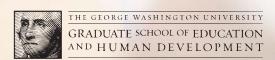**Effective Strategies
for Providing Quality
Youth Mentoring in
Schools and Communities**

Training
New
Mentors

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Training New

Effective Strategies for Providing Quality

Mentors

Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities

Revised September 2007

About the "Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities" Series

Mentoring is an increasingly popular way of providing guidance and support to young people in need. Recent years have seen youth mentoring expand from a relatively small youth intervention (usually for youth from single-parent homes) to a cornerstone youth service that is being implemented in schools, community centers, faith institutions, school-to-work programs, and a wide variety of other youth-serving institutions.

While almost any child can benefit from the magic of mentoring, those who design and implement mentoring programs also need guidance and support. Running an effective mentoring program is not easy, and there are many nuances and programmatic details that can have a big impact on outcomes for youth. Recent mentoring research even indicates that a short-lived, less-than-positive mentoring relationship (a hallmark of programs that are not well designed) can actually have a negative impact on participating youth. Mentoring is very much worth doing, but it is imperative that programs implement proven, research-based best practices if they are to achieve their desired outcomes. That's where this series of publications can help.

The "Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities" series, sponsored by the Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence, is designed to give practitioners a set of tools and ideas that they can use to build quality mentoring programs. Each title in the series is based on research (primarily from the esteemed Public/Private Ventures) and observed best practices from the field of mentoring, resulting in a collection of proven strategies, techniques, and program structures. Revised and updated by the National Mentoring Center at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, each book in this series provides insight into a critical area of mentor program development:

Foundations of Successful Youth Mentoring—This title offers a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of successful youth mentoring programs. Originally designed for a community-based model, its advice and planning tools can be adapted for use in other settings.

Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual—Much of the success of a mentoring program is dependent on the structure and consistency of service delivery, and this guide provides advice and a customizable template for creating an operations manual for a local mentoring program.

Training New Mentors—All mentors need thorough training if they are to possess the skills, attitudes, and activity ideas needed to effectively mentor a young person. This guide provides ready-to-use training modules for your program.

The ABCs of School-Based Mentoring—This guide explores the nuances of building a program in a school setting.

Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors—This resource is written directly for mentors, providing them with 10 simple rules for being a successful mentor and quotes from actual volunteers and youth on what they have learned from the mentoring experience.

Sustainability Planning and Resource Development for Youth Mentoring Programs—Mentoring programs must plan effectively for their sustainability if they are to provide services for the long run in their community. This guide explores key planning and fundraising strategies specifically for youth mentoring programs.

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The Hamilton Fish Institute and the National Mentoring Center hope that the guides in this series help you and your program's stakeholders design effective, sustainable mentoring services that can bring positive direction and change to the young people you serve.
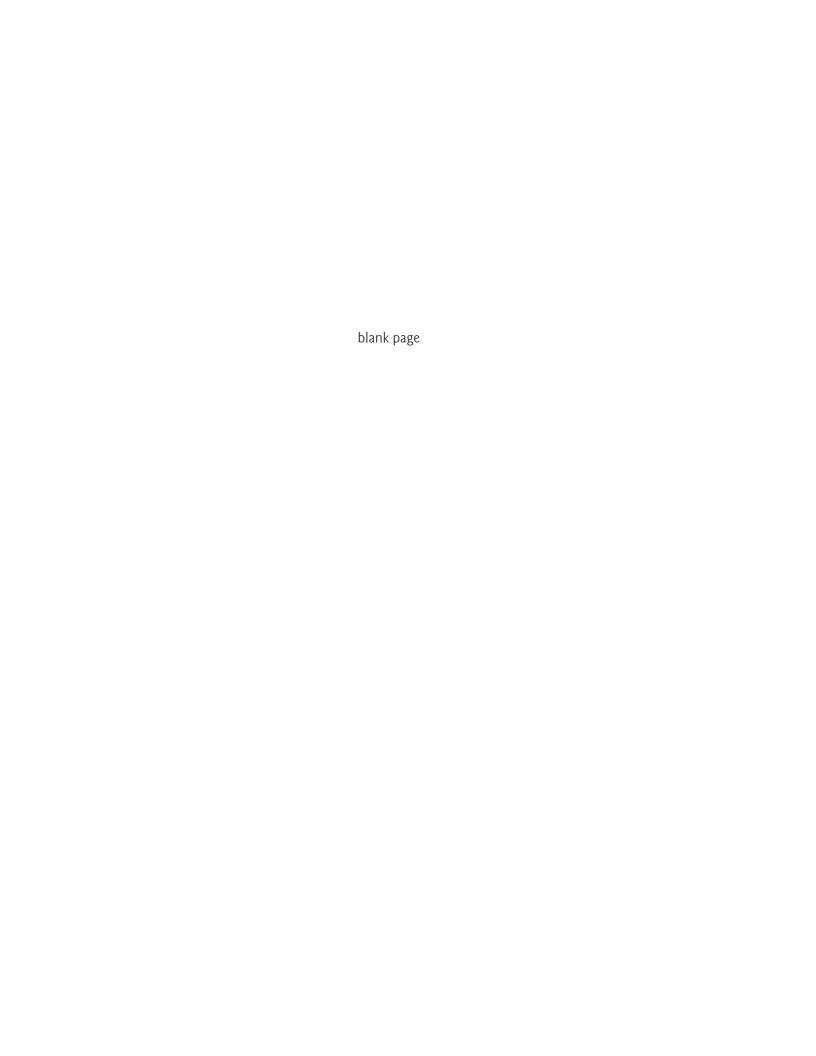
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Introduction

Because the relationship between a mentor and young person might seem to be a "natural" connection, mentoring programs sometimes overlook the importance of training. But like anyone stepping into a new role, mentors are more likely to succeed if they participate in useful training sessions that prepare them for what lies ahead. To begin developing their training plans, programs can ask themselves several key questions:

- What information do mentors need to acquire?

- What skills training do they need?

- How much training should be required? Should there be optional trainings, as well?

- When should the trainings take place? Before the mentor and youth first meet? Early in their relationship? Ongoing throughout their mentoring experience?

The following material focuses on training new mentors, and includes suggested activities for an initial training and program overview that adds up to about six hours of training. This agenda can easily be broken into two separate sessions to accommodate volunteers' busy schedules.

Because the tone of a mentor-youth relationship can be set quickly during the first few meetings, it is important that some training take place before the two begin to meet. Thus, the activities included here are intended as *preservice* training. The Appendix of this guide offers a listing of resources that can help with the *ongoing* training and support of your program's mentors.

What are the goals of preservice training?

While the details of the training will naturally vary depending upon the particular program, the overall goals are generally consistent across programs. Training should:

- Help participants understand the scope and limits of their role as mentors

- Help them develop the skills and attitudes they need to perform well in their role

- Introduce them to the concept of positive youth development

- Provide information about the strengths and vulnerabilities of the children or youth who are in the program

- Provide information about program requirements and supports for mentors

- Answer questions they may have about the mentoring experience

- Build their confidence as they prepare to start working with their mentee

The activities included here will help programs accomplish these goals and can be adapted easily to address individual program contexts. The material also can be supplemented with additional information and skills training. For example, programs might want to provide additional advice on specific mentoring activities, such as assisting with schoolwork or helping the youth set goals, or have mentors role-play their first meeting with their mentee to prepare them for that important event.

In addition to this guide, there is another resource that reinforces the material presented here: *Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors* (revised 2007). This guide includes 10 good practices for engaging youth and developing a trusting relationship. This guide was also produced by the National Mentoring Center and is available through the Hamilton Fish Institute for Violence Prevention at The George Washington University. This guide is available for free online at: http://www.hamfish.org. The Appendix offers further suggestions for resources that can supplement your mentor training content.

Tips for Trainers

Delivering a quality training session is a skill that program staff must develop if their mentors are to get the information and practice they need to effectively step into their new mentoring role. Ultimately, good trainers are facilitators. "Facilitate" means "to make easier," and a facilitator is actually a:

- Coach

- Listener

- Learner

- Manager of group process

"Facilitating" suggests the idea of a collaborative relationship between the trainer and participants—a relationship that helps mentors learn, rather than imposes learning upon them.

The following principles can help your staff conduct more effective training sessions.

BEFORE EACH TRAINING SESSION

1. Think about principles of adult learning.

- Adults want to see a reason for learning something—the learning must be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them. They learn in order to solve perceived problems.

- Adults are practical and goal-oriented. They focus on aspects of a training that are most useful to them.

- Adult teaching should be grounded in learners' experiences. Adults have accumulated a foundation of knowledge and life experiences that are a valuable resource. They learn best when new information and concepts are built on this foundation.

- Adults learn best when they are in a supportive environment. They want guidance, not competition—they don't want to be put on the spot or feel like they are being tested. They learn best when they are both psychologically and physically comfortable.

2. Know the training curriculum thoroughly.

- As necessary, customize activities and handouts to best address characteristics of your program, your specific group of mentors, and the strengths and needs of the children and youth they will be mentoring. Be prepared to offer real-life examples that illustrate your program's experiences. Tips for building appropriate training agendas and scripts begin on page 9.

