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research

in action

Youth Mentoring:
Do Race and Ethnicity Really Matter?

About the Research in Action Series

Overview

Last year, MENTOR released the *National Agenda for Action: How to Close America's Mentoring Gap*. Representing the collective wisdom of the mentoring field, the *Agenda* articulates five key strategies and action items necessary to move the field forward and truly close the mentoring gap. In an effort to address one of these critical strategies—elevating the role of research—MENTOR created the Research and Policy Council, an advisory group composed of the nation's leading mentoring researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.

In September 2006, MENTOR convened the first meeting of the Research and Policy Council with the goal of increasing the connection and exchange of ideas among practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to strengthen the practice of youth mentoring. The *Research in Action* series is the first product to evolve from the work of the Council—taking current mentoring research and translating it into useful, user-friendly materials for mentoring practitioners.

With research articles written by leading scholars, the series includes ten issues on some of the most pressing topics facing the youth mentoring field:

- Issue 1: Mentoring: A Key Resource for Promoting Positive Youth Development
- Issue 2: Effectiveness of Mentoring Program Practices
- Issue 3: Program Staff in Youth Mentoring Programs: Qualifications, Training, and Retention
- Issue 4: Fostering Close and Effective Relationships in Youth Mentoring Programs
- Issue 5: Why Youth Mentoring Relationships End
- Issue 6: School-Based Mentoring
- Issue 7: Cross-Age Peer Mentoring
- Issue 8: Mentoring Across Generations: Engaging Age 50+ Adults as Mentors
- Issue 9: Youth Mentoring: Do Race and Ethnicity Really Matter?**
- Issue 10: Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners

Using the Series

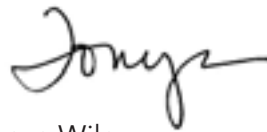
Each issue in the series is designed to make the scholarly research accessible to and relevant for practitioners and is composed of three sections:

1. **Research:** a peer-reviewed article, written by a leading researcher, summarizing the latest research available on the topic and its implications for the field;
2. **Action:** a tool, activity, template, or resource, created by MENTOR, with concrete suggestions on how practitioners can incorporate the research findings into mentoring programs; and
3. **Resources:** a list of additional resources on the topic for further research.


As you read the series, we invite you to study each section and consider what you can do to effectively link mentoring research with program practice. Please join us in thanking the executive editor, Dr. Jean Rhodes, and the authors of this issue, Dr. Belle Liang and Jennifer West, for graciously contributing their time and expertise to this project.



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Youth Mentoring: Do Race and Ethnicity Really Matter?

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Introduction

Not all mentoring relationships are effective and, in some cases, they can do more harm than good to a child's soul (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). Given this knowledge and the recent explosion of formal youth mentoring programs, researchers have begun an exploration of the predictors of enduring and beneficial matches—from the mentor's competence to the mentor-mentee fit (Liang & Rhodes, 2007). Given that mentees in formal mentoring programs typically represent diverse demographics, whereas most mentors are White (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Sipe, 1996), the question of whether mentors and youth should be matched based on demographic characteristics such as race and ethnicity has been hotly debated.

This article will summarize and distill research on youth mentoring that helps answer questions such as:

1. Does it matter whether mentors and mentees are matched on race and ethnicity?
2. Are same-race matches necessarily more beneficial than cross-race matches?
3. Do ethnicity and race affect the way mentors and mentees relate?
4. Are there other ways in which mentors, and mentoring programs, can foster cultural sensitivity in mentoring relationships?

Moreover, we will make recommendations for translating research into action and illustrate with a case example of a culturally sensitive mentoring program.

Does It Matter Whether Mentors and Mentees are Matched on Race and Ethnicity?

Although little research focuses on race and ethnicity issues among younger youth in formal mentoring programs, some research on the natural and formal mentoring relationships of late adolescent or college-aged ethnic minorities suggests that cultural differences seem to play a role in the expectation, attainment, and experience of mentoring (Liang, Tracy, Kauh, Taylor, & Williams, 2006). For example, Black mentors compared with White mentors more often initiated connections with Black mentees to play a role in their

personal and professional development (Kalbfleisch & Davies, 1991). Similarly, Latino students who were matched with mentors of the same race perceived them to be more helpful in their personal and career development, and they were more satisfied with their mentoring programs than were students who had mentors of a different race (Santos & Reigadas, 2000).

