



Mentoring Youth from Military Families: Lessons Learned and Effective Strategies

December 17th, 2015

2015 Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series Planning Team



Good to Know...

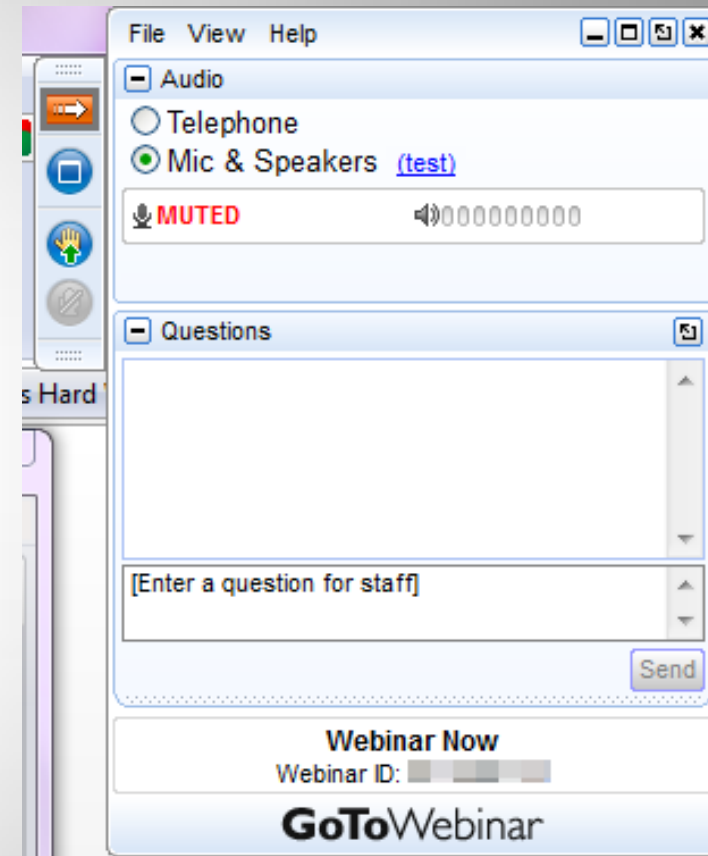
One week after the webinar, all attendees receive an email with:

- Instructions for how to access PDF of presentation slides and webinar recording
- Link to the Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series webpage, where all slides, recordings, and resources are posted.

Please help us out by answering survey questions at the end of the webinar.

Participate in Today's Webinar

- All attendees muted for best sound
- Type questions and comments in the question box
- Respond to polls
- Who is with us today?



Jim Seevers



- **Career Air Force Officer**
 - 28 Years – 17 Moves
 - Multiple family separations
 - Missed 4 of twin sons' first 7 birthdays
 - Daughter attended 8 schools (K-12)
- **Immediate Post-Military Focus: Residential Youth Programs**
 - Juvenile Justice
 - Adolescent Behavior Health
- **8+ Years of Service with Dare Mighty Things**
 - Mentoring Children of Prisoners National Resource Center
 - National Guard Youth Challenge Program Training and YIM Development
 - Direct Support for Amachi Mentoring, BBBS Lone Star, and BBBS NYC
 - Compassion Capital Fund National Resource Center
 - DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program

Antoinette Basualdo-Delmonico



- Independent researcher and consultant in the field of youth-focused programs
- Research includes the role parents play in the youth mentoring relationship
- Ph.D. in social work and sociology from Boston University

Bonnie Campbell



- MSW from Florida State University and over 30 years experience in the Human Services field
- Began working at Big Brothers Big Sisters of San Diego County in 2008 as a Match Support Specialist for Operation Bigs
- Promoted to Program Director in 2012

Setting the Stage

- Approximately 1.4 million children have a parent currently in the military
- Over 40% of all active Service members have a child under 18
- Approximately one million children have had a parent deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq (often multiple times)
- Military children exhibit an increased risk for a number of negative behaviors or circumstances

In theory, mentoring can help

- Mentors are often employed in situations where there is instability in the home
- Mentors can provide needed emotional and social support
- Mentors can make sure that youth stay on track academically
- Mentors and programs can help connect families to additional resources
- But... this work is unique and challenging for many reasons

Polls 3 and 4

It's Not Your Father's Military

- All Volunteer Force
- Citizen Soldier Revisited
- Multiple Deployments
- New Battlegrounds
- The “Fog” of Support



The Same . . . but Different



Common Bonds

- Service
- Sacrifice
- Trust
- Teamwork
- “Take Care of Our Own”

A New Era

- A New Kind of “Invisible” Enemy
- One Goal, 12 Services and Components, Endless Missions
- Longer War – Less Impact on Society
- Impact on Families: PTSD, Resiliency, and Stigma



Promising Fit



- Problems military children may be vulnerable to:
 - Poor academic performance
 - Difficulty with family relationships
 - Emotional issues (anxiety, depression)
- Participation in mentoring programs has been shown to improve youth outcomes related to these challenges.



