

# *Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series*



NATIONAL  
**MENTORING**  
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## **Peer Mentoring: Considerations and Best Practices**

*October 24, 2019*

# 2019 Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series Planning Team

The Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series is funded by the **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention** through the National Mentoring Resource Center and facilitated in partnership with MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership



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# Good to Know...

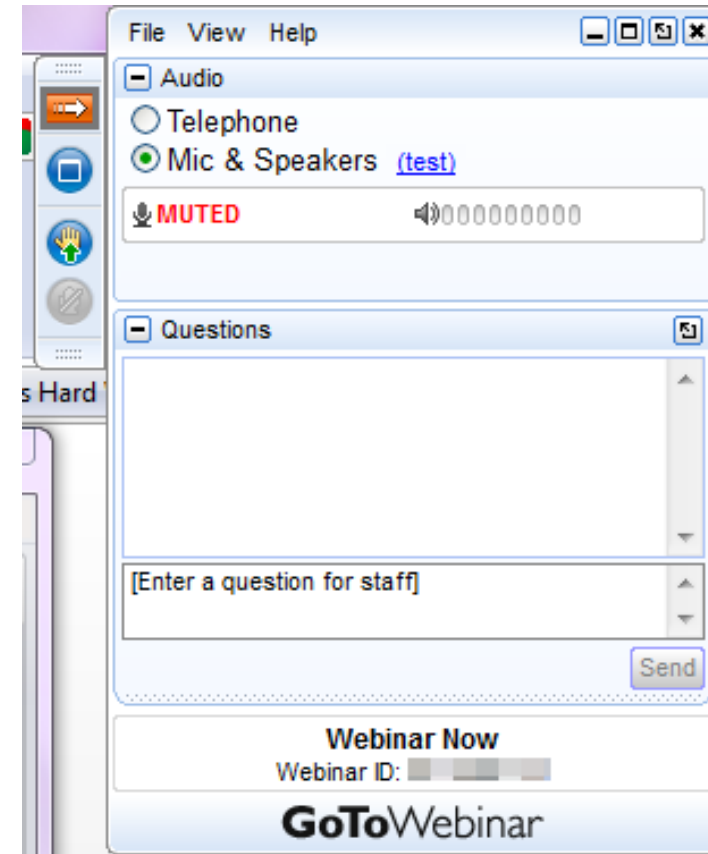
**One week after the webinar, all attendees receive an email with:**

- Instructions for how to access a 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?



# Today's Webinar



- Desiree Robertson
- Director of Training and Product Design, MENTOR

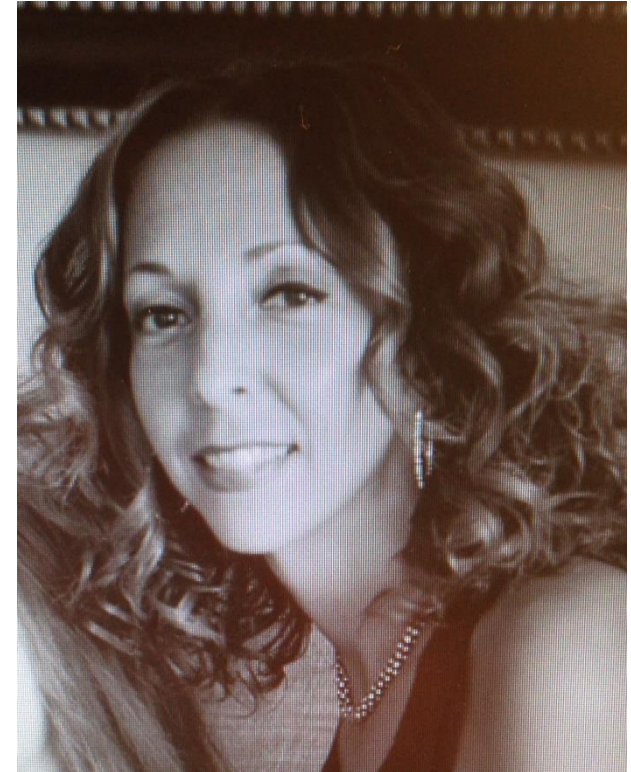
# Josh Berger, Ed.D.