Indeed, studies of natural mentoring relationships show that when youth choose their own mentors, they tend to seek mentors from the same racial or ethnic background (Cavell, Meehan, Heffer, & Holladay, 2002; Jackson, Kite, & Branscombe, 1996; Klaw & Rhodes, 1995; Sanchez & Colon, 2005) and mentors of the same gender (Chen, Greenberger, Farruggia, Bush, & Dong, 2003; Sanchez & Reyes, 1999). This may be due to the fact that perceived similarity has been associated with mentees' level of satisfaction with the relationship as well as mentors' fondness of mentees (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). Thus, same-race matches seem to matter to many youth mentees and have a potential impact on initial attraction and expectations for the relationship.

Are Same-Race Matches Necessarily More Beneficial than Cross-Race Matches?

The fact that youth naturally gravitate toward mentors of the same racial or ethnic background does not necessarily mean that same-race matches are ultimately more beneficial than cross-race matches. Studies on formal mentoring programs comparing the benefits of same-race and cross-race matches have produced mixed findings. For example, one study revealed that youth in same-race matches, compared to those in cross-race matches, reported receiving more instrumental support (Ensher & Murphy, 1997). Matching by race, however, was not associated with youth-reported levels of emotional support or youths' satisfaction with their mentors. Instead, this study suggested that mentees in cross-race matches might be just as satisfied as those in same-race matches if they perceive themselves to be similar to their mentors in other ways. Similarly, in a study of 476 African-American, Latino, American Indian, and Asian American youth, Rhodes and colleagues (Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman, & Lee, 2002) compared same-race and cross-race matches (where all cross-race mentors were White Americans). When matches were based on shared interests, geographic proximity, and youth and parental preferences for same-race pairs, no differences were found for the same-race and cross-race groups in the frequency of meetings and duration of relationships.

Interestingly, one study found that when gender was taken into account, greater benefits for same-race matches were found (Rhodes et al., 2002). Specifically, compared to boys in cross-race matches, boys in same-race matches were more likely to demonstrate increases in academic competence and self-esteem; girls in same-race matches compared

to girls in cross-race matches were more likely to show increases in school value and self-esteem. This study, however, does not provide definitive evidence of the superiority of same-race matches; the reported results may be due to differences in the benefits of same-sex versus cross-race relationships.

Do Ethnicity and Race Affect the Way Mentors and Mentees Relate?

Ethnicity and race may play a role in the ways that mentors and mentees relate to each other. More specifically, the quality of mentoring relationships may be shaped by the way race-related issues are negotiated by mentor-mentee pairs. For example, cross-race matches may be affected by the degree of cultural sensitivity on the part of the mentor, cultural mistrust on the part of the mentee, and feedback provided to the mentee (Sanchez & Colon, 2005). One study of African-Americans in late adolescence working with White mentors showed that the closeness and effectiveness of the match could be affected by how feedback from mentors is given to mentees (Cohen, Steele, & Ross, 1999). Critical feedback was interpreted negatively by mentees when not accompanied by comments about: (a) the high standards used in judging the work, and (b) general praise indicating a belief in the mentee's ability to meet such standards. This study suggests that an important dilemma for the mentor is how to give useful feedback in a way that is encouraging rather than discouraging.

Cultural values can also impact the types of mentors that are sought and the quality of the connection between mentor and mentee. For example, Sanchez and Colon (2005) posit that the cultural values of collectivism and individualism may determine whether youth are more likely to seek familial versus non-familial mentors, respectively. While youth from collectivist backgrounds may be more comfortable seeking out and communicating with multiple mentors who are members of their own extended family, youth from individualistic backgrounds may be more open to one-to-one relationships with adults outside the family.

Finally, cultural values may influence mentees' level of initiative, and result in the miscommunication or misinterpretation of social cues by culturally unaware mentors. For example, research on Asians suggests that despite their strong interest in mentoring relationships, they may be less likely than non-Asians to initiate and express this interest openly due to cultural differences in emotional expression and attempts to communicate respectful boundaries—qualities that are heightened in the hierarchical relationships of Asians (Liang et al., 2006). Thus, mentors who are insensitive to these cultural characteristics may be less apt to recognize a young Asian person's interest in the mentoring relationship and reciprocate interest.