- Developed in 2000 to provide children impacted by incarceration with caring mentors.
- History of flexibility reaching and serving youth from a wide range of backgrounds
 - Building relationships from within one's own community
 - One-to-one community-based mentoring model
 - Professional case management & support of mentoring match, ensuring mentee, family & mentor working together

Amachi Expansion for Military and Civilian Families (AEMCF)

Interview study with 62 program staff, community partners, military-connected youth mentees & parents, and mentors matched with military-connected youth

- How did programs reach & serve military families?
 - Challenges?
 - Effective strategies & practices?
- What were the experiences of mentors, and military-connected youth & parents in the mentoring program?

Goodness of Fit: Perceptions of Mentoring and Military

Mentoring	Military Families
Complementary features (partial examples)	
Mentors can be another caring adult outside family to support youth	Military experiences can place stress and strain on the family
Programs conduct rigorous volunteer screening & background checks	Military families put a high premium on safety
Mentors can facilitate new experiences & perspectives	Military life encourages flexibility and openness to new experiences
Seemingly incompatible features	
Mentors provide a positive role model to youth	Military families do not lack positive role models
Many families originally served by mentoring were single-parent families	Military families do no need or want a replacement for a deployed parent
Programs concentrate on recruiting mentors; families generally seek out mentoring services or are referred	Military families “take care of their own” and are hesitant to ask for support.

Finding & Engaging Families

Lessons Learned:

Building Community Partners

- Although **community partnerships with military-affiliated entities** did not immediately pay off (recruiting military families), **gaining buy-in and acceptance** among programs that served military families was crucial first step.
- Strong military partnerships may demand programs commitment to a long-term presence and persistence in the military community.

Finding & Engaging Families

Lessons Learned:

Building Connections with Military Families

- Programs had to invest significant time and effort into actively recruiting families.
- Programs had to highlight how mentoring “fits” with military culture.
- Programs had to reframe their presentation of the mentor’s role.

Finding & Engaging Families: TIPS

- **Develop & nurture** relationships within military community



- Think **creatively** about approaches/ program features that will be **attractive** to military families
- **Promote** mentoring in ways that emphasize **strength and resilience** of military families
- Make effort to keep staff **consistent** across all phases of enrollment, matching and support

Preparing for Military Mentoring Matches

Lessons Learned:

Preparing Staff

- Promoting a program as “serving military families” suggests staff awareness of military culture and sensitivity toward the military family experience.

Preparing for Military Mentoring Matches

Lessons Learned:

Preparing Mentors

- Some orientation or training about military families is important for volunteers matched with military-connected youth.
- Recruiting mentors with military experience, while not crucial, may benefit some youth and families.

Preparing for Military Mentoring Matches

Lessons Learned:

Preparing Families

- Programs should collect detailed information about the family's military situation at enrollment.
- Staff should prepare families, before the match begins, for how to discuss important events and transitions with the mentor.

Preparing for Military Mentoring Matches: TIPS

- Foster knowledge & skills of *all* staff in expanding mentoring for military families.
- Create an expectation of strong communication between parent and mentor to anticipate and address needs of youth.
- Secure the support of military parent and clarify their role in helping match develop, even in their absence.
- Before match start, discuss with family/mentor how a match ending will be handled.

Preparing to Serve Families Who Serve



"My Dad left in the beginning of January, and I'm scared when he's gone. I don't want him to have no arms or no legs. I just want his whole entire body home"

Micah

Quoted by National Military Family Association

- Needs Assessment
 - Recruiting
 - Screening
 - Training
 - Matching and Initiating
 - Monitoring and Supporting
 - Closing
- Situational Awareness
- From Known to Unknown
- Generating “BUZZ”

Focused Training

Webinars for Staff

- Recruiting Mentors and Mentees
- Establishing and Maintaining Partnerships
- Engaging Parents and Caregivers

Classroom-Based for Staff

- Self-Care and Compassion Fatigue
- Youth Development Phases
- Understanding Resilience
- Reintegration and Family Dynamics
- Boundary Setting
- Responding to Sensitive Issues

Webinars for Mentors

- Military Family Support
- Behavioral Health
- Suicide Prevention and Postvention
- Dealing with Grief and Loss
- Crisis Intervention
- Engaging Parents and Caregivers

E-Learning for Mentors

- Military 101
- Youth Development Phases
- Understanding Resilience
- Reintegration and Family Dynamics

Key Messages



- **For Program Staff**

1. *Listen and learn*
2. *Establish networks with common ground*
3. *Earn trust with partners*



- **For Mentors**

1. *Seek first to understand*
2. *Celebrate service and patriotism*
3. *Build on shared interests*



- **For Mentees and Families**

1. ***NOT** a replacement parent*
2. *Part of a larger network*
3. *Available before, during, and after deployment*

Importance of Networks

"There's a sea of goodwill out there from people willing to help. The challenge is in coordinating between them and us."