- Think about how you will facilitate the session, and be prepared to make on-the-spot adjustments if, for example, an activity is not working well or you find you need to spend more time on one activity and thus have to shorten another.

3. Select a space for the training that is physically comfortable and contributes to group interaction.

- The room should be large enough (but not too large), private (people from outside the group should not be walking in and out), quiet, clean, and well-lit.

- Avoid a traditional classroom set-up. Depending on the size of your group, have a table large enough for all the participants to sit around, or multiple tables that are square or circular. If that is not possible, arrange chairs in a circle—this will facilitate discussion.

- If small groups are going to be meeting as part of the activities, make sure there are nearby rooms available, or be sure the training room is large enough that small groups can meet within it without distracting each other.

4. Have everything ready.

- Copy handouts.

- Gather any required materials and equipment: newsprint, markers, masking tape, name tags, and anything else you might need for the session.

- You may want to prepare a script that you can use to guide your facilitation and keep the training on schedule (see page 10 for sample script content).

5. Arrive early.

- If necessary, be sure there are signs just inside the building entrance that show participants where to go for the training session.

- Get to the training room about 30 minutes ahead of time to set up the area: arrange chairs, do any necessary advance writing on the newsprint, and check equipment.

- Be sure that refreshments (coffee, water, soft drinks, etc.) are available.

- Greet participants as they arrive at the training room.

DURING EACH TRAINING SESSION

1. Create a comfortable learning environment.

- Be sure the physical space is conducive to group learning and that participants can hear each other as they speak.

- Create an atmosphere where participants are taken seriously and where they also can laugh. Think about ways to inject humor into the training sessions—for example, using relevant cartoons as overheads, or telling funny anecdotes about experiences of mentors. People are usually most open to new ideas when they are enjoying themselves and feel comfortable enough to risk making mistakes.

2. Pace the training appropriately.

- Encourage the exchange of ideas and information while also keeping activities on track. Move things quickly enough to keep participants from being bored but slowly enough to make sure they absorb what is being discussed.

- Allow time throughout the session for participants to ask questions. Where appropriate, involve the whole group in answering questions—but also have a feel for which questions should be answered quickly so the session can proceed.

3. Model good listening, feedback, and problem-solving skills—the skills that mentors need.

■ Listen carefully and respectfully. Acknowledge what people say even if you don't agree. People need to feel they are being listened to and that their ideas and concerns are recognized as worthy contributions.

■ Maintain eye contact with each person as he or she speaks. Monitor your nonverbal signals as well as your verbal comments.

■ Respond by guiding, not imposing. Be nonjudgmental. Repeat and address key points.

■ Help participants develop collaborative problem-solving skills. Involve them in answering other participants' questions, and have them work together to arrive at solutions to problems.

4. Think about how people learn best.

■ Keep this point in mind: people remember about 20 percent of what they hear, 40 percent of what they hear and see, and 80 percent of what they discover for themselves.

■ Use overheads and newsprint to help people see and remember. Newsprint is also a useful tool for group thinking and problem solving. Summarize major discussion points on newsprint—it dramatizes the variety and extent of the group's thinking. Post the newsprint paper on the walls around the room so you and your group can keep referring back to, and expanding upon, earlier ideas and contributions.

■ Build in success. People learn best when they experience success frequently. Structure activities so participants end with a sense of accomplishment. Structure the training session so it expands participants' sense of accomplishment throughout.

5. Be yourself.

■ Know your limitations—if you don't know the answer to a question, that's okay. You don't need to know all the answers. Just say you will try to find the information they requested and get back to them. And then do it.

■ Have a sense of humor.

AFTER EACH TRAINING SESSION

1. Get feedback from participants.

- Prepare an evaluation form that asks for feedback on both the process and the content of the training session. Distribute it at the end of the session, and ask participants to complete it before they leave.

- Schedule about five minutes at the end of the session for participants to complete this task, so they do not feel rushed and have time to write thoughtful feedback.

2. Reflect on what worked well and what did not.

- Do not use the feedback forms to give yourself a rating. Instead, use the information to help you think through what went well from the participants' point of view, what you need to modify about the content, and what facilitation skills you want to work on.

- Along with participants' feedback, give yourself your own feedback on the training. Think about the situations when participants seemed involved, bored, stimulated, confused, angry, or having fun. Based on your self-observations, make necessary adjustments in session content and your facilitation strategies.

3. Follow up on information you promised participants you would get for them.

- During the training session, keep a "to do" list of information (or answers to questions) that you tell participants you will obtain for them.

- Try to get the information, and then contact the participants who requested it. If you can't find the information (or the answer to a question), contact the participant to let him/her know about the situation.

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Building Your Training Agenda and Script

There are no hard rules about exactly how much preservice training mentors need to be successful. The amount required depends on the characteristics of the youth the program serves, the program's goals and objectives, the scope of the problems mentors are expected to address, and other factors. This guide presents a package of training activities that add up to about six total hours, a fairly common number for most community-based mentoring programs. The topics covered in this guide represent the common mentor skills and program information that most preservice trainings provide.

Too often programs skimp on mentor training because they do not want to ask their mentors to participate in a lengthy training session. Learn how to work with your mentors' schedules to ensure that you are providing adequate training. If you are already covering certain topics (e.g., organization background and history) in a separate mentor orientation, quickly review key points from the orientation during your preservice training. Some programs break mentor training up into two evenings, or over a weekend. Regardless of how you schedule it, make sure that your mentors get all the information they need before beginning to meet with their mentee. Mentors who are reluctant to participate in a comprehensive training schedule may not have the commitment your program is looking for.

You can use the agenda provided in this guide as a starting point for building your own training agenda.

TRAINING SCRIPTS

Just as actors memorize their lines from a script, successful trainers also create scripts to aid their training delivery. Creating a training script is much like creating your own flashcards for a test; the act of creating your training script helps you prepare for your session and

Training? Orientation? What's the Difference?

Mentor Orientation: Usually a one-hour, pre-match introduction to the organization, program goals, and requirements for mentors. Often used as a recruitment event to solicit applications from interested mentors.

Initial Mentor Training: Also known as pre-service training. Initial mentor training is offered to accepted and screened mentors prior to the first mentor-mentee meeting. This should be a required training for all mentors and can last from a few hours to several days depending on the amount of relevant material to cover. The National Mentoring Center recommends a minimum of four hours covering many of the topics found in the next sections of this book.

Follow-Up Training: Also known as ongoing training. Follow-up training often focuses on building additional skills as relationships progress. Topics should address issues brought forth by mentors, staff, youth, and parents. This type of training is often offered monthly or quarterly, usually one to two hours in length.

Mentee Training: Also known as mentee orientation. Mentee training is usually offered prior to the first mentor-mentee meeting. This type of training usually lasts about one hour. Some programs find great success in offering initial training to youth and their parents at the same time. This can be a good way of boosting parental involvement early on.

Parent Training: Also known as parent orientation. Parent training is usually offered prior to the first mentor-mentee meeting. This type of training usually lasts about one hour and can be coordinated at the same time as mentee training. Depending on the structure and goals of your program, parents may receive additional training.

memorize the flow and delivery of your content. There are a variety of ways to create a training script. Using an agenda you've developed, you can:

- Create detailed note cards with key points and instructions.

- Create a table, sort of an expanded agenda, with trainer notes and instructions.

- If you will be using PowerPoint slides, use the notes option to create a script of what you plan to say and do during each slide.

Almost every training will require certain generic statements at the beginning and end of each session—for example, you will want to introduce yourself, other staff, and participants. In addition, each session should begin with a review of the schedule for the day, handouts and materials, and housekeeping logistics such as the location of emergency exits and restrooms. You should cover those aforementioned "ground rules" at this time.

The following sample script can help you introduce and close your session with ease:

At the beginning of the training:

- Introduce yourself and welcome everyone to the training

- Share a few words about how excited you are to be here and to see everyone

- Thank participants for taking time to be a part of the training and for their commitment to mentoring

- Review what you will be talking about in the next few minutes (e.g., introductions, details of the program, agenda, materials, and housekeeping items). Chart these talking points before you begin so you will not forget anything.

Introduce other trainers and staff:

- Welcome the rest of the team to the training. Ask each person to stand up and give a brief introduction.

- Thank each presenter for being there.

- Notify participants that each presenter's contact information is also listed in their materials so that they can be reached individually after the training.

Materials and agenda:

Notify participants that in a few minutes you will be reviewing all the materials. Does everyone have access to their materials? They should have a variety of materials in front of them.

- Review the agenda. "Each person should have a copy of the agenda. Does anyone need an agenda?"

- Review the goals and objectives for the training. Make sure everyone knows the purpose and meaning of the day's activities.

- Starting and stopping. Announce that you will take breaks during the session at natural stopping points. Emphasize that you want participants to be comfortable at all times and you encourage them to take personal breaks as needed (refill their coffee, stretch, etc.).

Housekeeping logistics:

- Point out where the restrooms are located.

- Point out the emergency exits.

- Cell phones: "If you have one, take a minute right now to turn it off or put it on the silent/vibrate function."