How Do We Foster Cultural Sensitivity in Mentoring?: Translating Research into Practice

Ethnicity and race might affect many aspects of the mentoring relationship (e.g., mentees' selection of mentors, the benefits obtained in same-race matches versus cross-race matches, and ways of relating between mentees and their mentors). As a result, a number of questions arise regarding the race and ethnicity match between mentor and mentee, such as: Does it matter if mentors and mentees are matched on race and ethnicity? Are same-race matches more beneficial than cross-race matches? Do ethnicity and race affect the way mentors and mentees relate? and, Are there other ways to foster cultural sensitivity in mentoring relationships?

In an attempt to explore possible answers to these questions, this section zeroes in on several key insights gleaned from research on race and ethnicity in formal mentoring programs, and then suggests ways of translating each of these points into action.

Insight 1: Ethnicity and race may influence a number of aspects of the mentoring relationship. Nevertheless, even when same-race matches may be desired, they may not be necessary to achieve satisfying and beneficial mentoring relationships. For example, some research shows that having similar interests and attitudes may be an even better predictor of mentees' satisfaction with and support received from their mentors than is demographic similarity (Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).

Action 1: Assess whether matching based on race or ethnicity is important to the mentee and/or the mentee's family during the screening process. If having a mentor with the same racial or ethnic background is of less importance to the mentee, or currently not possible due to unavailability, carefully match mentors and mentees based on similar interests and attitudes, and geographic proximity. Matching mentors and mentees based on similarities is important with all pairs, but may be especially critical in cross-race matches.

Insight 2: Research findings on the relative benefits of same-race versus cross-race matches are mixed. However, we do know that mentoring outcomes reflect more than the race and ethnicity match between mentor and mentee. Rather, they reflect the ways in which mentors respond to multiple characteristics of the mentee, including aspects of a mentee's racial identity and cultural values. Furthermore, studies reveal that mentors need to be culturally competent in order to develop a successful cross-race pair (Sanchez & Colon, 2005). Without training in specific competencies, the most well-intentioned mentors may make critical errors that negatively impact these relationships (Rhodes, 2002).

Action 2: Mentor training is critical given the shortage of same-race mentors, particularly for male youth of color (Rhodes, 2002). Ongoing training and support can help mentors better understand and relate to mentees of diverse backgrounds, and create more positive outcomes. Ongoing training and support for mentors should be characterized by special attention to cultural issues. Ways of identifying and addressing specific cultural issues, as well as the consequences of failing to do so are demonstrated by the Rural After-School Program for Latino(a) youth discussed on page 9 (Diversi & Mecham, 2005).

Insight 3: Differences in racial and ethnic background may influence the way in which mentors and mentees relate to one another (Sanchez & Colon, 2005). Therefore, a culturally-sensitive mentor with an understanding of the youth's values and worldview is critical to successful communication and connection (Liang et al., 2006). However, there are some common characteristics that seem to promote positive connections amongst all mentor-mentee pairs, regardless of racial and ethnicity match. Consistent with research identifying characteristics associated with quality mentoring relationships, the practice of mentoring should include attention to developmental and relational processes, enduring mentor commitments, and exploration of similarities between mentor and mentee (including racial, ethnic, and cultural background). Relational aspects of mentoring include mutual engagement, authenticity, empowerment, and learning to cope with conflict (Liang, Tracy, Taylor, & Williams, 2002; Liang, Spencer, Brogan, & Corral, in press; Spencer, 2006; Spencer, Jordan, & Sazama, 2004). To foster these types of relationships, mentors must recognize and thoughtfully engage with both the strengths and struggles of their mentees in ways that promote their growth and development (Cohen et al., 1999). Mentoring relationships may also benefit from a developmental rather than a prescriptive approach to mentor relationships—one that allows for mentee self-exploration, goal-setting, and mutual relationship development, rather than an approach that imposes goals for the mentoring relationship. In particular, exploration of commonalities can serve as an early and central step in connecting with a mentee, and may form a foundation for lasting relationship development (Ensher & Murphy, 1997; Rhodes et al., 2002).

Action 3: Foster close and satisfying mentor matches, regardless of the diverse backgrounds of mentors and mentees. Recruitment of mentors should target individuals who possess these relational qualities, value developmental aspects of mentor-mentee relationships, and are willing and able to invest time and energy in the mentoring process (e.g., mentors with limited participation of only one semester related to a course or other context may have limited potential to engage in a meaningful relationship with their mentees). Mentor training should include the development of relational "skills" (e.g., fostering mutual engagement, authenticity, empowerment, and dealing with differences and conflicts) in the context of the mentoring relationship.

