

The WISDOM *of* AGE
A GUIDE FOR STAFF

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Foreword

The Wisdom of Age: A Handbook for Staff is a comprehensive resource designed to offer program staff with specific tools and promising practices to best recruit, train and support mentors over the age of 50; currently the fastest growing population in the United States. This handbook acts as a supplemental guide to MENTOR's *How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice*—a step-by-step toolkit that provides tips and strategies for developing and strengthening youth mentoring programs.

Included in *The Wisdom of Age: A Handbook for Staff*, you will find a series of “ready-to-use” tools, templates and training exercises that will take you through the different steps necessary to build quality mentoring relationships between youth and their 50+ mentors. Additionally, MENTOR has also developed a special companion piece, *The Wisdom of Age: A Handbook for Mentors*, which provides direct guidance to older mentors by helping them develop the skills to feel confident as they proceed in their mentoring relationships.

The Wisdom of Age: A Handbook for Staff was made possible by a generous grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and is the latest offering from MENTOR. For nearly two decades, MENTOR has worked to expand the world of quality mentoring. In collaboration with a strong network of state *Mentoring Partnerships* and with more than 4,600 mentoring programs nationwide, MENTOR helps connect young Americans who want and need caring adults in their lives with the power of mentoring.

We hope that you will use this handbook with great success. For further assistance, we encourage you to visit www.mentoring.org to find even more resources.

In Partnership,



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Executive Vice President



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Introduction

Introduction

Somehow we have to get older people back
close to growing children if we are
to restore a sense of community,
a knowledge of the past and a sense of the future.

MARGARET MEAD

The United States is in the midst of a demographic transformation, which has tremendous potential to enhance the lives of individuals and strengthen communities across the country. Currently, the fastest growing segment of the population is older adults (age 65+), who are also the healthiest, most active and best educated in our history. At the same time we are experiencing an explosion of potential human resources at one end of the age spectrum, we also are witnessing a drain of potential human resources at the other end—a loss unparalleled at any time in our history. More than 14 million young people in the United States are growing up in adverse circumstances, often living in poverty, with the potential for school failure, engaging in delinquent behavior, substance abuse and early, risky sexual activity (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 2003).

It is generally agreed that mentoring is one strategy for meeting the needs of high-risk youth. The challenges are many, but one very obvious challenge revolves around identifying a sufficient number of qualified individuals who can mentor the millions of young people in need of positive adult support. At a time when children, youth and families need more help, research suggests that civic engagement, defined as involvement in the community, appears to be declining (Putnam, 2002). Involvement in mentoring is one way to expand volunteer opportunities and, thereby, enhance civic engagement.

The ever-increasing numbers of adults 50+ are in an ideal position to act as mentors. They have a lifetime of experience in work and caring for family and also are striving for an enhanced sense of generativity as they age (Erikson, 1986). Historically, in many cultures, grandparents and other older adults naturally have played a key role in mentoring young people, especially in the African-American, Latino and American Indian communities. Older people were the “keepers of the meaning” (Vaillant, 2002) and passed on cultural and family traditions. Even among European-American families, multi-generation households were not uncommon, and informal mentoring occurred through this network of relationships.

Programmatic intergenerational mentoring, however, is a recent phenomenon. The concept of mobilizing older adults as volunteers in significant numbers was the dream of President John Kennedy, whose vision was to “add life to the years” of older adults by providing meaningful opportunities for service. While the formal youth mentoring movement can definitely benefit from the increasing numbers of committed older adults, there are some challenges we must address. This guide is designed to provide a more in-depth look at the cohorts that comprise the “older adult” population, as well as some strategies for effectively engaging older mentors with youth.

Raising Awareness: Why Intentionally Recruit People 50+ as Mentors?

Numbers. As we have noted, people 65 and older comprise the fastest growing segment of the population. By 2030, the number of older adults in the United States will have grown from 33 million in 2000 to more than 70 million; one in five Americans will be 65 or older! This growing 50+ population represents a vast resource for communities across the country. People are looking for opportunities to contribute to their families and communities, remain connected to others and maintain their vitality (Yoshido & Gorden 2009). Among the foreign-born population, 20 percent, or six million, are over the age of 55, and by 2050 the ethnic minority population is expected to more than double (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging, 2000). As older adults begin to realize their potential to become “the trustees of civic life” (Freedman, 1999), a 50+ civic engagement movement has emerged that could have a tremendous impact on helping to address our nation’s challenges.

Motivation. In 1950, the psychologist Erik Erikson introduced the concept of generativity as the seventh of eight stages in his theory of human development and the life cycle. Before Erikson, there was a widely-held belief that childhood and adolescence were the periods of greatest intellectual and emotional growth. This way of thinking suggested that young adulthood was a time to solidify one’s knowledge and skills by becoming established in a profession and developing a social network. It also held that by middle age, adults were slowing down mentally and physically and most had lost interest in the world around them and were “shutting down” in preparation for death.

In sharp contrast, Erikson was the first social scientist to describe adult development in terms of growth potential rather than loss of capacity. He wrote that growing older could be a time when adults value the opportunity to share what they have learned over the course of a lifetime. He defined generativity as the “concern for establishing and guiding the next generation,” for passing on cultural traditions and leaving a legacy. As he described it, generativity is “I am what survives of me.”

Researchers have concluded that the need to be generative is a powerful motivator for people at this stage of life because they are looking for productive roles and want to provide leadership and guidance that will foster the development of the next generation (Freedman, 1988, 1999; Taylor, et al., 1999; Taylor and Bressler, 2000; Henkin, 1999; Newman, et al., 1997). In a recent survey, when people 50+ were asked about their motivations for volunteering, three reasons appeared most often: the general desire to help people (67 percent), the desire to make one’s community a better place (56 percent) and a personal commitment to a cause or belief (54 percent) (AARP state volunteer survey as cited in Prisuta, 2003).

Why is this important? Mentoring relationships that are motivated by altruism, such as the desire to give back to the community or express one’s values, are more likely to be positive and sustained over time (Rhodes, 2006; Karcher, Nakkula and Harris, 2005). The goal of mentoring programs is to identify mentors who will make a commitment and fulfill their assignments. People 50+ want to leave a legacy; they want to know their lives have had meaning and their experience and skills are valued. Tapping into this desire to can be a powerful message for engaging older adults.

Education. Baby Boomers are better educated than previous cohorts, and education appears to be one of the strongest predictors of altruistic behavior (Putnam, 2000). College graduates are more likely than people with a high school education to volunteer (71 percent compared to 36 percent), and a higher percentage of volunteering through a formal organization is also linked to education (49.8 percent of college-educated Baby Boomers vs. 25.7 percent of non-college-educated Boomers). Among Baby Boomers with a high school education, however, the highest rates of volunteerism are among African-Americans (23.6 percent) and Hispanics (21.9 percent) as opposed to whites (20.9 percent)(CNCS 2005).

