

NOTES

Module 8

Training Mentors & Building Relationships



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Handout #1: Session Goals and The Basics

Session Goals

1. To explore the importance of their mentors' having strong communication skills
2. To participate in an activity that identifies qualities of "active listening"
3. To examine "good practices" that help mentors develop a successful relationship with their mentees.
4. To participate in role-plays and understand their usefulness in helping mentors practice skills
5. To identify and talk about some of your own important values
6. To explore activities that can help your program's mentors learn to understand and respect their mentee's culture and values

The Basics

1. "Listening" is a mentor's most valuable skill, and it can be practiced and learned.
2. The key to creating effective mentoring relationships lies in the development of trust. That requires time and patience by the mentor.
3. Values can be difficult for people to talk about. Even the word "values" is difficult to define.
4. There are often significant differences between a mentor and mentee in socioeconomic status and/or racial and ethnic background. Training mentors in understanding and respecting these and other forms of diversity will benefit the mentor-mentee relationship.
5. When mentors understand the ways that a mentee's personal values might manifest themselves in their relationship, they will be more able to respond non-judgmentally to their mentee.
6. It is important for facilitators to examine their own values and biases before leading training sessions on these topics.



Handout #2: *Agenda*

1. Introductions (10 minutes)

Participants identify challenges mentors may face early in the relationship with their mentee.

2. Active Listening(15 minutes)

3. Practicing Skills(20 minutes)

Participants gain practice in using role-plays to train mentors.

4. Building Trust (10 minutes)

Participants reflect on the importance of training their mentors in building trust.

5. Presentation of “Building Trust” Training Module (5 mins)

6. What’s a Value?(15 minutes)

Participants meet in groups to facilitate an icebreaker activity.

7. Values Voting(15 minutes)

Participants take a stand based on their values.

8. Value differences in Relationships (20 minutes)

Small groups explore ways to help their mentors learn to value differences.

9. Presentation of “Respecting Differences” Training Module (5 minutes)

10. Three Things I will Use (5 minutes)



Handout #3: *Mentor Workshop*

Building Trust Module

Session Goals

To help new mentors develop communication skills and understand personal qualities that are important for developing a successful relationship with their mentee.

By the end of the workshop, participants should have:

1. Identified qualities of “active listening”
2. Practiced applying active listening skills by participating in role-plays of conversations between a mentor and a mentee
3. Examined the importance of taking the time to first build trust with their mentee
4. Explored other key factors in developing a successful mentoring relationship



Agenda

1. Introductions (15 minutes)
2. If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio (30 minutes)
3. Communication Role-Plays (45 minutes)
4. Trust Comes First (15 minutes)
5. Pushing the Envelope (10 minutes)
6. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Included Here Are:

- Suggested activities, in a suggested sequence, that you can use or modify to meet the particular needs of your program
- Handouts that you can use or modify, and an evaluation form for participants to complete at the end of the session
- Preparation notes and tips for facilitators



Materials

Handouts

- Handout #3A: I Hear You
- Handout #3B: Building Relationships
- Handout #3C: During the Sessions

You Will Need To Supply*

* Host organization to prepare

- Flipcharts
- An easel
- Marking pens and masking tape
- The overheads you prepare, and an overhead projector
- Index cards
- Envelopes and paper that, when folded, fits inside the envelopes

Notes For Facilitators

Preparation Tips

1. This session should be co-facilitated with another staff member or a current 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. You might also want to practice the role-plays. (Some facilitators like to practice role-plays before presenting them in a session; others do not because they feel it detracts from the spontaneity that can be an important component of role-plays.)
2. Review the scenarios in Handout #4, “Role-Plays for Developing Listening Skills.” Adapt them, as necessary, so they realistically reflect your program; or write new scenarios



3. Read the handouts.
4. Prepare overheads to use during discussions.
5. If applicable, be prepared to talk about any particular challenges that your mentors may face as they try to develop a trusting relationship with the mentees your program serves.

Facilitation Tips

“Facilitate” means “to make easier.” Think about yourself as a “facilitator”—someone who helps mentors learn, rather than as someone who attempts to impose learning upon them. “Facilitating” suggests the idea of a collaborative relationship between trainer and participants.

A facilitator is a:

- Coach
- Listener
- Trainer
- Learner
- Manager of group process

What follows are some good practices for facilitating.

1. Before the training session:

Take time to plan carefully. Customise activities and handouts so they best address characteristics of your program. Be prepared to offer real-life examples that illustrate your program’s experiences. 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.

Select a space for the workshop that is physically comfortable and contributes to group interaction. 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 (square or round) for smaller groups to sit around. 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 rooms available nearby, or be sure the room is large enough that small groups can meet within it without distracting each other.

Have everything ready. Copy handouts and prepare overheads. Gather any required materials and equipment: flipcharts, markers, masking tape, name tags, an overhead projector (and extension cord, if necessary), and anything else you might need for the session.

Arrive early. Get to the room about 30 minutes ahead of time to set up the area: arrange chairs, do any necessary advance writing on the flipchart, and check equipment. Be sure that refreshments (coffee, water, soft drinks, etc.) are available.

2. During the session:

Create a comfortable learning environment. Be sure participants can hear each other as they speak. Create an atmosphere where people are taken seriously and where they can also laugh—people are usually most open to new ideas when they are enjoying themselves and feel comfortable enough to risk making mistakes. Think about ways to inject humour into the training session. Using relevant cartoons as overheads, for example, or telling funny anecdotes about experiences of mentors, can help create an open and friendly atmosphere.

Pace the workshop 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.

Model good listening, feedback, and problem-solving skills—the skills mentors need. Listen carefully and respectfully. Acknowledge what people say even if you don't agree. Maintain eye contact with each person as he or she speaks. Monitor your nonverbal signals as well as your verbal comments. Be nonjudgmental. Respond by guiding, not imposing. Repeat and address key points. Help participants develop collaborative



problem-solving skills by involving them in answering other participants' questions and having them work together to arrive at solutions to problems.

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 flipcharts to help people see and remember. Flipcharts are a useful tool for group thinking and problem solving. Summarise major discussion points on flipcharts, and post the pages 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 have a sense of accomplishment at the end of each. Structure the training session so participants' sense of accomplishment grows throughout.

Be yourself. Have a sense of humor. And know your limitations. If you don't know the answer to a question, that's OK. 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.

3. After the session:

Use an evaluation form to get feedback from participants. Distribute it at the end of the session, and ask participants to complete it before they leave.

