

# Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™

## A CHECKLIST FOR MENTORING PROGRAMS



# MENTOR

### STANDARD 1: RECRUITMENT

#### BENCHMARKS

##### MENTOR RECRUITMENT

- ☐ **B.1.1** Program engages in recruitment strategies that realistically portray the benefits, practices, supports, and challenges of mentoring in the program.
- ☐ **B.1.2\*** Program utilizes recruitment strategies that build positive attitudes and emotions about mentoring.
- ☐ **B.1.3\*** Program recruits mentors whose skills, motivations, and backgrounds best match the goals and structure of the program.
- ☐ **B.1.4\*** Program encourages mentors to assist with recruitment efforts by providing them with resources to ask individuals they know, who meet the eligibility criteria of the program, to be a mentor.
- ☐ **B.1.5\*** Program trains and encourages mentees to identify and recruit appropriate mentors for themselves, when relevant.

##### MENTEE AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN RECRUITMENT

- ☐ **B.1.6\*** Program engages in recruitment strategies that realistically portray the benefits, practices, supports, and challenges of being mentored in the program.
- ☐ **B.1.7** Program recruits mentees whose needs best match the services offered by the program.

#### ENHANCEMENTS

##### MENTOR RECRUITMENT

- ☐ **E.1.1\*** Program communicates to mentors about how mentoring and volunteering can benefit them.

- ☐ **E.1.2** Program has a publicly available written statement outlining eligibility requirements for mentors in its program.
- ☐ **E.1.3\*** Program uses multiple strategies to recruit mentors (e.g., direct ask, social media, traditional methods of mass communication, presentations, referrals) on an ongoing basis.

##### MENTEE AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN RECRUITMENT

- ☐ **E.1.4** Program has a publicly available written statement outlining eligibility requirements for mentees in its program.
- ☐ **E.1.5\*** Program encourages mentees to recruit other peers to be mentees whose needs match the services offered by the program, when relevant.

### STANDARD 2: SCREENING

#### BENCHMARKS

##### MENTOR SCREENING

- ☐ **B.2.1\*** Program has established criteria for accepting mentors into the program as well as criteria for disqualifying mentor applicants.
- ☐ **B.2.2** Prospective mentors complete a written application that includes questions designed to help assess their safety and suitability for mentoring a youth.
- ☐ **B.2.3** Program conducts at least one face-to-face interview with each prospective mentor that includes questions designed to help the program assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.
- ☐ **B.2.4** Program conducts a comprehensive criminal background check on prospective

adult mentors, including searching a national criminal records database, along with sex offender and child abuse registries and, when relevant, driving records.

- ☐ **B.2.5** Program conducts reference check interviews with multiple adults who know an applicant (ideally, both personal and professional references) that include questions to help assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.
- ☐ **B.2.6\*** Prospective mentors agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or a minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.
- ☐ **B.2.7\*** Prospective mentors agree in writing to participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentees that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by their mentoring program.

##### MENTEE SCREENING

- ☐ **B.2.8\*** Program has established criteria for accepting youth into the program as well as criteria that would disqualify a potential youth participant.
- ☐ **B.2.9** Parent(s)/guardian(s) complete an application or referral form.
- ☐ **B.2.10** Parent(s)/guardian(s) provide informed permission for their child to participate.
- ☐ **B.2.11\*** Parent(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or the minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.

- **B.2.12** Parents(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing that mentees participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentors that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by the mentoring program.

## ENHANCEMENTS

### MENTOR SCREENING

- **E.2.1** Program utilizes national, fingerprint-based FBI criminal background checks.
- **E.2.2\*** Program conducts at least one home visit of each prospective mentor, especially when the match may be meeting in the mentor's home.
- **E.2.3\*** Program conducts comprehensive criminal background checks on all adults living in the home of prospective mentors, including searches of a national criminal records database along with sex offender and child abuse registries, when the match may meet in mentors' homes.
- **E.2.4** School-based programs assess mentors' interest in maintaining contact with their mentees during the summer months (following the close of the academic school year) and offer assistance to matches in maintaining contact.
- **E.2.5\*** Programs that utilize adult mentors prioritize accepting mentor applicants who are older than college-age.
- **E.2.6\*** Program uses evidence-based screening tools and practices to identify individuals who have attitudes and beliefs that support safe and effective mentoring relationships.