Diversity. The U.S. population of adults 50+ is culturally, ethnically and racially diverse, providing an unprecedented opportunity to actively engage individuals from various backgrounds as mentors. In 2003, the nation's minority population totaled 98 million, and 18 percent were older than 65 (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports). Among the foreign born population, 20 percent, or six million people, are 55 or older (U.S. Census 2000 as cited in Senior Service America and Center for Applied Linguistics, 2006). In poor or immigrant communities, however, there may be barriers to volunteering through formal organizations, due to negative perceptions, culture or language (Points of Light Foundation, 2004), and for many, informal types of community engagement are a natural part of family, religious and communal life. It is estimated that by 2010, immigrant youth will comprise 25% of all U.S. children (The Urban Institute, 2006). Consequently, it is important to actively engage people from diverse communities.

Overcoming Stereotypes

Despite the aging of the U.S. population and the significant numbers of healthy older adults available to volunteer, there remains a good deal of ageism. Programs seeking volunteers frequently target younger adults, who may not have the time, the inclination or a sense of their own capacity to teach youth about cultural differences, money management or values (Scales, 2003). Ageist stereotypes can be prevalent among staff and youth. Adults 50+ may have their own stereotypes about youth. Program staff will need to create an environment that recognizes generational differences and promotes inclusion of diverse groups.

It is not uncommon for nonprofits to have between four and five different generations working side by side. These cohorts are generally identified as the GI or Traditionalists, born between 1915 and 1928; the Silent Generation, born between 1928 and 1945; the Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1964 (further divided into the Leading Edge and Trailing Edge Boomers); Generation X, born between 1965 and 1981, and Generation Y (also known as Millennials or Echo Boomers), born between 1982 and 2000. Different perspectives on work, communication styles, authority and technology can be a source of conflict between managers and the people they supervise or among members of a team. In order to minimize points of conflict and help create a more productive work force, it's important to understand the values, attitudes and beliefs of each generational cohort.

Staff can maximize the contributions of all by helping everyone understand their own and other generations' workplace characteristics. It is important to remember that other variables such as one's ethnic background, income level, family and/or life stage also can have a profound influence on one's values and work perspective. The following activity is helpful in bringing some generational perspective to the work setting.

TRAINING ACTIVITY

Generational Cohorts

Gallery Walk, Part 1

Materials: flip chart and markers

1. Prepare “Gallery Walk I” exercise. Write time frame (1940s – 50s; 1960s; 1970s; 1980s – 90s; 2000s) and the phrase “Defining Events” on five separate sheets of flip chart paper. Tape them up around the room.
2. Divide participants into five groups. Ask each group to brainstorm and record on the flip charts *the major social, cultural and political events that occurred during this time period*. Have groups rotate after two or three minutes so each group has a chance to view/add to every flip chart.
3. Now have groups report, and then ask participants to identify cohort names. For example, ask, “What term do we use to describe the cohorts who was in their teens and early twenties in the 1940s and 50s?” The “**Traditionalists**” were in their teens and twenties in the 1940’s. The **Silent Generation** was in their teens and early twenties in the 1950’s. For the 1960s **Leading Edge Boomers**; 1970s **Trailing Edge Boomers**; 1980s–90s **Generation X**; 2000s **Generation Y**, also known as Millennials and Echo Boomers.
4. Ask, “What stood out for you during this exercise? What do you see as the most significant differences among the cohorts?”
5. Explain: **External events** such as economic changes, wars, political ideologies, technological innovations and social upheavals act to **redefine social values, attitudes and preferences**.

And those cohort effects **stay with that cohort and influence its members’ behavior throughout the rest of their lives**.

- Cohort-formed values, attitudes and preferences generally do not change as a function of age or lifestyle.
- People who came of age during the Great Depression tend to be compulsive savers and risk-averse throughout their lives because they experienced economic hardship in early adulthood.
- People who came of age during the free-wheeling 60s still value self-expression, individuality and youth.

Gallery Walk, Part 2

Materials: flip chart, markers

1. Write the word “VALUES” on five sheets of flip chart paper, and put each one next to one of the cohorts. Direct participants to go back in teams and add attitudes and/or values they would attribute to each cohort.
2. Review with the group for additions, comments and feedback. Emphasize that a cohort’s values, attributes, attitudes, etc., present us with another lens that can help explain behavior. There are no value judgments. Instead, we need to understand the perspectives that age might bring so we can understand one another better.
3. After the group has completed this activity, review “cohort events” and “values” handout to compare participant perspectives with the research. The handout can be found at the conclusion of this section.

Working Effectively With People 50+

What's different about coaching/supervising people 50+? Because each generation possesses different values and motivations, it is difficult to find one management or leadership style that will work for everyone. The task-oriented, directive management techniques that worked well with the GI Generation may not be appropriate for Baby Boomers or those who follow. GI and older members of the Silent Generation tend to want defined roles and clear lines of authority, while Leading Edge and Trailing Edge Boomers respond better to a less structured, more *individualistic* approach to management and leadership (Meredith, Schewe, and Hiam, 2002).

Elements of Facilitative Management

This approach involves:

- Asking mentors their opinion.
- Involving them in decision-making.
- Listening to their concerns.
- Strategizing *with* mentors about reaching their goals with their mentee.
- Encouraging them to design or customize roles if they can't become involved in direct service.
- Empowering them to take on leadership roles.

Many people 50+ want to be *partners* with staff rather than being in a subordinate role. The ability to use *facilitative* leadership behaviors to engage others actively so their talents and contributions are fully leveraged is critical for coordinators or administrators interested in recruiting people 50+. This can be challenging for a young staff person working with a mentor who could very easily be older than their parents.

Tips for Staff in Working with Traditionalists and Silent Generation Mentors

1. Really get to know the mentor. People place a high value on personal relationships and personalized treatment.
2. Use the personal touch. Human interaction is often preferable to e-mail or voicemail.
3. Establish clear lines of communication. This generation has respect for authority and expects respect in return.
4. Coaching and supervision should be done by a respected leader. Younger staff can establish themselves in this role by adopting an open attitude and listening ear.
5. Above all, be open to the assets that people bring to the mentoring role regardless of age.

Tips for Staff in Working with Boomer Mentors

1. Emphasize your respect for their experience and accomplishments.
2. Coaching is the preferred style of development. Boomers see themselves as learners.
3. Give public recognition. Say, “Great job,” and, “Thank you.”
4. Stress the reciprocal nature of the coordinator/mentor relationship. “We can learn from each other.”
5. Be prepared for an “I know that” attitude. Boomers respond to feedback and knowing that their experience counts for something. Remember, in their professional lives, many have been workaholics. They sometimes feel younger generations don’t have the same work ethic.