- Invite participants to notify you if anything needs attention (out of coffee, water, temperature controls, etc.) or if they need anything during the training.

- Go over any "group agreements" or ground rules.

Closing the "welcome":

- "Are there any questions regarding the agenda, materials, housekeeping items?"

■ Announce a quick break, if needed, to get settled before you begin the training.

At the end of the training:

■ Ask participants to report out a few "golden nuggets" or "Ah ha!" moments from their experience at the training. "What was one thing that was very helpful for you?"

■ Review the original objectives of the training one by one and asked if the objectives were achieved.

■ Encourage them to continuing talking with each other. Suggest that they exchange contact information with at least one other person in the room.

■ Remind them that they can contact you or the program any time for support.

■ Thank participants for attending the training.

■ Pass out certificates of completion and any evaluation forms.

Working With Outside Trainers and Experts

Sometimes programs opt to work with outside trainers and experts to supplement their training agenda; provide ongoing training on a special topic (e.g., child abuse, drug and alcohol issues, tutoring); rotate speakers to keep participants interested; or even to deliver the entire training. While your program should, ideally, have the capacity to conduct most of its participant training, the following tips can help you work effectively with outside trainers on occasions when they are warranted.

FINDING TRAINERS

Your program should work with local experts who understand the community and the youth you serve. To find local experts, first think about the topic you would like to have presented. Brainstorm a list of agencies and individuals you know who specialize in these topics. Prioritize your first, second, and third choices and begin making phone calls.

Another way to connect with local and regional experts is to tap into resources from your state's mentoring partnership. Twenty-seven states currently have mentoring partnerships registered with MENTOR/ The National Mentoring Partnership (http://www.mentoring.org). Call your state or local partnership, or a neighboring state partnership, to see if it has a pool of trainers and experts.

COSTS AND CONTRACTING

Often you can get the expertise you need from an outside trainer for free through a partnership agreement or other arrangement. But occasionally an outside trainer will expect compensation for their time. Before hiring a trainer, check your organization or school's policies on hiring contractors. Questions to ask include:

- What type of paperwork and contract will be required?

- How will travel be paid for?

- How much money may we spend on a trainer contract?

- What type of credentials should the trainer have?

- Can you provide supplies and photocopies?

- How soon after the training will the contractor receive payment?

Fees for trainers can vary wildly depending on who you use and how much of their time you will need. Often you will be expected to pay for preparation time (usually about one to two hours of prep time for each hour of training provided) and possibly travel time (if they have to spend a lot of time getting to your location). It is also customary to pay for travel expenses, photocopies, and supplies. Each of these costs can be negotiated with the trainer.

To open negotiations ask about the trainer's rates, or simply say how much you can afford. Once you have agreed upon some parameters, ask the candidate trainer to submit a proposal. If you like the proposal, move to the next step in the process: getting the agreement in writing. Check to see if your organization already has a template for contracts. If not, create your own contract that includes the date, time, topics, and expenses. Have your trainer sign the contract. Standard practice also requires the trainer to submit an outline or agenda, sample hand-outs, audio/visual needs, and room setup requirements. Don't forget to administer and collect participant evaluations and share the results with your trainer.

Sample Mentor Training, Part 1:

Program Overview and Introduction to Mentoring

This section includes materials to help you plan and deliver an introductory training workshop for new mentors. This first section is intended to help new mentors:

- Understand the history, mission, and goals of the program

- Learn about the youth the program serves

- Develop a realistic understanding of their roles

- Begin to explore effective approaches to mentoring

The first part of this preservice mentor training agenda should take around three hours—(approximate times for each activity are provided). You can offer the second part (which starts on page 35) on the same day or deliver it on a separate date (that is more likely to work with your mentors' schedules). If you are unable to schedule a three-hour training workshop, this agenda can also be divided into two 90-minute sessions. Regardless of how you schedule it, we recommend that the training concepts in this guide be delivered *before* mentors begin meeting with their mentees.

Mentor Training Agenda—Part 1

1. Icebreaker—Introductions (30 minutes)

2. Roles of a Mentor (30 minutes)

3. Overview of Our Program (25 minutes)

Break (15 minutes)

4. The Youth We Serve (30 minutes)

5. What Supports Do Youth Need? (40 minutes)

6. Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

ACTIVITY 1.
ICEBREAKER: INTRODUCTIONS

Objectives:

- To help participants begin to know each other and become involved in the session

- To provide an experience that is somewhat parallel to the first meeting with their mentees

- To introduce the idea of "roles"

Length:

- About 30 minutes

Materials included:

- Handout: "Who I Am"

You will need to supply:

- Name tags (do not distribute them until the end of the activity)

Steps:

1. Tell participants you want them to introduce themselves to one another. Organize the group into pairs. (Pair people who do not know each other.) Then distribute the handout "Who I Am" (see page 18). Ask each pair to use the handout as a guide for having a conversation in which they introduce themselves and learn about one another. Tell them that each person will then introduce his/her partner to the whole group. Allow about 10 minutes for pairs to complete their conversations.

2. Have each person very briefly—allowing about one minute per person—introduce his/her partner.

3. Lead a discussion about how this activity is similar to starting a new relationship with a mentee. You can include these points:

- How did it feel to reveal things about themselves to a stranger?

- Did their partner do or say anything to help them open up? If so, what?

■ What did they try to do to help their partner feel more comfortable?

■ What would they do differently if they did this exercise again?

Note that this exercise provides practice in sharing information with another person and in helping that person share information with you. Those are key first steps in beginning a relationship. The exercise should also have helped participants think about some of the roles they play in life. For many of them, being a mentor will be a new role.

[Activity adapted, with permission, from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (1991). Relationship building. In *Volunteer education and development manual* (pp. 11–12). Philadelphia, PA: Author.]

ACTIVITY 1 HANDOUT:
Icebreaker: Who am I?

1. My name is...

2. My most important role in life is as a...

3. At work, I...

4. My favorite way to spend my free time is...

5. One thing about me that is important for people to know is...

6. Some of the strengths that I will bring to a mentoring relationship are...

7. One of my worries about being a mentor is...

8. One thing I hope to gain from being a mentor is...

9. The most important thing I hope my mentee will gain is...

ACTIVITY 2.
ROLES OF A MENTOR

Objectives:

- To identify qualities of effective mentors

- To explore roles that mentors can play in the lives of children and youth

Length:

- About 30 minutes

You will need to supply:

- 3" x 5" index cards

- Newsprint and markers

Steps:

1. Give each participant an index card. Ask them to think back to when they were a child or youth. (Suggest an age range that is the same as the ages of the children or youth they will be mentoring.) Ask them to silently:

- Identify one person, preferably someone who is not a relative, who was a kind of mentor for them

- Think about why that person was important to them and the result for them of that person's interest

- Recall the *qualities* of that person that made her or him so valued, and write down two or three of those qualities on the index card

2. Have participants talk briefly about the mentor they identified and the qualities they valued. As they speak, list those qualities on the newsprint. When a quality is repeated, put a check mark next to it each time it is mentioned. (For example, the first time someone says "good listener," write that phrase. Each time someone else identifies this quality in his or her mentor, put a check mark by the phrase.)

3. Review the items on the list. Note which were mentioned most often. Then have the participants identify which of the qualities might be categorized as "communication skills," such as listening, talking,

asking questions, and being nonjudgmental. (Later training activities focus specifically on helping mentors develop communication skills, but their importance should be emphasized immediately.)

4.   Ask participants—again thinking back to the person they identified—to identify the *roles* a mentor can play in a child's or youth's life. List their responses on the newsprint. (These might include friend, big brother, big sister, positive role model, resource, guide.) Lead a brief discussion about what each of these roles might involve. Be sure participants see that a mentor is NOT a parent, teacher, or counselor.

5.   Allow time for participants to talk about their hopes and concerns in their new role. For example, which of the qualities that they admired in their "mentors" do they feel fairly confident they possess? Which do they need to work on developing? What other concerns do they have about their role?

As a transition to the next activity, note that program staff are there to provide support to the mentors.

ACTIVITY 3.
OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

If you have not had a separate orientation to present information about the program, this is a good point in the training session to cover the material. (If your mentoring program is school-based, be sure there is also an orientation session that introduces volunteers to the school where they will be meeting with their mentees.)

Objectives:

- To share the program's history, mission, and goals

- To help mentors feel connected to your program

- To be clear about the program's requirements and ground rules

- To understand the forms of support the program will provide for mentors

Length:

- About 25 minutes

You will need to supply:

- A handout: written materials that contain the information you cover during this activity (see the next page for a list of information to include)

- Newsprint and markers

Steps:

1. Distribute the handout you have prepared. Then briefly describe your program's history, mission, and structure. This will help volunteers feel they are part of the organization and give them an understanding of what the program hopes to achieve through their mentoring efforts.

2. Discuss your organization's expectations of mentors. This could include, for example, time requirements (both the frequency of meetings with their mentee and the length of commitment); telephone or in-person meetings with the program supervisor or school coordinator; requirements for preservice and ongoing training; and any paperwork that mentors are required to complete.

