

YOUTH-INITIATED MENTORING TOOLKIT



The Governor's Prevention Partnership

**361 Main Street, East Hartford,
Connecticut 06118**

The Youth-Initiated Mentoring Toolkit

The Youth Initiated Mentoring Toolkit is designed to help mentoring practitioners understand what youth-initiated mentoring is and how to implement it. The toolkit consists of three parts. The first part describes youth-initiated mentoring models and reviews implementation considerations. The second part provides guidance on using social capital mapping to help youths referred to mentoring programs examine their social networks and identify prospective mentors. The final part discusses family engagement, a central theme in youth-initiated mentoring, and offers tools for improving family engagement.

[The Governor's Prevention Partnership](#) created this toolkit. The Partnership focuses on creating positive outcomes for young people by preventing substance use and fostering connections with caring adults. We amplify the protective nature of mentoring and its power to help youth say no to substance use and make positive choices for their future. We are the Connecticut affiliate of MENTOR and train mentoring organizations across the state on the latest advancements in the mentoring field.

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Components

Part 1: Youth-Initiated Mentoring

Educational Brief:

- [Youth-Initiated Mentoring: Combining Youth Choice and Structured Support](#)

Resources:

- [YIM Mentee Booklet Template](#)
- [YIM Mentor Booklet Template](#)
- [YIM Parent/Caregiver Booklet Template](#)
- [YIM Implementation Checklist](#)

Part 2: Social Capital Mapping

Educational Brief:

- [Mapping It Out](#)

Resources:

- [My Social Network](#)
- [My Capital Map](#)
- [Things We Have in Common](#)
- [How to Ask Someone to Become Your Mentor](#)

Part 3: Family Engagement

Educational Brief:

- [Family Engagement Strategies: Taking A Culturally Responsive Approach](#)

Resources:

- [Culturally Responsive Family Engagement Tool](#)
- [The National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards Adapted for Mentoring Providers](#)
- [20 Activities to Support Family Engagement](#)
- [Sample Family Engagement Calendar](#)

PART 1:

YOUTH-INITIATED MENTORING

Educational Brief:

[Youth-Initiated Mentoring: Combining Youth Choice and Structured Support](#)

Resources:

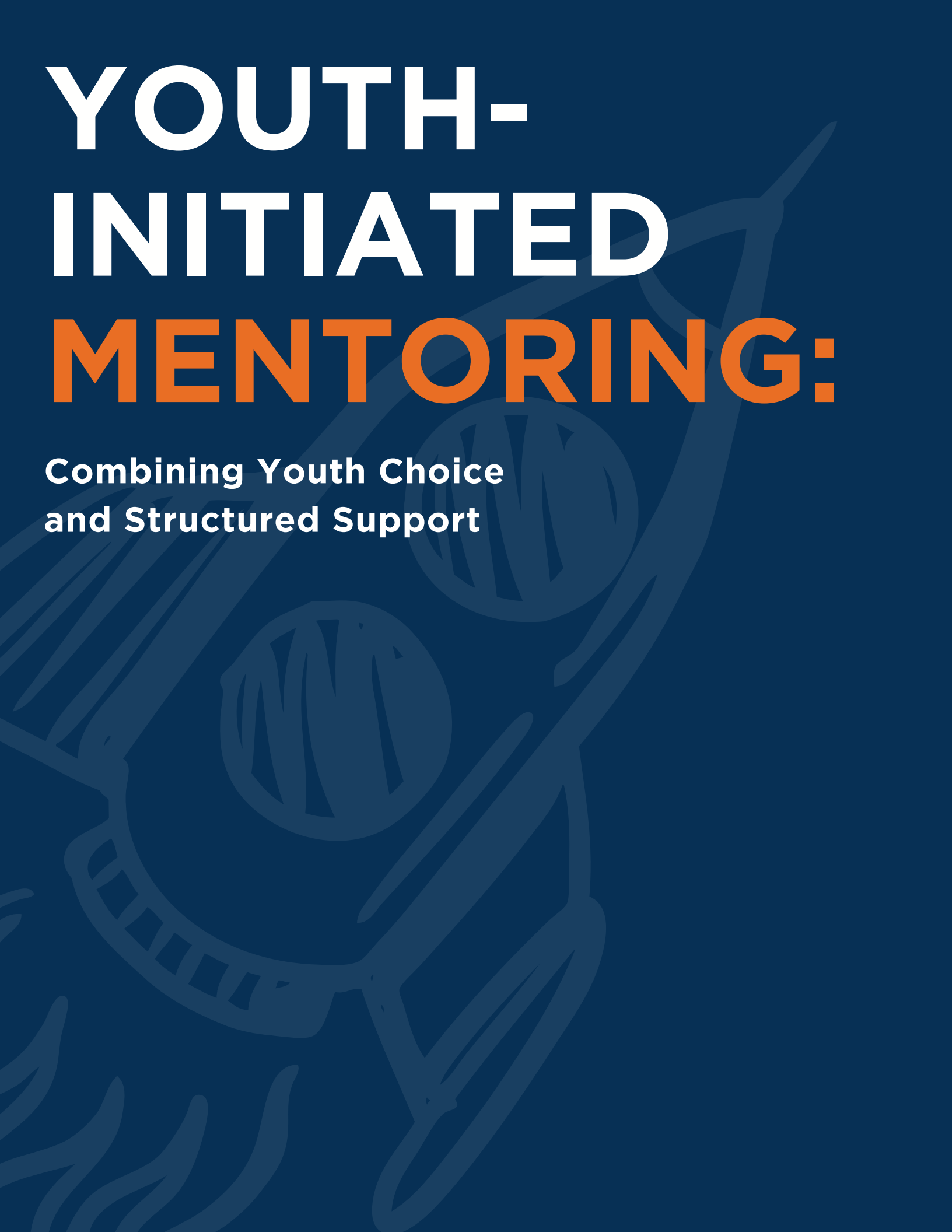
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YOUTH- INITIATED MENTORING:

Combining Youth Choice
and Structured Support



Youth-Initiated Mentoring: Combining Youth Choice and Structured Support

Youth-initiated mentoring (YIM) is an innovative hybrid approach to mentoring that leverages naturally occurring bonds between non-parental adults and youth referred to mentoring programs and nurtures these relationships through the structured support of formal programs to strengthen those relationships.

Mentoring relationships that organically develop between young people and non-parental adults in their lives can foster positive youth development and buffer against risks for delinquency, school failure, and other negative outcomes. The YIM approach provides formal mechanisms to support youths' growth and resilience by teaching them how to identify, recruit, and maintain relationships with natural mentors. The objective is to empower them to benefit from these relationships throughout their lifetimes to help them achieve their goals, dreams, and aspirations (van Dam and Swartz, 2020).



Key Features

Best practices for mentoring programs are outlined in the [Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™ \(EPPM\)](#) and apply to both traditional and YIM programs. However, YIM differs from traditional mentoring in many ways. Table 1 summarizes how the components of YIM differ from the traditional mentoring approach. In traditional mentoring, staff usually match youths with adult volunteers who must establish new relationships with the youths. The program staff recruit, screen, and train volunteers and youth referred to their programs. They match volunteer mentors with youth based on common interests, introduce them, provide match support, and monitor closures. Family involvement is usually minimal.

YIM starts off as a radically different approach to mentor recruitment; youth nominate mentors from people they already know, and staff help them ask those people to mentor them. Youths often choose adults who are part of their communities, typically a former teacher, school official, coach, family friend, or other people who are already working in the helping profession or working with youths during their day jobs. Many of them are not inclined to independently volunteer to become a mentor, but when a specific youth approaches them, they are more likely to agree because they already know what to expect from the relationship and may be flattered to think that they have impacted the youth.





While some youth have the ability and skills to forge naturally occurring mentoring relationships and access mentors, many youths may lack these relationship skills, particularly those with complex needs or in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. Some youth and their families may believe that there are no supportive non-parental adults in their lives. Thus, program staff use techniques like motivational interviewing, social capital mapping, and network analysis to help them identify supportive adults that they already know. Program staff locate the identified supportive adults to talk with them about what YIM is and assess their willingness to participate in the program. They also work with youth to prepare them for making the request to become a mentor and deal with the possibility of rejection if the person is not able to fulfill this request. Through ongoing match support, program staff encourage strong relationship bonds and cultivate the mentee's relationship skills by offering training on topics, e.g., effective communication, asking for help, reciprocity and healthy boundaries in relationships, and conflict resolution. Another important feature that YIM gives both the youth and the parent/caregiver voice in who their mentor is and encourages family engagement to support the mentoring relationship.

Table 1. Components of Youth-Initiated Mentoring Approach

	How the YIM Approach Differs from Traditional Mentoring
Mentee Recruitment	<p>Includes recruitment components of traditional mentoring and the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program sets up a recruitment process (e.g., sole referral agency) to recruit youth who can benefit most from the program. • Recruitment includes training for youths and families on what youth-initiated mentoring is. Recruitment includes training for youths and families on what youth-initiated mentoring is.
Family Engagement	<p>YIM is youth-driven and family-guided.</p>
Mentor Recruitment	<p>Staff use social capital mapping and network analysis to help youth identify possible mentors among the supportive adults they already know.</p> <p>Youth with their parent/caregiver's guidance choose which adults to ask to become a mentor.</p> <p>Staff search for contact information to reach out to the youth-chosen mentor candidates.</p>
Screening & Matching	<p>Staff conduct pre-screening conversations with the youth-chosen mentor candidates to assess willingness to become a mentor and then coach youth to ask the candidate to become their mentor.</p> <p>Programs use the same mentor enrollment criteria as traditional mentoring.</p> <p>The mentor candidate completes an application, interviews, and background checks to ensure that the mentee meets program eligibility requirements.</p>
Training	<p>Mentor training includes YIM and transitioning to formal mentoring relationship.</p> <p>Mentee training may include networking and relationship skills needed to cultivate natural mentoring relationships.</p>
Match Initiation	<p>Staff coach mentees on how to ask the chosen person to mentor them.</p> <p>Youth ask the person nominated to become a mentor.</p>

Table 1. Components of Youth-Initiated Mentoring Approach Continued

	How the YIM Approach Differs from Traditional Mentoring
Match Support	<p>Same as traditional mentoring.</p> <p>Staff may need to put in more effort since mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers may feel like they do not need support since they already have stable mentoring relationships.</p>
Family Engagement	<p>Same as traditional mentoring.</p>

Youth-Initiated Mentoring Models

YIM is a relatively new approach. Most YIM programs are in the early stages of development. YIM has been utilized to address negative youth outcomes, e.g., delinquency, school dropout, out-of-home placement, and suicide risks. It has been implemented as universal, selected, and indicated prevention in a variety of settings (van Dam, 2018).