- Director of Beldegrun Center for Innovative Leadership in Los Angeles, CA
- Author for the National Mentoring Resource Center review on Cross-Age Peer Mentoring
- Mentoring consultant currently working with the San Francisco's Mayor's office on youth mentoring and economic mobility in affordable housing communities

# Margo Ross, Psy.D.

- Managing Director, Communications & Development, Center for Supportive Schools (CSS)
- Oversees CSS's business development efforts including grant writing, grants managements, communications and marketing



Western High School  
Baltimore City Public Schools  
CSS Peer Group Connection (PGC) Representatives

## Raguiata Diallo

- Western HS Senior
- 2nd year PGC leader
- Plans to Major in Nursing



## Anitra Washington

- 19 year educator
- WHS Educational Associate
- PGC stakeholder coordinator
- Served as PGC advisor 2018-2019



# Implementing Peer Mentoring Programs

Dr. Joshua Berger, Ed.D.

# Defining Peer Mentoring

Cross-age peer mentoring is a systematic approach to delivering mentoring services through the use of trained peers to mentees who are generally at least two years younger (Karcher, 2013).



# Why Peer Mentoring?

- DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, and Valentine's (2011) meta-analysis of youth mentoring programs did not find any statistical differences between program outcomes when mentors were teenage peers rather than adults.
- Overall, peer helpers with strong training were found by Carkhuff (2000) to be “as helpful” or “more helpful” than the typical credentialed adults. They can also enhance the cognitive and social skills of their mentees, bolster their emotional well-being, and serve as role models and advocates (Rhodes, 2004).
- Peer programs provide an economical means to reach widespread populations of youth.

# Benefits of Peer Mentoring Programs

- Builds community and positively impacts school culture
- Improves school connectedness and peer relations for both mentors and mentees. Increases participation in school activities.
- Improves academic development for student leaders and mentees (grades, effort, attitude, motivation, attendance etc.)
- Enhances diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Improves communication skills and empathy of mentors and mentees
- Improves problem solving, decision making, and goal setting for mentors and mentees
- Mentors develop lifelong leadership skills through program participation
- Improves conflict resolution and violence prevention skills for mentors and mentees
- Enhances self-esteem for mentors and mentees
- Decreases substance use for mentors and mentees
- Eases school transitions for mentees
- Decreases disciplinary issues for mentees (fewer referrals, fights, etc.)
- Decreases stress for mentees
- Mentees want to become student leaders themselves after participating in these programs

# Limitations of Peer Mentoring Programs

- Peer mentors often grapple with the same identity-related issues as do their mentees, so it can be difficult for them to fully assist with adolescent transformations (Rhodes, 2004).
- Unintended consequences in peer programs can arise when peers display antisocial attitudes or behaviors and get positive reinforcement (verbal or nonverbal approval) from higher status or older peers.
- Peers are not trained counselors.

# Using Evidence-Based Practices

- Only high-quality mentoring programs have positive effects on youth
- “Middle-of-the-road” mentoring programs have few clear outcomes
- Low-quality mentoring programs show documented damage to youth

# Using Evidence-Based Practices

- Literature review for cross-age peer mentoring
- Doctoral dissertation using sequential mixed-methods study
  - 623 program coordinator survey respondents
  - 13 expert interviews
  - Berger, J. R. (2016). The Implementation of School-Based Peer Programs: Successes, Challenges, and Solutions. *UCLA*. ProQuest ID: Berger\_ucla\_0031D\_15173. Merritt ID: ark:/13030/m5xq1swj. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7kv3g5w2>