3. Describe the roles of your program staff members and the types of support that mentors can expect from program staff. Be sure mentors understand how they can communicate with program staff, and that they feel comfortable doing so. Include a description of community resources, if any, that are available for the mentee or mentee's family, and the program's process for accessing those resources.

4. Discuss legal/liability and confidentiality issues as they relate to your program.

5. Describe the program's ground rules and the reason for each rule. (For example, your program might have a rule about limits on gifts to mentees; or if you have a school-based program, your mentors might be allowed to meet with their mentees only at the school.) If you have a site-based program—at a school or some other institution—also describe rules that mentors must adhere to in relation to that site. (For example, they might be required to sign in each time they visit the school.) Allow plenty of time for mentors to ask questions.

Creating an "About Our Program" Handout

This handout can be as simple as a few pages or as involved as a full "handbook" mentors take with them and reference throughout the mentoring relationship. Regardless of length, it should contain the following information:

- The program's history, mission, and goals

- Expectations for mentors (time commitment, responsibilities, etc.)

- Staff members and their roles

- Support mentors receive

- Ground rules and policies (those not covered under "expectations for mentors")

If you produce a lengthier handbook, you may wish to also include:

- Information about the youth the program serves

- Tips for mentoring ("Our program's approach")

- Information on youth development and the mentoring relationship cycle (examples are found later in this guide)

- Information about other youth services or access to community or school resources that your program provides.

ACTIVITY 4.
THE YOUTH WE SERVE

Objectives:

- To introduce the concept of positive youth development

- To provide information about the children or youth who are enrolled in your program

Length:

- About 30 minutes

You will need to supply:

- Newsprint and markers

Steps:

1. Write this statement on the newsprint:

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

(The statement is from a brochure about the National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth.)

Ask participants what they think this statement means. Relate it to the mentor "roles" they identified during the "Roles of Mentor" activity. Then ask them to keep the statement in mind as they hear more about the children or youth they will be mentoring.

2. Present information that will help your mentors understand characteristics—the particular strengths and needs—of the children or youth they will be mentoring. Depending on your program, you may want to do the presentation in one of the following ways, or come up with your own alternative (such as having a staff member make the presentation):

- If the children or youth in your program have special needs or some other common characteristic (for example, if they are children in foster care, youth who all live in the same housing project, youth living in a juvenile detention facility, children or youth with physical disabilities, etc.), you can arrange to have an outside presenter come to the training session to talk about

the particular challenges the children or youth face and the special strengths they possess. A social worker involved with foster care could, for example, talk about the foster care system and its effects on children. Someone from the housing project's tenant council could talk about living in the project so that your mentors have a context for understanding their mentees' lives. If your program is school based, a staff member from the school or your program's school coordinator could make a presentation about what life is like in the school and how youth come to be enrolled in the mentoring program.

or...

■ If the children or youth in your program are all within a particular age range, you can invite someone who works with young people that age to talk about youth development. For example, someone who works with youth at a local Boys and Girls Club, YMCA/YWCA, or other afterschool or youth-serving program could talk about experiences with and observations of children or youth of that age.

NOTE: Be sure that anyone you invite to speak has the kind of positive, supportive attitude toward children and youth that you want your mentors to have. Talk to the person well in advance about this training session and explain why you would like him or her to speak to the group. You can also, in advance, give the speaker a copy of the agenda for the training so he or she can see how the presentation fits into the overall session.

or...

■ Arrange for a panel of three or four current or former mentors with your program (or mentors from a similar program). Among other topics, they could discuss their initial expectations for the mentoring relationship and how and why those expectations may have changed over time, their challenges and rewards, and what they have come to understand about the children or youth. (As the trainer, you will facilitate the panel discussion.)

Whatever form of presentation you decide to use, allow plenty of time for questions afterward. As appropriate, return to the idea of roles and expectations. Note how important it is for mentors to understand that their primary role is to be a friend—to support their mentee, rather than entering the relationship with the belief that they are going to transform him or her. The presentation about the children and youth in your program should help new mentors begin to see how important it

is to take a gradual approach to developing the relationship—to take the time to allow their mentee to learn to trust them.

3.   Return to the opening statement about "helping young people achieve their full potentials," and relate it to the information that has just been presented. Note that the idea in this statement is the essence of a positive approach to youth development.

ACTIVITY 5.
WHAT SUPPORTS DO YOUTH NEED?

Objectives:

■ To examine the concept of positive youth development in more detail

■ To explore ways that mentors can contribute to positive youth development

Length:

About 40 minutes

Materials included:

■ Handout: "Developmental Assets for Children and Youth"

You will need to supply:

■ 3" x 5" index cards

■ Newsprint and markers

Steps:

1. Copy one or more of these quotes (or other quotes that you like) onto the newsprint:

> *"Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him, and to let him know you trust him."* —Booker T. Washington

> *"Treat a child as though he already is the person he's capable of becoming."* —Haim Ginott

> *"If you have no confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence, you have won even before you have started."* —Marcus Garvey

Lead a discussion about the quote(s) as a way into talking about principles of positive youth development. Note that experts in positive youth development often talk about young people's "basic needs"— essential conditions that help youth avoid risky behaviors, experience healthy development, and achieve their full potential.

2.   Distribute the handout "Developmental Assets for Children and Youth." Explain the concept of developmental assets as described in the first two paragraphs of the handout. Then review the list of assets. As you do, ask which of the assets could be "delivered" by a mentor. You can also ask which assets could be delivered, but probably should not be, given the discussions the group has been having about mentors' roles. For example, it is NOT a mentor's role to be sure the mentee has done his or her homework each day.

3.   Organize participants into pairs, and give each pair an index card. Ask them to think about everything the group has discussed so far during this training session—including the qualities and roles of mentors, the children or youth enrolled in the program, and positive youth development. Then ask each pair to choose one of the developmental assets that mentors can help deliver, and decide on two or three things a mentor could do to accomplish that. They should write these on the front of the card. On the back of the card, they should write down two or three things that, as mentors, they should avoid doing because they would be counterproductive. (For example, a mentor can provide support by being sure to meet regularly with the mentee, by doing "fun" activities with their mentee, and by being encouraging and positive. Criticizing or lecturing the mentee would be counterproductive.)

4.   Have the pairs present their "can do" and "should avoid" lists. As they do, compile two master lists on the newsprint. Where useful, have the group discuss individual items—both positive and negative ones. For example, if a pair suggests that a mentor should avoid being judgmental, ask for examples of situations when a mentor's first impulse might be to sound judgmental (if the youth reports bad grades or being in a fight, for example), and how those situations could be handled in a more positive, productive way.

After the pairs have finished presenting their ideas, review the lists and see if there is anything that the participants want to add, delete, or modify.

5. Display this quote (or another quote you like) on the newsprint:

> *"Catch people in the act of doing something right."* —Ken Blanchard, *The One-Minute Manager*

Ask participants to think for a minute about some of the many small ways they could "catch" their mentee "in the act of doing something right." Then ask for a few volunteers to give some examples. Emphasize the important role that mentors have in providing support and building their mentees' self-esteem and self-confidence.

ACTIVITY 5 HANDOUT:

Developmental assets for children and youth

"Developmental assets" are factors—both external and internal—that decrease the likelihood that young people will engage in risky behavior and increase the chances they will grow up to be healthy, caring, and responsible adults.

The following framework, developed by Search Institute (a research and training organization in Minneapolis), identifies 40 factors, or "assets," that are critical for young people's growth and development. The first 20 of these assets are external—positive experiences that children and youth should be receiving. The next 20 are internal—qualities that young people should (with the help of adults, communities, and institutions) be developing within themselves.

(Please note that there are different versions of the 40 assets for different ages of youth. The list presented here is for adolescents grades 6–12. There are other versions for early childhood (ages 3–5) and middle childhood (grades 4–6). All these versions can be downloaded on the Search Institute Web site at: http://www.search-institute.org/assets/assetlists.html.

EXTERNAL ASSETS

The first 20 developmental assets focus on positive experiences that young people should receive from the people and institutions in their lives. Four categories of external assets are included in the framework:

1. Support

Young people need to experience support, care, and love from their families, neighbors, and many others. They need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments. The developmental assets in this category include:

- Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support

- Positive family communication—Young person and his/her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s)

- Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from non-parent adults

- Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors

- Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment

- Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school

(Activity 5 Handout continued)

2. Empowerment

Young people need to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secure. The developmental assets in this category include:

- The community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth

- Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community

- Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week

- Safety—Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood

3. Boundaries and Expectations

Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are "in bounds" or "out of bounds." The developmental assets in this category include:

- Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts

- School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences

- Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior

- Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior

- Positive peer influence—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior

- High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well

4. Constructive Use of Time

Young people need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs, congregational involvement, and quality time at home. The developmental assets in this category include:

- Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours a week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts

- Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations

(Activity 5 Handout continued)

- Religious community—Young person spends one hour or more a week in activities in a religious institution

- Time at home—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week

INTERNAL ASSETS

A community's responsibility for its young does not end with the provision of external assets. There needs to be a similar commitment to nurturing the internalized qualities that guide choices and create a sense of purpose and focus. Four categories of internal assets are included in the framework:

1. Commitment to Learning

Young people need to develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning. The developmental assets in this category include:

- Motivation for achievement—Young person is motivated to do well in school

- School engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning

- Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day

- Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school

- Reading for pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week

2. Positive Values

Youth need to develop strong values that guide their choices. The developmental assets in this category include:

- Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people

- Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty

- Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs

- Honesty—Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy"

- Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility

- Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs

(Activity 5 Handout continued)

3. Social Competencies

Young people need skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to succeed in life. The developmental assets in this category include:

- Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices

- Interpersonal competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills

- Cultural competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds

- Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations

- Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently

4. Positive Identity

Young people need a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise. The developmental assets in this category include:

- Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me"

- Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem

- Sense of purpose—Young person reports that "my life has purpose"

- Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future

ACTIVITY 6.
WRAP-UP

Objective:

- To help participants think about how to apply their learning from the session

Length:

- About 10 minutes

Materials included:

- Handout: "Summarizing This Session"

- Evaluation Form (The form can be found on page 64. Skip this step and save the evaluation until the end if you are doing both parts of the training in this guide in one day.)