Universal Prevention

Universal prevention models provide YIM as standalone interventions in schools, afterschool programs, or community settings and target youths in the general population. They teach networking skills, encourage youth to reach out to natural mentors within their social networks and teach relationship skills. An example is:

Connected Scholars

CS is a research-based YIM curriculum with 15 lessons and related activities to teach high school and college students about social capital and skills to expand their social networks, recruit mentors, and maintain mentoring relationships. The goals of CS are to build self-efficacy related to networking and finding mentors, increase the student's willingness to seek support from others, improve relationships with teachers and staff and improve academic outcomes.





Selective Prevention

Selective prevention YIM models target high-risk youths or specific populations of youths. YIM is implemented in the context of a mentoring program or another type of youth development program that can support the relationship. Examples include:

Mentoring New Opportunities Work

(NOW) is an enhancement of traditional community-based mentoring programs across Connecticut to increase meaningful, lasting mentoring relationships among truant and delinquent youths between 6 and 17 years of age. Probation officers, child welfare social workers, Juvenile Review Boards, and other community-based organizations make referrals which flow directly to the mentoring organizations. Program staff help youths identify YIM and employ strategies to increase family engagement to support match process. If the youth cannot identify a YIM mentor, the youth are matched with a traditional volunteer mentor.

Midlands Mentoring Partnership

(MMP), in Omaha, Nebraska, offers a YIM model for at-risk youth in the juvenile justice and foster care systems by leveraging partnerships with traditional one-on-one, community-based mentoring programs. Mentoring is a volunteer service. MMP created a structure that included a sole referral agency that identifies youth between 13 and 17 years of age who would be a good fit for YIM. Part of the referral source's role is to manage youth expectations. All referrals flow through MMP. MMP receives the referrals, and then matches them with the correct program based on the referral information they receive, and coach programs around how to work with those families and youth. MMP trains providers on how to implement the model and the kinds of resources available to them through MMP and the referral agency. The goal is to teach the providers how to use the model effectively and become self-sustaining.



Selective Prevention

The National Guard Youth Foundation ChalleNGe

(ChalleNGe) program incorporates YIM as part of the three-phase program to serve youths between 16-18 years of age who dropped out or who have been expelled from school, are unemployed, drug-free, and not involved with the juvenile justice system at the time of admission to the program. The two-week military-like preparation phase determines whether the youths are physically and mentally suitable for the program. Successful youths graduate as cadets to the quasi-military residential phase, which lasts six months, where a team of educators and counselors help youths learn leadership, academic excellence, healthy behaviors and fitness, responsible citizenship, service to community, life skills, and job skills. Youth prepare for high school diploma/GED. Finally, the 12-month post-residential phase includes placement (e.g., employment, higher education, or military service) and a structured YIM mentoring program. With the support of program staff, mentors support the youth's transition back into their communities, and reinforce the values and behaviors learned in the ChalleNGe program.

Caring Adults R Everywhere

(CARE) is a research-informed intervention for older youth who are aging out of foster care that uses YIM to encourage the development of growth-focused relationships between older youth in foster care and supportive adults already in their social networks. Staff facilitate the process of identifying YIM mentors and nurturing those relationships through the 12-week program.





Indicated Prevention

Used as indicated prevention, YIM is employed as part of a wraparound approach and mental health treatment of youth and families with significant challenges. Examples are:

InConnection (van Dam et al., 2017)

InConnection uses YIM alongside clinical intervention to prevent out-of-home placement. Mentors are recruited using YIM recruitment strategies. Mentors become part of a wraparound team that includes the youth, parent/caregiver, YIM mentor, and mental health professionals. The team assesses the youth and family's situation and determines solutions that respect the family's autonomy. Then, they make a treatment plan that outlines goals and monitoring activities. Clinical staff provide guidance and support throughout the treatment period and help youth nurture the YIM relationship. When the alliance between the youth, mentor, and family is stable, the professional's involvement ends, and the YIM continues supporting the youth and family.

The Youth-Nominated Support Team

(YST) employs YIM to help youths after psychiatric hospitalization for suicidal behaviors. Youths nominate caring adults to serve as support persons after release from the hospital. Caring adults attend psychoeducational trainings on suicide prevention and learn specific information related to the youth's diagnosis, including the treatment plan, risk factors, warning signs, and emergency resources. After release from the hospital, caring adults help the youth adhere to their treatment plan with guidance from the clinical professionals.



Benefits of Youth-Initiated Mentoring



LOWER RECRUITMENT COSTS

Because youth find their own mentors, YIM lowers the costs of mentor recruitment and helps programs find mentors with similar backgrounds to the youth referred to the program.

LONGER MATCH RELATIONSHIPS

YIM mentoring relationships tend to last longer on average than traditional mentoring relationships (Spencer et al., 2018; Spencer, Gowdy, et al., 2019). Once YIM matches begin, mentoring relationships develop more quickly and seemed more resilient than traditional matches. They start with a level of trust and mutual understanding between the mentor and mentee that may take several months of careful match support to achieve in traditional mentoring. YIM mentors may also be less likely to become frustrated by unmet expectations since they already know what to expect from the relationship. Similarly, youths may find it easier to build meaningful bonds when they select the mentor themselves and may become more invested in the match.

BETTER YOUTH OUTCOMES

A recent meta-analysis of 14 studies and 3594 youths found that YIM approaches protect against a variety of risks, foster positive youth outcomes, and improve treatment effects when combined with clinical interventions. This study reported that the average effect across multiple youth outcomes for YIM was greater than those reported for traditional volunteer-based mentoring or natural mentoring (Raposa et al., 2019; van Dam, Smit, Wildschut et al., 2018; van Dam, Blom, Kara et al., 2021). YIM leverages the pre-existing emotional connection between mentors and mentees (Spencer, Drew, Gowdy, & Horn, 2018) to improve a range of academic, vocational, and behavioral outcomes, including higher educational levels, more time employed, higher earnings, and fewer arrests (Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, & Grossman, 2013). It can increase willingness to seek support, improve relationships with teachers, and increase grade point averages (Schwartz et al., 2017). 7 YIM prevents out-of-home placement of adolescents with complex needs (van Dam et al., 2017) and reduces the mortality rate of older youths aging out of foster care (Greeson & Thompson, 2016) and youths at risk of suicidal behavior (King et al., 2019).

Implementation Considerations



YIM can be added as an enhancement to a traditional mentoring approach or implemented as a standalone YIM program. Programs like the ChalleNge or the Mentoring NOW programs have enhanced existing programs, while other programs like Caring Adults R Everywhere and the Midlands Mentoring Partnership have fully implemented YIM programs. Whatever model is chosen, there are some issues that need to be considered when implementing YIM:



Implementation Considerations

Organizational Mindset

Implementation of YIM requires that both staff and management are open to innovation and working with community partners in new ways. It is important that both management and staff understand the distinction between traditional mentoring and YIM. Mentor and mentee recruitment is considerably different. Staff need to be willing and able to utilize new skills, develop new program procedures, and work with community partnerships in different ways. Without an open mindset, programs risk implementing YIM with low fidelity, drifting back to familiar ways of doing things, and missing out on the potential benefits of YIM for the youths they serve.





Implementation Considerations

Staffing Requirements

Implementing YIM requires specific staff knowledge and skills. Having familiarity with the needs and challenges of high-risk youths and their families and therapeutic skills like motivational interviewing will prepare staff to address initial reluctance that could cause some youth to opt-out of YIM. Staff must have the skills to work with youth where they are at and encourage them to explore relationships with adults in their networks even when they feel that there are no supportive adults in their lives. They need to be open to using tools like social capital mapping, willing to do the intensive work required to locate prospective mentors, and very familiar with the communities where youths live.

Referral Mechanisms

Not only do programs need to have clear criteria for which subpopulations of youth are targeted for YIM, programs need to develop the structural mechanisms to identify them. As in traditional mentoring programs, staff in YIM programs must promote the program in the community and cultivate relationships with potential referral sources. YIM requires partnering with referral sources in new ways, e.g., partnering with another service provider to work with youths that they serve or setting up a sole referral agency to recruit qualified youths. To avoid concerns about blurring professional boundaries when youth nominate teachers, coaches, or other service providers as prospective mentors, programs must clearly define parameters around who can and cannot be mentors, e.g., a mentor cannot be someone who is currently providing services to anyone in the youth's family and nominated mentors cannot be siblings. Programs will need written procedures for locating prospective mentors, introducing them to the idea of YIM, and coaching mentees on how to ask them to become their mentor. They will also need to have backup options for youth who are not able to identify a suitable mentor, e.g., offering a traditional volunteer mentor or making referrals to other local mentoring providers.



Implementation Considerations

Workflow and Time Investment

YIM changes the workflow and time investment for staff. Unlike traditional programs that start with mentor recruitment, YIM begins with recruiting mentees and helping them identify prospective mentors. Doing social capital mapping may require multiple meetings with the youth. Staff will need to give youth and families space to understand how YIM could benefit them and to take additional time to develop the trust necessary for youth to open up to the idea of examining their social networks. Staff will also devote more time and energy to new tasks like tracking down prospective mentors, often with very little information. Training and match support may take additional skills, e.g., the ability to resolve conflicts when parents/caregivers do not approve of the youth's choice of mentor or coaxing reluctant youths to explore the possibility that there may be an adult in their social network whose relationship with them could be strengthened through participation in a formal mentoring program.



Implementation Considerations

Training Requirements

Staff need to be trained on how to implement YIM with fidelity and receive regular booster trainings. Staff will need to train mentors, mentees, and their families on the distinction between traditional and YIM. They should have booklets for [parents/caregivers](#), [mentors](#), and [mentees](#) that describe YIM and the programs expectations that can be given out as part of the pre-match training. Additionally, they need coaching strategies on identifying mentors and how to ask someone to be their mentor. Part of mentee training must include preparing them for the possibility that some adults who they nominate may not pass background checks or meet other program requirements and others may not be able to commit to being a mentor. Ideally, mentee training on relationship and networking skills will continue throughout the match process and involve working with mentors to help youth practice using these skills to widen their social networks. Similarly, mentors and family members will need to be trained on YIM and maintaining boundaries when there is already a relationship between the mentor and family members. Because family participation is key to YIM, trainings will need to address the importance of youth and family voice and the ways that the program incorporates opportunities for family engagement. This toolkit provides more information on family engagement strategies in Part3.