# Four Primary Implementation Factors

- Program Coordinator(s)
- Peer Mentors
- Program Structure
- Community and/or School Support

# Program Coordinators

# Characteristics of Effective Program Coordinators

- Passion for mentoring programs
- Strong communication and organizational skills
- Flexible and approachable problem-solvers
- Inspiring motivators and team builders
- Role models who understand the needs of mentees
- Sufficient time to coordinate mentoring program

# Challenge of Program Coordinator Sustainability

- Solutions:
  - Stakeholder teams
  - Back-up coordinators
  - Co-coordinators



<https://blog.vantagecircle.com/teamwork-and-team-building/>

# Peer Mentors

# Characteristics of Effective Peer Mentors

- Dependable and committed
- Empathetic with a respect for mentees
- Willingness to work closely with adults
- Strong communication, problem solving, and interpersonal skills
- Ability to cope with difficult situations while remaining non-judgmental
- Can be both serious and playful
- Positive, stable, and responsible role models
- Adaptable and resilient



# Recommendations for Recruitment and Selection Process

- Host multiple promotional meetings to describe benefits, describe expectations, and answer questions
- Standardize application and provide subsequent individual or group interview
- Seek out teacher, staff, coach, and current peer mentor recommendations
- Create a stakeholder committee for selections
- Ensure cohort of peer mentors represent a microcosm of school/community
- Avoid pre-existing groups or forced administrative selections

# Importance of Peer Mentor Training

- Mentor training is essential to program success, regardless of the particular program structure (Myric & Bowman, 1981; Tindall & Black, 2008).
- Regression in mentees when mentors have no training (Foster, 1991; Sprinthall & Blum, 1980).
- Emphasize pre-match and post-match training.

# Introductory Pre-Match Training

- Introduction to program goals, expectations, and ethics
- Digital and social media use
- Budget and reimbursements
- Transportation
- Teambuilding
- Skill building:
  - Active listening skills
  - Confidentiality
  - Referral skills
  - Equity and inclusion training

# Pre-Match Training – Sharing Expectations

- **Mentors need to show up:**

- Research illustrates the positive impact of offering a stable presence for youth over the course of a year.

- While cancelling meetings may seem inevitable from a mentor's perspective, mentees can view these disappointments as a reflection of a mentor's personal regard for him/her and negatively affect self-esteem (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Herrera et al., 2007; Karcher, 2005).

# Pre-Match Training – Sharing Expectations

## **Set realistic expectations:**

- Studies indicate that mentors frequently enter programs with high personal expectations of making a difference (Balcazar & Keys, 2013). When the work proves more challenging than initially anticipated, these mentors are more likely to terminate the mentoring relationship for fear of failure or perceived lack of appreciation (Spencer, 2007).
- Mentors need time to “think through the obstacles; focusing on only the unicorn and the rainbow version doesn’t prepare the leaders to handle the inevitable questioning by one or two of their kids” (Berger, 2016).

# Advanced Post-Match Training

- Mentors who receive ongoing support and supervision are more likely to continue in their positions and have more satisfying mentoring relationships that, in turn, increase positive youth outcomes (MENTOR, 2009; Rhodes, 2004).
- Typical advanced training focuses on any challenges that arise and includes goal-setting for upcoming meetings, outreach planning, and skill development (Berger, 2016; Tindall & Black, 2008).



# Peer Mentor Mistakes

- Student leaders will occasionally make mistakes (minor and major) that call their position in the program into question (Berger, 2016).
- Multiple approaches to significant mistakes that program coordinators should think through in advance.