Steps:

1. Distribute the handout "Summarizing This Session." Ask participants to write down two or three things they learned during this part of the training that they will be able to put to use as they begin their mentoring relationship. Then ask for a few volunteers to share one of their items.

2. Distribute the evaluation forms, and ask everyone to complete one and return it to you before leaving.

ACTIVITY 6 HANDOUT:

Summarizing this session

List two or three things you learned during this session that will help you when you begin your new role as a mentor. Then explain *how* each will help.

1.

2.

3.

Questions I still have...

blank page

Sample Mentor Training, Part 2:

Working Effectively With Your Mentee

This part of the training includes materials and activities that can help your mentors:

- Prepare for their first few meetings with their mentee

- Develop communication skills

- Practice conversation and relationship-building techniques

- Examine approaches for building trust with their mentee

- Learn to set appropriate boundaries and activities with their mentee

As with Part 1, the agenda for this three-hour training session can also be broken into two halves. An additional 40-minute exercise on choosing activities for mentoring meetings is also included.

This portion of the training session should be co-facilitated with another staff member or a current or former mentor. As you prepare for the workshop with your co-facilitator, you will want to decide on the scenario you are going to role-play in Activity 2, "If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio," and the role each of you is going to take.

Mentor Training Agenda—Part 2

1. Icebreaker—Are You Listening? (20 minutes)

2. If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio (25 minutes)

3. Communication Role-Plays (40 minutes)

Break (15 minutes)

4. Trust Comes First (25 minutes)

5. Establishing and Maintaining Boundaries (45 minutes)

Optional activity—"What Should We Do?" (40 minutes)

6. Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

ACTIVITY 1.
ICEBREAKER: ARE YOU LISTENING?

Objectives:

- To get participants actively involved in the training session

- To identify qualities of a good listener

Length:

- About 20 minutes

You will need to supply:

- 3" x 5" index cards

- Newsprint and markers

Steps:

1. Give each participant an index card. Say you want them to reintroduce themselves to the group, but first you want them to consider this:

> *Think about several specific one-to-one conversations you have been involved in recently with a friend, relative, or co-worker. Would you describe yourself as a "good" listener? Why? Did you do anything that made you a less effective listener?*

Ask them to write on the front of the index card one thing they do or one quality they have that makes them a "good" listener. On the back of the card, they should write one thing they do or quality they have during conversations that interferes with listening well. They will be sharing both of these qualities with the group when they introduce themselves.

Allow a couple of minutes for participants to write on their index cards.

2. Go around the room, having each participant introduce himself or herself and briefly state their "good listening" and "bad listening" quality. As they speak, record their responses in two lists (headed "qualities of good listening" and "characteristics of bad listening") on the newsprint.

3.   Ask participants, "What is a good listener?" During the discussion, they should see that a "good listener" helps the speaker feel comfortable and clarify thoughts and feelings.

Return to the items you have just listed on the newsprint, and have participants discuss how each contributes to, or hinders, "good listening." Ask if there are any items they want to delete, change, or add to the list.

ACTIVITY 2.
IF YOU WANT EASY LISTENING, TURN ON THE RADIO

Objectives:

- To hear the difference between supportive and non-supportive communication

- To understand the qualities of "active listening"

Length:

- About 25 minutes

Materials included:

- Handout: "I Hear You"

You will need to supply:

- Newsprint and markers

Steps:

1. With your co-facilitator, do *two* role-plays of a conversation between a mentor and mentee. In the role-plays, the "mentee" should be the same age as the children or youth in your program and have other conversational characteristics that realistically exemplify those real mentees.

Use the same scenario for both role-plays. You can use or modify the following scenario, or create one of your own to represent situations that mentors in your program will be dealing with:

> *Your mentee is 13 years old. You have been meeting for two months. He is always polite but is also always very quiet. Today, when you meet, he is even quieter than usual and he seems uninterested in doing anything. Suddenly, he blurts out, "I can't stand it anymore. My teachers are picking on me. My mother ignores me. My brother's beating up on me. I'm going to run away from home."*

In the first role-play, the "mentor" should display poor listening and other communication skills. The "mentor" could, for example, be non-

supportive by asking, "What did you do at school that got you in trouble?" Or the mentor could cause the mentee to feel defensive by saying, "Your mother isn't very nice to you." Or the mentor could shut off communication by telling the mentee what to do instead of listening and helping to draw him out.

After the role-play, ask participants for feedback. As they speak, add items, as appropriate, to the "good" and "bad listening" lists that are on the newsprint from the previous activity.

In the second role-play, the "mentor" should display effective listening and other communication skills.

After the role-play, ask participants for feedback. Again, as appropriate, add items to the "good" and "bad listening" lists on the newsprint.

2. Distribute the handout "I Hear You," and allow participants a few minutes to read it. Then lead a discussion about items on the handout, asking for examples and encouraging participants to ask questions about anything they don't understand. (Remember, you are modeling good listening skills!)

3. Use the following quote (write it on the newsprint) to summarize this activity:

> *"Easy listening exists only on the radio."* —David Barkan

ACTIVITY 2 HANDOUT:
I hear you

People tend to think of listening as something passive, or they tend not to think about it at all. But listening is actually a skill—a valuable skill that can be practiced and learned.

Nicole didn't talk at all when I first met her. The adults in the house where she lived didn't take the time or have the time to talk to the kids. I had to learn not to ask her questions she could answer in a few words. Instead of asking, "How was school today?" I ask, "What did you do in school?" Or when we go to the movies, I don't ask her if she liked it but what her favorite part was. When we're planning a meal, we go shopping together and talk about what we're buying.

One writer has compared a listener to a catcher in a baseball game.* Observers who don't know a lot about baseball might believe that a catcher is doing nothing more than waiting for a pitcher to throw the ball. They think that all the responsibility rests with the pitcher, who is, after all, the one who is winding up and delivering the pitch. In the same way, some people believe that all the responsibility in communication rests with the person who is talking.

In reality, though, a good catcher is not a passive target waiting to receive the pitch. He or she concentrates on a pitcher's motions; tracks the path of the ball; and, if necessary, jumps, stretches, or dives to make the catch. Similarly, a good listener actively tries to catch and understand the speaker's words.

ACTIVE LISTENING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL OF A GOOD MENTOR

"You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time."
—M. Scott Peck

When you talk with your mentee, try to remember to:

- Clear your mind of unnecessary thoughts and distractions, so you can give her or him your undivided attention.

- If your mentee is a child or much smaller than you, sit when you talk, so you are at about the same level.

- Make eye contact.

- Be aware of your body language.

- Pay attention to your mentee's facial expressions, gestures, and body language.

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* Kavanaugh, J. (1998). *Everyday heroes: A guidebook for mentors*. Santa Fe, NM: Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, "Los Sabios," and Injury Prevention and Emergency Medical Services Bureau, Public Health Division, New Mexico Department of Health.

(Activity 2 Handout continued)

- Read between the lines for your mentee's feelings. Learn to say, "How did that make you feel?"

- Ask open-ended questions. Don't ask, "How was school today?" Instead ask, "What did you do in school today?" Then, as appropriate, ask nonthreatening follow-up questions.

- Paraphrase—restate in your own words—what you think the child or youth has said. When paraphrasing is accurate, your mentee will feel understood. If it is off the mark, it invites her or him to clarify and also reminds you to listen more closely.

- Ask questions when you don't understand.

- Put yourself in your mentee's "shoes," and try to understand the world from her or his perspective.

- Put aside preconceived ideas, and refrain from passing judgment.

- Acknowledge that you are listening by occasionally nodding your head and saying things like, "I see."

- Give your mentee the same respect that you desire for yourself when you are talking to someone.

> ### Some additional ideas for killing a conversation on the telephone:
>
> - Be totally silent for minutes at a time while your mentee is talking. Don't say, "I see," or "OK," or ask any questions. That way, your mentee will wonder if you're even there.
>
> - Do something else while the conversation is taking place: work at your computer, read your e-mail, do dishes, fold laundry, pay bills.

How to kill a conversation:

- Tell the speaker that the way he or she feels is wrong. "It's silly to feel that way."