Insight 4: Studies indicate that a one-size-fits-all approach is not always effective for mentoring relationships and programs (Grossman & Johnson, 1998; Reddy, Roffman, Grossman, & Rhodes, in press). While certain qualities of mentoring relationships (e.g., emphasis on authenticity, engagement, empowerment, and empathy in the relationship) may generalize across ethnicity and race, we need to consider other ways in which mentors and mentoring programs can foster cultural sensitivity. More specifically, youth from diverse backgrounds may present unique needs and opportunities for mentoring relationships. For example, youth may approach mentoring relationships with certain expectations for and ways of relating within hierarchical relationships influenced by their cultural values. Moreover, youth of color may face challenges of racism, as well as other culture-specific struggles, that may negatively affect their school success and psychological well-being (Gonzales & Kim, 1997; Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2001), which are two commonly targeted outcomes in mentoring programs (Linnehan, 2001). Thus, mentoring that takes into account cultural and racial issues may support these youth in vitally relevant ways.

Action 4: Design mentoring programs that are sensitive to theory and research on the cultural characteristics of the youth populations served. Combining universally beneficial aspects of mentoring programs with responsiveness to the diverse backgrounds and needs of mentored youth may enhance the applicability and effectiveness of mentoring relationships.

Insight 5: This article suggests mentoring programs should increase attention to issues having to do with race and ethnicity in the design and evaluation of their programs. Research should be done to examine the impact of mentoring programs that prioritize cultural competency training and culturally specific program practices. Currently, race- and culture-sensitive approaches to mentoring are in short supply. The race- and culture-based trends noted in this article may not necessarily generalize to programs that are designed to meet the unique needs of youth across race or ethnicity. Most of the extant research on same-race, cross-race dyads, fails to compare various dyadic combinations of mentor-mentee race and gender. For example, cross-race mentorships in which the minority is the mentor may be very different from cross-race mentorships in which the minority is the mentee.

Action 5: Programs should collaborate with researchers to conduct additional research examining various combinations of demographic variables that may affect the quality of the fit between youth and their mentors. Specifically, research methodologies may do well to include more comprehensive designs with observations in all cells including female minority mentor-female minority mentee; female white mentor-female white mentee; male minority mentor-male minority mentee; male white mentor-male white mentee; etc.

Case Example of a Culturally Sensitive Mentoring Program

Although some youth mentoring programs consider race and ethnicity important and attempt to match mentors and mentees on these variables, other programs that do not or cannot match on these variables due to a lack of ethnic minority volunteer mentors have demonstrated ways in which a program can still be culturally sensitive and effective by integrating information related to culture into their program curricula. Below we describe the Rural After-School Program, which represents a culturally sensitive mentoring program that expressly identifies and integrates cultural values as part of its framework.

Despite the fact that many matches were cross-race and cross-sex, the Rural After-School Program for Latino(a) youth described by Diversi and Mecham (2005) represents a culturally sensitive program that closely analyzed the potential pitfalls of cross-race matching and worked to integrate cultural values into mentor training and the program curriculum. All mentees in this program were immigrant Latino(a) eighth and ninth graders, and most mentors, with the exception of three Latino college men, were White college women. Specifically, this program was designed to address school failure, identified behavioral difficulties, and language and cultural issues among Latino(a) youth in a predominately White area. As described by Diversi and Mecham (2005), this mentoring program was theoretically grounded in an empowerment model, based on models of conscientization (Freire, 1970), and reconstructing cultural narratives and ethnic identity toward bicultural success (Collins, 1991; Richardson, 1990). Therefore, mentors were trained in cultural and developmental issues, such as immigration, adolescent development, acculturation, and ethnicity. Together mentors and mentees not only worked on school projects and tests, but also on acculturation issues, and awareness of biculturalism (e.g., code switching, Spanglish, rap cultures, racism in the community, and social perspective taking).

Mentees had positive perspectives on the program, enjoying the camaraderie of mentors and other peers in the program, and crediting their mentoring relationships for positive influences on their academic and personal lives. Mentors, for the most part, were gratified by the academic gains of the mentees, as well as the trusting relationships experienced with many of them. Interestingly, however, some described cultural differences to be a source of tension and misunderstanding. For example, the public display of affection among Latino(a)s made some mentors uncomfortable. Also, cultural differences in the concept of property became an issue in some matches. Specifically, some youth would “borrow” something from their mentors without asking permission, assuming that what was “out on the table” was openly available for sharing in the group.