Implications for Monitoring Mentor-Mentee Matches

1. *The Issue.* Technology has changed the nature of work and, often, relationships. Boomers in particular value conversation and consensus. Gen X and Gen Y may be more comfortable in communicating and making decisions via e-mail.

What to do. Program coordinators may choose to communicate through informal e-mail messages, such as, “We’re having a meeting Thursday the 13th at 5 p.m.” Then, conversations about mentee or coaching can be handled in one-on-one discussions or in-service meetings.

2. *The Issue.* Generations X and Y, although not exclusively, are driven by their attachment to technology, which means they are never without a connection to coworkers, family or friends. It’s not unusual for someone to feel disrespected when they are cut off from conversation while a staff coordinator takes a phone call or sends a text message.

What to do. Setting and respecting guidelines for cell phones, pagers and other technological devices can help minimize distractions and ensure that meetings run smoothly and without interruption.

3. *The Issue.* Many people 50+ like to work in teams and value being united by a common purpose and making decisions together. “Leadership by consensus” is a message that works for them. They appreciate in-service meetings where they can meet with other mentors and discuss common challenges and triumphs. The “greatness of the team effort” is not a message that necessarily works for Generation X. They consider themselves to be self-reliant, often preferring to figure things out themselves, and they expect others to do the same. They may not feel comfortable facilitating the group discussions that Boomers, especially, crave.

What to do. This may be the perfect opportunity to tap into the skills and expertise of 50+mentors, who could conduct an in-service meeting or help plan some activities that would facilitate conversations and problem-solving.

4. *The Issue.* Just as younger staff need to appreciate people 50+ for their assets, the same is true for older mentors. They need to be mindful of not being critical of younger staff because of perceptions of inexperience or a different work ethic. They need to be aware of differences in style and fashion.

What to do. Using the Gallery Walk training exercise with mentors can help provide that perspective of seeing the world from the “age lens” of other generations. Also try the “What’s Hot, What’s Not” training activity.

5. *The Issue.* Some mentors may be happy to receive a MENTOR mug and pin in January during National Mentoring Month, but Boomer mentors often want a different kind of recognition ³/₄ something that satisfies their need to be appreciated for their experience.

What to do. Think of recognition and incentives along a continuum. Continue to provide the mugs, pins and T-shirts. Feature your mentor-mentee pairs in your newsletter or on your Web site. Provide mentors with business cards, invite them to present at conferences or attend a meeting with the executive director to talk about the program. Include mentors in conducting training, leading in-service meetings or other leadership opportunities.

Handling the Illness or Death of a Mentor

One of the most common concerns about recruiting older adults as mentors is the possibility of illness or death. Unfortunately, there is very little available in the literature that directly speaks to this concern. While it is true that older people may be at increased risk for stroke, heart attack or the diagnosis of a debilitating, chronic illness, it is also true that current populations of people 50+ have increased longevity and, in general, are living healthier while they are living longer (National Center for Health Statistics). There is also evidence that volunteering has positive effects on one's physical and mental health (Fried, et al., 2007). Smoking and obesity, however, appear to be the two leading causes of premature death, and both are prevalent among some populations of people 50+ (National Center for Health Statistics).

Termination of a relationship due to illness or death must be handled with sensitivity and transparency. As program coordinators, we must be able to acknowledge that a mentor, or a mentor's family member, has become ill and not promise the mentee that his/her mentor will be able to return. We must also make arrangements for continuation of a mentoring relationship if possible, and we must provide an outlet and opportunity for grief and closure.

Illness. Illness can affect the mentor or a mentor's family member. The best possible scenario is that an illness is temporary and the mentor can return to the program after a respite. In this case, if it is feasible, encourage the mentee to stay in touch with the mentor, via phone, e-mail or letter writing. The mentor will most likely appreciate the thoughtfulness of this connection, and it can be an important learning experience for the mentee. A program coordinator can help oversee this process, and other mentors can step in. In the Across Ages program, an intergenerational mentoring initiative created at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, if a mentor was ill or caring for a sick spouse, the other mentors often would take mentee on outings and fill in during the interim, helping to make sure that the youth was in touch with his/her mentor. This occurred because many of the mentors had become friends with one another through in-service meetings and other program activities. They also were sympathetic about the challenges of family illness since many of them had shared similar experiences over the course of their lifetimes.

If a mentor has to leave the program permanently, it is important to provide the pair with an opportunity to say goodbye, in person or over the phone. They may be able to continue a connection if both are agreeable, simply as friends would if one moved away, or it may be better to terminate the relationship. This is a decision that should be made with all parties involved, including the youth's parents/caregivers, the mentor, youth and program coordinator. Under no circumstances should the relationship just be allowed to dwindle away without some type of closure.

Death. In some cases, an illness may lead to death or a mentor may die suddenly from a heart attack, stroke or accident. It must be noted that younger mentors are also at some risk, and we shouldn't let the possibility of ill health or misfortune prevent us from investing in recruiting older adults.

When handling the death of a mentor with a young person, it is best to be direct, sensitive and honest. The program coordinator should make the youth's parents/caregivers aware of the situation before talking to the mentee. Sharing the news with the youth might be something that is done with the family, or it might be between the youth and the program coordinator—that is a decision that can be made by program staff and the family. A mentee should be given as much information as is appropriate for his/her age and is respectful of the mentor's family. It is important for the youth to have an opportunity to express his/her sympathy to the mentor's family. It might be in the form of a letter or phone call. The youth might create a tribute to his/her mentor that can be shared with friends or family. If the youth's family is in agreement, it might be appropriate for the mentee to attend the funeral or memorial service. It is also important to respect the religious and cultural traditions of the mentee's and the mentor's families; open communication and dialogue will be critical. It is not uncommon for young people to feel they have been abandoned when someone they are close to dies and to experience anger and resentment at the person who has left them. Again, the role of program staff is paramount in being aware of these issues and to have someone available to talk with the youth. Family members also must be included in this process.

Using the Across Ages program as an example again, the program mentors can play an important and supportive role by including the youth in outings and accompanying them to program activities until a new match has been found.

Rematching. The question of rematching can be delicate since we know that mentors are not interchangeable (Rhodes, 2000) and it's not easy to establish the mentor-youth bond. On the other hand, we don't want to lose youths from the program or have them regress or suffer because of unfortunate circumstances. It is important to get a commitment from the youth and his/her family before matching with another mentor and to engage in the same careful process of training and facilitating the match. Don't skip over a step in the mistaken notion that the young person has experience as a mentee.

Training Older Mentors

Mentor training is an essential component to promoting effective, sustainable programs and enduring matches (DuBois, et al). Mentors need ongoing coaching and support so they, in turn, can coach and support their mentee. In general, training for mentors of any age should focus on raising awareness about the assets and challenges of the youths being mentored, strategies for positive mentor-youth interaction, interaction with families and problem-solving techniques. Of particular importance in training older mentors is helping them understand current youth culture in order to break down stereotypes and build relationships.