- Don't look at the person who is speaking to you.

- Sit slouched over, look distracted, drum your fingers on the table, or use some other body language to signal to the speaker that you're not really interested.

- While the person is speaking, think about what you're going to say in reply. It's not possible to be forming your own words and concentrating on the speaker's at the same time—so the response you're planning is unlikely to be very useful.

- Be judgmental and challenging. Ask questions that put your mentee on the spot: "Why didn't you do better on the test?" "Why did you say that to her?" "How could you possibly think that?"

- Interrupt the person who is talking. Finish his or her sentences.

ACTIVITY 3.
COMMUNICATION ROLE-PLAYS

Objective:

- To practice applying "active listening" skills by participating in role-plays

Length:

- About 40 minutes

Materials included:

- Handout: "Sample Role Plays"

Steps:

1. Tell participants that you want them to apply some of the ideas they have been talking about during this session by role-playing conversations with their mentees.

Organize participants into pairs. Give each pair one of the scenarios from the trainer resource "Sample Role Plays," or one of the scenarios you have created.

Tell the pairs you want them to use their scenario as the basis for *two* role-plays of a conversation between the mentor and mentee. The same person should play the "mentor" and the same person the "mentee" for both role-plays.

- In the first role-play, the "mentor" should display poor listening and other communication skills

- In the second role-play, the "mentor" should display effective listening and other communication skills

- As time allows, they should then switch roles and do the role-plays again

Remind participants that there are many positive (as well as many negative) ways to respond to a situation. Good communication skills should be incorporated into a person's own style, not be forced.

As the pairs are doing their role-plays, you and your co-facilitator should listen in on as many as possible. Each time after you listen to a

role-play, you can ask the pair a few questions to help them reflect on the experience. For the "bad" role-play, for example, you can ask the "mentee" how the "mentor's" words or actions made him or her feel. For the "good" role-play, you can ask the "mentee" what the "mentor" said or did that made him or her feel the mentor could be trusted.

Allow about 20 minutes for the pairs to complete their role-plays.

2.   Bring the whole group back together. Ask for a pair to volunteer to give their two role-plays. After each of the role-plays, have other participants give feedback on what the mentor said and did to block or to foster a conversation that would build trust and help the mentee feel comfortable about talking openly. Also encourage the pair to talk about how the experience felt to them and what they might be more aware of now that they have done the role-plays.

As time allows, have other pairs present their role-plays and receive feedback.

[Adapted from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. (1991). Volunteer Development Seminar, Communication Skills. In *Volunteer education and development manual* (pp. 17–18). Philadelphia, PA: Author.]

ACTIVITY 3 HANDOUT:
Sample communication role-plays

These scenarios are intended to give participants an opportunity to explore various ways of responding to their mentees, incorporating the communication skills they have been exploring during this training workshop. You can cut these along the dotted lines and give one scenario to each pair during the Communication Role Plays activity. Or you might want to create new scenarios that describe situations that more closely represent your particular program.

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1.   Your mentee is 11 years old. You have been meeting for more than two months, and she has never expressed an opinion about how you and she should spend your time together. You always suggest the activities. When you suggest one, she always says, "That'll be OK." When you suggest more than one and ask her to choose, she says, "It doesn't matter which one." When you ask her to suggest what she'd like to do, she says, "Anything will be nice." You know it's important for her to share in the decision making and in your meeting today you've decided to try to deal with this situation.

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2.   Your mentee is 13 years old. This is only your third meeting with him. His family recently moved and, as a result, he started going to this school just last month, after the school year had already started. He hadn't said much about school during your first two meetings. In fact, he hadn't said much about anything. But today when you meet, you immediately see that he has a black eye. You ask him what happened. "Nothing," he says. "I just got into a fight in the cafeteria."

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3.   Your mentee is seven years old. You have been meeting with him for six weeks, and he has always seemed to enjoy your time together. But when you meet with him today, it seems like nothing can make him happy. He doesn't want to play computer games or read a story together or play catch, all things he usually enjoys. He finally agrees to work on putting together a Super Monsters puzzle with you, but when the puzzle is halfway complete, he knocks all the pieces onto the floor and starts kicking them across the room.

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4.   Your mentee is 12 years old. During the first two months of your relationship, things seemed to be going well between you. But then she didn't show up for your last two meetings. You phoned again and set up another meeting, this time arranging to pick her up in your car. She is home when you arrive there, and she gives you a big smile when she sees you. But you're upset about the missed meetings and feel you have to talk about it.

(Activity 3 Handout continued)

5.   Your mentee is 14 years old, and you have been meeting with her for three months. At your meeting today, she proudly shows you the report card she has just received. "I didn't fail anything," she says. You look at the report card: She has just barely passed all her classes. You know she's smart and should be doing much better in school.

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6.   Your mentee is 14 years old, and you have been meeting with him for a month. On a Monday afternoon, you meet him at school, and the two of you are having a great time shooting hoops and talking about what else each of you likes to do to have fun. "I had a great time this weekend," he says. "I went to a party where this guy brought all this beer."

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7.   Your mentee is 15 years old, and you have been meeting with him for three months. When you see him today, he has just gotten his report card, and he is failing two subjects. "I can't wait until I'm 16," he says. "The first thing I'm going to do is drop out of school."

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8.   Your mentee is eight years old, and you have been meeting for two months. During the first half-hour of your meeting today, you and she play hopscotch outside in the schoolyard. She seems a bit quieter than usual, but you don't think much about it because she is very shy and usually doesn't talk much when you are together. It's cold out, and after a while the two of you decide to go inside to the school library to read a book. When you sit down together at the table to read and she takes her coat off, you see that she has fresh, large bruises on both her arms.

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9.   Your mentee is 14 years old, and you have been meeting for two months. The two of you have just gone to a movie together, and you want to go with her to get something to eat and talk about the movie. "What time is it?" she asks. When you tell her, she says she has to go home to babysit for her sister and make dinner. "I'm already late," she says. "My mother's going to scream at me. It's not fair. She's never home. She makes me do every-thing."

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10. Your mentee is 14 years old. You've been meeting for three months, and you know he has a huge crush on a girl in his class. He talks about her a lot and considers her his girl-friend. Your mentee is small and shy, and you're pretty sure this is the first girlfriend he's had. When you meet today, he's obviously downcast. "What's the matter?" you ask. He tells you his girlfriend has started seeing a guy who's 17, and she told your mentee, "Why would I want to go out with a runt like you?"

ACTIVITY 4.
TRUST COMES FIRST

Objective:

- To appreciate the importance of taking the time to first build trust with their mentee

- To understand what does and does not contribute to building trust

Length:

- About 25 minutes

Materials included:

- Handout: "Building Relationships"

- Optional handout: "The Mentor-Mentee Relationship Cycle"

Steps:

1. Emphasize that being an active listener is an essential quality for building a successful mentoring relationship. However, it is not the only one.

Ask participants to think about their own experiences in relationships they had with adults (other than their parents) when they were a child or youth.

> *How long did it take for those relationships to form? How long, as a child, did it take them to trust and feel attached to the adult? How long, as a youth, did it take? Why did they begin to trust that adult? Did the trust remain? Did they ever begin to question it? If so, why?*

2. Distribute the handout "Building Relationships," which draws together much of what participants have been exploring during these training sessions. Note that the information on the handout is based on research conducted about mentoring relationships in Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies from around the country. Allow participants a few minutes to read the handout.

Lead a discussion about information on the handout. (Before the session, you could write the handout's key points on the newsprint and display them during the discussion.) Be sure to relate the bulleted

items to the underlying principle of establishing trust. Allow participants ample opportunity to ask questions and to discuss any confusion about, or possible disagreement with, information on the handout.

3.   After discussing the Building Relationships handout, you may also want to refer to the "Mentor-Mentee Relationship Cycle" handout, which describes the stages of a typical mentoring relationship and provides communication tips for building trust and overcoming difficulties. Alternatively, this additional handout can be used in ongoing training or inserted into a mentor handbook you provide.

ACTIVITY 4 HANDOUT:
Building relationships

What makes a mentoring relationship successful?

The key to creating effective mentoring relationships lies in the *development of trust* between two strangers of different ages. Volunteers come to mentoring programs because they want to help youth. Without establishing trust, however, mentors can never truly support the youth with whom they interact.

Establishing communication and developing a relationship can often be difficult processes. Learning to trust, especially for youth who have been let down before, requires time—youth cannot be expected to trust their mentor simply because program staff have put the two of them together.

The most critical factor in determining whether matches develop into satisfying and effective relationships characterized by high levels of trust is the approach of the mentor. Mentors who follow a gradual path in trust-building find that the types of support they can offer, and are accepted, broaden considerably once trust has been established.

Effective mentors are more likely to engage in the following practices:

- They see themselves as "friends" rather than teachers or parents, and define their role as supporting the youth in a variety of ways.

- They are "active listeners."

- They make a commitment to being consistent and dependable, to maintaining a steady presence in the youth's life.

- They understand that the relationship may seem fairly one-sided—they may feel like they are doing all the work—and they take responsibility for keeping the relationship alive. For example, early in the relationship, youth often test adults to determine whether they will actually stick around. Successful mentors regularly initiate contact and ensure that meetings are scheduled, rather than waiting to hear from youth.