Reflect on what worked well and what did not. Use the information from participants' evaluations to help you think through what worked well from their point of view, what you need to modify about the content, and what facilitation skills you want to strengthen. 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.

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 or her know about the situation.

Activity #1: Introductions

- Introduce yourself. Welcome the new mentors and explain the goals of this training session.
- Give each person an index card. Tell participants you want them to introduce themselves to the group, but first you want them to consider this:

Think about some one-to-one conversations you have been involved in recently. 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.

- Go around the room, having each participant introduce himself or herself and briefly state his or her "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 flipchart.

Activity #2: If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio

- 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 on the lists generated during the previous activity, 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.
- 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 those in your program and have other conversational characteristics that realistically exemplify those mentees. Use the same scenario for both role-plays. You can use or modify



the following scenario, or create one of your own that accurately represents situations which 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 skills and construct roadblocks to communication. After the role-play, ask participants for feedback. (As they speak, add items, as appropriate, to the "good" and "bad listening" lists on the flipchart.) In the second role-play, the "mentor" should display effective listening skills. After the role-play, ask participants for feedback. (Again, as appropriate, add items to the "good" and "bad listening" lists.)

- Distribute Handout #3A, "I Hear You," and allow participants a few minutes to review it. (Before the workshop, make an overhead—perhaps titled "Active listening is the most important quality of a good mentor"—that includes the handout's bulleted items, so you can display it during the following discussion.) Lead a discussion about items on the handout, asking for examples and encouraging participants to ask questions about anything they don't understand. (Remember that you're modeling good listening skills!)
- Use the following quote (write it on the flipchart or display it on an overhead you have prepared) to summarise this activity:

"Easy listening exists only on the radio."

—David Barkan

Activity #3 Communication Role-Plays

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

Organise participants into pairs. (If your program matches male mentors with boys and female mentors with girls, organise the pairs by gender.) Give each pair one of the



scenarios you have written on the flipchart. 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. (If necessary, the pairs should change the gender of the mentee in the scenario, so female pairs will be role-playing a scenario with a female mentee, and male pairs will be role-playing a scenario with a male mentee.) The same person should play the “mentor” and the same person the “mentee” for both role-plays:

1. In the first role-play, the “mentor” should display poor listening skills and construct roadblocks to communication.
 2. In the second role-play, the “mentor” should display effective listening skills.
 3. As time allows, they should then switch roles and do the role-plays again. Remind participants that there are many positive (and negative) ways to respond to a situation. Good communication skills should be incorporated into a person’s own style, not forced. As the pairs are doing their role-plays, you and your co-facilitator should listen in on as many pairs 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-listener” role-play, for example, you can ask the “mentee” how the “mentor’s” words or actions made him or her feel. For the “good-listener” 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.
- 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 with permission from the Volunteer Development Seminar, “Communication Skills,” pp. 17-18. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.)



Activity #4 *Trust Comes First*

- Emphasise 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 when they were a young person.

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?

- Distribute Handout #3B, “Building Relationships.” Note that the information in the handout is drawn from research conducted about mentoring relationships in Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies from around the country. Allow participants a few minutes to read the handout. Then lead a discussion about information on the handout. (Before the session, prepare an overhead with key points to display 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.

Activity #5 *Pushing the Envelope*

Before undertaking this exercise please be aware that it could bring up issues that make participants feel uncomfortable. It may be necessary to provide time for debriefing or make participation optional.

- Thank the participants for their contributions to this workshop and say that there are just one or two more things you want to do during this session. Then give each person a piece of paper and an envelope. Tell participants that you want each of them to write down on the piece of paper one thing about themselves that they have never told anyone. Then they should fold the paper, put it inside the envelope, seal the envelope, and write their name on the outside. Allow a few minutes for them to complete this task. Then ask them to pass the envelopes to you. When you have the envelopes, act as though you are considering opening them—for example, you might



look quite interested in them, start to open one, and then stop. (Don't actually open any of the envelopes.) Your goal is to make the participants feel slightly distrustful and uneasy, or at least to make them wonder what's going on. After you have created a little tension and uncertainty, smile and return each of the envelopes to its owner.

- Ask the group how they felt during this exercise. While they will probably talk freely about it—and about issues of trust—be sure the discussion addresses at least these points:

There are actually several aspects of trust involved in this exercise. First, participants have to trust you enough that they are willing to write down something about themselves they have never told anyone. (At least some people are likely to have written something other than a profound personal secret.) Then they have to trust you enough to put their names on the envelopes and pass the envelopes to you. Participants should also talk about how they felt when you seemed like you were going to open some of the envelopes. (Even if they wrote something other than a personal secret, your opening the envelope would be a violation of confidentiality and trust.)

Relate the experience participants have just had during this activity to the process of building trust with their mentee. This is also an opportunity to remind them about your program's confidentiality requirements—but the major point here concerns the internal trust between the mentee and mentor, not external requirements.

Activity #6 Wrap-Up

- Write this (or another quote) on the flipchart, as a backdrop for the workshop's wrap-up:

"No one ever listened himself out of a job."

—Calvin Coolidge

- Distribute Handout #3C, "During This Session," and ask participants to write down two or three things they have learned during this session that they will be able to put to use as they begin their mentoring relationship. (These could be skills, attitudes, or anything else.) They should also try to describe how they will put that learning to use. Allow a few minutes for them to complete the handout. Then ask for a few volunteers to share one of their items.
- Thank the participants for their attendance and involvement. Distribute the evaluation forms, and ask everyone to complete one and return it to you before leaving.



Handout #3A: *Mentor Workshop*

Building Trust Module - “*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. 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 a speaker's words. The next section offers tips for active listening. Active Listening is the Most Important Skill of a Good Mentor 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.
- Consider the appropriate use of eye contact with respect for your mentee's culture.
- Be aware of your body language.
- Pay attention to your mentee's facial expressions, gestures, and body language.
- Read between the lines for your mentee's feelings. Learn to say, “How did that make you feel?”



*Jim Kavanaugh. *Everyday Heroes: A Guidebook for Mentors*. 1998. Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, "Los Sabios," and Injury Prevention and Emergency Medical Services Bureau, Public page 1 of 3.

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. —A mentor - Health Division, New Mexico Department of Health, p. 27.