# Program Structure

# Program Structure

- Outreach Format
- Curriculum
- Match Process
- Evaluation
- Facilities



# Strengths, Challenges, and Solutions for...

- One-to-one outreach format
- Group outreach format
- Standardized vs. flexible curriculum
- Closing rituals



# The Match Process

- In both one-to-one and group mentoring contexts, research emphasizes the importance of *match fit* between mentor and mentee (Pryce, Kelly, & Guidone, 2013).
- Program effectiveness was significantly enhanced when matches were made based on similarity of interests (Dubois et al., 2011; Rhodes, 2004).
- Match length- Grossman and Rhodes (2002) found correlations between positive youth outcomes (academically, psychologically, and behaviorally) and the duration of these relationships.
- Frequency of meetings matter (Bayer A., Grossman, J.B, & DuBois, D.L. (2015).

# Program Evaluation Challenge

The challenge of tracking seemingly immeasurable contributions:

- “How do you measure the kid that gives the balloon to his 6th grader because his mom has cancer? You can't. How do you measure prevention?... Every story that I hear like that, there are probably at least two or three stories of kids who were either going to commit suicide or were struggling, and a peer mentor reached out and we don't even know” (Berger, 2016).

# Solutions for Program Evaluation

- Consistent program evaluation of clearly specified program goals is another best practice.
- Pre- and post-model with a manageable number of outcomes.
- Quantitative and qualitative evaluations including interviews, data records, surveys, and descriptive narratives.

# The Importance of Community and/or School Support

# Challenges Related to Lack of Support from Admin or Faculty

- “I’ve seen lack of community involvement and support ruin a program... If you can’t bring your key administrators online because they don’t understand the value and they’re not going to support it, you’re going to have a mighty difficult time sustaining or developing a program” (Berger, 2016).



<http://ancosanvcc.com/support-us/>

# Solutions for General Lack of Support

- Have administrators:
  - Attend their own training
  - Visit another school with a thriving program
  - Participate on the school's stakeholder team
- Effective public relations plans are important for a programs' long-term sustainability.
- Program evaluations are critical for administrators to provide additional support and funding (Weinberger, 2013).
- Explore school, district, state, and federal grants, as well as private foundations.

# Challenges Related to Scheduling

- Program coordinators not having enough time to plan, supervise, and evaluate their programs in addition to other responsibilities.
- Not enough time for consistent meetings between program coordinators and student leaders.
  - “My school refuses to structure regular meetings between student leaders and program coordinators and, as a result, we are ending our program. I cannot work with kids in 15-minute random lunch periods that they may attend with true effectiveness and credibility” (Berger, 2016).
- Not enough time for consistent meetings between student leaders and mentees.

# Facilities

- Universal programs
- Advanced scheduling
- Location and proximity of adults

# Launching or Enhancing Peer Mentoring Programs

- What type of program would you like to implement or enhance in your school? Why?
- Who might be able to co-lead this program?
- Do you prefer a 1-1 or a group format? Why?
- Do you prefer a universal or a selective outreach format? Why?
- When might the student leaders get trained? When might the student leaders meet with their mentees?
- Where might these meetings take place?

# Center for Supportive Schools (CSS)

**CSS helps schools become places where students want to be.**

We help leverage the resources in schools to create more caring and vibrant learning communities.



Developing all students into leaders



Empowering teachers to collaborate with each other and with students



Engaging entire school communities to improve how learning happens

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# Our Experience with Peer Mentoring

Since 1979, CSS has partnered with over 200 schools to put into place a peer-to-peer group mentoring model, known as Peer Group Connection (PGC) that trains and mobilizes older/more experienced students to help ease the transition into school for incoming students and improve school culture and climate. Over 45,000 students are impacted by PGC every year.