It is sometimes tempting to provide a superficial orientation to the program and avoid the in-depth training that mentors really need in order to be effective in their roles. This is especially true if program staff is not comfortable leading and facilitating training sessions. An excellent resource is the publication *Training New Mentors* (2007), written by Linda Jucovy and published by the Hamilton Fish Institute of School and Community Violence and the National Mentoring Center at Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. In addition to providing detailed information with regard to training content, it also offers practical guidance for trainers, including pre-training preparation, tips for creating an optimal learning environment during the training and strategies for summarizing and following up after the training.

Pre-service training also is a good way to assess the commitment and strengths of your potential mentors. Mentors who are too busy to attend the pre-service training may be too busy to provide the consistent support needed by the youths. Designing interactive activities that call upon the mentors to share experiences relevant to the mentoring relationship and approaches to meeting challenges is a good way to ensure that mentors have the perspective and skills to be the best mentors possible.

Training older adults can be a very different experience from training younger people, particularly considering the extent to which technology is often used in a teaching environment. Training for mentors should not be viewed merely as the imparting of information but also as the “unleashing” of knowledge, skills and experience that older adults already possess. Encouraging participants to share their life experience will enrich the training program and alleviate the anxiety some may feel about being in a traditional “classroom” environment. Below are some tips for creating an optimal experience for older adult learners.

Understand Adult Learning Principles. There are numerous theories regarding adult learning, but all focus on common themes: experience provides the basis for learning activities; adults are interested in learning that has relevance to jobs or personal situations; and adults need to be involved in planning and evaluating the experience.

Structure of Learning Experiences

1. Adults prefer flexible schedules that respond to their own time constraints.
2. Adults prefer face-to-face learning rather than learning through the use of video or audio communications.
3. Adults derive benefits from interactional activities with others who differ in age, level of experience and professional preparation.

Learning Climate

1. Adult learners seem to learn better if there is an atmosphere of mutual helpfulness and peer support.
2. Since adult learners may be reluctant to take risks, the climate should be characterized by a sense of trust and acceptance.
3. Adult learners appreciate the invitation to express their views and are open to the views of others.
4. Adult learners bring clear expectations to the learning environment and expect instructors to accommodate these expectations.

Focus of Learning

1. Adult learners derive the greatest benefit from instructional methods that assist them in processing their experience through reflection, analysis and critical examination.
2. Adult learners are motivated by practical how-to learning.

Teaching-Learning Strategies and Media

1. Adult learners value problem-solving and cooperative learning.
2. Adult learners seem to benefit from active participation in the learning process.

(Stroot, S., et al., 1998)

Develop a Training Plan-Oriented. The orientation session is usually the first session where participants learn about the project and their responsibilities.

Mentor orientation should provide:

- An overview of the program, including mission and goals.
- Qualities of successful mentors.
- Mentor roles and responsibilities.
- Role of program staff and how to contact them.
- Description of eligibility and screening process.
- Level of commitment expected (time, energy, etc.).
- Summary of policies.
- Benefits and rewards of participation.
- Schedule of upcoming events.
- Addressing questions.

Pre-Service. A Pre-service training should focus on strategies for helping mentors develop the skills and attitudes to perform their roles. These include:

- Familiarizing mentors with the health, psychological, social, financial and emotional dynamics of the targeted youth population.
- Enabling mentors to engage in effective mentoring relationships.
- Introducing concepts of family functioning and the effects of a youth's problems on parents, siblings, relatives, friends, neighbors and other social networks.
- Helping mentors appreciate what is special and unique about each youth, the strengths and assets they bring to the relationship.
- Helping mentors understand the feelings that may be experienced by parents/caregivers caring for challenging youths (frustration, anger, anxiety, disappointment, depression) and preparing mentors to deal with those feelings in themselves.
- Helping mentors understand the feelings that young people might have by living in similar challenging circumstances.
- Helping mentors recognize and tolerate different lifestyles, values and practices.
- Teaching some basic principles of behavior management.
- Providing basic instruction for emergency procedures.
- Acquainting mentors with resources for educational and recreational activities.
- Familiarizing mentors with project procedures and reporting requirements.
- Introducing mentors to community resources and programs available to assist youth.

In-Service Training. In-service training is a good way to assess the progress of the mentor-mentee relationships and to provide additional support and skill building. "You don't know what you don't know until you realize you don't know it" has been a favorite mantra of the Across Ages mentors. Although the pre-service training provides the time to discuss issues and engage in problem-solving, it's not until we find ourselves face-to-face with a challenge that we can test our ability to deal with it. Continued opportunities for learning and practice increase a mentor's skills and confidence and go a long way to ensure retention in the program. Be sure to get mentor input on time, transportation, location and topics to be discussed. Topics may include:

- Clarifying values.
- Involvement with youth's family.
- Dealing with high-risk behaviors.
- Understanding mental health issues.
- Learning leadership skills.
- Conflict management.
- Setting limits.
- Goal setting.



**Mentor
Training
Activities**

Mentor Training Activities

Mentor Roles and Qualities

1. Ask mentors to find a partner, preferably someone they do not know.
2. Lead participants in a guided reflection for several minutes by asking them to think about someone in their lives they consider to have been a mentor. It could be a teacher, neighbor, family friend, relative, pastor, or supervisor. Ask them to identify the roles that person played and the qualities and characteristics he or she embodied.
3. Ask them to discuss their mentoring experience with their partner, identifying the circumstances, roles, and qualities of their mentor. Explain that they will need to listen carefully because they will be sharing their partner's mentoring experience with the rest of the group.
4. Ask a few pairs to share with the group. Record responses on chart paper—e.g., who the mentor was, the roles he or she played, and the qualities and characteristics that person had. Other participants can add to the list if it seems incomplete.

In all likelihood, participants will identify roles such as teacher, coach, advocate, and role model. Qualities and characteristics will include listener, nurturer, encourager, unconditional support, visionary, sense of humor, and others.

Depending on the age of the group, participants may identify family members as mentors. The facilitator can make the point that today, many mentees do not have family members they can turn to; consequently, we are seeing an increase in *programmatic mentoring*.

The facilitator should also make the point that the roles and qualities participants identified as being important to them are the same as those we are asking them to take on with their mentees. In other words, this is an opportunity to share what you have learned about life and support a mentee. Mentors need not be corporate executives or have a Ph.D.

What's Happening to Young Adolescents?

1. Write this statement on the board or newsprint:

Helping young people achieve their full potential is the best way to prevent them from becoming involved in risky behavior.

– National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth

2. Ask participants what they think this statement means in light of the mentor roles that were identified in the previous activity.