- They involve the youth in deciding how the pair will spend their time together. While youth are often reticent about expressing what they want to do, successful mentors take the time to learn about the youth's interests and provide them with options for how to spend their time, rather than planning everything without their input.

- They pay attention to kids' need for "fun." Having fun together is a key part of building relationships, and it also provides youth with valuable opportunities that are otherwise often unavailable to them.

[Handout information from Morrow, K.V., & Styles, M.B. (1995). *Building relationships with youth in program settings: A study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.]

(Activity 4 Handout continued)

■ They seek and utilize the help and advice of program staff. Successful mentors recognize that they don't have all the answers, and they value the support and guidance that program staff can provide.

What stands in the way of a successful relationship?

Mentors who focus first on building trust and becoming a friend to their youth tend to be more effective than mentors who immediately try to change or reform the youth. Adults whose attention is concentrated on reforming youth often are frustrated by the youth's lack of receptivity. These mentors make the mistake of pushing too hard and too quickly on the mentee's problems: pressing them to talk about sensitive issues before they are ready, and ignoring the youth's desire to help set the agenda for the pair's activities. These mentors fail precisely because they are too focused on their own agenda.

Less successful mentors tend to do the following.

■ They approach the relationship with narrow, specific goals aimed at changing the youth's behavior.

■ They have difficulty meeting with youth on a regular and consistent basis, often demanding that youth play an equal role in initiating contact. Unsuccessful mentors often complain that their mentees do not call them to schedule meetings, or that youth fail to show up for meetings when they say they will.

■ They attempt to instill a set of values that may be different from or inconsistent with those the youth is exposed to at home.

■ They attempt to transform or reform the youth by setting tasks (for example, focusing on doing schoolwork during their meetings) and adopting a parental or authoritative role in their interactions with youth. For youth, the value of a mentor is often in having a supportive adult who is not a parent or teacher—adopting the posture of these authority figures undermines the development of trust between a mentor and youth.

■ They emphasize behavior changes over developing mutual trust and respect in the relationship. Mentors cannot force youth to change; too much focus on what is wrong with a youth is more likely to turn him or her away from the mentor.

Adopting these ineffective strategies most often leads to dissatisfaction with the match and premature termination. In a study of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, researchers found that more than 70 percent of the matches that included mentors who took a "reform the youth" approach met only sporadically, and the majority of those matches ended relatively quickly without much impact. In contrast, in matches where mentors adopted the gradual trust-building approach, more than 90 percent met on a regular and consistent basis for an extended period of time.

ACTIVITY 4 OPTIONAL HANDOUT:
The mentor-mentee relationship cycle

STAGE 1: Beginning of the Match	Characteristics:	Effective Communication:
	■ Getting to know each other ■ The first impressions ■ Trying to see the positive in the relationship ■ Bonding	■ Ask open-ended questions ■ Use body language that is open and not guarded ■ Active listening ■ Demonstrate empathy ■ Avoid "prescriptive" communication ■ Use prompts ■ Speak with language that you feel comfortable with ■ Don't be afraid of silence

STAGE 2: Challenging and Testing	Characteristics:	Effective Communication:
	■ Mentee challenges ■ Testing phase ■ Rethinking first impressions ■ Difficult feelings or emotions may surface	■ Be consistent in your communication, even if it is difficult ■ Demonstrate respect ■ Build problem-solving techniques into your open-ended questions ■ Raise sensitive issues at the beginning of your interactions ■ Make sure to separate behaviors from who the mentee is ■ Disclosure of personal feelings and experiences when appropriate

(Activity 4 Optional Handout continued)

STAGE 3: "Real" Mentoring	Characteristics: ■ The relationship begins feeling right again ■ Trust is established ■ Growth in the mentee can be observed ■ A "deeper" bond and connection has been formed	Effective Communication: ■ Continue with disclosures when appropriate ■ Avoid advising, and allow youth to actively problem solve ■ Build off your knowledge of your mentee's strengths to foster deeper discussions ■ Give positive feedback and don't be afraid to let your mentee know when something has hurt you.

STAGE 4: Ending	Characteristics: ■ Preparing for closure ■ Relationship may become deeper or mentee may start pulling away ■ Reflection	Effective Communication: ■ Find common language to sum up your feelings ■ Provide feedback that describes growth that you observed ■ Be prepared to listen and affirm fears that your mentee may have

[Relationship cycle handout adapted, with permission, from Rummell, C. (2006). Effective communication in the mentor/mentee relationship cycle. In Cannata, A. (Ed.). *Ongoing training for mentors: 12 interactive sessions for U.S. Department of Education mentoring programs*. Folsom, CA: Mentoring Resource Center.]

ACTIVITY 5.
ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES

Objective:

- Understand what a boundary is and why boundaries are needed in mentoring relationships

- Understand how to prevent and buffer mismanagement of boundaries in mentoring relationships

- Develop a framework for dealing with boundary issues

Length:

- About 45 minutes (time will cover approximately two scenarios)

Materials Provided:

- Handout: "On Boundaries"

- Handout: "Boundary Scenarios"

You will need to supply:

- Chalkboard or newsprint

- Chalk or markers

Steps:

1. Explain that effectively setting boundaries with their mentee will help them have a positive mentoring experience, provide them with valuable life lessons, protect them from burning out, and, most important, prevent them from walking away prematurely from their mentoring commitment. A mentor's ability to set boundaries will allow the mentee to feel safe, develop a sense of trust and, ultimately, learn how to set boundaries for him- or herself. This exercise will help mentors identify key areas around which boundaries are essential, as well as provide them with guidelines for how to continue to protect those boundaries throughout the life of the mentoring relationship.

2. Distribute and have participants review the "On Boundaries" hand-out. Tell them that they will have a chance to role-play these principles in a few minutes.

Distribute the "Boundary Scenarios" handout. Feel free to adapt and change the scenarios to increase their relevance to your program. Ask participants to:

- Select a person to record responses as well as another to present to the larger group.

- List all the worst ways in which the assigned scenario could be handled. Have a recorder write the ideas down on the newsprint and label it "What not to do."

- Discuss and write down ways in which their group feels the scenario should be handled.

Give participants about 15 minutes to complete this task.

3. Review responses to scenarios (about 15 minutes). Ask each small-group representative to go to the front of the room, read the group's scenario out loud, and explain how they decided the scenario should be handled, as well as what pitfalls to avoid. Invite the rest of the participants to add feedback or ask questions. Summarize key points and clarify agency's policies as necessary.

Tip: Record and save boundary topics and responses from your workshops and daily work to be used for future boundary training sessions.

4. Once you have facilitated and reviewed participant responses to the scenarios, you can add any missing key points and guidelines related to the issue. This time will also serve as your opportunity to provide them with a way of thinking about boundaries that will help guide their actions should the need arise. See the "On Boundaries" handout for key talking points.

[This activity and handouts adapted, with permission, from Arevalo, A. (2006). Establishing and maintaining boundaries. In Cannata, A. (Ed.) *Ongoing training for mentors: 12 interactive sessions for U.S. Department of Education mentoring programs* (pp. 5–10). Folsom, CA: Mentoring Resource Center.]

ACTIVITY 5 HANDOUT:
On boundaries

What is a boundary?

A boundary can be thought of as a protective barrier that helps to keep us safe. For boundaries to be effective they need to be applied on a consistent and ongoing basis. Boundaries teach children what healthy relationships look like and allow them to be children.

Who needs boundaries?

All of us can benefit from having healthy boundaries in our relationships. Exercising your ability to set and maintain those boundaries throughout your mentoring relationship will provide you with an opportunity to challenge your own personal growth.

Although all children need boundaries, they are particularly important for youth who:

1. Come from chaotic and unpredictable environments

2. Have been the victims of abuse

3. Have to take care of the adults in their lives and as a result have not had their own needs met

Are there any signs that can tell me if my personal boundaries have been crossed? Feeling angry, used, violated, drained, or that you need to walk away from the relationship may be signs that you are in a situation where your boundaries are being violated.

How do I prevent my boundaries from being violated?

You should decide what boundaries are important to you before the match begins and certainly before being confronted with a difficult situation. Planning in advance will help prevent being caught off guard and it will also help you plan and rehearse your desired response. Some specific areas where boundaries are important include:

- Money: How much money am I comfortable spending on each outing? How will I respond if on an outing my mentee asks me to buy him/her something? How would I feel if my mentee's family requests help with their finances?

- Behavior: What would I do if my mentee uses foul language, mistreats others, steals, or is disrespectful of me during one of our meetings?

- Self-disclosure: How would I respond if my mentee asks me about my previous experience with sex, drug use, past relationships, or other personal issues?

(Activity 5 Handout continued)

- Time: How much time do I feel comfortable spending with my mentee on a weekly basis? Am I comfortable receiving phone calls at work? How late is too late to receive a phone call (or too early)? What would I do if my mentee does not show up for a meeting?