- Ask open-ended questions. Don't ask, "Did you enjoy school today?" Instead ask, "What did you do in school today?" Then, as appropriate, ask non-threatening follow-up questions. Closed questions are typically the kind that will receive a "yes" or "no" answer. Open-ended questions typically might begin "How", "What", "When?" "Why"
- Paraphrase—restate in your own words—what you think the mentee 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.



How to NOT Kill a Conversation

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

1. Don't tell the speaker that the way he or she feels is wrong. "It's silly to feel that way."
2. Don't use inappropriate eye contact. Consider eye contact that is culturally appropriate.
3. Don't 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.
4. While the person is speaking, don't 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.
5. Don't be judgmental and challenging. Try not to ask questions that put your mentee on the spot. "Your grades should be better." "You shouldn't have said that to her." "How could you possibly think that?"
6. Never interrupt the person who is talking. Allow him/her to finish their sentences.

Some Additional Ideas for NOT Killing a Conversation on the Telephone

1. Say things like, "I see," or "OK," or ask questions. That way, your mentee will know you're there. Try to avoid periods of silence while your mentee is talking on the phone.
2. Never do something else while the conversation is taking place: work at your computer, read your e-mail, do dishes, fold laundry, pay bills. Give your mentee your undivided attention.



Handout #3B: *Mentor Workshop*

Building Trust Module - *Building Relationships*

What Makes a Mentoring Relationship Successful?

I knew that it was going to take her some time to loosen up, and you just can't force someone to trust you...you can't force somebody not to be shy. You just have to wait.

—A mentor

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 young people. Without establishing trust, however, mentors can never truly support the young person with whom they interact. Establishing communication and developing a relationship can often be a difficult process. Learning to trust, especially for young people who have been let down before, requires time—young people 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 characterised 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, broadens 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 young person in a variety of ways.
- Are “active listeners.”
- Make a commitment to being consistent and dependable, to maintaining a steady presence in the young person’s life.
- Recognise that the relationship may seem fairly one-sided and take responsibility for keeping the relationship alive. Young people 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 young people.

- Involve the young person in deciding how the pair will spend their time together. While young people are often reticent about expressing what they want to do, successful mentors take the time to learn about the young person's interests and provide them with options for how to spend their time, rather than planning everything without input from the young person.
- Pay attention to young people's need for "fun." Having fun together is a key part of building relationships, and it also provides young people with valuable opportunities that are otherwise often unavailable to them.
- Seek and utilise the help and advice of program staff. Successful mentors recognise 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 young people tend to be more effective than mentors who immediately try to change or reform the young people. Adults whose attention is concentrated on reforming young people are often frustrated by the young person's lack of receptivity. These volunteers make the mistake of pushing too hard and too quickly on the young person's problems: pressing the mentee to talk about sensitive issues before he or she is ready, and ignoring the young person'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 mentee's behavior.
- Have difficulty meeting with the mentee on a regular and consistent basis, often demanding that young people play an equal role in initiating contact. Unsuccessful



mentors often complain that their mentee does not call them to arrange meetings or that the mentee fails to show up for scheduled meetings.

- Attempt to instill a set of values that may be different from or inconsistent with those the mentee is exposed to at home.
- Attempt to transform or reform the mentee by setting tasks (for example, focusing on doing schoolwork during their meetings) and adopting a parental or authoritative role in their interactions with young people. 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 mentee.
- Emphasise behavior changes over developing mutual trust and respect in the relationship. Mentors cannot force a mentee to change; too much focus on what is wrong with a mentee 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 over 70 percent of the matches that included mentors who took this “reform the youth” approach met only sporadically, and the majority of those matches ended relatively quickly. 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.

[Information from *Building Relationships With Youth in Program Settings: A Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. 1995. Kristine V. Morrow and Melanie B. Styles. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.]



Handout #3C: *Mentor Workshop*

Building Trust Module - *During This Session*

List three things you learned during this session that will help you when you begin your new role as a mentor. They can be skills, attitudes, or anything else. Then explain how each will help.

1.

2.

3.



Handout # 4: *Role-Plays for Developing Listening Skills*

Use the following scenarios during Activity #3, Practicing Skills. (They are the same scenarios that are included in the “Building Trust” materials.) Write each scenario you select on a separate page of the flipchart or index cards.

Role-Plays between mentor and mentee

1. Your mentee is a white 15 year 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.
2. Your mentee is a 16 years old Samoan. 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 at school.”
3. Your mentee is 15 years old and white. 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.
4. The mentee is a 16-year-old Indigenous female who lives alone. She is trying to hold down a job at McDonalds and go to TAFE to complete a Hospitality course. Her family lives in another town and because of their own life struggles have little

support to offer her. Whenever she talks to her mentor she complains about not having enough money.

5. The mentee is an 18 year old Italian first year university student studying law. The mentor is a 4th year law student, trying to help the mentee settle into university life. The mentee lives with her father and three brothers, her mother died in a car accident two years ago. She is having difficulty keeping up with the demands of her course and is thinking of dropping out.
6. The mentee is a 14 year old Indigenous female from what appears to be a loving and supportive family. She has been meeting regularly with a female mentor, and things seemed to be going very well. However, during the last two meetings she has appeared very sad and withdrawn.

Role plays between mentors and coordinators

1. A mentor came to the coordinator and reported that he was concerned that his 18 year old male mentee had disclosed that he was harming himself.
2. A 17 year old mentee is a state ward, a migrant with little family support, and living in a refuge. The mentor asks to speak to the coordinator as he is finding that the mentee is becoming dependent upon him and wants to spend much more time than the program specifies.
3. The teacher approaches the coordinator to express some concern regarding a mentor. The student (mentee) has reported to the teacher that they have spent two sessions hearing about the mentors' family and hobby.
4. A mentor coordinator is aware that a request for reimbursement of expenses by a mentor is well above what could be expected for the activities that the mentor and mentee have participated in.



Handout #5: *Speaking of Trust*

Mentors speak:

- It really has taken a while for her to show, to demonstrate—and she’s really not demonstrative in life—but she has really warmed up in the last few months and that’s been just really lovely. She talks a lot more than she used to. And she talks spontaneously now, which really thrills me. And she tells me things spontaneously. It used to be I would always have to initiate the conversation and always ask the questions. And now she really initiates a lot of conversations when we’re driving in the car, and tells me a lot of things. Like she even told me about a problem at home.
- Like I said, the main thing at first was just gaining trust and that trust that she would confide to me, that was important first. I had to let her know that no matter what, she could tell me anything and I’d believe her and trust her and I’d support her. I think that’s what these kids need...I think it just takes a long time to build up a trust.
- When he doesn’t talk and smile very much, then there’s something really bugging him and I just ask him, “Is something bothering you?” And he says, “No.” But later, he’ll say something. I say, “You know you can blow off steam by talking to me if you want to.” And he usually does.