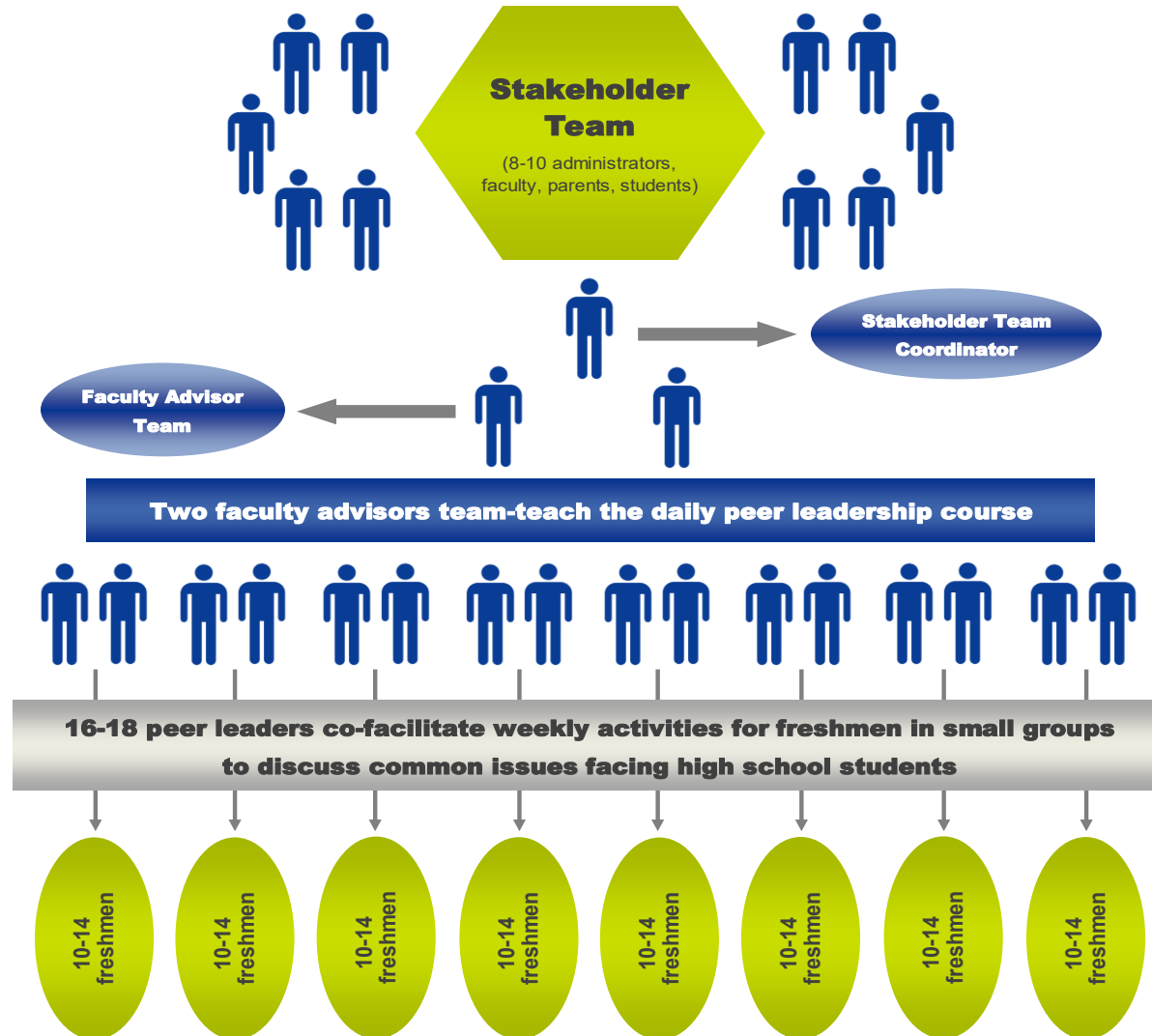
# What is Peer Group Connection (PGC)?

A peer-to-peer group mentoring model that trains and mobilizes older/more experienced students to help ease the transition into school for incoming students and improve school culture and climate.

- **PGC for high schools:** 11th and 12th graders support 9th graders
- **PGC for middle schools:** 8th graders support 6th graders

Each of these programs uses a distinct and developmentally appropriate curriculum.