### MENTEE SCREENING

- **E.2.7\*** Mentees complete an application (either written or verbally).
- **E.2.8\*** Mentees provide written assent agreeing to participate in their mentoring program.

## STANDARD 3: TRAINING

### BENCHMARKS

#### MENTOR TRAINING

- **B.3.1** Program provides a minimum of two hours of pre-match, in-person, mentor training.
- **B.3.2** Program provides pre-match training for mentors on the following topics:
  - a. Program requirements (e.g., match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing, being late to meetings, and match termination).
  - b. Mentors' goals and expectations for the mentee, parent or guardian, and the mentoring relationship.
  - c. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles.
  - d. Relationship development and maintenance.
  - e. Ethical and safety issues that may arise related to the mentoring relationship.
  - f. Effective closure of the mentoring relationship.
  - g. Sources of assistance available to support mentors.
  - h. Opportunities and challenges associated with mentoring specific populations of youth (e.g., children with an incarcerated parent, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth in foster care, high school dropouts), if relevant.
  - i. Initiating the mentoring relationship.
  - j. Developing an effective, positive relationship with mentee's family, if relevant.
- **B.3.3\*** Program provides pre-match training for the mentor on the following risk management policies that are matched to the program model, setting, and population served.
  - a. Appropriate physical contact
  - b. Contact with mentoring program (e.g., who to contact, when to contact)
  - c. Relationship monitoring requirements (e.g., response time, frequency, schedule)
  - d. Approved activities
  - e. Mandatory reporting requirements associated with suspected child abuse or neglect, and suicidality and homicidality
  - f. Confidentiality and anonymity
  - g. Digital and social media use
  - h. Overnight visits and out of town travel

- i. Money spent on mentee and mentoring activities
- j. Transportation
- k. Emergency and crisis situation procedures
- l. Health and medical care
- m. Discipline
- n. Substance use
- o. Firearms and weapons
- p. Inclusion of others in match meetings (e.g., siblings, mentee's friends)
- q. Photo and image use
- r. Evaluation and use of data
- s. Grievance procedures
- t. Other program relevant topics
- **B.3.4** Program uses training practices and materials that are informed by empirical research or are themselves empirically evaluated.

## ENHANCEMENTS

### MENTOR TRAINING

- **E.3.1** Program provides additional pre-match training opportunities beyond the two-hour, in-person minimum for a total of six hours or more.
- **E.3.2** Program addresses the following post-match training topics:
  - a. How developmental functioning may affect the mentoring relationship
  - b. How culture, gender, race, religion, socioeconomic status, and other demographic characteristics of the mentor and mentee may affect the mentoring relationship
  - c. Topics tailored to the needs and characteristics of the mentee
  - d. Closure procedures
- **E.3.3** Program uses training to continue to screen mentors for suitability to be a mentor and develops techniques for early trouble-shooting should problems be identified.

### MENTEE TRAINING

- **E.3.4\*** Program provides training for the mentee on the following topics:
  - a. Purpose of mentoring
  - b. Program requirements (e.g., match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing or being late to meetings, match termination)
  - c. Mentees' goals for mentoring
  - d. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles

- e. Mentees' obligations and appropriate roles
  - f. Ethics and safety in mentoring relationships
  - g. Initiating the mentoring relationship
  - h. Effective closure of the mentoring relationship
- ☐ **E.3.5\*** Program provides training for the mentee on the following risk management policies that are matched to the program model, setting, and population served.

See B.3.3 for the list of policies to address during training.