Admiral Mike Mullen, former Chairman, JCS



Service Members
And Families

Federal, State, and Community
Service Providers

- Examples:
 - Service (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard) Family Programs
 - DoD Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program
 - National Military Family Association
 - Military Child Education Coalition

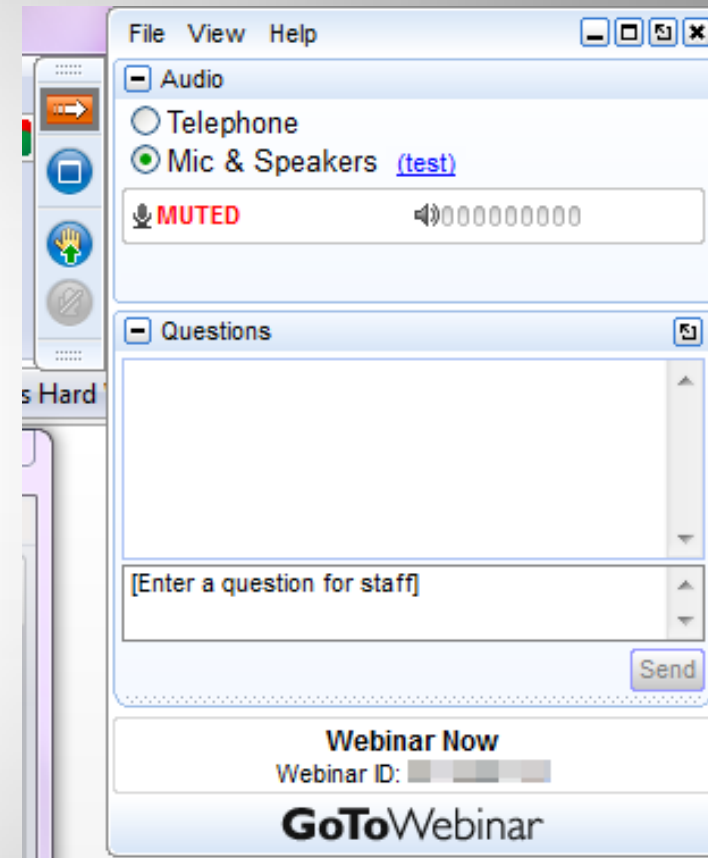
After Action Review (AAR)



- Engage the Sponsor (e.g., DoD)
– Early and Often
- Address “Balance” – Strengths & Concerns
- Expand Asset Mapping -
Network of Community
Connections and Partnerships
- Make Training Available “On
Demand” with More on
Outreach and Recruiting
- Use Multiple Pathways to
Success

Q&A for all Panelists

Type your questions in the question box:



Supporting the Match

Lessons Learned:

- Changes in the family's military situation may affect the child and the mentoring match.
- Additional types of support may be helpful for military matches and their families

Supporting the Match: TIPS

- Provide mentors with *ongoing* guidance about family's military situation
- Coach families on how to talk with mentor about military-related issues and be prepared to facilitate these discussions if needed
- Consider providing opportunities for matches (and families) to meet with others served by program

Notes from the Field: Engaging Families

- Create a separate team of recruitment, enrollment, and match support staff
- Staff members with military connections
- Site-based – families comfortable with program held in structured setting at school
- Base and regional commanders buy-in

Engaging Families

- Year round outreach efforts – families moving in and out
- Challenge – turnover of military leaders, liaisons - need to continually renew partnerships
- Message – serving those who serve us; extended family; “Like a coach or favorite teacher, a Big gives a child another trusted adult who can provide an extra layer of support”

Engaging Families

- Include families in holiday, end of the year parties at sites
- Summer party for mentors, mentees, and families
- Partner with community organizations – offer resources to families (e.g. school backpacks, bicycle giveaways, Thanksgiving dinners, tickets to professional games, Mother's Day luncheon)



Preparing for Military Matches

- **STAFF:** At least one team member – military affiliation, Military culture training – all staff, Additional training – military mentoring staff
- **MENTORS:** Orientation to military lifestyle, deployment cycle, ongoing support during match
- **MENTEES:** Detailed information about family military situation