# PGC for High Schools



# Common Challenges & How We Address

## Resources

- 2 school-based adults to team-teach the daily, for-credit peer mentoring class
  - 1 certified teacher; 1 other faculty or staff member
- 1-time program fee of \$60,000 per school
  - Grant funding
  - Title I funding
  - Long-term sustainability

## Scheduling

- PGC occurs as part of regular school day
  - Advisory
  - Health/PE
  - Homeroom/lunch



# Impact of PGC: Attendance

From 2018 Westat study of PGC-HS in 32 schools over 2 years:

- 9th grade students and peer leaders who participated in PGC attended school more than non-participants.
- Increased attendance rates were sustained a full year after students completed PGC.

6.1  
more  
days



Baltimore/NYC

6.2  
more  
days



North Carolina

7.8  
more  
days



Baltimore/NYC

2.4  
more  
days



North Carolina

# Impact of PGC: Academic Achievement

From 2018 Westat study of PGC-HS in 32 schools over 2 years:

- 9th grade students who participated in PGC were on-track to graduate on time more so than were non-participants, a finding that was also sustained into 10th grade, one year after PGC participation.
- 9th grade students and peer leaders who participated in PGC exhibited a higher grade point average (GPA) than non-participants.

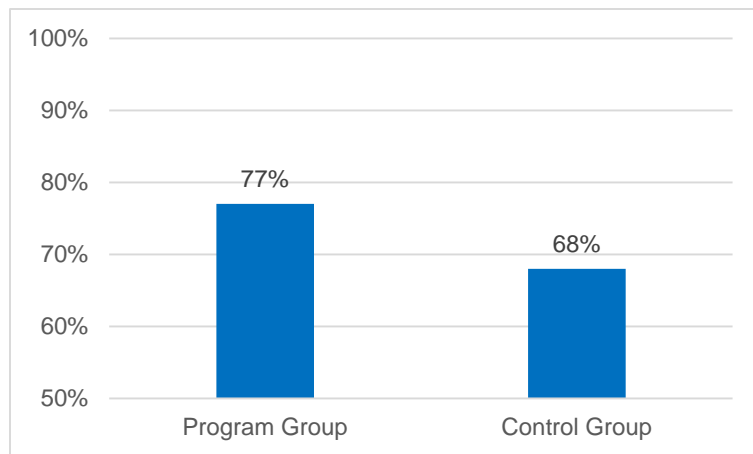
**Grade Point  
Average (GPA)**



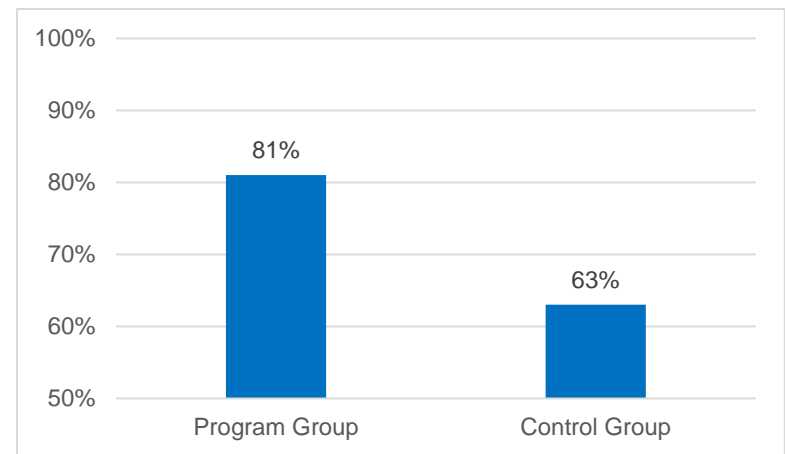
# Impact of PGC: Graduation

## % of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who graduated from high school

All Students



Male Students



# **A cross-age peer mentoring relationship is a powerful form of youth development, but one that cannot be left to its own devices.**

Peer mentors...