## PARENT OR GUARDIAN TRAINING

- ☐ **E.3.6\*** Program provides training for the parent(s) or guardian(s) (when appropriate) on the following topics:
- a. Purpose of mentoring
  - b. Program requirements (e.g., match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing or being late to meetings, match termination)
  - c. Parents' and mentees' goals for mentoring
  - d. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles
  - e. Mentees' obligations and appropriate roles
  - f. Ethics and safety in mentoring relationships
  - g. Initiating the mentoring relationship
  - h. Developing an effective, working relationship with your child's mentor
  - i. Effective closure of the mentoring relationship
- ☐ **E.3.7\*** Program provides training for the parent(s) or guardian(s) on the following risk management policies that are matched to the program model, setting, and population served.

See B.3.3 for the list of policies to address during training.

## STANDARD 4: MATCHING

### BENCHMARKS

- ☐ **B.4.1** Program considers the characteristics of the mentor and mentee (e.g., interests; proximity; availability; age; gender; race; ethnicity; personality; expressed preferences of mentor, mentee,

and parent or guardian; goals; strengths; previous experiences) when making matches.

- ☐ **B.4.2** Program arranges and documents an initial meeting between the mentor and mentee as well as, when relevant, with the parent or guardian.
- ☐ **B.4.3** Program staff member should be on site and/or present during the initial match meeting of the mentor and mentee, and, when relevant, parent or guardian.
- ☐ **B.4.4\*** Mentor, mentee, a program staff member, and, when relevant, the mentee's parent or guardian, meet in person to sign a commitment agreement consenting to the program's rules and requirements (e.g., frequency, intensity and duration of match meetings; roles of each person involved in the mentoring relationship; frequency of contact with program), and risk management policies.
- ### ENHANCEMENTS
- ☐ **E.4.1\*** Programs match mentee with a mentor who is at least three years older than the mentee.
- ☐ **E.4.2\*** Program sponsors a group matching event where prospective mentors and mentees can meet and interact with one another, and provide the program with feedback on match preferences.
- ☐ **E.4.3\*** Program provides an opportunity for the parent(s) or guardian(s) to provide feedback about the mentor selected by the program, prior to the initiation meeting.
- ☐ **E.4.4\*** Initial match meeting occurs at the home of the mentee with the program staff member present, if the mentor will be picking up the mentee at the mentee's home for match meetings.
- ☐ **E.4.5\*** Program staff member prepares mentor for the initial meeting after the match determination has been made (e.g., provide mentor with background information about prospective mentee; remind mentor of confidentiality; discuss potential opportunities and challenges associated with mentoring proposed mentee).
- ☐ **E.4.6\*** Program staff member prepares mentee and his or her parents or guardians for the initial meeting after the match determination has been made (e.g., provide mentee and parent(s) with background

information about selected mentor; discuss any family rules that should be shared with the mentor; discuss what information family members would like to share with the mentor and when).

## STANDARD 5:

## MONITORING AND SUPPORT

### BENCHMARKS

- ☐ **B.5.1** Program contacts mentors and mentees at a minimum frequency of twice per month for the first month of the match and once a month thereafter.
- ☐ **B.5.2\*** At each mentor monitoring contact, program staff should ask mentors about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentor and mentee using a standardized procedure.
- ☐ **B.5.3\*** At each mentee monitoring contact, program should ask mentees about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentee using a standardized procedure.
- ☐ **B.5.4** Program follows evidence-based protocol to elicit more in-depth assessment from mentors and mentees about the quality of their mentoring relationships, and uses scientifically-tested relationship assessment tools.
- ☐ **B.5.5\*** Program contacts a responsible adult in each mentee's life (e.g., parent, guardian, or teacher) at a minimum frequency of twice per month for the first month of the match and once a month thereafter.
- ☐ **B.5.6\*** At each monitoring contact with a responsible adult in the mentee's life, program asks about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentee using a standardized procedure.\*
- ☐ **B.5.7\*** Program regularly assesses all matches to determine if they should be closed or encouraged to continue.

