting via Skype or have mentor and mentee write reflection letters and mail "Termination Agreements" to all relevant parties.

If a mentor disappears, the match coordinator will conduct a closure celebration with the mentee where he or she learns challenges and successes of the relationship from the perspective of the youth. The mentor coordinator will highlight the strengths of the youth and emphasize that he or she is not responsible for the abrupt ending of the mentoring relationship. The mentor coordinator should use this meeting to determine if the youth is a strong candidate to be re-matched. A coordinator should consider the following when re-matching.

1. Does the youth's level of need/challenges align with your program's level of service? Is he/she experiencing both environmental and behavioral challenges that would be better served by a program that combines mentoring with other support services?
2. Are both the youth and parent receptive to your program and being re-matched?
3. Does the youth require a mentor with specific skills?
4. What were the reasons for the previous relationship's end; particularly can challenges be mitigated to ensure the successful completion of a new relationship?

Responses to the above considerations should be documented in the youth's "Match Closure Summary."

## CLOSURE INTERVIEW FORM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Matching: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Termination:  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. What caused the termination?
2. Does the mentor have any suggestions for making the program more successful?
3. Does the mentee have any suggestions for making the program more successful?
4. Are there any misunderstandings or other issues to be resolved?
5. Would the mentor like to be re-matched? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
6. Would the mentee like to be re-matched? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

Form completed by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

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Courtesy of the Maryland Mentoring Partnership, *Vision to Reality Mentoring Program Development Guide*.



RECOMMENDED TEMPLATE  
**PARENT/GUARDIAN CLOSURE AND TERMINATION AGREEMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program

I (name of Parent/Guardian) \_\_\_\_\_ am the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Mentee) \_\_\_\_\_ a Mentee, in the \_\_\_\_\_

Mentoring Program.

On (Date) \_\_\_\_\_ I was notified by the \_\_\_\_\_ Program that the relationship between my child and his/her mentor \_\_\_\_\_ (name of mentor) has been terminated. As of (Date) \_\_\_\_\_, she/he is no longer involved in the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program. I understand and consent that as of this date my child is **not permitted** to engage in any activities or contact with said Mentor (e.g. scheduled or unscheduled visits, activities, meetings in the community or beyond, public places, designated site, said Mentor's home or mine, or by any other means including via telephone, e-mail, text or social media) under the auspices and supervision of the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program. Any such contact will be the full responsibility of the Mentor and Mentee with my consent.

Further, I hereby fully release, discharge and hold harmless the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program, participating organizations and all of the foregoing employees, officers, directors, and coordinators from any and all liability, claims, causes of action, costs and expenses which may be or may at any time hereafter become attributable to participation in and termination from the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program.

I have read this Closure and Termination Agreement and fully agree to its contents.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

Note: It is recommended that Mentoring Programs seek counsel of an attorney in order to individualize this agreement to best meet the needs of their program.

RECOMMENDED TEMPLATE  
**MENTEE CLOSURE AND TERMINATION AGREEMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program

I (name of Mentee) \_\_\_\_\_ have been a mentee, currently age \_\_\_\_\_ since (Month, Day, Year) \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program. My mentor's name is \_\_\_\_\_.

On (Date) \_\_\_\_\_ I met with said Mentor and program official and agreed to terminate my relationship with said Mentor. As of (Date) \_\_\_\_\_, I am no longer engaged as a Mentee in the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program. I understand and consent that as of this date I am **not permitted** to engage in any activities or contact said Mentor (e.g. scheduled or unscheduled visits, activities, meetings in the community or beyond, public places, designated site, said Mentor's home or mine, or by any other means including via telephone, e-mail, text or social media) under the auspices and supervision of the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program. Any such contact will be the full responsibility of the Mentor and Mentee.

Further, I hereby fully release, discharge and hold harmless the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program, participating organizations and all of the foregoing employees, officers, directors, and coordinators from any and all liability, claims, causes of action, costs and expenses which may be or may at any time hereafter become attributable to my participation in and termination from the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program.

I have read this Closure and Termination Agreement and fully agree to its contents.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Note: It is recommended that Mentoring Programs seek counsel of an attorney in order to individualize this agreement to best meet the needs of their program.

Prepared by Dr. Susan G. Weinberger, President Mentor Consulting Group DrMentor@aol.com

RECOMMENDED TEMPLATE  
**MENTOR CLOSURE AND TERMINATION AGREEMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program

I (name of Mentor) \_\_\_\_\_ have served as a Mentor to (Name of Mentee) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mentee), currently age \_\_\_\_\_ since (Month, Day, Year) \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program.

On (Date) \_\_\_\_\_ I met with said Mentee and program official and agreed to terminate my relationship with said Mentee. As of (Date) \_\_\_\_\_, I am no longer engaged as a Mentor in the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program. I understand and consent that as of this date I am **not permitted** to engage in any activities or contact said Mentee (e.g. scheduled or unscheduled visits, activities, meetings in the community or beyond, public places, designated site, said Mentee's home or mine, or by any other means including via telephone, e-mail, text or social media) under the auspices and supervision of the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program. Any such contact will be the full responsibility of the Mentor and Mentee.

Further, I hereby fully release, discharge and hold harmless the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program, participating organizations and all of the foregoing employees, officers, directors, and coordinators from any and all liability, claims, causes of action, costs and expenses which may be or may at any time hereafter become attributable to my participation in and termination from the \_\_\_\_\_ Mentoring Program.