Context/Issue Discussions.

Present information that will help participants understand the youth they will be mentoring—the challenges they face and the assets they possess. It is often useful for mentors to hear from people in the field who have particular expertise in an area relating to the youth's experience and/or developmental stage. Programs focused on mentoring youth in foster care, youth with disabilities or those who have parents/caregivers in prison might invite case managers or others involved with the youth to discuss the challenges faced by these young people and the strengths they have developed. Similarly, someone who works with young people in an after-school setting can lead a discussion about stages of emotional and physical development that can inform mentors about youth's interests and behaviors. A teacher or guidance counselor might provide some insight into what school is like and the issues youth face at school. After the discussions, ask participants to again reflect on the statement above. It is important to help participants set realistic expectations. Their role is to be a friend, a support and a guide. They should not expect that they can transform the young person. (This activity is adapted from "Training New Mentors.")

Understanding Adolescent Development

Share the following information with the participants (select the material that is appropriate for the age of their perspective mentees). Ask them to reflect on their own experiences at this age, and provide some examples. Then focus the discussion on youth today. How might the experiences of today's youth be the same or different? Stress that while young people dress differently, are more proficient with technology and are exposed to more sex and violence in the media, they are, nonetheless, going through the same developmental experiences as adolescents have in the past.

Early Adolescence (*begins at age 10 or 11 and merges with mid-adolescence at age 14 or 15*)

Physically

- Girls' growth begins and peaks earlier than boys'
- Reproductive system begins to develop
- Secondary sex characteristics begin to develop

Intellectually

- Beginning to move from concrete thinking (what is) to abstract thinking ("formal operations"—what might be true if...)
- Cannot always perceive long-range implications of current decision
- Expanded interests; intense, short-term enthusiasm

Socially and Emotionally

- **Self**
 - Preoccupation with rapid body change
 - Self-absorption, self-consciousness
 - Diminished self-esteem
- **Family**
 - Redefining relationship with family; moving toward more independence while still looking to family for guidance and values
 - Few major conflicts over parental control
- **Peers**
 - Increasing importance
 - Seeking to become part of group to hide insecurities from rapid changes
 - Comparing own normality and acceptance with same-sex peers
 - Moving toward more intimate sharing of feelings
- **Sexuality**
 - Defining self in terms of maleness and femaleness
 - Learning how to relate to opposite sex

Mid-Adolescence (*begins at age 14 or 15 and merges with late adolescence at about age 17*)

Physically

- Growth slowing; stature reaches 95 percent of adult height
- Secondary sex characteristics well advanced

Intellectually

- Growing competence in abstract thinking
- Capable of perceiving future implications of current acts and decisions, but does not always apply them
- Reverts to concrete thinking under stress

Socially and Emotionally

- **Self**
 - Reestablishing body image as growth slows
 - Preoccupation with fantasy and idealism as abstract thinking and sense of future develops
- **Family**
 - Major conflicts over control (rules, homework, curfew)
 - Struggle for emancipation, greater autonomy
- **Peers**
 - Strong identification with chosen peers to affirm self-image
 - Looking to peers for behavioral codes
- **Sexuality**
 - Testing ability to attract and parameters of masculinity and femininity
 - Developing sexual codes of behavior, personal value system

Source: Robert Johnson, M.D., University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Mentoring Manual Baltimore, MD. Abell Foundation, 1990.

Effective Mentoring Relationships

What is an effective mentoring relationship? In a study of four Linking Lifetimes programs, Public/Private Ventures attempted to define effective adult/youth relationships and determine if such relationships do develop in an intergenerational setting.

Based on this study, the following are recommended strategies for interacting with youth.

Understand the youth's reluctance to trust.

Many of the young people in our programs have been disappointed by previous relationships with adults. Be patient. It may take a while for your youth to overcome his/her hesitance and begin to trust you.

View your purpose in the program as being available to give; understand that, at least initially, the relationship will be one-directional.

Offer reassurance and support.

It's important to offer reassurance and kindness to your youth and remind him/her that you're available to talk at any time. Don't be afraid to tell your youth that you care about and believe in him/her. Too many young people rarely hear those words.

Suggest ways to solve problems.

Try to listen carefully and offer possible solutions without passing judgment. Practical suggestions rather than criticism or preaching are usually most helpful for youth. Whenever possible, try to think together of ways to solve a problem, rather than lecture your youth about what you think he/she should do.

Identify the youth's interests, and take them seriously.

Try to include your youth in determining the activities you engage in and the areas in which you offer help.

Do not force the youth to talk about personal issues.

Delving into your youth's personal or family life, particularly early in the relationship, is usually not productive. It's unwise to ask youth to discuss information they may be ashamed of, such as poor school performance, a criminal record or abusive family behaviors. If your youth resists sharing information, don't push. Silence does not necessarily mean rejection. It's important not to measure a relationship's success by the extent of the youth's disclosure.

On the other hand, you may be surprised by how much your youth shares with you early without any prompting or inquiry from you. It's important to determine why this information is being given so early and fully. There is the possibility your youth may be testing you to see if you are "shock proof."

Have realistic expectations.

Many mentors get discouraged when they feel their youth aren't "turning their lives around" or making huge improvements. Although you certainly will have an impact on your youth, it is unlikely that he/she will be totally transformed by this relationship. Gains may seem small (e.g., showing up for meetings, expressing appreciation, missing fewer school days), but they are nonetheless signs of progress. Adjusting your expectations and understanding that your youth may not always express gratitude directly will prevent mentor "burnout" and frustration.

Try to relate to your youth's personal experiences.

Although you may not have faced the same problems as your youth, try to remember some of the difficulties you had growing up.

Attempt to understand your youth's family, social class and culture.

Best Practices in Mentoring Relationships

Communicate Effectively.

Talking and communication are not the same! There are three basic skills: listening, looking and leveling.

Listening Listening does not have to be passive. It can be as active as talking, if you do it right. To listen effectively, you should:

- Pay attention.
- Don't think ahead to what you are going to say, thereby ignoring the speaker while rehearsing your own comments.
- Don't interrupt.
- Listen for feelings underneath the words.
- Keep an open mind and don't judge immediately.
- Encourage the speaker to continue, and clarify what has been said.

Looking People communicate with verbal and body language. Pay attention to the whole person. Take note of facial gestures and body movements. There are clues that will help you more fully understand what the person is saying. Some helpful tips:

- Make eye contact.
- Show that you are listening by leaning forward in your chair, saying, "Uh huh" or, "Go on."
- Check what you are understanding: repeat back what you heard. Ask if that's what the mentee said.

Leveling Leveling means being honest about what you are feeling and thinking. Tips include:

- Be honest in what you say.
- Speak for yourself. Use "I" statements instead of "you" statements.
- Deal with the other person's feelings. Don't give unwanted advice or try to change someone's feelings. Just listen and try to understand.