A mentee speaks:

- Yeah, it’s not like a parent lecture, so I guess it’s cool, it’s like you sit there and your mom’s like bawling you out and you’re like yeah, you know, you’re sitting there and you’re not really listening to her, you’re kind of like zoning out, you know. And every time she’s like, boom, oh yeah. You just sit there and she’s like babbling on, like yeah. But like with your mentor, it’s like when you’re talking to your friends and they’re cranking on you, right, it’s like yeah, I know, man, I gotta do this and I gotta get my act together.

[All quotes are from *Building Relationships With Youth in Program Settings: A Study of Big Brothers /Big Sisters*. 1995. Kristine V. Morrow and Melanie B. Styles. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.]



Handout #6: Resources for Training Mentors & Building Relationships

Print Material

- *Mentor Training Curriculum*. 1991. National Mentoring Working Group. Washington, D.C. Available through the National Mentoring Partnership, or through the “Volunteer Marketplace Catalog,”
- *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Available at Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, national@bbbsa.org.
- *EMPOWER: Child Sexual Abuse Education and Prevention Program*. 1989. Catalina Herrerias. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Includes comprehensive materials for providing training on this topic to mentors, parents, and youth. Available through Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 230 North 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, national@bbbsa.org.
- *How To Be a Great Mentor*. 1999. A guide produced by Kaplan, *Newsweek*, and the National Mentoring Partnership. Available through the National Mentoring Partnership.
- *Everyday Heroes: A Guidebook For Mentors*. 1998. Jim Kavanaugh. Developed by the founders of the Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, “Los Sabios,” in New Mexico, this guide was written to help adults become caring and supportive mentors, and is a useful training resource. Available through the Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, (<http://www.mentorship-wisemen.org/>)
- NSW TAFE course # 9803A Mentoring in the community. Ph: 131601

Some useful Web sites

www.mentoring.org

National Mentoring Partnership—includes information about characteristics of an effective mentor.

www.nwrel.org/mentoring

The National Mentoring Center at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory—provides on-line access to the Center’s newsletters and other information.



Handout #7: Steps for Leading an Activity on “What I Value

1. Introduce yourself, welcome your group members, and tell them you want them to introduce themselves.
2. Ask them to look in their purses/wallets/briefcases/pockets or on themselves and find something that represents or symbolises some aspect of their values or lifestyle. (Examples include a photograph, a piece of jewelry, an organisation membership card, and almost anything else.) Alternatively, participants may choose to describe or quickly sketch an object that symbolises some aspect of their values or lifestyle.
3. When all of your group members have found something, ask each to give her or his name, show the chosen item, and explain why that item is representative or symbolic for her or him. (You can model this exercise by first showing and explaining an item that is important to you.)
4. After everyone has introduced herself or himself in this way, point out that what they have chosen may symbolise a value.
5. Ask group members to brainstorm a definition of “values.” As they do, write their responses on the flipchart.

(Adapted from the “Values Clarification Seminar,” p. 11. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.)



Handout #8: *Values*

Values are general principles that are of fundamental importance to people. Examples include equality, tolerance, honesty, privacy, security, education, and service. People generally feel very strongly about their values, although they may find them difficult to discuss or describe. A person's values greatly affect her or his:

- **Opinions:** Views or judgments about a particular matter.
- **Beliefs:** Ideas of what is true that are strongly supported by evidence or feelings.
- **Attitudes:** Feelings or emotions about things.

A person's individual values may develop during childhood as a result of the influence of family, peers, religion, culture, and/or society in general. Values may also change over time. Values influence a person's most important decisions about education, work, friends, sexual relationships, and parenting.

(Adapted from "Examining Your Values—What's Important to You?," p. 17. *Practical Education for Citizenship and Employment: Personal Development*. 1992. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.)



Handout #9: *Value-Laden Statements*

Choose two or three of these statements to use during the “values voting” activity, or develop statements of your own.

1. Euthanasia is wrong.
2. Homeless people should not be allowed to sleep in public parks.
3. People who knowingly infect others with HIV should be sentenced to jail.
4. Women, not men, should take the primary responsibility for birth control.
5. It should be legal for lesbian and gay couples to get married.
6. Young women who wear revealing clothes are looking for trouble.
7. Young people should not talk back to adults.
8. Young people get into trouble with police because their parents give them too much freedom.
9. Condoms should be distributed in high schools.
10. There is sometimes a good reason for a man to hit his wife or girlfriend.
11. The government should provide free child care for all working mothers.
12. Women who are addicted to illegal drugs should lose custody of their children.



Handout #10: Case studies to explore value differences.

1. Kate is a mentor in a school based mentoring program. Kate has made a commitment to the program, and attends the school every week at 11am on Tuesdays to meet with student Natalie. Kate finds that she is often waiting to meet with Natalie. Natalie is sometimes at school and but late to meet with Kate, sometimes Natalie has spent the morning at the shops and comes to school just to meet with Kate at 11.15-11.30, and sometimes Natalie just doesn't come. Natalie is considered by her teachers to be at risk of disengaging from the school totally, often missing classes and rarely taking paper and pen to class.

Discussion

Teachers are feeling encouraged that Natalie is making some effort for the mentoring program, however Kate the mentor is feeling that Natalie is letting her down. How as a mentoring co-ordinator might you address this situation.

Is there a conflict in values? If so, whose?

2. Josh is a 16 year old young man who has left school after completing year 10. He is working with mentor, Les, in a community based mentoring program, whose goal is to link young people into employment or training. Les works as a manager in local government. Josh disclosed to Les that his father makes money through selling drugs, and he is thinking of joining his dad. Josh has not been able to find a job and he thinks apprenticeships and traineeships are poorly paid by comparison. Les is shocked by this disclosure and wants to tell Josh that his family are criminals.

Discussion

- a. Discuss the value differences between Josh and Les.
 - b. How can Les make the mentoring relationship work under these circumstances?
 - c. Les is troubled with the values that Josh holds, what can he do?
 - d. Is this a moral problem, a legal problem, or both?
3. Ali is an eighteen year old Somali young man attending an English program in TAFE. He lives with his mother and seven brothers and sisters in a housing commission flat in inner Melbourne. He has been in Australia for three years and has recently had an



ear pierced. His mother is horrified and wants him to leave home. Ali approaches his mentor Spiros with this problem. Spiros thinks that Ali's family are unreasonable, and that it is ridiculous to even consider throwing out your son over an earring.