- Working with parents/guardians: What would I do if my mentee's father asks me out on a date? What do I do if when greeted at the door, my mentee's mother begins sharing her "laundry list" of complaints about her son? What would I do if my mentee's grandmother begins crying and sharing her problems with me when I drop by for a visit?

Remember that if you are not sure how to respond to a situation, you have every right to request time to think about it. It is best to set boundaries from the start. However, you can and should make adjustments to your relationship as necessary. It is better to adjust a boundary than to walk away from a relationship.

Finally, and most important, remember that you do not have to do this alone. If you are unsure about a situation, need help figuring out how to proceed, or need an intervention, you can go to program staff for support.

Are there any guidelines I can use that can help guide my actions when confronted with situations that challenge healthy boundaries?

Here is a three-step approach you can apply when trying to decide how to handle a difficult scenario:

1. *In mentoring, the relationship is the formula, the strategy, and the intervention*. How can you respond to this situation in a way that protects the well-being of the mentoring relationship?

2. *The implications of your response are as important as the response itself*. What are the short-term and long-term consequences of the way you choose to handle the situation?

3. *Communicate from a place of personal honesty*. How can you effectively communicate with your mentee the importance of the boundary in question in a way that honors your needs without blaming or shaming your mentee?

ACTIVITY 5 HANDOUT:
Boundary scenarios

Scenario 1

You arrive at your usual meeting place and your mentee has not arrived. You had previously called your mentee to let her know what time to meet. You both agreed that you would interview the head of the college art museum for a special school project. What should you do or say next time you talk to your mentee?

Scenario 2

You have been matched with your mentee for about six months and you are starting to "bond." One day your mentee asks you if you ever experimented with alcohol when you were younger. You did try alcohol in middle school, and more often in high school. What do you say?

Scenario 3

Every time you go to pick up your mentee, his father greets you at the door and spends at least half an hour chatting with you. You are glad he likes you, but his long greetings are getting in the way of the time you spend with your mentee. How should you handle this situation?

Scenario 4

During one of the group activities of the mentoring program, you notice that your mentee is being mean to one of the other children. You've noticed this behavior in the past, but have not said anything about it. Your mentee's attitude toward other children makes you feel uncomfortable. What should you do?

Scenario 5

You and your mentee hit it off right away. You were very excited about your match until a few weeks ago when your mentee started calling you a few times a day. You are excited she likes you so much, but are unsure if the amount of time you are spending on the phone is appropriate. You don't want to hurt her feelings, but you are feeling uncomfortable with the calls at work and tired from all the calls at home. What should you do?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY.
"What Should We Do?"

Objective:

- Understand the resources available in their community for match activities

- Learn how to help their mentee decide on match activities that are relevant to their interests

Length:

- About 40 minutes

Materials provided:

- Handout 1: "School-Site Activities We Can Do"

- Handout 2: "Community Activities We Can Do"

You will need to supply:

- Chalkboard or newsprint

- Chalk or markers

- Note cards or scratch paper

Steps:

1. When I Was Your Age Visualization (about 20 minutes)

Ask the participants to think back to when they were a child. Now ask them to visualize themselves at the same age as their mentee. Use the following phrases to help them visualize:

- How did your bedroom look?

- What books did you like reading?

- What was your favorite subject in school?

- What did you look forward to after school?

- What sports/hobbies did you enjoy?

- What did you like to collect?

- What made you unique?

Ask them to keep those images in their mind. Now ask, "What was your favorite activity during this time in your life? What were you really into?"

2. Record their responses on the chalkboard or newsprint.

Review the list and have the group talk about how the activities might be changed to appeal to the kids your program serves. Have the group expand one of the activities listed. For example, if a participant says that his/her favorite activity was playing on the jungle gym, talk about related activities that a match might pursue, such as researching famous Olympic gymnasts, attending a sporting event, designing the ultimate jungle gym using popsicle sticks, or using the Internet to learn about sports-related careers.

3. Review available options (about 10 minutes).

Take a few minutes to review what type of activities mentors and mentees can participate in at their program site and in the community. Mention any free or low-cost activities on the horizon. Remind mentors of any group outings or school events that are scheduled. Review the two handouts, "Community Activities We Can Do" and "School-Site Activities We Can Do," or another handout you have created that is more applicable to your program's services.

4. Key debrief points (about 5 minutes)

    ■ Keep in mind that activities should adhere to program policies around off-campus outings (if applicable), amount of money that can be spent, and liability and safety issues. Remind them to check with program staff if they are unsure if an activity is OK.

    ■ Encourage mentors to suggest activity ideas that take advantage of other offerings (e.g., a group museum trip or open gym time) and that mesh with program goals.

    ■ In a community-based program mentors should check in with the mentees' parents and program staff before embarking on any new or out-of-the-ordinary activities.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY HANDOUT:
School-site activities we can do

- Read a book, especially in a new genre

- Join (or find more about) a school club, sport, or activity

- Create academic goals (both short and long term)

- Do research on the Internet

- Explore the school library

- See if you can use the gym (or get outside) to play active games or exercise

- Talk about what happened during the school day

- Talk about successes (and disappointments) at school

- Create a notebook to organize schoolwork

- Write a story together

- Discuss strategies for taking tests and effective study habits

- Discuss managing time effectively

- Make a collage that illustrates the mentee's values or goals

- Plan a service project (either for the school or out in the community)

- Build a Web site together

- Make a mentoring journal about your time together

- Research some interesting or unusual careers

- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper about a topic of interest to your mentee

- Learn about a country your mentee would like to visit someday (plan a fantasy vacation)

- Talk about your family heritage and research your roots

- Pick a foreign language neither of you know and learn some basic words and phrases

- Take pictures to create a school "scrapbook"

- Talk about the best (and the worst) parts of their school day

(Optional Activity Handout continued)

- Work on spelling—and how to use a dictionary and thesaurus

- Study for a test or complete homework (sparingly)

- Review previous tests and homework

[List adapted from Cannata, A., Garringer, M., MacRae, P., & Wakeland, D. (2005). *Making the grade: A guide to incorporating academic achievement into mentoring programs and relationships* (p. 70). Folsom, CA: Mentoring Resource Center.]

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY HANDOUT:
Community activities we can do

- Visit museum, aquarium, planetarium, art gallery, natural museum, national park, cemetery, zoo, etc.

- Tour the public library

- Visit a job site

- Do a job shadow

- Interview someone who has an interesting job

- Research career qualifications

- Visit a high school, attend high school events

- Visit local universities

- Take a class together—learning a new skill together can be fun and exciting

- Take a nature hike

- Visit a farm

- Take a historical tour of the city

- Go to cultural event (concert, play, symphony, rodeo)

- Go to a culturally themed event (pow-wow, MLK celebration, etc.)

- Watch an educational special or movie with an educational theme

- Talk with senior citizens about their life story and historical events

- Participate in a summer reading program

- Go grocery shopping together; plan a menu for a meal, make a budget for it, compare prices

- Explore public transportation together

[List adapted from Cannata, A., Garringer, M., MacRae, P., & Wakeland, D. (2005). *Making the grade: A guide to incorporating academic achievement into mentoring programs and relationships* (p. 70). Folsom, CA: Mentoring Resource Center.]

ACTIVITY 6.
WRAP-UP

Objective:

■ To help participants think about how to apply their learning from the session

Length:

■ About 40 minutes

Materials included:

■ Handout: "Summarizing This Session"

■ Evaluation Form

Steps:

1. Write this (or another quotation) on the newsprint, as a backdrop for the session's wrap-up:

> *"No one ever listened himself out of a job."* —Calvin Coolidge

2. Distribute the handout "Summarizing This Session," and ask participants to write down two or three things they learned during the session that they will be able to put to use as they begin their mentoring relationship. (These could be skills, attitudes, or anything else.) Then ask for a few volunteers to share one of their items.

3. Distribute the evaluation forms, and ask everyone to complete one and return it to you before leaving.

4. Be sure to reiterate what the next steps are for your new mentors (getting matched, meeting the mentee and their parents/guardian, etc.). Make sure they know who to contact on your staff if they have questions about what's next.

ACTIVITY 6 HANDOUT:

Summarizing this session

List two or three things you learned during this session that will help you when you begin your new role as a mentor. Then explain how each will help.

1.

2.

3.

Questions I still have...

ACTIVITY 6 HANDOUT:
Evaluation of training session

Date:

1. What did you find to be most useful in this workshop?

2. What did you find to be least useful?

3. Was there anything you felt was missing from this session—anything you would have liked to know more about?

4. In what other ways could we improve this session?

5. Please rate the following:

	Poor		Average		Excellent
Effectiveness of trainer	1	2	3	4	5
Training room	1	2	3	4	5
Training content	1	2	3	4	5
Training activities	1	2	3	4	5
Training materials	1	2	3	4	5
Overall rating	1	2	3	4	5

6. List other topics or concerns you would like to have addressed in upcoming training sessions.

7. Please use the back of this form for any additional comments.

Additional Reading and Resources for Training Mentors

Arevalo, E. (with Boggan, D., & West, L.). (2004). *Designing and customizing mentor training*. Folsom, CA: Center for Applied Research Solutions. Available online at:
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Smink, J. (1999). *Training guide for mentors*. Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center.

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