Youth participating in this program also identified cultural tensions in their assessment of their mentoring relationships. Cultural tensions can occur on both individual and systemic levels. For example, mentors who had mentees facing extensive racism, poverty, or violence were more likely to take on crisis management roles, which contributed to rapid mentor burnout, and increased stress in the mentoring relationship (Ginwright, 2005). Ginwright (2005) also discussed cultural influences on working-class youths' decision-making roles in their own families, which may involve youth taking on adult responsibilities given changes in welfare regulations, etc. For these youth, progressive mentoring models of shared youth responsibility may be perceived as stressful and burdensome, rather than as empowering.

Another challenge recognized within the Rural After-School Program related to mentoring efforts to empower Latino(a) students by fostering a bicultural identity (i.e., supporting ties to youths' native language, rituals, and history, while encouraging youth to learn to navigate their host culture, (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Although individual mentors supported these practices, the mentoring program was not structurally designed to address these cultural issues and structural inequities within youths' schools and other social systems. This program's shortcomings carried the potential for perpetuating isolation among participating youth (Diversi & Mecham, 2005). Together, the individual and systemic difficulties exemplified by the Rural After-School Program highlight the need to understand and address youths' multiple contexts in order to provide culturally responsive mentoring interventions.

Conclusion

The research described above suggests that there may be some advantages to matching based on race and ethnicity, including the fact that mentees tend to gravitate naturally to same-race, same-sex mentors. However, once in the relationship, regardless of whether it is same-race or cross-race, other factors may play a larger role in determining the success of the relationship, including, 1) whether the mentee perceives his or her mentor as similar in other ways (e.g., shared interests, personality, etc.); and 2) whether mentors and programs are culturally sensitive. These findings suggest the need for mentors and mentoring programs to work toward developing culturally sensitive youth mentoring programs.

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Notes

Youth Mentoring: Do Race and Ethnicity Really Matter?

Questions about the role of race, ethnicity, and diversity in youth mentoring relationships have been discussed and debated by the field for years. As proponents of specific strategies continue to passionately defend their beliefs, the need for answers—or at a minimum well-founded guidance—grows. The number of mentees from culturally diverse backgrounds far surpasses the availability of ethnic minority mentors resulting in a large number of cross-race or cross-ethnicity matches. In her article, Dr. Liang emphasizes the need to make informed decisions when matching young people with mentors from different races. Specifically, this article discusses potential challenges, relational processes, and benefits of same- and cross-race matching. Building on these important ideas, this action piece consists of a series of training activities that offer mentors, mentees, and program staff the opportunity to examine issues of diversity and reflect on their individual perspectives and assumptions.

Training Activities

The following training activities are designed to give mentors and program staff an opportunity to explore issues of diversity in their respective roles. Mentors will think about how they can enhance their relationships with mentees while program staff will examine whether their match protocols reflect the unique needs of different racial, cultural, and ethnic youth.

Exercise 1: Exploring Expectations

Audience:	Mentors before they are paired with mentees
Time required:	30-40 minutes
Materials:	Paper, crayons, markers, or various art supplies

1. Give each participant a blank sheet of paper and several different colored markers or crayons. Ask them to draw a picture of their future mentee. Be sure not to elaborate on these instructions—allow the mentors to explore their own assumptions and expectations without any guidance.
2. After the participants have had a chance to finish their drawing, ask them to write out the ways they think their mentee will be similar or different from them. Some prompting questions you can use include: Will your mentee be the same race? Will your mentee be the same gender? Will your mentee have the same interests and hobbies? Will your mentee have the same cultural background? Will your mentee speak the same language? Will your mentee come from the same socio-economic group? Give participants several minutes to complete this exercise.

3. After everyone has finished, ask them to share their drawings and lists in small groups of three or four people. During this small group sharing, ask each person to talk about his or her expectations and assumptions about the future mentee. What do they think their mentee will look like? What will he or she like to do? How do they expect their mentee to be similar or different from them?
4. Debrief with the large group. Ask the group what they learned about their expectations of their future mentees during this exercise. What differences between mentors and future mentees were disclosed? What are the ways mentors expect they will be similar to their future mentees? What fears do they have about working with youth that may come from different racial, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds? What do they think the program could do to help them overcome these fears?
5. Let the participants know more about how they will be matched and the ways that your program offers support to mentors who work with mentees from different cultural, racial, or ethnic backgrounds. Also, be sure to record responses from the group on flip-chart as these responses can give your program insight about the potential concerns of mentors and the type of support they want, need, or expect from the program.