Discussion

- a. What is informing the values of Ali, his mother and the mentor?
 - b. What conversation should Spiros have with Ali?
 - c. What could Spiros do?
 - d. Should a mentor express opinions about the values that student's families hold?
4. Harry has completed one round of mentoring, and is looking forward to the next, especially as he feels he has ways to make it better. The mentoring coordinator, Anne, has organized a session for mentors and mentees to meet before making the matches. Harry tells Anne that he didn't enjoy this session last time, and thinks it should be skipped. Harry reckons that mentees should be happy with who ever they get, because he will be, and he doesn't want to be part of a popularity contest. Anne usually gets mentors and mentees to meet, and write down who they would prefer to work with

Discussion

- a. What are Anne's values regarding matching participants?
 - b. What do you think is underneath Harry's comments?
 - c. Who else needs to be considered?
 - d. How should Anne handle this situation.
5. A young 17 year old woman who has been out of school for 2 years, leaving before completing Year 10 is the mentee. Her view of the world is that unemployment is normal, as her parents, aunts and uncles are all unemployed and reliant on benefits from Centrelink. The mentor is very enthusiastic and trying to encourage the mentee to consider a pre vocational training course in hairdressing The mentee seems happy on Centrelink benefits.

Discussion

- a. What are the difference in values between the mentor and mentee.
- b. What issues are there here for the mentor and mentee?
- c. Is it the role of the mentor to change the values of the mentee?



Handout #11: Mentor Workshop

Respecting Differences Module

Session Goals

To help mentors understand the ways that differing values and cultures could affect their relationship with their mentee. By the end of the workshop, they should have:

- Explored their own and their mentee's values
- Developed an understanding of the ways that personal values manifest themselves in daily life
- Identified situations in which a seeming conflict between their own and their mentee's values has led, or could lead, to discomfort in the relationship
- Practiced ways to respond positively and supportively to their mentee when those situations occur

Agenda

1. What I Value (15 minutes)
2. Understanding Values (25 minutes)
3. Put Yourself In Your Mentee's Shoes (25 minutes)
4. Responding Positively (50 minutes)
5. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Materials

- Suggested activities, in a suggested sequence, that you can use or modify to meet the particular needs of your program
- Handouts, notes, and training tips for facilitators



Handouts

- Handout #11A: Dealing with Diversity
- Handout #11B: Cultural Sensitivity

You Will Need to Provide*

* Host Organisation to prepare.

- Copies of handouts and any other materials you have prepared for participants
- Copies of the evaluation form
- If you are doing the optional “Values Voting” activity: three signs—STRONGLY AGREE, UNSURE, and STRONGLY DISAGREE
- A flipchart
- An easel
- Marking pens and masking tape
- An overhead projector
- Name tags
- Index cards

Notes for Facilitators

Preparation Tips

1. *Values are very personal.* We all have strong feelings about what we believe in. At the same time, this sensitive subject is one that many of us have not thought explicitly about or verbalised. During this workshop session, however, participants will be asked to do exactly that. They will be identifying their values, looking at where those values came from, and understanding the ways in which values affect their daily lives. This is an important part of helping them, as mentors, develop the ability to be non-judgemental about values that mentees or mentees’ families may hold which seem to conflict with their own values.

There may be a great range in the level of awareness your participants have about their personal values. Some may be attuned to their own values and recognize the diversity of values. They may have a good understanding of how that diversity can contribute to conflict, and be able to verbalise all of this. Others may not have previously had the



opportunity to reflect on their values and may be unfamiliar and uncomfortable with this approach.

Be sensitive to this range and understand your role in gently helping your participants develop an appropriate level of awareness. As a facilitator, you will be presenting information, leading exercises, and modeling behavior. Take time to think about your own values, how they have been shaped, and how they influence your daily life. Work through the exercises in this curriculum. The clearer you are about your own values, the less likely you are to impose them on others.

[Adapted with permission from the “Values Clarification Seminar,” p. 7. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.]

2. *These materials include a number of handouts for participants. Read them all carefully.*
3. *Review the scenarios that are provided for Activity #4, “Responding Positively.” Adapt them, as necessary, so they realistically reflect your program, or develop new scenarios. Write each scenario you plan to use during Activity #4 on a separate page of the flipchart.*
4. *Prepare overheads to use during discussions.*
5. *If applicable, be prepared to talk about the cultural characteristics and values that are most typical among the mentees in your program serves.*

Facilitation Tips

“Facilitate” means “to make easier.” Think about yourself as a “facilitator”—someone who helps mentors learn, rather than as someone who attempts to impose learning upon them. “Facilitating” suggests the idea of a collaborative relationship between the trainer and participants. A facilitator is a:

- Coach
- Listener
- Trainer
- Learner
- Manager of group process



What follows are some good practices for facilitating

1. Before the training session:

- *Take time to plan carefully.* Customise activities and handouts so they best address characteristics of your program. Be prepared to offer real-life examples that illustrate your program's experiences. 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.
- *Select a space for the training that is physically comfortable and contributes to group interaction.* Avoid a traditional classroom setup. Depending on the size of your group, have a table large enough for all the participants to sit around, or multiple tables (square or round) for smaller groups to sit around. 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 rooms available nearby, or be sure the training room is large enough that small groups can meet within it without distracting each other.
- *Have everything ready.* Copy handouts and prepare overheads. Gather any required materials and equipment: flipcharts, markers, masking tape, name tags, an overhead projector (and extension cord, if necessary), and anything else you might need for the session.
- *Arrive early.* 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 flipchart, and check equipment. Be sure that refreshments (coffee, water, soft drinks, etc.) are available.

2. During the session:

- *Create a comfortable learning environment.* Be sure participants can hear each other as they speak. Create an atmosphere where people are taken seriously and where they can also laugh—people are usually most open to new ideas when they are enjoying themselves and feel comfortable enough to risk making mistakes. Think about ways to inject humour into the training session. Using relevant cartoons as overheads, for example, or telling funny anecdotes about experiences of mentors, can help create an open and friendly atmosphere.
- *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.