Recommendations

- **Educate community partners on YIM and the characteristics of youth that can most benefit from it using in-person contacts.**
- **Disseminate literature that describes the YIM program and the youth it serves.**
- **Develop an infrastructure for receiving mentee referrals that include written criteria for youth participation, application procedures, and how referrals will be funneled to the program, e.g., MMP's sole source referral agency.**
- **Require staff to learn social capital mapping and motivational interviewing, which are techniques that can be used to help youth explore what they want from a mentor, and who in their lives have been mentor-like qualities, as well as help them understand that a mentor candidate is someone who has the potential to become a mentor not necessarily someone who has been a full-fledged mentor in the classic sense.**
- **Develop written procedures for what constitutes a suitable mentor, as well as the procedures that staff will use to locate prospective mentors and have a pre-screening conversation with them.**





- **Monitor the fidelity of YIM. Programs should have written procedures for evaluating the fidelity of the program at least quarterly. You can use a [YIM checklist](#) like the one in this toolkit to document adherence to the YIM model.**
- **Train mentees on networking and relationship skills throughout the match and help mentors teach mentees strategies to practice these skills.**
- **Encourage bonding of the mentoring dyad to the program through events, positive reinforcement, involving them in program activities, e.g., mentor training, and community outreach events. Since mentors and mentees have pre-existing relationships, they may feel that they do not need to check in with program staff, so it is critically important to foster the feeling of being part of a team that includes the program.**
- **Integrate the youth family voice by developing and utilizing feedback from youth and family advisory groups and obtain their feedback throughout the process of planning, programming, and evaluation of your program.**
- **Explore ways that your organization can offer opportunities for family members to get to know other families and share resources, e.g., family support groups.**
- **Allocate staff time to accomplish recruitment and fidelity monitoring effectively.**

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THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT FOR YOU IN MENTORING!

A YOUNG PERSON'S
GUIDE TO MENTORING

[PROGRAM NAME HERE]



WHAT IS A MENTOR?



SOMEONE YOU CAN COUNT ON TO BE THERE FOR YOU!

A MENTOR...



BELIEVES IN YOU



**COACHES YOU TO MAKE
POSITIVE CHOICES**



**INSPIRES YOU TO DO
BETTER**

We all need support in life, and there are special people that help us along the way.

This is a chance for you to find someone like that, someone who will help you develop new skills and habits that will change your life for the better.

You will have FUN too!

This is a great opportunity...

Are you up for the challenge?

Will you take it?

Will you work for it?



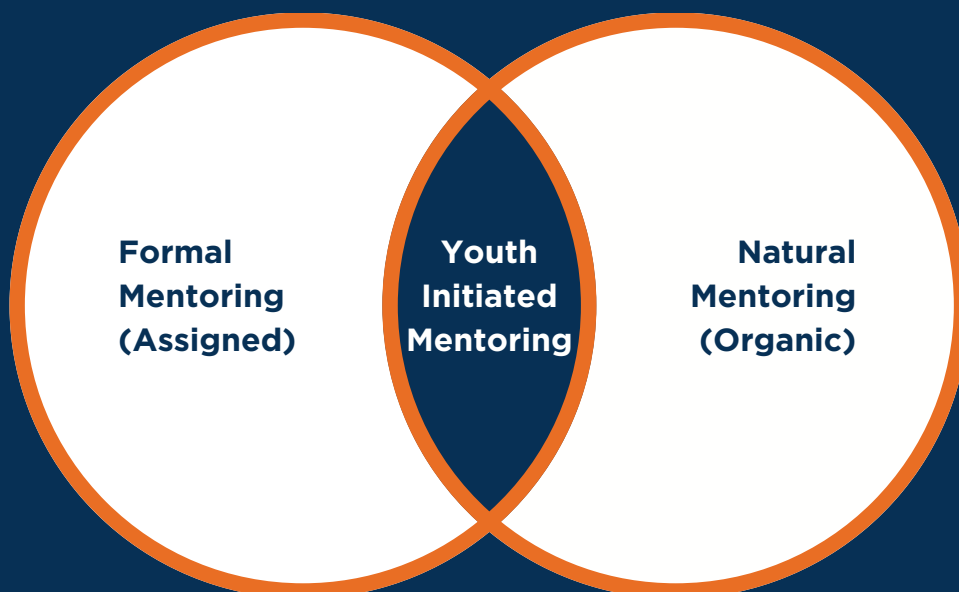
WHAT IS YOUTH-INITIATED MENTORING?



Some of us have “Natural Mentors” Youth-Initiated Mentoring

Youth-initiated mentoring (YIM) is a way to blend informal and formal mentoring support. Youth (with the help of family) nominates a non-parental adult, such as a teacher, coach, or extended relative, who can serve as a supportive role model.

After nominating a potential mentor, our program will screen and train this “nominee.” The program then formalizes the mentoring relationship, provides expectations and guidelines, and provides ongoing monitoring and support for match relationships. In addition, the program will sponsor some opportunities for larger group events throughout the year.



HOW CAN A MENTOR HELP YOU?



HOW MENTORS HELP

- Help you set and meet goals (accountability)
- Provide a positive role model
- Introduce you to other supports and people (increasing their “social capital”)
- Provide support and help you bounce back from disappointments.
- Advocate for you & connect you to resources
- Help you problem-solve and make positive choices
- Help you to develop skills
- Help you to be successful in school
- Help you think about career goals
- Teach you life skills for adulthood
- Provide opportunities for fun!
- And more!

RESPONSIBILITIES

YOUR MENTOR

- Commit to at least 6-12 months
- Meet with you in person for four or more hours each month
- Show up & stay in touch
- Listen without judgment
- Keep things confidential
- Allow you to be central in the relationship. (Mentors are trained to talk to you about your goals and interests, as well as to build the relationship and activities around you.)
- Participate in mentor training and check in regularly with staff

YOU

- Make a commitment
- Share contact information
- Show up for meetings— call if you must cancel
- Stay in touch with your Mentor
- Share your dreams & goals
- Be open about concerns
- Be respectful
- Show appreciation

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CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU'VE BEEN NOMINATED AS A

MENTOR!

NOW WHAT?

[PROGRAM NAME HERE]



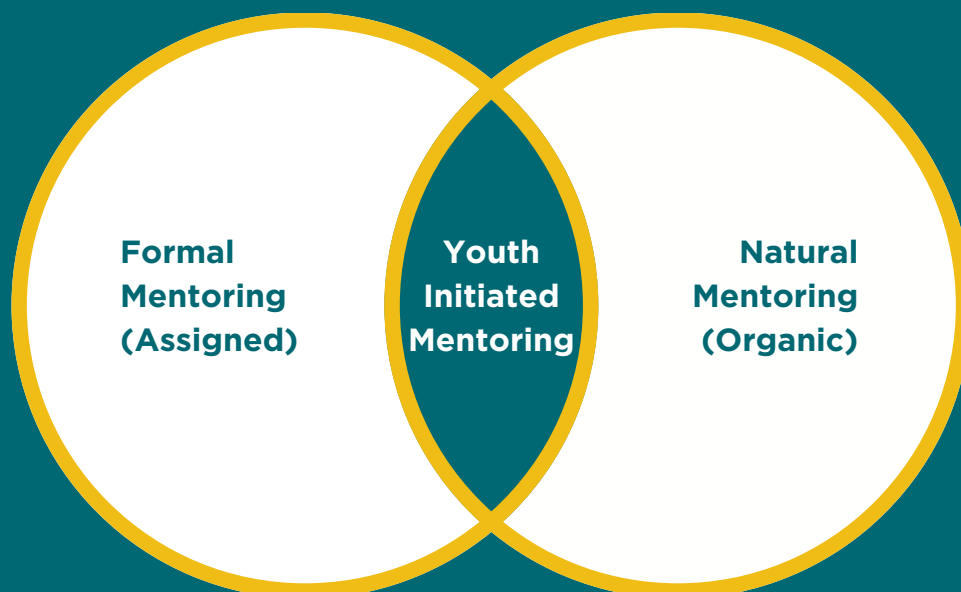
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HOW DO MENTORS HELP?



HOW MENTORS HELP

- Help mentees set and meet goals (accountability)
- Act as a positive role model
- Introduce mentees to other supports and people (increasing their “social capital”)
- Provide support and help mentees bounce back from disappointments
- Advocate for mentees & connect them to resources
- Help mentees problem-solve and make positive choices
- Help mentees to develop skills
- Help mentees to be successful in school
- Help mentees think about career goals
- Teach mentees life skills for adulthood
- Provide mentees with opportunities for fun!
- And more!

RESPONSIBILITIES

YOU

- Commit to at least 6-12 months
- Meet with your mentee in person for four or more hours each month
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- Listen without judgment
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- Participate in mentor training and check in regularly with staff

YOUR MENTEE

- Make a commitment
- Share contact information
- Show up for meetings— call if they must cancel
- Stay in touch with you
- Share their dreams & goals with you
- Be open about concerns
- Be respectful
- Show appreciation

HOW TO BECOME A MENTOR



1

Once you are nominated as a mentor, our staff will meet with you to discuss the program commitment and determine if this opportunity is a good fit for you.



2

You will complete an application, and with your consent, background screening will be conducted. Training will be provided on mentoring policies, guidelines, and effective practices.



3

You and your mentee will then be “formally matched” and encouraged to create a supportive relationship with a focus on the youth’s goals. Staff will also provide support to you and your mentee throughout your participation in our program.



PART 1:

YOUTH-INITIATED MENTORING

Educational Brief:

- [YIM Parent/Caregiver Booklet Template](#)

Resources:

- [YIM Mentee Booklet Template](#)
- [YIM Mentor Booklet Template](#)
- [YIM Parent/Caregiver Booklet Template](#)
- [YIM Implementation Checklist](#)



DOWNLOAD

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND FOR YOUR CHILD IN MENTORING!

A PARENT/CAREGIVER
GUIDE TO MENTORING

[PROGRAM NAME HERE]



WHAT IS A MENTOR?



SOMEONE YOU CAN COUNT ON TO BE THERE FOR YOUR CHILD!

A MENTOR...



**BELIEVES IN YOUR
CHILD**



**COACHES YOUR CHILD TO
MAKE POSITIVE CHOICES**



**INSPIRES YOUR CHILD
TO DO BETTER**

We all need support in life and there are special people that help us along the way.

This is a chance for your child to find someone like that, someone who will help them develop new skills and habits that will change their life for the better.

They will have FUN too!

This is a great opportunity...

You have an important role in making your child's mentoring relationship successful!



HOW CAN A MENTOR HELP MY CHILD?



HOW MENTORS HELP

- Help them set and meet goals (accountability)
- Provide a positive role model
- Introduce them to other supports and people (increasing their “social capital”)
- Provide support and help them bounce back from disappointments
- Advocate for them & connect them to resources
- Help them problem-solve and make positive choices
- Help them to develop skills
- Help them to be successful in school
- Help them think about career goals
- Teach them life skills for adulthood
- Provide opportunities for fun!
- And more!