- **B.5.8** Program documents information about each mentor-mentee meeting including, at a minimum, the date, length, and description of activity completed.
- **B.5.9** Program provides mentors with access to relevant resources (e.g., expert advice from program staff or others, publications, Web-based resources, experienced mentors) to help mentors address challenges in their mentoring relationships as they arise.
- **B.5.10\*** Program provides mentees and parents or guardians with access or referrals to relevant resources (e.g., expert advice from program staff or others, publications, Web-based resources, available social service referrals) to help families address needs and challenges as they arise.
- **B.5.11** Program provides one or more opportunities per year for post-match mentor training.
- **B.5.12\*** Program provides mentors with feedback on a regular basis regarding their mentees' outcomes and the impact of mentoring on their mentees to continuously improve mentee outcomes and encourage mentor retention.

## ENHANCEMENTS

- **E.5.1\*** Program conducts a minimum of one in-person monitoring and support meeting per year with mentor, mentee, and when relevant, parent or guardian.
- **E.5.2** Program hosts one or more group activities for matches and/or offers information about activities that matches might wish to participate in together.
- **E.5.3\*** Program hosts one or more group activities for matches and mentees' families.
- **E.5.4** Program thanks mentors and recognizes their contributions at some point during each year of the mentoring relationship, prior to match closure.
- **E.5.5\*** At least once each school or calendar year of the mentoring relationship, program thanks the family or a responsible adult in each mentee's life (e.g., guardian or teacher) and recognizes their contributions in supporting the mentee's engagement in mentoring.

## STANDARD 6: CLOSURE

### BENCHMARKS

- **B.6.1** Program has a procedure to manage anticipated closures, when members of the match are willing and able to engage in the closure process.
- **B.6.2** Program has a procedure to manage unanticipated closures, when members of the match are willing and able to engage in the closure process.
- **B.6.3\*** Program has a procedure to manage closure when one member of the match is unable or unwilling to engage in the closure process.
- **B.6.4** Program conducts exit interview with mentors and mentees, and when relevant, with parents or guardians.
- **B.6.5\*** Program has a written policy and procedure, when relevant, for managing rematching.
- **B.6.6\*** Program documents that closure procedures were followed.
- **B.6.7\*** Regardless of the reason for closure, the mentoring program should have a discussion with mentors that includes the following topics of conversation:
  - a. Discussion of mentors' feelings about closure
  - b. Discussion of reasons for closure, if relevant
  - c. Discussion of positive experiences in the mentoring relationship
  - d. Procedure for mentor notifying the mentee and his or her parents, if relevant, far enough in advance of the anticipated closure meeting to provide sufficient time to adequately prepare the mentee for closure
  - e. Review of program rules for post-closure contact
  - f. Creation of a plan for post-closure contact, if relevant
  - g. Creation of a plan for the last match meeting, if possible
  - h. Discussion of possible rematching, if relevant
- **B.6.8\*** Regardless of the reason for closure, the mentoring program should have a discussion with mentees, and when relevant, with parents or guardians that includes the following topics of conversation:

- a. Discussion of mentees' feelings about closure
- b. Discussion of reasons for closure, if relevant
- c. Discussion of positive experiences in the mentoring relationship
- d. Procedure for notification of mentor, if relevant, about the timing of closure
- e. Review of program rules for post-closure contact
- f. Creation of a plan for post-closure contact, if relevant
- g. Creation of a plan for the last match meeting, if possible
- h. Discussion of possible rematching, if relevant
- **B.6.9** Program has a written public statement to parents or guardians, if relevant, as well as to mentors and mentees that outline the terms of match closure and the policies for mentor/mentee contact after a match ends (e.g., including contacts using digital or social media).

### ENHANCEMENTS

- **E.6.1** At the conclusion of the agreed upon time period of the mentoring relationship, program explores the opportunity with mentors, mentees, and (when relevant) parents or guardians to continue the match for an additional period of time.
- **E.6.2** Program hosts a final celebration meeting or event for mentors and mentees, when relevant, to mark progress and transition or acknowledge change in the mentoring relationship.
- **E.6.3\*** Program staff provide training and support to mentees and mentors, as well as, when relevant, to parents or guardians, about how mentees can identify and connect with natural mentors in their lives.

*\* Benchmark and Enhancement practices that are marked with an asterisk represent those that are either new or were substantially changed from the Third Edition. Mentoring programs are encouraged to give equal consideration to the implementation of all of the Benchmark practices that are listed under this Standard.*

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