- *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. Maintain eye contact with each person as he or she speaks. Monitor your nonverbal signals as well as your verbal comments. Be nonjudgmental. Respond by guiding, not imposing. Repeat and address key points. Help participants develop collaborative problem-solving skills by involving them in answering other participants' questions and having them work together to arrive at solutions to problems.
- *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 flipcharts to help people see and remember. Flipcharts are a useful tool for group thinking and problem solving. Summarise major discussion points on flipcharts, and post the pages 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 have a sense of accomplishment at the end of each. Structure the workshop session so participants' sense of accomplishment grows throughout.
- *Be yourself.* Have a sense of humour. And know your limitations. If you don't know the answer to a question, that's OK. 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.

3. After the session:

- *Use an evaluation form to get feedback from participants.* Distribute it at the end of the session, and ask participants to complete it before they leave.
- *Reflect on what worked well and what did not.* Use the information from participants' evaluations to help you think through what worked well from their point of view, what you need to modify about the content, and what facilitation skills you want to strengthen. 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.
- *Follow up on information you promised participants you would get for them.* During the workshop 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 or her know about the situation.

Activities

Activity #1: *What I Value*

- Introduce yourself. Welcome the mentors and describe the goals and agenda of this training session.
- Ask the participants to look in their purses/wallets/briefcases/pockets or on themselves and find something that represents or symbolises some aspect of their values or lifestyle. (Examples include a photograph, a piece of jewelry, an organisation membership card, and almost anything else.)
- When all of the participants have found something, go around the room asking each to give her or his name, show the chosen item, and explain why that item is representative or symbolic for her or him. (You can model this exercise by first showing and explaining an item that is important to you.)
- After everyone has introduced herself or himself in this way, point out that what they have chosen may symbolise a value.

[Adapted from the "Values Clarification Seminar," p. 11. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.]

Activity #2: *Understanding Values*

- Write the word "values" on the flipchart. Ask participants to define the word, and write their responses on the flipchart. (This is a brainstorming activity, so at this point, just list their responses without any discussion.) Have the group discuss the responses and arrive at some agreed definitions for "values." (See Handout #8, "Values," for a possible definition.)

Then ask them for examples of values, and list their responses on the flipchart. Ask the participants to think about the values that are particularly important to them personally—values that influence how they lead their daily lives.

Distribute an index card to each participant. Ask them, on the front of the card, to list two or three of their important personal values. Ask for volunteers to read one of their values and briefly describe how it manifests itself in their daily life.



- Now ask the group to brainstorm answers to this question: “From where do people get their values?” Again, list the responses on the flipchart. Review the list, asking participants to give examples of how their current values have been shaped by such factors as their family background, gender, race or ethnicity, socioeconomic class, religion, the community where they grew up, or an experience or series of experiences. (You can give an example from your own life to get the conversation started.)
- Try to draw together the discussions in this activity by noting some of the similarities and differences among participants’ values, and by observing that values are not right or wrong. We may sometimes feel uncomfortable about another person’s values, but it’s good to remember that the same people may feel uncomfortable about our values.

[Adapted from the “Values Clarification Seminar,” pp. 13-14. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.]

Note: If you are including the optional “Values Voting” activity in this training, this is a good point in the workshop to use it. See the Handout #: Values Voting,” for guidelines on how to conduct this activity.

Activity #3: Put Yourself In Your Mentee’s Shoes

- Ask participants to think for a minute about some of the values that are important to the people they are mentoring. Then ask them to write down one or two of those values on the back of their index card.
- Remind participants about the confidentiality requirements of your program and that any information they hear during this session about any participant (or their families) cannot be repeated.
- Then ask for volunteers to read one of their mentee’s values and explain how they know it is the mentee’s value—in other words, how has that value shown up during one of their meetings? (As participants speak, you can make a list on the flipchart of the values they mention.)
- Review the list of mentees’ values that you have recorded on the flipchart. Lead a discussion in which participants note the extent to which those values are the same as, or different from, the values they identified for themselves in the previous activity.
- Refer participants to the list of “where values come from” that they generated during the previous activity when they were discussing their own values. Ask them to now



“put themselves in their mentees’ shoes.” Then lead a discussion that addresses these two topics:

1. *Where do their mentees’ values come from? (In general, they would arise from the same sources as the mentors’ values—family, ethnicity, community, etc.)*
2. *To what extent are the sources of mentees’ values different in specifics—although the broad categories are the same—than the sources of participants’ values? How are they different? For example, what is different about mentees’ ethnic backgrounds and their traditions and beliefs? What is different about mentees’ family life? About the communities that they are growing up in? Record participants’ major points on the flipchart.*

(Handout #11A, “Dealing with Diversity” addresses many of the points that you are also addressing in this discussion. You probably do not want to spend much, if any, time specifically reviewing the handout during this workshop. However, refer to it here, and be sure that participants receive a copy at the end of the session.)

- Now ask participants if differences between their own and their mentees’ values have ever led them (the participants) to feel uncomfortable, or if the differences have been a potential source of conflict. Encourage them to give examples and to discuss how they tried to handle the situation. As participants talk about those experiences, ask if other members of the group have had similar experiences and, if so, how they have responded to those situations.
- Copy this quote (or another quote you want to use) onto the flipchart or display an overhead you have made of it:

“Problems are only opportunities with thorns on them.”

—Hugh Miller

- Ask the group to think for a minute about the meaning of the quote, and say that you will return to it in a few minutes.
- Distribute Handout #11B, “Cultural Sensitivity,” and allow participants a minute to read it, noting that you want to focus on the bulleted items. Review the information on the handout. (It is a good idea to have prepared an overhead of the bulleted items, so you can display them during the discussion.)
- Then ask the group to think back to the quote, “*Problems are only...*” Ask them to identify the opportunities that are present in an apparent values conflict with their mentee. (They might say, for example, that it is an opportunity for them to learn about their mentee, and to help their mentee clarify his or her feelings, figure out how to solve a problem, or think more clearly about one of his or her values. They should

also see that it is not an opportunity to be judgmental, to give unwanted advice, to impose their own values, or to act like an authority figure.)

- Write their responses on the flipchart. At the end of the discussion, review the list and see if there is anything they want to change or add.