Note for the Trainer: This activity can also be adapted for use with mentees before they are matched. Mentees can draw pictures of what they expect their mentor to look like, talk about their expectations, share their concerns about having a mentor from a different background, and discuss what support they want from the program.

Exercise 2: Issues of Diversity in Matching

Audience:	Mentor Program Staff
Time required:	Part I – 30 minutes, Part II – 45 minutes
Materials:	Pre-written labels

Match coordinators must develop strategic mentor-mentee match strategies that best support diverse youth in their program. The following exercise will give mentor program staff an opportunity to think about the effectiveness of their match criteria.

Note for the Trainer: If time is limited, Part I can be done as a standalone activity. However, Part II offers additional opportunities for mentor program staff to explore strategies and assumptions around same-race and cross-race match criteria.

Part I. Matching by Labels

In advance, make name tags for each of the mentors and mentees listed below.

1. Give participants name tags and ask them to visibly place them on their body. Name tags should be randomly distributed—it doesn't matter who gets what name tag.
2. When all name tags are passed out, tell participants that they are about to engage in an interactive match activity. Let them know that they must move around the room, read each other's nametag, and find their appropriate "match." Let them know that there are two basic rules for this activity:
 - a. There can only be one mentee for each mentor.
 - b. No speaking can occur. The matching must be done only by looking at each other's labels.

Once the rules have been explained, tell the participants that they will have five minutes to complete the activity.

Note for the Trainer: As there are more mentees than mentors, there will be two mentees who do not have a mentor.

3. When all matches have been created, debrief the activity. Ask participants to describe how they chose their match. What criteria did they use? How similar/dissimilar was this activity to criteria their program uses for matching? Do they think matching only on the basis of race and gender is effective? Why or why not? Do participants think matches formed during this activity could be successful? Why or why not? What other information would be helpful to know?
4. Explain to participants that while race and gender are important criteria to consider when matching, other factors such as similarity, shared interests, parent and child preference, program mission, and chemistry may also be important.

Matching Labels

Mentors

Blanche: Caucasian Female
David: Caucasian Male
Gloria: Latina Female
James: African-American Male
Katherine: Caucasian Female

Mentees

Amy: Korean American Female
Jesus: Latino Male
Marcus: African-American Male
Maria: Latina Female
Brandon: African-American Male
Ronald: Caucasian Male
Tasha: African-American Female

Part II: Exploring Promising Practices in Same-Race and Cross-Race Matching

1. Tell participants that they are going to participate in a second match activity. Before they do this activity, a review of several guidelines about cross-race and same-race matching will be helpful.
2. In advance, write these five suggested practices on flipchart and display for all participants to see.
 - Always match based on the needs of the child.
 - There is not a “one-size-fits-all” matching strategy—every child is different.
 - Race, culture, ethnicity, and gender are among the factors that should be considered when making a match—though these factors should not be the sole determinants.
 - Same-race and cross-race matches both hold potential to make a difference for youth. Especially, if they perceive themselves to be similar to their mentors.
 - When cross-race matches are made, programs should offer diversity and cultural awareness training to mentors.
3. After you have reviewed these guidelines, make sure all participants are still wearing their name tags. These name tags contain important information about the name, race, and gender of different mentors and mentees.
4. Pass out mentor and mentee profiles (page 19-20) to the appropriate participants (e.g., Blanche should receive the profile sheet for Blanche). Give participants a few moments to review the information on the profile sheet.

5. Have participants walk around the room and try to find their best match. Tell them that they should spend time talking to one another to learn more about the diversity of interests and backgrounds in the room.
6. After everyone has had a chance to talk, ask them to self-select into mentor-mentee pairs based on their conversations and information contained on their name tags. This means it is essential for all the mentors and mentees to talk to each other to be sure that the right matches have been made. Let them know that there will be two mentees that do not have mentors.
7. When all mentors and mentees are paired, ask each match to share their profile and nametag information with the group. Record this information on flipchart. Ask the group whether they agree on all matches that were formed.
8. Debrief activity by reviewing the five guidelines. Ask participants to discuss how they used the suggested guidelines to inform their match selection. What challenges did they face? Were some matches easier to make than others? How different were the matches between the first activity and the second activity? How could program staff use these suggested guidelines to determine matches in their own programs? What other information would have been helpful to make these matches?