Who Are the Mentors

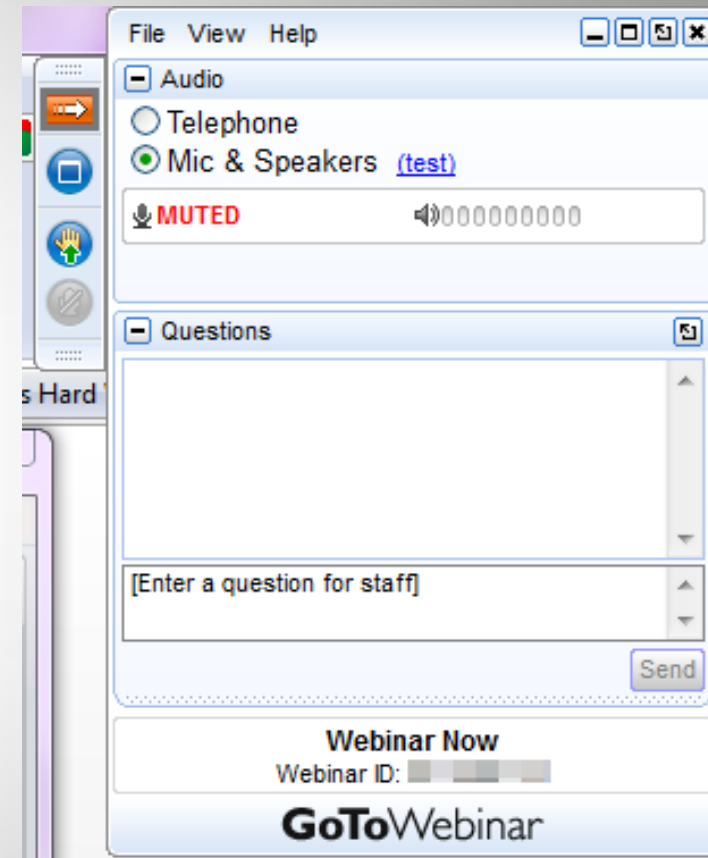
- Pros and cons of Active Duty (AD) mentors
 - Non-deployable units
- Civilians want tangible way to support military
- Retired volunteers good fit for site-based
- 2010
 - 182 matches
 - 68% civilian/veterans
 - 32% AD
- 2014
 - 225 matches
 - 45% civilian/veterans
 - 55% AD

Lessons Learned

- Recruit from non-deployable units
- Ensure Command support for volunteers to participate in site-based sessions
- Careful matching of mentor and mentee – mentor not similar to AD parent
- Invite all military students at school to participate

Q&A for all Panelists

Type your questions in the question box:



Specific Resources

- [“Taking Care of Our Own: Lessons Learned About Engaging Military Families in Youth Mentoring”](#)
- [Amachi Military Training](#)
- [“Working With Military Families”](#)
- The e-learning modules are available at <http://www.aemcfresourcecenter.com/> using the following log in:
 - User ID: aemcfmentor
 - Password: mentor1

Additional Resources



National Mentoring Resource Center

Apply for no-cost help for your mentoring program

www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org

Mentoring Connector

Recruit mentors by submitting your program to the Mentoring Connector (previously called the VRS)

<https://connect.mentoring.org/admin>

Remember...

After the webinar:

- Please help us out by answering survey questions at the end of the webinar.
- Everyone will get an email with information on how to download the slides, recording, and resources on the CMWS webpage on the MENTOR website:

http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/training_opportunities/collaborative_mentoring_webinar_series/

Stay Connected

- Email us at collaborativewebinarseries@mentoring.org
- Tweet with hashtag #MentoringWebinar
- Visit our webpage on the MENTOR website for past and upcoming webinars:

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www.mentoring.org/program_resources/training_opportunities/collaborative_mentoring_webinar_series. The page features the MENTOR logo (National Mentoring Partnership) and the tagline "Expanding the World of Quality Mentoring". Navigation links include "HOME", "ABOUT MENTOR", "START A PROGRAM", "PROGRAM RESOURCES", "GET INVOLVED", "NEWS & RESEARCH", and "SUMMIT 2015". A search bar is present. The main content area is titled "Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series" and includes a breadcrumb trail: > Home > Program Resources > Training Opportunities > Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series. A sidebar on the left lists "PROGRAM RESOURCES" with sub-items: Elements & Toolkits, Resource & Publication Library, Volunteer Referral Service, Background Checks, Training Opportunities, and Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series. The main text describes the series as a partnership between MENTOR and several state-level mentoring organizations, including the Maryland Mentoring Resource Center, Indiana Mentoring Partnership, Kansas Mentors, the Mentoring Center of Central Ohio, the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, Oregon Mentors, and the Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania. The page also features logos for "Collaborating Partners" such as MENTOR, mentoring partnership, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Chesapeake, and Indiana.

Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series

Join Us Next Month!



Assuring Your Program's Financial Future
January 21, 2016
1 - 2:15 pm Eastern



Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series