RESPONSIBILITIES

THE MENTOR

- Commit to at least 6-12 months
- Meet with your child in person for four or more hours each month
- Show up & stay in touch
- Listen without judgment
- Keep things confidential
- Allow your child to be central in the relationship. (Mentors are trained to talk to your child about their goals and interests, as well as to build the relationship and activities around them.)
- Participate in mentor training and check in regularly with the mentoring program staff

YOUR CHILD

- Make a commitment to being mentored
- Share contact information
- Show up for meetings — they should call if they must cancel
- Stay in touch with their mentor
- Share their dreams & goals
- Be open about their concerns
- Be respectful
- Show appreciation

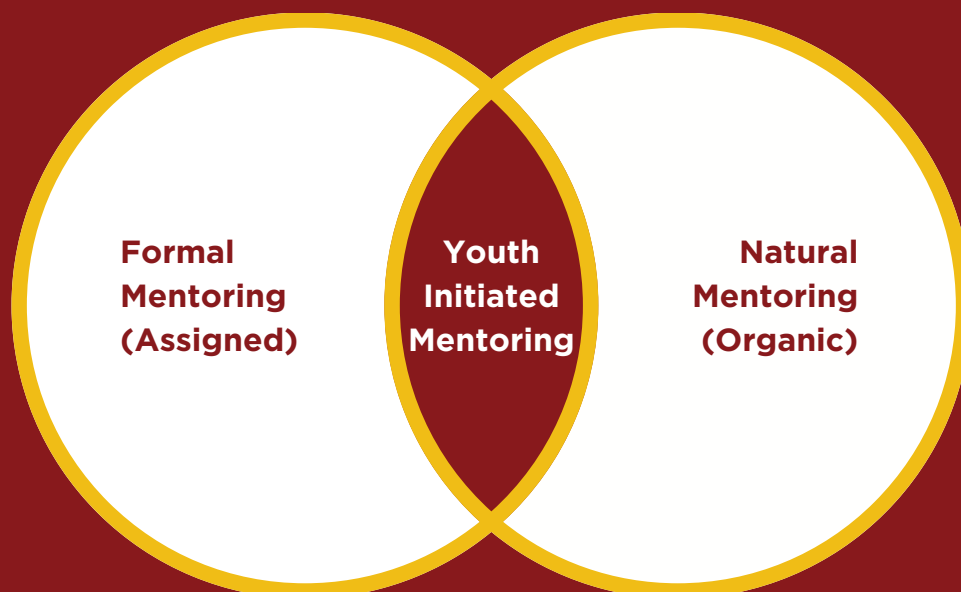
WHAT IS YOUTH-INITIATED MENTORING?



Some of us have “Natural Mentors” Youth-Initiated Mentoring

Youth-initiated mentoring (YIM) is a way to blend informal and formal mentoring support. Youth (with help of family) nominates a non-parental adult, such as teacher, coach, or extended relative who can serve as a supportive role model.

After nominating a potential mentor, our program will screen and train this “nominee.” The program then formalizes the mentoring relationship, provides expectations and guidelines, and provides ongoing monitoring and support for match relationships. In addition, the program will sponsor some opportunities for larger group events throughout the year.



HOW PARENTS & CAREGIVERS CAN SUPPORT MENTORING RELATIONSHIP



- **Show your interest in the relationship.**
- **Help support the meeting schedule.**
- **Participate in program activities when invited.**
- **Talk to the mentor about your child's strengths, personality, and needs.**
- **Provide feedback to program staff.**
- **Honor the mentoring relationship's confidentiality and trust.**
- **Encourage your child to work through challenges that come up in their mentoring relationship.**
- **Help your child learn how to be a "mentor magnet."**

SOURCE:

Adapted from Supporting Youth Build Students in Mentoring Relationships.
<https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/resource/supporting-youthbuild-students-in-mentoring-relationships/>

PART 1:

YOUTH-INITIATED MENTORING

Educational Brief:

- [Youth-Initiated Mentoring: Combining Youth Choice and Structured Support](#)

Resources:

- [YIM Mentee Booklet Template](#)
 - [YIM Mentor Booklet Template](#)
 - [YIM Parent/Caregiver Booklet Template](#)
- [YIM Implementation Checklist](#)



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Youth-Initiated Mentoring Checklist

- ☐ Defined criteria that outlines the specific characteristics of youth who would benefit most from YIM.
- ☐ Campaign to educate referral sources on the program's YIM model.
- ☐ Written procedures and infrastructure to recruit youth who can benefit from YIM (e.g., single referral agency).
- ☐ Trainings for mentors, mentees, and parent/caregivers that describe the YIM model and address program expectations, policies, and procedures.
- ☐ Booklets for prospective mentors, mentees, and their families that describe YIM and program expectations.
- ☐ Written staff procedures for implementing YIM include:

Step 1: Get to know what the mentee wants from a mentoring relationship.

- ☐ Ask the mentee and their family about the goals that they would like to achieve from the mentoring relationship.
- ☐ Discuss the qualities they would like in a mentor.
- ☐ Ask if the mentee and parents/caregivers whether there are adults that they think would be good mentors.

Step 2: Help the mentee examine their social network.

- ☐ Use a social network handout to identify key persons
- ☐ Use social capital mapping to describe the current relationship bonds. Identify the youth's top one or two choices.
- ☐ Get the family's input and agreement.

Step 3: Reach out to mentors and supportive adults.

- ☐ Locate mentor candidates and have a pre-screening conversation about mentoring.
- ☐ Prepare the mentee to ask the non-parental adult to be their mentor.
- ☐ Coach the mentee on how to react if the answer is "no."
- ☐ Training on networking skills.
- ☐ Written mentor recruitment strategy that includes locating and contacting prospective mentors
- ☐ Alternative mentoring options for youth who cannot identify a prospective mentor in their social network.
- ☐ Training and tools for mentees to build networking and relationship skills.
- ☐ Written closure procedures of YIM matches.

PART 2:

SOCIAL CAPITAL MAPPING

Educational Brief:

Mapping It Out

Resources:

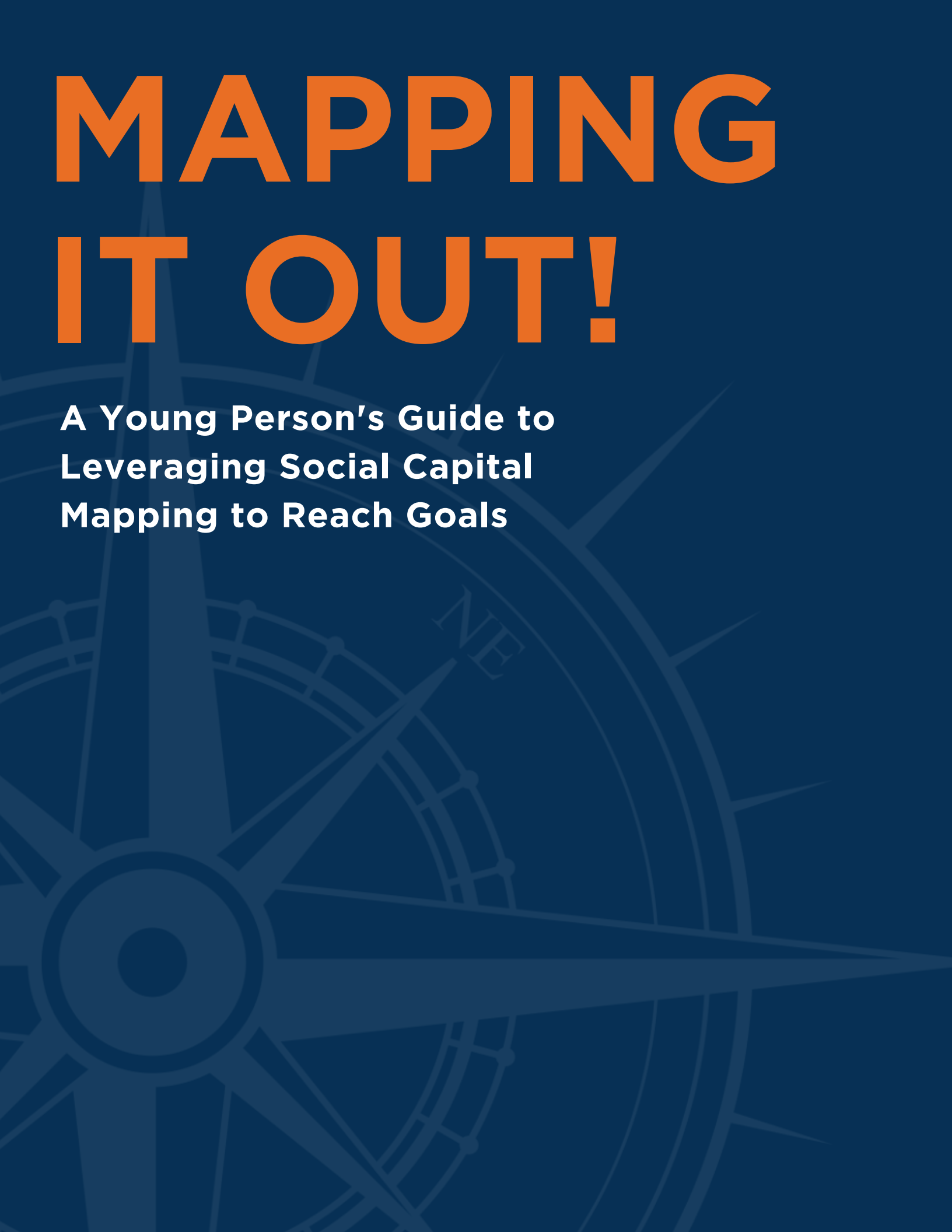
- My Social Network
- My Capital Map
- Things We Have in Common
- How to Ask Someone to Become Your Mentor



DOWNLOAD

MAPPING IT OUT!

**A Young Person's Guide to
Leveraging Social Capital
Mapping to Reach Goals**



BUILDING GOAL POWER



Muscle is power.

Money is power.

The **connection** that we have with people who can support us in reaching our goals is also power.

This Guide

This educational brief will introduce you to social capital mapping and how to use it when implementing youth-initiated mentoring to help mentees identify supportive adults in their lives who can take on formal mentoring roles and help them develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in reaching their goals. Teaching mentees how to examine their social network is a skill that will have lifelong payoffs.

WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL MAPPING?

Social capital mapping is a key tool used in youth-initiated mentoring that culminates in the mentee identifying two to three people whom they could ask to mentor them.

It can also be used in many contexts to teach youth key networking and relationship skills. The connections that people have with other people in their life creates a web of connection called a social network. The people in their social network and the characteristics of the relationships that they have with them generate “social capital” that can help them succeed in achieving goals.

Social capital is the benefit received from relationships. Social capital mapping is a technique used to graphically depict or map this social network and examine the qualities of the relationships in it.



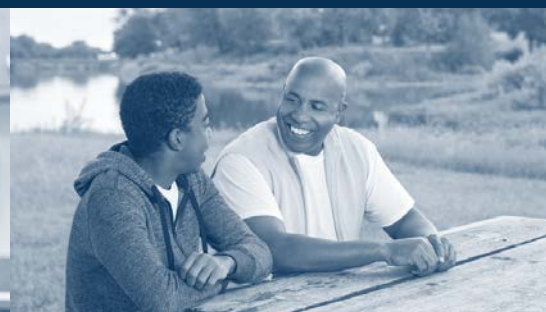
DEVELOP TRUST FIRST



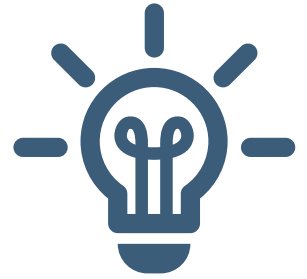
Do not expect to go into an intake interview and find that the mentees are ready to identify a person to be their mentor. You will need to establish enough trust with them that they are willing to share details about their relationships.