Active Listening

Active listening helps you identify what another person is feeling and reflect back to that person what you have heard. It is listening that improves communication, which builds and sustains relationships.

To Practice Active Listening

- Use questions or statements that are not answered by a “yes” or “no” response.
- Use words like “what,” “how,” “when” and, “Tell me about....”
- Listen without interrupting the speaker.
- Work hard at concentrating on what is being said.
- Avoid being distracted from words by mannerisms, clothing or voice quality.
- Avoid letting expectations interfere with hearing what is being said.
- Pay attention to nonverbal cues and body language.
- Listen for feelings, attitudes, perceptions and values, as well as facts.
- Be attentive to inarticulate, repetitious or slow speakers.
- Restate the other person’s statements so they know they are heard.
- Ask the other person to repeat or clarify if needed for understanding.
- Wait for the other person to finish before framing a response.

Active Listening Responses

- Uh huh.
- I hear what you’re saying.
- That makes sense.
- I’ve felt that way, too.
- That’s understandable.
- I think I would feel that way, too.
- It would be hard not to feel that way.
- It’s normal to think those things.
- It’s OK to feel that way.
- If I were you I might feel _____, too.

Stages of the Mentor-Youth Relationship

The mentor-youth relationship often goes through at least three major stages. It is important to understand these stages so you can be prepared to respond appropriately.

The first stage of a mentoring relationship is Familiarization and Testing; the second stage is Commitment and Work; and the last stage is Termination and/or Closure. Since each relationship is unique, the amount of time spent in each of these stages will vary.

Stage One: Familiarization and Testing

In this stage, you and your youth are trying to get to know each other. Many youth may be uncommunicative, answering questions with shrugs or one-word answers. There may be some jousting between you and your youth to test the limits of the relationship. This is particularly true of youth who want to see how far they can “push” you or trust you to be there for them. This pushing or testing might be demonstrated by the youth:

- Missing appointments.
- Giving the mentor the silent treatment.
- Making unreasonable demands.
- Having angry outbursts.
- Cursing to get a reaction.

In stage one, the tone for the relationship is set. You should:

- Be on time for meetings.
- Request that your youth be on time as a matter of respect for you.
- Express realistic expectations of the youth.
- Try only to make promises that you can keep.
- Provide unconditional friendship and support.
- Engage in activities that the youth suggests.
- Understand that your youth may not be comfortable just talking.
- Let the youth know how his or her behavior is affecting you.

While you should respect the confidences shared by the youth, you should apprise your youth that information that may be detrimental to him/her should be shared with the project coordinator. Encourage the youth to share such information with the coordinator or other proper authorities.

Stage Two: Commitment and Work

In stage two, there is a deepening of the relationship. You and your youth may begin to spend more than the required time together and may call each other frequently on the phone. You may notice visible signs of caring for one another, such as remembering special occasions. However, it's possible that as your relationship proceeds, your youth may exhibit behavior that is problematic. Stage two is a time for the hard work that can really make a difference for your youth in the long run.

Goal setting is particularly important during this stage. The most successful mentoring relationships involve helping youth develop specific skills and competencies. It's important to work with your youth in developing goals, even if you think he/she should be working on certain things. Otherwise, you will be just another adult telling him/her what to do.

Stage Three: Termination and/or Closure

It is hoped that this formal mentoring relationship will grow into a more natural one that will sustain itself without agency supports. However, some relationships will not continue and others will end prematurely due to geographic moves, illness, incompatible relationships, youth confinement, etc. How a relationship ends is key to how you and especially the youth will think about and value the experience you shared.

Planned Terminations can be facilitated in the following ways:

If you initiated the termination:

- The youth should be alerted well in advance of your departure from the relationship.
- The reasons for the departure should be discussed with the youth by you and reinforced by the project's coordinator.
- Youth may feel they are being abandoned and may demonstrate anger. Allow them to grieve and be appropriately angry. In those relationships that were less intimate, this process will, of course, be less painful to the youth.
- If possible, continue contact with your youth by phone or letters.

If your youth initiated the termination:

- Don't view this separation as a failure but as an opportunity to continue the relationship at a new level.
- Engage in letter writing and phone calls.

In both instances, focus on the:

- Progress you made.
- Fun you had.
- New ways you plan to keep in contact.

PRACTICE SCENARIOS

How Would You Handle These Situations?

Ask mentors to role play and problem solve these scenarios based on what they have learned regarding effective mentoring strategies and active listening.

- Your mentee is 13 years old. Things seemed to be going well between you, but he has now missed the last two meetings. You phoned again and this time arranged to pick him up. He is happy to see you when you arrive, but you are upset and disappointed that he hasn't been more responsible. How do you talk to him?
- Your mentee is 12 years old and you have been together for about three months. She has never expressed an opinion about how you spend your time together or suggested an activity. She is always "OK" with whatever you choose. You know it's important to share in the decision-making and you have decided to deal with the situation. What do you say?
- Your mentee, age 11, lives with his single mom and four older sisters. You have been meeting with him for almost six months and are aware that his mom's new boyfriend recently moved in. He says this is the third time someone has moved in since his dad died, and he can always tell they will be around for a while because they take his place at the head of the table. He hasn't said that he is upset, but you can tell he is angry by the way he talks about this man. What can you say to help him out?
- Your female mentee, age 12, has a boyfriend at school, and you notice the relationship is becoming very intense. Twice now you have picked her up after school and seen that her clothes are disheveled, and today you saw bruises on her neck. You don't know if she is having sex, but you feel that this relationship is inappropriate for someone so young, and you're afraid she may follow in the footsteps of her sister, who had a baby at 15. How can you handle this situation?
- You and your mentee, age 11, have been matched for several months. She and her mother seemed very enthusiastic about the match when you met at the program orientation, and the few times you have been out together it has been fun. But over the past few weeks, each time you go to meet her she has to babysit her younger siblings. Several times you have called and left a message with her mom, and she hasn't returned your call. You're not quite sure what's happening, but you think her mom may be sabotaging the relationship for some reason. How do you handle this situation?
- Your mentee, age 10, is one of five children being raised by his grandmother. You have been together for almost six months and you feel that he is really benefitting from having some extra attention from a male. You have noticed, however, that his grandmother needs a mentor as much, if not more, than the youth, and she has been calling you on the phone in between meetings. She talks endlessly when you go to pick up your mentee, asking advice about where to look for certain resources or telling you about the challenges of the other children. How do you handle this situation?

Supporting Mentors

The following sections are adapted from the Linking Lifetimes Program Development Manual (1993) by Henkin, Perez-Randal and Rogers, published by Temple University's Center for Intergenerational Learning.