Activity #4: Responding Positively

- Tell participants that now you want them to apply some of the ideas they have been talking about during this session by role-playing conversations with their mentees about potentially difficult, value-laden issues. (Your mentors should have participated in a previous training that focused on communication skills—and, in particular, active listening. If you think it is necessary, you may want to briefly review the key elements of being an active listener. Handout #3A, “I Hear You,” is included for this purpose.)
- Organise participants into small groups of three people. (If your program matches male mentors with boys and female mentors with girls, organise each group so all three members are of the same gender.) Use Handout #11C – Skill Building Scenarios to carry out the below actions.
 1. Discuss their scenario, identifying the issues that are involved and the values that seem to be underlying those issues. (Depending on a small group’s gender makeup, that group may need to switch the gender of the hypothetical mentee.

For example, if a small group that includes only women is given a scenario about a boy, they should change the boy’s name and identity to a girl’s name and identity. That way, the role-play will involve a same-gender match.)

2. Use the scenario as the basis for two role-plays of a conversation between the mentor and mentee. The first role-play should exemplify how the mentor should not respond. The second role-play should exemplify a more positive response. One of the group’s members should play the role of the mentee in both role-plays. The other two group members should play the role of the poorly responding mentor and the effectively responding mentor. Allow 15 minutes for the small groups to complete their discussion and role-plays.
- Bring the whole group back together. Ask for a small group to volunteer to give its role-plays. The volunteer group should describe the scenario, note what the major issues and underlying values were, and give both its negative and positive role-plays.
 - After each role-play, have other participants give feedback. They should talk about what the mentor said and did to either block or foster a positive conversation. Did the mentor say or do anything that would build trust or help clarify the situation for the



mentee? Did the mentor help the mentee feel more positively about, or more in control of, the situation?

- As time allows, have other small groups describe their scenarios, present their role-plays, and receive feedback.

[This activity is adapted from “Communication Skills Seminar,” pp. 17-18. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.]

Activity #5: Wrap-Up

- Write this (or another quote) on the flipchart, or display it on an overhead:

“Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things, I am tempted to think...there are no little things.”

—Bruce Barton

- Ask the participants to think for a minute about this quote in connection with their mentoring relationship. What are the “little things” they can do (and what are the “little things” they should avoid doing) to show understanding of, and respect for, their mentee’s culture, values, and concerns? What are the “tremendous consequences” that can result from those “little things”?
- Distribute Handout #12, “Three Things I will Use...,” and ask participants to write down three things they have learned during this session that they will apply in their mentoring relationship. They should also describe *how* they will apply that learning.
- Allow a few minutes for them to complete the handout. Then ask for a few volunteers to share one of their items.
- Thank the participants for their attendance and involvement. Distribute the evaluation form, and ask everyone to complete one and return it to you before leaving. Note that the evaluation form includes space for them to suggest topics for future training sessions.

Handout #11A: *Mentor Workshop* **Respecting Differences Module**

Dealing with Diversity

One of the most critical training needs for mentors is help in dealing with diversity.

Some mentors talk about “culture shock” when they describe their initial apprehension and lack of familiarity with and/or understanding of the world from which their mentees come. It is normal and natural to feel a certain amount of apprehension about meeting someone for the first time, especially if it’s expected that you will become a trusted and trusting friend. Add to that a significant difference in age, socioeconomic status, and/or racial and ethnic background, and it’s easy to see why this is such an important issue for mentors.

Toward a Broad Definition of Cultural Diversity

While many mentor programs prefer to match mentees with mentors who come from similar backgrounds in terms of race, socioeconomic status, etc., often this is not possible. Mentors may be matched with mentees whose backgrounds and lifestyles are very dissimilar to theirs.

Culture is more than race or ethnicity. It encompasses values, lifestyle, and social norms, including such things as communication styles, mannerisms, ways of dressing, family structure, traditions, orientation to time, and response to authority. These differences may be associated with age, religion, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. When mentors lack understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, they may become judgmental, thus undermining the possibility of developing a trusting relationship.

Knowledge is the key to understanding. There are different types of diversity issues, and each has the potential to cause misunderstanding between a mentor and a mentee. However, you can’t learn cultural understanding just from a textbook. Talk to your mentee about his or her background and ancestry, about what life is like at



school or home or with his or her friends. Find out why your mentee does and says the things he or she does. Your program director, other mentors, friends, and co-workers may also have insights into cultural differences.

As you begin to learn and understand more about your mentee, you will be less likely to make negative value judgments. We hope that the following few examples will encourage you to explore the cultural context from which your mentee comes.

Ethnic Diversity

If your mentee comes from a different ethnic background, learn about the values and traditions of that culture. This could include the role of authority and family, communication styles, perspectives on time, ways of dealing with conflict, and marriage traditions, among other things. It is your task as a mentor to learn about ethnic diversity from your mentee, from your observations, and from discussions with program staff so you can better understand the context of your mentee's attitudes and behavior.

Socioeconomic Diversity

Mentor-mentee pairs might come from very different socioeconomic backgrounds.

The mentor may have grown up on a farm, while the mentee has never been outside of the city. The mentor may own a house, while the mentee may not know anyone who owns a new car, let alone a house. A mentee's family may move frequently, perhaps every few months. A mentee may have to share a very small apartment with many people. A mentor must learn that many things he or she takes for granted are not necessarily common to all. These types of cultural differences are commonplace between mentor and mentee and require time and understanding for an appreciation of their significance.

There are psychological effects of chronic poverty, including stress and depression. Some mentees may develop a "culture of survival" frame of mind. One mentor talks about how her mentee, who comes from a very poor family, spends huge sums of money on what the mentor considers frivolous things— like a pair of jeans that costs \$100. Poverty often prevents people from believing their future holds any promise of



getting better. Thus, they have no motivation to save money to invest in the future. It becomes realistic to have a belief in “taking what you can get while you can get it.”

Youth Culture

Many of the characteristics of adolescence are normal developmental traits and don't vary significantly from one generation to the next. Rebellion, for example, is a common trait of adolescents, although it may be expressed differently from generation to generation. Most of us, as teenagers, dressed very differently—perhaps even outrageously—by our parents' and grandparents' standards. We did things our parents didn't do; we talked differently than our parents, etc.

Take the time to remember what it was like to be your mentee's age. Think about the following questions: When you were in [your mentee's] grade—

- *What was a typical day like?*
- *What was really important to you at that time?*
- *What was your father/mother like? Did you get along? Were you close?*
- *Think of your friends. Were friendships always easy or were they sometimes hard?*
- *In general, did you feel as though adults typically understood you well?*

At the same time, it is important to remember that some things do change dramatically and result in very different contexts and experiences from one generation to the next. There may be significantly more alcohol and drug abuse today than when you were growing up; sexually transmitted diseases are more common and more dangerous; crime and violence have dramatically increased throughout the country, particularly in urban areas; guns are widely available and everywhere in the population; violence in the media and in “games” is commonplace; single parent families have become more common while greater demands are being placed on all families.