- Need support from adults to provide help to peers
- May be inclined to role model negative behaviors
- Require continuous training, supervision, and guidance

That said, older peers are HUGE influences on youth, so this approach can work magic when implemented properly.

<http://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/building-effective-peer-mentoring-programs-intro-guide.pdf>



# PGC at Western High School

- Western High School is a college preparatory school in Baltimore City with over 1,100 students
  - Over 90% of our students attend college after graduation
  - Last year students were awarded over 10 million in scholarships
- Our PGC program began in 2018 with 41 leaders
- Most of our leaders are 12<sup>th</sup> grade students
- We service over 300 freshmen
- Last year we held PGC leaders retreat, bi-weekly outreaches, activity day, family night, and service day
- Our freshmen hold the program in high regard and the current 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are looking forward to the chance to become PGC leaders



# PGC at Western High School

9<sup>th</sup> Graders  
Activity  
“Tough  
Questions  
for Tough  
Classes”



Leaders +  
PGC students =SUCCESS



Principal Michelle  
White

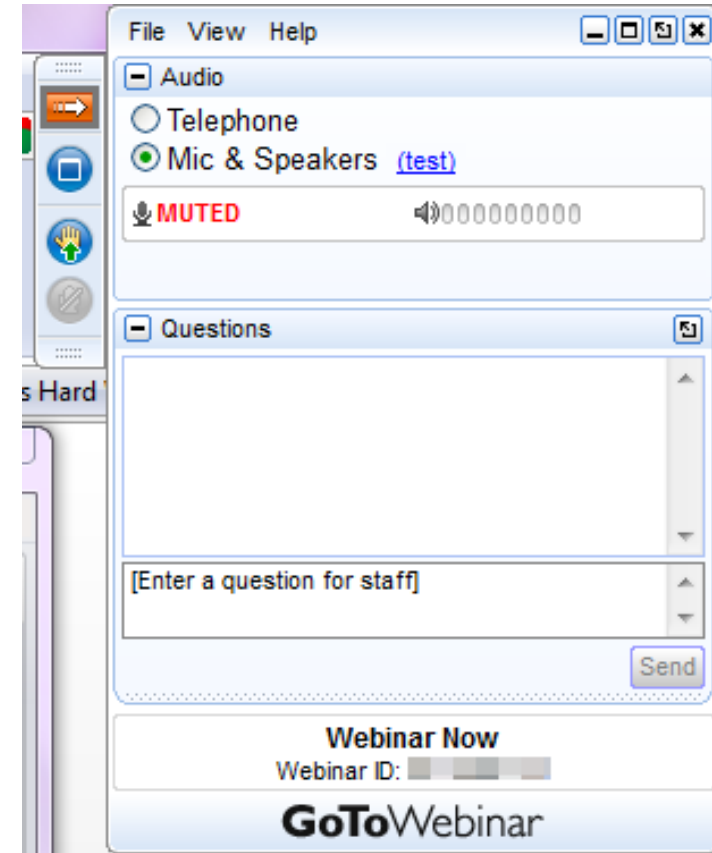
9<sup>th</sup> Graders  
Activity  
“Random  
to  
Organized”



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# Q&A

Type your questions in the question box:



# For More Information

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## Peer Mentoring Resources

- Mentoring Model Review: One-to-One Cross-Age Peer Mentoring, Michael Karcher, PhD, and Joshua Berger, PhD
- Peer Mentoring Handbook, Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania
- Peer Group Connection: Program Review Insights
- Cross-Age Mentoring Program: Program Review Insights

# Additional Resources



## **Affiliates**

Affiliates serve as a clearinghouse for training, resources, public awareness and advocacy. Find your local affiliate here: <http://www.mentoring.org/our-work/our-affiliates/>

## **Mentoring Connector**

Recruit mentors by submitting your program to the Mentoring Connector  
<https://connect.mentoring.org/admin>

## **National Mentoring Resource Center**

Check out the [OJJDP National Mentoring Resource Center](#) for no-cost evidence-based mentoring resources

## **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)**

Check out the [OJJDP website](#) for more resources and information on mentoring initiatives

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# Remember...