The role of the program coordinator is particularly important in intergenerational mentoring programs. The coordinator may have to serve as a mediator between the mentor and youth, the mentor and family or the mentor and a caseworker or teacher. Mentors need to be provided with relevant information and consistent support.

Some tips:

- Give each mentor specific written instructions on how to reach staff and what to do in an emergency.
- Encourage mentors to report problems, questions and concerns immediately.
- Ask mentors to keep a record of their activities using designated project forms.
- Provide one-to-one supervision. During these sessions, each mentor can meet with staff to discuss activities, progress, problems and questions.
- Maintain weekly or biweekly phone contact, and plan regular in-service meetings.
- Maintain a virtual or actual library of materials that mentors can use, including relevant material on positive youth development, behavioral management, etc.
- Provide opportunities for informal exchange of ideas among mentors during all project functions.

Managing Mentor Stress

Program-based mentoring can be stressful for mentors and youth. Mentors may become frustrated by what they perceive as a lack of progress or by negative events. In general, it takes at least six months to develop a trusting mentor-mentee relationship that is grounded in real friendship, and mentors may become impatient with the pace at which this occurs. Sometimes, when mentors realize the depth of the problems faced by their youth, they feel overwhelmed. It's extremely important for coordinators to help mentors develop realistic expectations and understand that initially the relationship will be one-directional. Persistence is a critical factor in successful mentoring. Assessing the needs of each mentor and responding to concerns in a timely manner will help prevent mentor drop-out. Make sure mentors feel a sense of belonging to the program and know they are appreciated.

Youth may also feel uncomfortable being pushed into an unnatural relationship. Sometimes they react with fear and want to pull away. Periodically meeting with youth, either individually or in a group, will help reassure them they should stick with the program.

Empowering Mentors in Capacity-Building Roles

Successful intergenerational mentoring programs are those in which the mentors are empowered to be involved actively in program operations, as well as to assume increasingly responsible roles with their youth. Experienced mentors can do an excellent job in recruiting other mentors and share their learning in training sessions. Mentors can plan program activities, conduct training and coach new mentors. They might help with fund raising or publicity for the program. This is an opportunity to tap into the skills and expertise that people 50+ can and want to bring to the work.

It is also critical that mentors are involved directly with their youth and feel they can go to the appropriate teachers or caseworkers for information, advocacy or support. For this to happen, staff must feel comfortable with a realignment of responsibility over time, as the mentors take more responsibility for direct intervention.

Mentors should be encouraged to get to know teachers, counselors, social workers, probation officers and others in their youth's life. The coordinator should introduce the mentor to the appropriate professionals, and mentors should alert the coordinator before contacting any of these people; parents should be made aware of these contacts, as well.

Mentor/Youth/Family Relationships

Establishing a working relationship with the youth's family that does not compromise the mentor-mentee relationship is one of the greatest challenges. Often, siblings want to be included in mentoring activities, and caregivers turn to the mentor for advice and support. This appears to be especially true when the mentor is an older adult because the mentor is seen as a wise and trusted friend and not in competition with the caregiver as someone who might be closer to their age. The mentor's first concern and priority must always be his/her mentee.

Support from the youth's family can be nurtured through the inclusion of the family from the very beginning. Permission from the parent/caregiver must be obtained, and it should indicate an understanding of the program and the importance of family to its success. There are several ways the program coordinator can involve the family:

- Provide orientation sessions covering the same information that is discussed with the youth.
- Provide guidelines for parents/caregivers to help them know what to expect from the relationship and the sponsoring agency.
- Provide on-site childcare for parents who may need to bring other children.
- Help find transportation.
- Provide refreshments.
- Make parents/caregivers a part of the program.
- Emphasize how they can contribute to the success of the program.
- Encourage them to speak favorably about the program to their child.
- Ask them to help with planning activities and meetings.
- Respond quickly to their concerns.
- Encourage mentors to give periodic reports about the youth's progress.
- Discourage mentors from becoming a mediator between the youth and parent.
- Emphasize that a mentor does not take the place of a parent or grandparent.

Typical Mentor Concerns

These are questions frequently asked by mentors. Use these as the focal point for discussion among staff so you can be prepared to respond.

How do I know if the relationship isn't working?

How about the youth's family?

I'm amazed at the things he/she doesn't know.

If he/she can't read very well, how can he/she go to college or get a good job?

What if he/she needs help I can't provide?

What if I need help?

As a mentor, do I need to be on my best behavior at all times, or can I be myself as I deal with my own problems?

As a mentor, can I criticize the actions taken by my mentee if I feel that criticism is constructive?

What do I do if the youth refuses to do something I ask?

How should I approach my mentee's parents/caregivers? How can I avoid threatening their relationship with their child?

What happens if it simply is not working? How long do we try to work it out, and who do I talk with?

Should I take my mentee to lunch, give him her money or buy gifts?

What if my mentee doesn't return phone calls or misses appointments?

Preparing Youth

Just as participants need to be trained for their role as a mentor, it is equally important to orient youth to the program and the expectations of a mentee. Youth should be:

- Willing to have a mentor.
- Committed to the scheduled meetings with the mentor and coordinator.
- Available to spend time with the mentor and participate in other program activities.
- Able to get to program activities.
- Have authorization from a parent/caregiver.

Periodically, mentees should meet as a group to discuss their reactions and feelings about the program. These group activities will help the program coordinator monitor the mentor-mentee relationships. The following are some suggested training strategies for mentees:

- Use a group activity/warm up exercise to break the ice and facilitate interaction among the youth. This should be conducted at the beginning of each session.
- Summarize the goals of the project, such as doing well in school, finding an after-school or summer job, exploring career development, etc.
- Define mentoring and the role of a mentor.
- Describe the mentors who will be in the program.
- Provide some ideas and activities for helping youth to get to know their mentors (see Oral History activity).
- Introduce the mentoring project as a rare and exciting opportunity.
- Have a youth give testimony about how his/her mentor was helpful.
- Identify expectations of youth participants and discuss strategies for making this an optimal experience.
- Have youth brainstorm the kinds of things they would like to do with their mentor.

Common questions asked by youth in intergenerational mentoring programs, according to Linking Lifetimes and Across Ages, include:

Why do we have mentors?

How often do I meet with my mentor?

Do we get to choose our mentors?

Can I bring a friend?

Since he/she is older, will he/she like to do the things I like to do?

What if I don't like my mentor?

Can my mentor do sports activities with me?

Will my mentor be my parent and tell me what to do?

Is everything I say to my mentor confidential?

Do I have to tell my mentor about my family?

How do I tell my mentor that I'm having sex/pregnant, suspended from school, etc?