Mentor Profiles

Blanche is 72. She is Caucasian. She has been married for 50 years. She loves to read and play games with her three grandchildren. She was a teacher in an urban school district before she retired and wants to continue helping young people in some capacity.

David is 22. He is Caucasian. He is single. He loves to go to museums and read comic books. He also enjoys playing video games. David struggled with school growing up but was able to make it to college with the help of a mentor.

Gloria is 40. She grew up in Mexico and moved to the United States when she was 10. English is her second language. She struggled trying to learn English and is very proud of her accomplishment. Gloria is close to her family and is very involved in her church and her community.

James is 30. He is African-American. He works as a nurse in a psychiatric hospital. He enjoys swimming, running, and playing rugby in a community league. James grew up in foster care and wants to work with a child that is going through the same experience.

Katherine is 23. She is Caucasian. She recently graduated from college and moved to the area. She likes to knit, cook, and go to the movies. She describes herself as an extrovert. She wants to be a mentor because she wants to help a child who may be struggling in school.

Mentee Profiles

Amy is 10. She was born in Korea and has lived in the US for five years. She struggles with learning English. She regularly attends church and likes to cook with her three sisters. Her mother wanted Amy to have a mentor so she could do better in school.

Jesus is 11. He is Latino. Jesus was doing well in school until his father got sick and died a year ago. He enjoys playing sports and listening to music. His mother wants him to have a male figure in his life now that he doesn't have a father.

Marcus is 10. He is African-American. He loves to read and play board games. He struggles with math and science. His mother wanted Marcus to have a mentor who could help him improve in school.

Maria is 12. She is Latina. She is very quiet and has very few friends in school. Her mother recently lost her job and Maria has become quite depressed. She used to enjoy knitting and reading but now she seems to only want to watch TV after school.

Brandon is 13. He is African-American. He enjoys watching cartoons and likes to draw. His mother wants him to be in the program to have access to role models who are African-American.

Ronald is 12. He is Caucasian. He likes to bike, play basketball, and play video games. He struggles in school and really doesn't like math or language arts.

Tasha is 14. She is African-American. She likes to sing in her church choir and plays flute in the school band. She has been getting into a lot of trouble at school lately for lying and cheating on tests.

Youth Mentoring: Do Race and Ethnicity Really Matter?

Advocates for Youth. Dedicated to creating programs and advocating for policies that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health. www.advocatesforyouth.org

- A Youth Leader's Guide to Building Cultural Competence
www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/guide/introduction.htm

EdChange Multicultural Pavillion. Dedicated to providing professional development, scholarship, and activism for diversity, social justice, and community growth. www.edchange.org

- Awareness activities
www.edchange.org/multicultural/activityarch.html

MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership. The leader in expanding the power of mentoring to millions of young Americans who want and need adult mentors. www.mentoring.org

- Exploring and Valuing Diversity: How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice™
www.mentoring.org/program_staff/eep/toolkit/operations/training/expvaluingdiversity.doc
- Mentoring and Race, article from Research Corner.
www.mentoring.org/program_staff/research_corner/mentoring_and_race.php?pid=all
- Tools for programs working with immigrant and refugee youth
www.mentoring.org/program_staff/eep/toolkit/immigrant_youth.php

Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota. Statewide partnership that promotes mentoring in the state of Minnesota. www.mentoringworks.org

- Tools for understanding the influence of culture on mentoring relationships
www.mentoringworks.org/sites/a234b4c8-ec92-4a0c-8351-434a90b6c1cc/uploads/TMA_7-Influence_of_Culture_on_Mentoring_Relationships.pdf

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory - National Mentoring Center. National organization that provides training and technical assistance to youth mentoring programs. www.nwrel.org/mentoring

- Same-race and Cross-race Matching, Technical assistance packet.
www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packseven.pdf

Notes

Notes

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MENTOR is leading the national movement to connect young Americans to the power of mentoring. As a national advocate and expert resource for mentoring, in concert with a nationwide network of state and local *Mentoring Partnerships*, MENTOR delivers the research, policy recommendations, and practical performance tools needed to help make quality mentoring a reality for more of America's youth.

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