Doing a social map can be triggering for mentees who do not feel that they have a supportive network of friends and family. Social capital mapping can open up conversations about sensitive topics and feelings that mentees have about their relationships. So, it is important to take the time to develop trust with the mentee before getting into the heart of social capital mapping. You will need to develop rapport with the mentee first. Typically, it is recommended to attempt social capital mapping with a mentee during your second meeting with them. The first meeting should be spent gathering information about the things that they like to do and chatting about light topics (e.g., sports or music) chosen to get them talking about themselves and their interests.



TIPS FOR BUILDING TRUST



Be friendly and positive.

A smile or compliment is always a good way to start a conversation. It says, “I see you. I am a friend.”

Do not ask too many questions.

Start the interview by chatting about light subjects. It will give them a chance to warm up to you.

Observe.

Often something the youth is wearing or carrying with them might indicate an interest that could be a good conversation starter.

Be genuine.

Adolescents always size us up. If they sense that you are being genuine, they are more likely to trust you, making it easier for you to become part of their support network.

Listen.

Using your active listening skills, rather than leading the conversation, is one of the best ways to learn about another person.

Share.

Telling them something about yourself, like a hobby or your thoughts about last night’s football game, or having interesting things like books, games, or objects in your office can spark the conversation.

Allow silence.

By not giving into the silence, you convey that you will hang in until they are ready to talk.

DESCRIBING THE MENTEE'S SOCIAL NETWORK

The next step is to get the mentee to think about what these relationships are like. This is a continuation of the intake interview with a focus on identifying non-parental adults in the mentee's life and understanding the types of relationships that the mentee has with them. The idea is to have a conversation about the connections that they currently have with people in their lives. The [My Social Network](#) handout can guide the conversation. Begin the conversation by asking the mentee to think about the last 2-3 years. The instructions on the handout have probing questions that you can ask to help get the conversation going. The goal is to identify a number of people who have positive relationships with the mentee. It is not important that there are people identified in each category or that all people identified have close relationships with the mentee. The important thing is that they identify persons that they feel comfortable with, whom they feel they can trust, and who have supported them in the past.

MY SOCIAL NETWORK

Making connections to people who can provide information, tools, and resources that will help you succeed with your educational, personal, and career goals.

The Most Successful People You Know

Your Closest Friends _____

Teachers & School Staff _____

Coaches _____

Faith-based Contacts _____

Other People _____

Neighbors _____

Family and Relatives _____

People From School _____

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask the mentee to think about the adults in their lives over the last 2-3 years. In a conversational manner, identify adults and place their names under the category around the star that best describes the type of relationship.

Some questions to use as probes are:

- Where do you feel the most comfortable?
- With what person or people do you feel the most comfortable?
- What adult helped to inspire and support you over the last 2-3 years?
- Who can you call to ask for advice or just to talk?
- Who understands you best?
- Who believes in you? Who stands by you? Who appreciates you for just being you?
- Who from the past or present have you wanted to stay connected to? How? Why?
- Who have you called when you were in trouble or needed help?
- Who has been with you during a crisis or a troubled time?
- Who would you contact when feeling stressed, or when you need advice?
- Who have you shared to holidays or special occasions?
- Who do you feel can you trust?

(Adapted from Questions to Identify Adult Connections, Greenon, Johanna K. CARE: A Natural Mentoring Intervention for Older Youth, in Foster Care, North Carolina: Curlew-Boswell Books, Courtesy of A You Gotta Believe! Brooklyn, NY, www.yougottabelieve.org/)

DESCRIBING THE MENTEE'S SOCIAL NETWORK

CONT.

The [Things We Have in Common](#) handout offers a way to talk in more detail about what these relationships are like. The handout asks mentees to think about whether the person shares characteristics with them and to consider the types of social support that they give to the mentee and that the mentee gives to them. Mentees learn about types of social support and reciprocity in relationships. Considering the types of social support provided by relationships is key to social capital mapping.

Relationships provide us with different kinds of social support or resources that we need to reach our goals. Types of social support include:

Informational support, which refers to advice, knowledge, suggestions, or help with problem-solving.

Companionship support, which refers to doing fun things together, providing a sense of social belonging, or sharing activities like playing sports or going to the movies.

Instrumental support, which refers to financial assistance, material goods and services like housing, clothing, or assistance filling out a school application.

Emotional support, which refers to encouragement, affection, trust, motivation, caring, and empathy.

THINGS WE HAVE IN COMMON					
Mentor's Name	Are they the same race or ethnicity as you?	Do they share the same gender identity as you?	What support do you receive from this person?	What kind of social support do you give to this person?	What are other resources that you share with this person?

INSTRUCTIONS

- Write the names of the people in the mentor's social network in the first column.
- Put a check in the column to the right of their name to indicate if they are the same race or ethnicity, and gender identity as the mentee.
- If the mentee knows that the person has a particular interest or hobby, write that information in the column labeled as "Interests or Hobbies."
- In the next two columns, indicate the type of social support that is given to the person by the mentee and by the mentor to the person.
- Finally, consider things that might make it difficult for the person to agree to be a mentor like recently having a baby, currently being the mentor's teacher, or living on a boat and a half away from the mentee.


Although there are many types of social capital, it is important to understand the different kinds of social support or resources that we need to reach our goals.

Informational support refers to encouragement, advice, suggestions, and resources that help you learn and grow.

Companionship support refers to doing fun things together, providing a sense of social belonging, or sharing activities like playing sports or going to the movies.

Instrumental support refers to financial assistance, material goods and services like housing, clothing, or assistance filling out a school application.

Emotional support refers to encouragement, affection, trust, motivation, caring, and empathy.



DESCRIBING THE MENTEE'S SOCIAL NETWORK

CONT.

One relationship can provide multiple types of support. It can be helpful to get mentees to think about the type of support they need to accomplish specific goals and the kind of support they want from their mentor. The conversation can help them identify the types of support they get from the relationships with people in their network, as well as consider what kinds of support they give to others, and what some of the obstacles that might make it difficult for the person to commit to a formal mentoring relationship with the mentee, e.g., having a new baby or being service provider who is paid to work with the youth or their family.

Another way to discuss relationships is to do the [My Social Capital Map](#) handout. This handout is also called an eco-map. The mentee puts their name in the middle circle and the names of the people whom they have identified in the social network in the surrounding circles. Then, they draw lines to connect the smaller circles to the center one. The type of line indicates how the mentee feels about the relationship bond: solid lines are strong, dotted lines are weak, and lines with crosses through them indicate stressful relationships. The point here is that a weak bond does not necessarily mean that the person would not be a good mentor candidate. It simply means that the mentee will need to put more into building the relationship. This is another key lesson about mentoring relationships for the mentee to learn—they can strengthen relationships to improve the support they receive from them.



DESCRIBING THE MENTEE'S SOCIAL NETWORK

CONT.

At this point, it is important to get the family's input. Although the focus of mentoring is on the relationship between the mentor and mentee, the family is a gatekeeper. They must give their approval of the youth's choice, as well as logistical arrangements of mentoring meetings, e.g., times that the mentee will be picked up or dropped off and where they can go with the mentor. Parents/caregivers can provide important information about social dynamics that can affect the success of the mentoring relationship.



KEY QUESTIONS

Does the person have the time to be your mentor?

Have they shown an interest in you previously?

What does the mentee want from the mentoring relationship?



By following these steps, you have helped the mentee examine their social network and the relationships that they have with people who might be good mentor candidates.

DESCRIBING THE MENTEE'S SOCIAL NETWORK

CONT.

NEXT ➡

The next step is screening the prospective mentors and assisting the mentee in asking the top candidate(s) to become their mentor. Woven throughout the conversation, you have talked about what a mentoring relationship is, the qualities they want from a mentor, or how specific people in their network might help them reach goals, e.g., getting a job or into college. The objective is to choose one or two people who have the qualities that the mentee is looking for in a mentoring relationship and have the ability to say “yes.”



Proponents of youth-initiated mentoring report that **80% of mentees** are able to identify a mentor. However, if they are not able to identify someone and still want a mentor, it is preferable to offer to match that mentee in the traditional way with a volunteer mentor who they do not already know.

MAKING — THE ASK —



Approaching someone to ask to become a mentor can be very intimidating, and there is the risk that the person chosen by the mentee will say “no.” Youth-initiated mentoring programs must prepare the mentee for this task. Although there are different ways the youth-initiated mentoring programs do this, making the ask is typically a multi-stage process guided by program staff. It involves locating the prospective mentors and telling the person that they have been chosen by the youth to be a mentor.

Youth seldom have the contact information for the persons they would like to mentor them, and their last contact with them may have been a while ago. You will need to locate the prospective mentors’ contact information, which can be time-consuming. The mentee’s parents/caregivers may be able to help, or you may go to schools, churches, and other community organizations in search of the prospective mentor.



MAKING — THE ASK —

CONT.

Once the prospective mentors are located, you contact them to have a brief pre-screening conversation to determine whether they are open to the possibility of becoming a mentor, as well as whether they have the qualities that would make them a good mentor for the youth. You will need to tell them what youth-initiated mentoring is and what a mentor can expect from the program. For confidentiality reasons, you may choose not to give the name of the youth during the pre-screening conversation. Although some programs have staff solicit their mentor participation, doing so misses an opportunity to teach the mentee valuable networking skills.

You have already started this process of preparing the mentee to make this request during the network analysis with conversations about what mentoring is and what qualities they would like in a mentor. Preparing them entails assisting with scheduling a meeting with the mentor candidate, giving them information to share about the program's mentor eligibility requirements (see examples), and helping them practice what to say. The [How to Ask Someone to Become Your Mentor](#) handout summarizes five simple script preparation steps.

HOW TO ASK SOMEONE TO BECOME YOUR MENTOR

1 Say hello and explaining that you are in the _____ mentoring program. Tell them that in this program mentees, like yourself, choose who they would like to ask to become their mentor.

2 Explain the program's expectations for mentors:

- How long would they be your mentor in the program?
- How often would you meet with them?
- What kinds of things would you do together?

3 Share that you would like them to be your mentor and why you thought about asking them.

4 Give insight into what do you want from a mentoring relationship. Are there specific goals that you are trying to achieve?

5 Say THANK YOU. It's important for you to acknowledge the commitment mentors take on, and make it clear how much you appreciate their considering your request.



• If they say no, graciously thank them and tell them that you understand that it is a commitment that they cannot make right now.

• If they say yes, show gratitude. Make it clear that you are ready to commit the time and energy to make the most of the mentoring relationship.

MAKING — THE ASK —

CONT.