One mentor talks about a conversation he had with his mentee about school dances, which, for the mentor, were filled with fond memories of music, dancing, and fun. For the mentee, though, school dances were dangerous places where gunfire was a



common occurrence. It's important to understand the context of your mentee's life so you can understand what she or he is coping with.

Suggestions for dealing with diversity:

- *Remember that you are the adult—the experienced one.* Imagine what your mentee must be thinking and feeling. In general, young people of all ages, but particularly teens, believe they are not respected by adults and worry about whether a mentor will like them or think they're stupid. They are coming to you for help and may already feel insecure and embarrassed about the problems in their lives. It is your responsibility to take the initiative and make the mentee feel more comfortable in the relationship.
- *Remember to be yourself.* Sometimes, with the best of intentions, we try to "relate" to young people and try to use their slang, etc. Mentees can see through this and may find it difficult to trust people who are not true to themselves.
- *You may learn a lot about another culture, lifestyle, or age group—but you will never be from that group.* Don't over-identify with your mentee. Your mentee realizes you will never know exactly what she or he is feeling or experiencing. Your mentee may actually feel invalidated by your insistence that you "truly know where she or he is coming from."

[Adapted from material in *Mentor Training Curriculum*. 1991. National Mentoring Working Group, convened and staffed by the National Mentoring Partnership and United Way of America. Originally appeared in *Guidebook for Milestones in Mentoring*. 1990. The PLUS Project on Mentoring, National Media Outreach Center, QED Communications, Inc.]



Handout #11B: *Mentor Workshop*

Respecting Differences Module - *Cultural Sensitivity*

“Culture,” defined in its broadest sense, is the underlying fabric that holds together a person’s world—or just about everything that binds one to a particular group and place in time. This includes language, values, beliefs, customs, rituals, oral and written history, art, music, dance, food, and much more.

Cultural sensitivity refers here to an attitude of respect, openness, and acceptance toward people, whatever their culture. All truly supportive relationships are built on a sense of trust and safety, which comes from a feeling of being appreciated for just the way one is. Therefore, our primary job as mentors is to honor the inherent worth that each child brings into the world and to respect their special cultural backgrounds. Below are some reminders:

- Honestly examine your own mind for prejudices and stereotypes. Almost all of us have learned some.
- Think about where our biases come from and try to see them as learned misinformation.
- Make a personal commitment to be culturally sensitive as a mentor.
- See your mentee, first and foremost, as a unique and valuable person.
- Approach cultural differences as an opportunity for learning.

[Adapted from *Everyday Heroes: A Guidebook for Mentors*, p. 23. 1998. Jim Kavanaugh. Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, “Los Sabios,” and Injury Prevention and Emergency Medical Services Bureau, Public Health Division, New Mexico Department of Health.]



Handout #11C: *Mentor Workshop*

Respecting Differences Module

Skill-Building Scenarios

Choose from the following scenarios the ones most relevant to your program. Or you might want to modify these or create entirely new scenarios that describe situations that more closely represent your particular program.

Select or create enough scenarios so that each small group has a different one to use during Activity #4, "Responding Positively." Write each of the scenarios you are going to use on a separate page of the flipchart. The scenarios are intended to give participants an opportunity to explore various ways of responding to their mentees, incorporating the communication skills they have gained and the values explorations they have done in this and other training sessions.

1. Your mentee, who is 14 years old, has told you she wants to be a lawyer when she grows up. She is very smart but has never achieved highly in school. You know that, recently, she has not even been going to school regularly. Today, when you go to the school for your scheduled weekly meeting with her, your program's school coordinator takes you aside and says your mentee's truancy has become a serious problem. Later, when you bring it up with your mentee, she gets mad and says, "I'm not learning anything worthwhile. School is boring."
2. Your mentee is 15 years old, and you know he likes to party. Recently, he's been talking a lot about his new girlfriend, who is 14 years old. During your meeting today, he tells you that he's pretty sure his girlfriend is pregnant. It sounds to you as if he's bragging about it.
3. Your mentee is 13 years old and often works after school and on weekends babysitting children in the neighborhood. She is a diligent worker and has told you that she's working because she wants to start saving money now so she can buy a car. You have helped her open a savings account, and she deposits a small amount of money every few weeks. When you meet with her today, she



proudly shows you the new pair of Nikes she's wearing. "Look," she says. "I bought them with the money I'd saved. They cost \$105 dollars."

4. Your mentee is 10 years old. When you meet with him today at school, he is extremely sleepy. When you say something about it, he tells you there was a lot of noise in his apartment last night and he couldn't sleep. Later he tells you that the noise was because his mother had friends over and they were drinking a lot and smoking marijuana. He says he doesn't like it when his mother has her friends over at night because he's so tired the next day, it's hard for him to go to school. When your mentee says this to you, you feel angry at his mother.
5. Your mentee is 15 years old. She has a very close relationship with another girl in her class at school. Your mentee used to mention her constantly, but recently her name has not come up at all. During your meeting today, you ask your mentee how her friend is doing. "OK," she says. She's quiet for a minute, and then she tells you that she's thinking maybe she shouldn't see her friend anymore because they're together so much that other kids at school have started making jokes about them and calling them names. "Do you know what I mean?" she asks.
6. Your mentee is 14 years old. You and he sometimes talk about possible careers. He's interested in learning more about the world of work, so one afternoon after school, you pick him up and take him to your office. Just after you arrive, you introduce your mentee to a co-worker. Your mentee mutters, "Hello," and while the co-worker is still just a few feet away, says loudly, "That guy's the worst dresser I've ever seen!"
7. Your mentee is 12 years old. She is a nice person but is very loud and has almost no sense of what is appropriate socially. You are in the supermarket with her, shopping for ingredients for the dinner you plan to make together. Your mentee is talking at the top of her voice, using obscenities, blocking the aisles with your shopping cart, and making a mess of the displays on the supermarket shelves. What do you say?



Handout #12: *Three Things I Will Use*

Briefly describe three things you learned during this session that you will use at your program. These might be facilitation strategies, content for mentor workshop sessions, or anything else.

1.

2.

3.