Matching Mentors and Youth

Some research suggests that successful mentoring is most likely to occur between individuals in the same environment who do not have that much social distance between them. Often the most effective mentors are not the ones usually perceived as “successful,” such as corporate executives. Rather, some of the best mentors are individuals who may be seen as “unexceptional” but have overcome personal difficulties and have survived and thrived (Freedman, 1988). Older adults who are indigenous to a youth’s environment are an untapped resource.

While homogeneous matching does expedite the development of trust, it does not guarantee a successful mentoring relationship. Many mentoring programs have experienced success in matching mentors from different backgrounds. Healthy relationships can form as long as the mentor has an understanding and appreciation of the cultural and environmental factors affecting the youth. Program coordinators should place emphasis on a caring and nurturing attitude by the potential mentor. *The matching of mentors and youth should be driven by the needs of the youth.*

Informal Matching. Sponsoring large group sessions, in which the pool of mentors and targeted youth participate in fun activities, helps mentors and youth get to know one another and goes a long way to alleviate fear and mistrust. Storytelling, music, dance, oral history and intergenerational “ice breaker” activities are all great vehicles to help participants feel comfortable with one another. Project staff can use these sessions to observe natural interactions, and activities can be planned that deliberately pair people together, allowing for a number of pairings during the course of a session. This data can be combined with other information about the needs and characteristics of the mentors and youth to help in the matching process. It’s also possible to ask each about preferences, but there may be disappointment if first preferences are not honored.

SAMPLE ICEBREAKERS

Icebreakers are essential for helping people feel comfortable when they first meet. An icebreaker should last between 10 and 15 minutes. The following are some icebreakers that have proven successful with intergenerational mentoring projects.

The Ageline

1. Ask participants to line up from youngest to oldest without talking or using signals. They should put themselves in the line where they think they should be.
2. Taking turns, have each person introduce themselves by name and age. As they do, they should rearrange themselves so they are in the correct place in the line.
3. Ask a series of questions, such as: What is the best/worst thing about your age? What age would you like to be if you could? Why?
4. Give participants an opportunity to switch places and “try out” a different age. Ask those who switched why they did so. Ask the youngest and oldest people to switch places. Do they have any questions for the other? Any advice? Ask the youngest group if they were surprised by the answers of the older people. Ask the older group the same question about the answers of the young people. Discuss the stereotypes and myths we hold about different ages.

Human BINGO

1. Create a new card, or use the sample BINGO card at the end of this chapter. Prepare one copy of the card for each group member. If you are creating your own card, make sure that the questions are relevant to your audience. Create questions that may illicit unique or funny responses.
2. Participants circulate to find members of the group who match the descriptions in the bingo squares.
3. When they find a match, the participant writes the name of the individual in the square. Different names must be used in each square.
4. When the participant has filled the entire card, he or she shouts, “Bingo!”
5. Ask the participant to read through his or her card, identifying the group members matching each description. Ask group members to expound upon their answers.

SAMPLE ICEBREAKERS, cont'd

The Human Chain

- 1.** The first person stands up and makes one statement unique to them, (For example, “My favorite color is turquoise.”)
- 2.** If there are any group members for whom that statement is also true, those people stand up or raise their hand. The first person goes over and links arms with that person. If there is no one who has the same characteristic, the person must continue to make statements until there is a match. If multiple people raise their hands at the same time, the facilitator or the person making the statement can select the person they saw first.
- 3.** That person then must state a different fact unique to them. (For example, “I grew up in a house with my grandparents.”)
- 4.** The first person who stands up or raises their hand for that fact should go over and link arms with that person.
- 5.** The exercise continues until all participants are linked in a human chain. This exercise highlights what is unique about each individual, as well as the similarities within the group as a whole.

GALLERY WALK ACTIVITY HANDOUT

Traditionalists (b. 1915–1926) and Silent Generations (b. 1927–1945)

DEFINING EVENTS	CORE VALUES	ASSETS	CHALLENGES	CORE MESSAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Depression • WWII • Women in the workforce (Rosie the Riveter) • Volunteer for the war effort • Big Bands • McCarthy Era • Post war suburban migration • Strict segregation • Many worked in manufacturing jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard work • Respect for authority • Delayed reward • Patriotic • Patience • Risk Adverse • Conformity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable • Loyal • Provide hours of regular on-going service as volunteers • Thorough • Detail oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenged by ambiguity and change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tradition is important in our organization • You will be helping to instill traditional family routines/values

Leading Edge Baby Boomers (b. 1946–1955)

DEFINING EVENTS	CORE VALUES	ASSETS	CHALLENGES	CORE MESSAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mickey Mouse Club • Civil Rights movement • Vietnam War • Assassinations of JFK, MLK, RFK, Malcolm X • Man on the Moon • The VW Beetle and the Beatles • “sex, drugs, rock’n roll” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimism – “we can change the world” • Team orientation • Empowerment • Work is paramount • Personal gratification (what’s in it for me”) • Concerns for the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service oriented • Team players • Hard workers • “Push the envelope” • Open minded • Good as collaborative problem-solvers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put process ahead of results • Not as frugal as their parents • Don’t respond well to direct criticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your experience is valued • You can really make a difference • Let’s sit down and talk about how we’re going to address this issue.

Trailing Edge Baby Boomers (b. 1956–1964)

DEFINING EVENTS	CORE VALUES	ASSETS	CHALLENGES	CORE MESSAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Vietnam War • Watergate and resignation of Richard Nixon • Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter • Iran-Contra • Changes in economy/gas prices • Introduction of technology into everyday life • Beginning of regular use of credit cards and therefore credit card debt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pessimism regarding capacity to change the world • Reduced sense of entitlement (e.g “nothing is guaranteed”) • Less political involvement • Reduced sense of entitlement • Big push for health and wellness • Advocates for the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardworking • Increasingly tech savvy • Devoted parents and willing to promote programs that support youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pessimistic regarding ability to effect change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your expertise and dedication can make a difference

Generation “X” 1965–1981

DEFINING EVENTS	CORE VALUES	ASSETS	CHALLENGES	CORE MESSAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenger disaster • Three Mile Island • Oklahoma City Bombing • High divorce rate • Two parent working families • Latch-key kids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reliant • Work-life balance • Self reliance • Pragmatism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptable • Creative • Self reliant • Not intimidated by authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impatient • Want to maintain work-life balance • Adaptable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can have fun at work (mutuality of experience) • We can offer you flexibility • Your ideas are valued on merit not just by years of experience

Generation "Y " (aka Millenials and Echo Boomers) b. 1982–2000

DEFINING EVENTS	CORE VALUES	ASSETS	CHALLENGES	CORE MESSAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/11 and other foreign terrorist attacks • Wall street implosion • Technology boom • Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq • Global warming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental stewardship • Multi-cultural perspective • Civic duty • Frugality or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective optimism • Techno-savvy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of economic hardship • Still require s upervision— story yet to be written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We work as a team • We'll provide guidance



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