In addition to knowing how to ask the candidate to become their mentor, the mentee must be prepared for the possibility that they say “no.” You can have a conversation with the mentee about how they might feel, as well as why this might happen. It is important that the mentee understand that refusal to take on the formal mentor role is not a rejection of the youth. The mentor candidates can have valid reasons for declining, e.g., family obligations, health issues, or job commitments.



SUMMARY

Youth-initiated mentoring is a promising approach for fostering mentoring relationships and addressing recruitment challenges that many traditional mentoring programs face. It builds on the natural mentoring relationships. However, many youths lack the skills necessary to identify and forge relationships with supportive adults in their social networks. They need help in identifying and engaging with potential mentors. Mentoring providers can use social capital mapping procedures and the accompanying tools described here to help youth and their families in youth-initiated mentoring programs identify prospective mentors. In the process, staff provide mentees with hands-on training on what a mentoring relationship is, what they want from their mentoring relationship, and crucial networking skills.

PART 2:

SOCIAL CAPITAL MAPPING

Educational Brief:

- [Mapping It Out](#)

Resources:

[My Social Network](#)

- [My Capital Map](#)
- [Things We Have in Common](#)
- [How to Ask Someone to Become Your Mentor](#)



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INSTRUCTIONS

Ask the mentee to think about the adults in their lives over the last 2-3 years. In a conversational manner, identify adults and place their names under the category around the star that best describes the type of relationship.

Some questions to use are probes are:

- Where do you feel the most comfortable?
- With what person or people do you feel the most comfortable?
- What adult helped to inspire and support you over the last 2-3 years?
- Who can you call to ask for advice or just to talk?
- Who understands you best?
- Who believes in you? Who stands by you? Who appreciates you for just being you?
- Who from the past or present have you wanted to stay connected to? How? Why?
- Who have you called when you were in trouble or needed help?
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- Who would you contact when feeling stressed, or when you need advice?
- Who have you shared to holidays or special occasions?
- Who do you feel can you trust?



(Adapted from Questions to Identify Adult Connections, Greeson, Johanna K, CARE: A Natural Mentoring Intervention for Older Youth in Foster Care., North Carolina: Curie-Bojaxhiu Books. Courtesy of A You Gotta Believe! Brooklyn, NY., www.yougottabeilevel.org/)

MY SOCIAL NETWORK

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- [My Capital Map](#)
- [Things We Have in Common](#)
- [How to Ask Someone to Become Your Mentor](#)



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MY SOCIAL CAPITAL MAP

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Write your name in the center circle.
 - 2 Write the names of people in your social network in the circles around the center circle.
 - 3 Draw a solid line connecting the smaller circle to the center circle to show relationships that strong and a dotted line to show relationships that are weak.
 - 4 If there is conflict or the relationship is stressful in the relationship, put an "x" on the line.
 - 5 The last step is to indicate how resources and support flow in the relationship. To do this put an arrowhead on the end of the line to show the direction of the support. If you provide support to that person, the arrow should point to that person's circle. If they support you, the arrowhead should point to you. If you provide support to each other, put an arrowhead on both ends of the line.
- 1 Use as many circles as necessary and add more if needed.



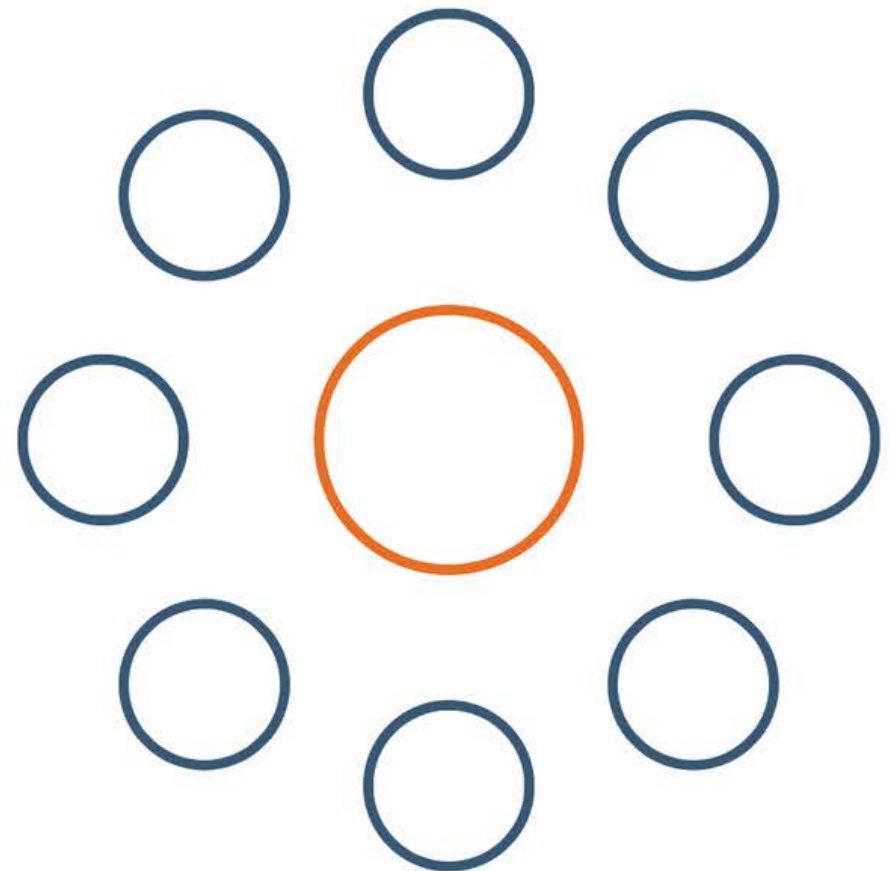
KEY

Strong Relationship

Weak Relationship

Relationship Stress / Conflict

Relationship Support Flow



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SOCIAL CAPITAL MAPPING

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Resources:

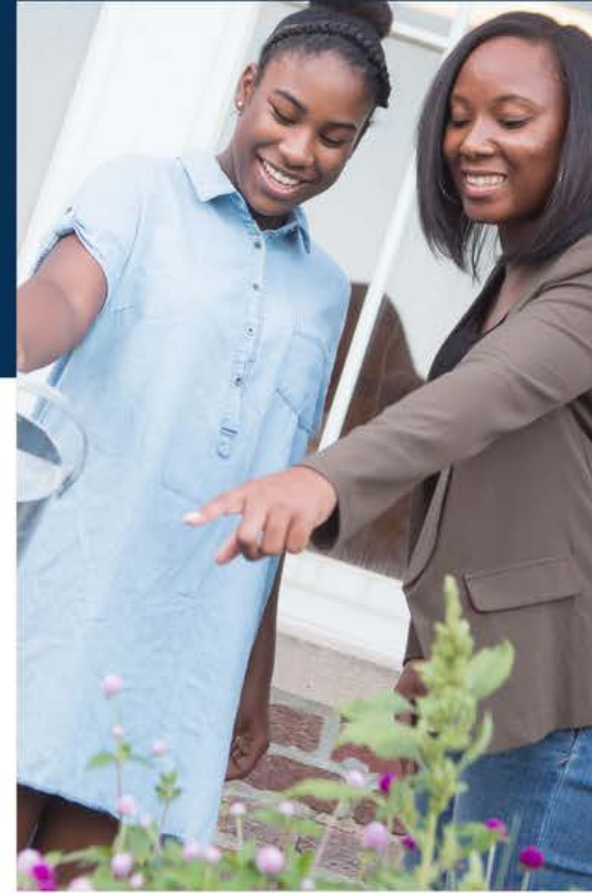
- [My Social Network](#)
- [My Capital Map](#)
- [Things We Have in Common](#)
- [How to Ask Someone to Become Your Mentor](#)



DOWNLOAD

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Write the names of the people in the mentee's social network in the first column.
2. Put a check in the columns to the right of their name to indicate if they are the same age or cultural identity, and gender identity as the mentee.
3. If the mentee knows that the person has a particular interest or hobby, write that information in the column labeled as "interests or hobbies."
4. In the next two columns, indicate the type of social support that is given by the person to the mentee and by the mentee to the person.
5. Finally, consider things that might make it difficult for the person to agree to be a mentor like recently having a baby, currently being the mentee's teacher, or living an hour and a half away from the mentee.



Although there are many ways of defining social capital, all depend on relationships. Relationships provide us with different kinds of social support or resources that we need to reach our goals.

Emotional Support refers to encouragement, affection, trust, motivation, caring, and empathy.

Instrumental Support refers to financial assistance, material goods and services like housing, clothing, assistance filling out a school application.

Informational Support refers to advice, knowledge, suggestions, or help problem-solving.

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PART 2:

SOCIAL CAPITAL MAPPING

Educational Brief:

- [Mapping It Out](#)

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- [My Capital Map](#)
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[How to Ask Someone to
Become Your Mentor](#)



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HOW TO ASK SOMEONE TO BECOME YOUR MENTOR

- 1 Say hello and explaining that you are in the _____ mentoring program. Tell them that in this program mentees, like yourself, choose who they would like to ask to become their mentor.
- 2 Explain the program's expectations for mentors:
 - How long would they be your mentor in the program?
 - How often would you meet with them?
 - What kinds of things would you do together?
- 3 Share that you would like them to be your mentor and why you thought about asking them.
- 4 Give insight into what do you want from a mentoring relationship. Are there specific goals that you are trying to achieve?
- 5 Say THANK YOU. It's important for you to acknowledge the commitment mentors take on, and make it clear how much you appreciate their considering your request.



If they say no, graciously thank them and tell them that you understand that it is a commitment that they cannot make right now.

If they say yes, show gratitude. Make it clear that you are ready to commit the time and energy to make the most of the mentoring relationship.

PART 3:

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Educational Brief:

[Family Engagement Strategies: Taking
A Culturally Responsive Approach](#)

Resources:

- [Culturally Responsive Family Engagement Tool](#)
- [The National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards Adapted for Mentoring Providers](#)
- [20 Activities to Support Family Engagement](#)
- [Sample Family Engagement Calendar](#)



DOWNLOAD

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

**A Culturally
Responsive Approach**

This Guide

The following guide discusses what family engagement means for mentoring programs and strategies to enhance culturally responsive family engagement. Although cultural responsiveness and family engagement are often discussed as separate dimensions of programming, they are intricately related. Cultural responsiveness refers to a process that emphasizes the importance of learning from and respectfully relating to people of different backgrounds, heritages, and traditions. It comes from acknowledging and understanding one's own culture and values while respecting those of others.



It requires self-reflection and the ability to learn non-judgmentally about other cultures. Practicing cultural humility is part of being culturally responsive. Cultural humility refers to learning about the key identities of youth and families, such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, generational status, religion, and nationality. It also includes being sensitive to the historic realities of violence and oppression that have led to systemic racism and other forms of oppression.