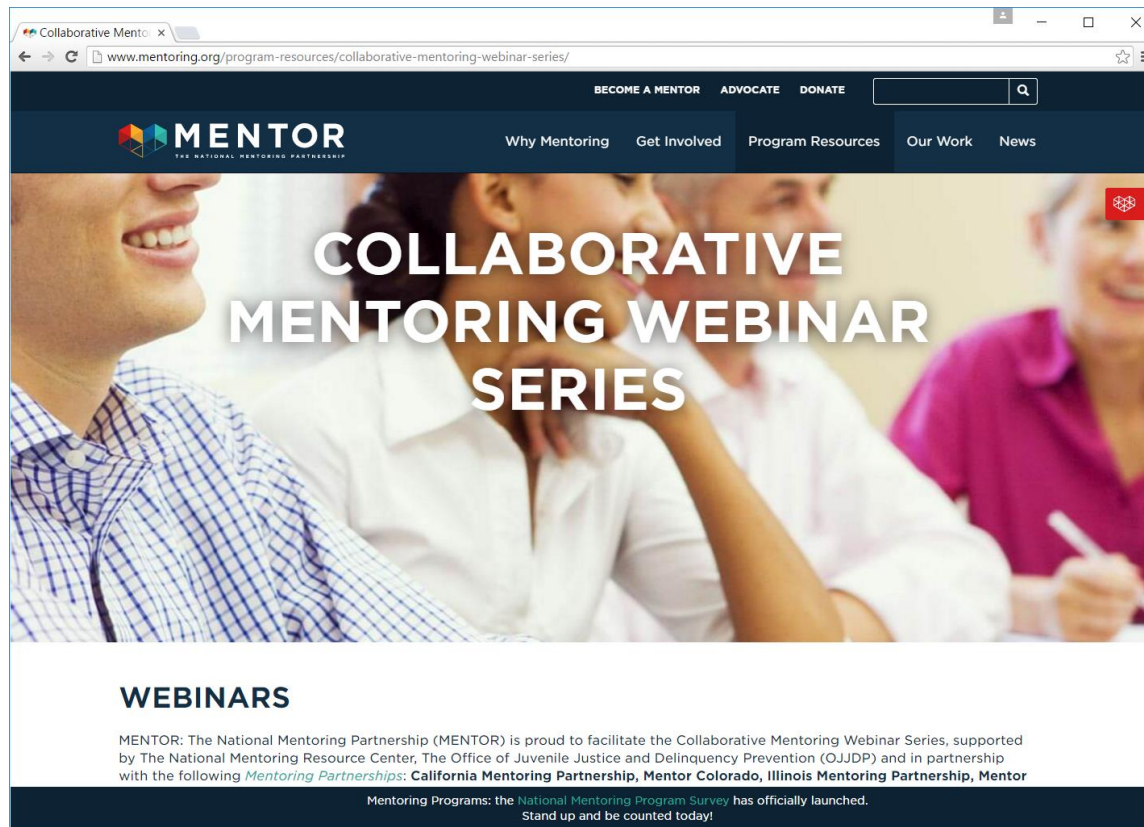
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- Everyone will get an email with information on how to download the slides, recording, and resources on the CMWS webpage on the MENTOR website:

[http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_resources/training\\_opportunities/collaborative\\_mentoring\\_webinar\\_series/](http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/training_opportunities/collaborative_mentoring_webinar_series/)

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- **Tweet** with hashtag #MentoringWebinar
- **Visit our webpage** on the MENTOR website for past and upcoming webinars:



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# Join Us Next Month!



## Mentoring and Social Emotional Learning Thursday, November 21, 2019



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