I have read this Closure and Termination Agreement and fully agree to its contents.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Note: It is recommended that Mentoring Programs seek counsel of an attorney in order to individualize this agreement to best meet the needs of their program.

Prepared by Dr. Susan G. Weinberger, President Mentor Consulting Group  
DrMentor@aol.com

This sample continued contact statement was compiled by staff at Institute for Youth Success using our knowledge and examples from the field. Please refer to your governing board and/or legal counsel when defining your organization's liability as it pertains to future contact between program participants.

**Continued Contact Form**  
Insert Program Name and Address

This agreement is to inform the following participants (insert name of youth) \_\_\_\_\_ and (insert name of mentor) \_\_\_\_\_ of (insert name of mentoring program) that their mentoring relationship is formally closed and is no longer under the supervision and monitoring of (insert name of mentoring program). Any future contact between the participants listed above is at the sole discretion of the parties involved (mentor, youth, caretaker/guardian).

(Insert name of program) supports youth to flourish through committed mentoring relationships. We appreciate your participation and hope that you have benefited from the experience.

This agreement was distributed by \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of program coordinator) of (insert name of mentoring program) on \_\_\_\_\_ date.

As former participants in (insert name of mentoring program) we hereby acknowledge that our mentoring relationship is formally closed. We therefore hold harmless (insert name of mentoring program), and all employees, officers, directors and coordinators from any and all liability, claims or costs pertaining to any and all on-going interactions between ourselves which may be or may at any time hereafter become attributable to participation (insert name of mentoring program).	
Parent/Guardian _____	Date _____
Youth _____	Date _____

## Friendship Reviews

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Talk with your program staff to find out what happens next—is it time to close this friendship or is it possible to stay in touch? If you're going to continue your friendship, be sure to find out the details: How often can you meet? Will you need to stay in touch with your program? Make sure parents/guardians know about the arrangement, too.

If it's time to say good-bye, remember all the fun and positive experiences you had with your friend. Know that you'll always have that with you and you can return to this Journal whenever you need a reminder. Now that you've been successful with this friendship, it can be easier to start another one!

Whether your friendship is ending or continuing, take a few moments to reflect on your mentoring experience and share the answers with your friend and program staff.

What is your friendship like? How would you describe it?

Did you enjoy spending time with your friend?

How has your friend influenced you?

What was your favorite activity? What didn't you like & why?

How have you changed from this experience?

Do you have any advice for new mentees or mentors?

What do you think of the program?



This friendship review tool developed by Friends for Youth Mentoring Institute is a wonderful example of an exit interview tool for youth and mentors. This document is included in the *Mentoring Journal* published by Friends for Youth.

## Match Closure Summary

Name of Mentee: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

Match Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Closure Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Match: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the circumstance and check the reason for match closure

Planned	Mentor	Mentee
Completed one-year match		
Other, specify:		

Extenuating	Mentor	Mentee
Relocation		
Life Change		
Time/Schedule Conflict		
Family/Personal/Health Issues		
Other, specify:		

Difficult	Mentor	Mentee
Violation of Policy		
Behavioral Problems		
Lack of Cooperation with Agency		
Parent/Guardian Withdrew Youth		
Lost Interest		
Other, specify:		

Additional details concerning the closure:

Recommend rematch?      Mentor:  Yes  No |    Mentee:  Yes  No

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Place copy in both mentor and mentee files*

# SUPPORT PACT

We recognize that our mentoring relationship is no longer under supervision of the Mentoring Coordinator and support of (*insert name of agency*). In an effort to sustain an on-going friendship based on mutual support and understanding the following...

\_\_\_\_\_  
MENTOR

Pledges to provide specific support to, and has been accepted as a resource for such support by,

\_\_\_\_\_  
YOUTH

Confirmed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
DAY MONTH YEAR

List program and/or match identified support options below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

As part of this commitment we agree to stay in contact with each other regularly, which we define as, \_\_\_\_\_, via \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

EXAMPLE

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- i Keller, T. E. (2005) The stages and development of mentoring relationships. In D.L. DuBois & M.J. Karcher (Ed.), *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (pp. 82-99). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- ii Grossman, J.B., & Rhodes, J.E. (2002). The test of time: Predictors and effects of duration in youth mentoring programs. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30, 199-219.
- iii Spencer, R., Basualdo-Delmonico, A. Termination and closure of mentoring relationships. In D.L. DuBois & M.J. Karcher (Ed.) *Handbook of Youth Mentoring Second Edition*. (pp. 469-481). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- iv Spencer, R. et al. "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do: A Qualitative Interview Study of How and Why Youth Mentoring Relationships End." *Youth & Society* (2014): 0044118X14535416.
- v Zilberstein, K., & Spencer, R. (2014). Breaking bad: an attachment perspective on youth mentoring relationship closures. *Child & Family Social Work*.
- vi Spencer, R. "It's not what I expected": A Qualitative study of youth mentoring relationship failures. *Journal of Adolescent Research*. 22, 331-354.
- viii Herrera, Carla, David L. DuBois, and Jean Baldwin Grossman. "The Role of Risk: Mentoring Experiences and Outcomes for Youth with Varying Risk Profiles." *MDRC* (2013).
- ix Rhodes, J. & Spencer, R. "First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships." *American Psychological Association*. Vol. 40, No5, 452-458. (2009)
- xi Karcher, M.J. Ed. *The Cross-Age Mentoring Program (CAMP) for Children with Adolescent Mentors*. Program Manual. (pp. 78). 2012