Families teach core values and attitudes about school, work, people, and identities that often come up in the mentoring relationship. Children learn about themselves and their culture within the contexts of their families, as well as key skills like how to express emotions, solve problems, and build relationships with others. Parents/caregivers are important gatekeepers who provide consent for youth participation, approve the choice of mentor, and determine when mentoring visits occur. They are key sources of information about family values, practices, and concerns that inform match support.



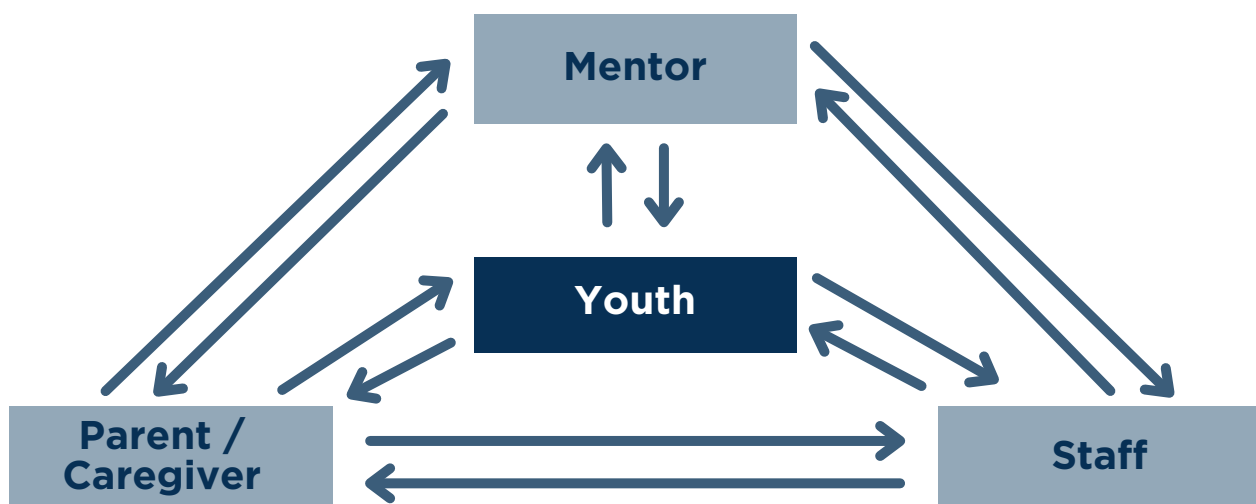
Moreover, how parents/caregivers feel about the mentor can have a significant impact on the length, quality, and success of the mentoring relationship (Basualdo-Delmonico & Spencer, 2016; DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002; Shamblen, Courser, Schweinhart, et al., 2020; Spencer & Basauldo-Delmonico, 2014; Taylor & Porcellini, 2013). DuBois and colleagues (2002) report that mentoring programs that involve parents and solicit their feedback are more effective than those that do not. Additionally, evidence suggests that the effects of mentoring may be partially attributed to improvements in intimacy, communication, and trust in the parent-child relationship (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000).



Approaches to Family Involvement in Youth Mentoring

The primary emphasis of youth mentoring programs is the mentor-mentee dyad, although youth mentoring involves relationships between the mentor, mentee, staff, and the mentee's family (see Figure 1). Programs often pay minimal attention to family involvement. Staff frequently view parents/caregivers as important to the match but also as a source of potential interference. Staff may be concerned that parents/caregivers will interfere with the mentoring relationship or put undue demands on mentors (e.g., Spencer & Basualdo-Delmonico, 2014; Spencer, McCormack, Drew, Gowdy, & Keller, 2021; Taylor & Porcellini, 2013).

Figure 1. Relationships Involved in Youth Mentoring



SOURCE: Keller (2005), *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 26, 2, 169-188.

Furthermore, they may believe that youth need mentors to compensate for deficits in parenting or family dysfunction (Spencer, McCormack, Drew, Gowdy, & Keller, 2021). These negative assumptions about youth and families can lead to blaming them for their socioeconomic circumstances.



Program staff typically coach mentors to maintain strict boundaries with family members in order to keep the focus on the mentoring relationship. They provide mentors with little direction about their relationship with parents/caregivers. Mentor training focuses almost exclusively on strategies for working with their mentee (Basualdo-Delmonico & Spencer, 2016). Consequently, most mentors start the mentoring relationship without giving much thought to the relationship that they will have with their mentee's families.



Similarly, staff encourage parents/caregivers to foster positive bonds between the mentor and mentee by ensuring that the mentee meets with the mentor. Staff urge parents/caregivers to share information with the mentor and the program that can help the relationship grow and to express positive feelings about the mentoring relationship, and to show appreciation for the time that the mentor gives to the mentee.

As a result, parents/caregivers can feel like outsiders. Cultural, language, and socioeconomic differences can further contribute to parents'/caregivers' feelings of alienation, particularly if they get the message that they are not partners in the mentoring relationship. Some parents/caregivers have multiple children and other responsibilities that can affect their ability to participate in the program. They may view mentoring as a reprieve from some of the stresses of parenting or a means of providing opportunities to their child that they cannot. On the other hand, Spencer, Basauldo-Delmonico, and Lewis (2011) report that most parents/caregivers want to be involved and see their role as essential to the healthy development of their children's mentoring relationships by coordinating schedules and activities, advising mentors, and mediating when there are conflicts in the mentoring relationship, or it is at risk of termination (Spencer, Basualdo-Delmonico, and Lewis, 2011).



Opportunities for parent/caregiver involvement vary across youth mentoring programs. Spencer & Basualdo-Delmonico (2014) conducted focus groups with staff from 24 youth programs and identified three different approaches to involving families (see Table 1). All three approaches center on supporting the mentor-mentee relationship. The first two limit the role of parents/caregivers to recipients of program-directed information and support. The third is the collaborating approach which entails intentionally building partnerships between parents/caregivers and mentors to promote the success of the mentoring relationship. This approach most closely aligns with the principles of culturally responsive family engagement, as well as the system of care approach espoused by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Effective culturally responsive family engagement results from leveraging partnerships between staff, mentors, and parents/caregivers for the benefit and well-being of youth.

Table 1. Types of Family Involvement in Mentoring

	Involving	Engaging & Serving	Collaborating
Primary Goal of Family Involvement	Provide information and education	Address the needs of the family to support mentoring relationship	Partner with parents/caregivers in the mentoring process
View of Parents / Caregivers	Potential roadblocks in the mentoring process	Challenged and in need of support and coaching	Experts on the mentee assets that support of the mentoring process
Practices	<p>Instruct parents/caregivers on how to engage with the program</p> <p>Convey the program's expectations and the importance of parental/caregiver involvement</p> <p>Invite parents/caregivers to program sponsored and directed events</p>	<p>Engage parents/caregivers in program sponsored and directed activities to support the family's needs</p> <p>Build relationships with families to encourage them to reach out to staff with their needs</p> <p>Provide direct service to families and broker community resources</p> <p>Build support among parents</p> <p>Coach parents to be good reporters</p>	<p>Facilitate parent/caregiver-mentor meeting prior to the mentor-youth match</p> <p>Emphasis on good parent/caregiver-mentor communication</p> <p>Coach parents/caregivers and mentors to increase mutual understanding</p> <p>Facilitate relationships between all parties in the relationship</p>

SOURCE: Spencer & Basualdo-Delmonico (2014).

What Is Culturally Responsive Family Engagement?

Culturally responsive family engagement refers to an approach that values partnerships between families, program staff, and mentors. It is shaped by genuine respect for the social and cultural diversity of youth and families. The specific goals of the partnership may vary depending on family preference, culture, and economic or social factors. A genuine partnership honors a family's strengths and culture and shared goals for their children.



Key characteristics of family engagement in youth mentoring:

- Centers on the mentoring relationship.
- Involves parents/caregivers, staff, and mentors.
- Develops through mutual trust and respect.
- Supports youth and family voice.
- Continues throughout a mentee's participation in the program.

Effective family engagement requires thoughtful and intentional planning to develop and maintain. Staff must actively work to nurture positive relationships with families and provide parents/caregivers with opportunities for meaningful participation in the program, like participation on advisory boards, volunteering during program events, and offering feedback as part of program evaluation. The aim is that strategies for family engagement permeate all levels of the organization, are codified into policies and procedures, and reflected in day-to-day interactions.

Some Strategies that Staff can use to Bolster Family Engagement

- **Send a letter or card as part of the intake process congratulating the parent/caregiver for giving their child the gift of a new friend. This starts the relationship by conveying value and respect for their decision-making power and acknowledging that mentors are additional support rather than replacements for the youth's existing family system.**
- **Create a welcoming environment by decorating the office space with artwork that showcases youth and families and celebrates their community and heritage.**



Some Strategies that Staff can use to Bolster Family Engagement

- Celebrate parents/caregivers, recognize their role in supporting mentoring relationships, highlight family strengths, and acknowledge their contributions to successful mentoring. Staff can invite families to tell their stories about the mentoring program in newsletters, YouTube videos, and social media posts. Posts can include interviews with parents/caregivers about why they want their child to have a mentor, how they support the mentoring relationship, and what changes they have observed in their child as a result of program participation.
- Include parents/caregivers in mentor trainings and public events to offer the family perspective. Often mentor trainings emphasize getting to know the mentee but neglect the family perspective. Having the parent/caregiver co-facilitate a training allows them to share their perspectives on what works when mentoring youths from their communities and sensitizes participants to the challenges and difficulties in the lives of youth and their families.



- Communicate regularly with parents/caregivers using a variety of methods of communication and reminders such as orientation sessions, **booklets**, event calendars, emails, and text messages. Good communication is key for developing partnerships with families. Communication with families must be clear, concise, and in the languages that families speak.

Some Strategies that Staff can use to Bolster Family Engagement

- Check-in monthly with parents/caregivers to get their feedback on how the match is going.
- Have a family advisory board to solicit input from the youths and families on topics such as service needs, program enhancements, and interpretation of data collected for evaluation purposes.
- Send notes of congratulations to parents when their child makes progress towards their goals. These notes demonstrate the pride that the program has in the mentee while at the same time joining the parent/caregiver in celebration of their child's success.
- Offer parents/caregivers a variety of opportunities to participate in the program and schedule activities at times when it is easy for parents/caregivers to attend. A good strategy is to combine brief learning lessons into fun, family-friendly activities and offer food, transportation, and childcare for families whenever possible.
- Use a [family engagement calendar](#) to plan activities throughout the year. The calendar can include recognition events, advisory board meetings, focus groups, feedback surveys, trainings, and stories in newsletters or social media posts. There should be something at least monthly that highlights families or gives parents/caregivers opportunities for involvement.



Some Strategies that Staff can use to Bolster Family Engagement

- Provide ways that families can offer support and network with each other, like a family FaceBook page or a support group facilitated by a parent/caregiver of a youth who has been successful in the program.
- Solicit regular feedback from parents/caregivers when planning programming and evaluating the program. Programs can gather parents/caregiver input through periodic focus groups or surveys to explore ways to improve the program and document how well the program meets the needs of the youth and families it serves. By tracking family participation by type of activity and month, staff can document how family engagement strengthens the program and impacts youth outcomes.



Core Principles of Culturally Responsive Family Engagement

- Adopt a strengths-based approach that acknowledges the family's role in the mentoring relationship and respects the role of the parents/caregivers who want the best for their children.
- Seek input from parents/caregivers on their child's interests, strengths, needs, and goals.
- Treat everyone with dignity, courtesy, and respect.

Core Principles of Culturally Responsive Family Engagement

- Recognize that a strong sense of cultural identity is central to developing positive self-esteem.
- Invest in building trusting relationships between program staff, mentors, mentees, and families.
- Respect cultural differences among families, mentors, and program staff.
- Encourage self-reflection about cultural assumptions, values, and beliefs.
- Tailor engagement strategies to the youth and family's preferences (e.g., language), strengths, needs, and barriers.
- Seek to learn, understand, and honor the cultures and traditions of the families and communities that your program serves from their perspectives, including historical injustices and ongoing systemic inequalities.
- Demonstrates an ongoing commitment to promoting cultural humility through program activities.
- Utilize family input in planning, implementation, and program evaluation.



These are a few strategies that create a welcoming program and enhance family engagement. There are resources like the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care which can be adapted for mentoring providers. The Governor's Prevention Partnership has also created a tool to assess a youth mentoring program's culturally responsive family engagement strategies. The tool is divided into eight sections that include the environment and organizational context, each of the six standards of the [Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring™](#) (EEMP), and program evaluation. The EEMP is research-informed, evidence-based practices, standards, and benchmarks to promote quality programming and strong outcomes for mentoring organizations. There are six standards that address each area of mentoring program activities: recruitment, screening, training, match initiation, match support, and closure. This tool is a compilation of strategies that programs can use to be welcoming to families and infuse the youth and family voice in programming. It provides program staff with a way to determine what areas of the program need attention and give them ideas on how to implement and improve culturally responsive practices by partnering with families.



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PART 3:

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Educational Brief:

- [Family Engagement Strategies: Taking A Culturally Responsive Approach](#)

Resources:

- [Culturally Responsive Family Engagement Tool](#)
- [The National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards Adapted for Mentoring Providers](#)
- [20 Activities to Support Family Engagement](#)
- [Sample Family Engagement Calendar](#)



DOWNLOAD

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TOOL



Name of the Program:

Date of Assessment: / /

Purpose

This tool helps program staff assess areas in their program where they can make changes to improve culturally responsive family engagement. This tool can be completed during an interview with staff, or it can be self-administered by staff.

How This Tool Is Organized

There are eight sections. The first section covers general characteristics of the organization and the program that recreate an environment and organizational culture that is family-friendly. This section is followed by sections for each standard in the Elements of Effective Practice in Mentoring™ (EEMP). The EEMP is research-informed, evidence-based practices, standards, and benchmarks to promote quality programming and strong outcomes for mentoring organizations. Finally, there is a section on family engagement practices related to program evaluation. Each of these sections is divided into general considerations for all programs, followed by considerations specifically for youth-initiated mentoring programs.

How To Use This Tool

Step 1. Choose the one answer that most closely reflects the program's implementation of the policy or practice described using the following scale:

1=Rarely True, 2=Sometimes True, and 3=Consistently True.

If your program does not implement a youth-initiated mentoring model, skip the questions as indicated and go on to the next section.

Step 2. Use the scoring matrix that corresponds to your type of mentoring program to calculate the percentage of questions in each section that consistently applies to your program. Write the number of questions that you answered "Consistently True" in column A. Divide by the number of possible questions in column B and multiply by 100. Write the percentage in column C. Do this for each section and for the overall tool.

Step 3. Using your program's scores as a guide, go back through the sections and identify priority areas where you feel your program can improve. These will be the focus of your action plan.

Step 4. Identify a team that includes management, staff, and families to develop an action plan for new policies and procedures that will be implemented within the next three (short-term change), six (medium-term change), and twelve months (long-term change). The action plan should include what goals and objectives will be achieved, who will be responsible for doing what, and the timeframe for completing each task (see <https://creately.com/blog/diagrams/how-to-write-an-action-plan/>). The action plan should also be updated regularly to reflect progress towards meeting each of the goals and objectives.

Section 1: The Environment and Organization

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
1.1	The program has a publicly available written statement that specifically addresses the program's commitment to culturally responsive, strengths-based, family-driven, youth guided programming that is prominently displayed on its website, social media, and written materials.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.2	The racial, social, linguistic, and cultural diversity of members of the Board of Directors and staff reflects the diversity of the youth, families, and communities served.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.3	Members of the Board of Directors receive training on implicit bias, cultural responsiveness, and how to interact in non-judgmental and welcoming ways with all families regardless of ethnicity, educational level, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, abilities, and other diversity.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.4	Staff receive training on implicit bias and cultural responsiveness and how to understand and respect cultural differences, to be non-judgmental, and how to interact in non-judgmental and welcoming ways with all families regardless of ethnicity, educational level, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, abilities, and other diversity.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.5	Staff training addresses strategies to engage parents/caregivers and other family members at intake and throughout service delivery.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.6	The program has an accessible resource library or virtual space where families can find information on resources available in their community as well as books and reference materials of interest to families (e.g., mental and physical health, housing, nutrition, schools, heating programs, and free resources).	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.7	The program displays posters and other visual cues in the office and on its website and social media that indicate that it is a welcoming place for families of all racial, ethnic, gender identities, sexual orientations, language groups, and abilities.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.8	Family friendly language is used in all forms, handbooks, flyers, website, written materials, and all communications with families (e.g., without jargons or acronyms, written in 5 th grade reading level or lower, and available in multiple languages).	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 1: The Environment and Organization Continued

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
1.9	The program recognizes the importance of family in the mentoring relationship through stories in newsletters or during recognition events.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.10	Staff communicates with families consistently using flyers, newsletters, phone calls, emails, welcome packets, and events.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.11	When communicating with parents/caregivers, staff are specific in what they ask of them (e.g., they give dates, locations, and times of events, what they need, and how parents can be involved).	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.12	The program has established partnerships with community organizations that reflect the diversity of the youth and families that it serves.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.13	The program has a youth advisory group that represents the diversity of the youth served, including LGBTQA+, and youth involved in the foster care and juvenile justice systems.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.14	The program has a family advisory group that represents the diversity of the families in the communities that it serves.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
<i>If the program does NOT use a youth-initiated mentoring model skip to Section 2.</i>						
1.15	All new staff receive training on YIM and strategies to address implementation challenges.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.16	Staff receive booster sessions on YIM.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
1.17	Staff consult youth and families about strategies to improve YIM programming and overcome implementation challenges.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 2: Recruitment

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
2.1	Staff create opportunities for youth and parents/caregivers to assist in identifying and recruiting mentors.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.2	The mentor job description includes having knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with being culturally responsive and interacting with parents/caregivers.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.3	The program's youth advisory board and/or family advisory board assists in the planning, development, and implementation of recruitment strategies.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.4	Both parents/caregivers and youth receive written materials that clearly describe the program and expectations for participating youth and families.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.5	Parents/caregivers of prospective mentees complete a written application or referral form.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.6	The program customizes recruitment messaging to address the diversity the youth and families in the communities that the program serves.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.7	Recruitment and outreach materials include a statement that clearly indicates the program's commitment to culturally responsive, strengths-based, family-driven, youth guided programming and expectations for family engagement.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.8	Recruitment and outreach materials are available in multiple languages and include images that reflect the diversity of the youth, families, and communities served.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.9	The program places recruitment materials in multicultural media outlets e.g., community and non-English newspapers.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.10	The program networks through local community-based religious, social, and cultural organizations within the communities that it serves to recruit mentors.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.11	The program consults with families to identify barriers and implement strategies to engaging in mentoring (e.g., fears about having a mentor come to their home or working with their children).	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 2: Recruitment Continued

Rarely True

Sometimes True

Consistently True

Priority for Improvement

If the program does NOT use a youth-initiated mentoring model skip to Section 3.

2.12	Youth nominate supportive adults who are already in the youth's life to be considered as a potential mentor.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.13	Parents/caregivers give their feedback on potential mentors that the youth identifies.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.14	Parents/caregivers assist the youth in requesting that the chosen person become his/her mentor when appropriate.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
2.15	The program has a mentor recruitment strategy that includes locating the contact information for supportive adults that youth and family have identified as prospective mentors.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 3: Screening

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
3.1	The program uses input from families to design a screening protocol that is culturally responsive e.g., what questions to ask concerning and to determine what criteria should disqualify someone from becoming a mentor.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.2	Staff ask parents/caregivers regularly for input on their child's needs from a mentor.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.3	Confidentiality policies explicitly address mentor and program obligations to keep youth information confidential and what information can be shared with parents/caregivers, including policies for sharing youth's sexuality and gender identity.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.4	Screening policies and practices are designed to assess cultural responsiveness and detect mentor biases that indicate racist, xenophobic, and homophobic/transphobic attitudes and behaviors that can affect their ability to develop close and trusting relationships with their mentees and their families.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.5	During screening, staff assess a mentor's willingness to put effort into developing relationships with family members and their ability to be culturally responsive.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.6	There are defined opportunities for youth and families from the communities served to provide feedback on screening materials.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.7	Staff conduct an interview with the youth and their parent/caregivers as part of the intake process.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.8	Staff ask the mentee and parent/caregivers about their mentor preferences (e.g., gender, age and racial/ethnic background, gender identity or sexual orientation) during intake.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.9	If applicable, staff provide a thoughtful explanation when their mentor preferences cannot be honored.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.10	Program policies address how parent/caregiver match preferences e.g., race, religion, sexual orientation/gender identity among other criteria will be considered in the matching process.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 3: Screening Continued

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
3.11	Parents/caregivers provide informed permission for their child to participate.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.12	Parents/caregivers and mentees agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or the minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.13	Parents/caregivers and mentees agree in writing that mentees participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentors at the minimum frequency and number of hours that are required by the mentoring program.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.14	Staff take a family and youth-led approach which is built on getting input from youth and families about their expectations and goals for the mentoring relationship.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.15	Staff have a consistent process for informing parents/caregivers of additional supports the agency can provide and other services in the community that they can use e.g., family and youth booklets, regular phone calls, and newsletter.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.16	Staff get releases of information which will allow staff to get information from the referral source or schools that might be helpful in developing a trusting mentor-mentee relationship, goal setting, and providing supportive services for the family.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
<p><i>If the program does NOT use a youth-initiated mentoring model skip to Section 4.</i></p>						
3.17	Staff use social capital mapping tools to help the mentee identify potential mentors in their existing social network.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.18	Mentees choose people in their social network to ask to become their mentor.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
3.19	Parents/caregivers give input on potential mentors during the mentor screening.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 4: Training

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
4.1	Mentor pre-match training includes training on implicit bias, cultural responsiveness, and related topics relevant to developing strong relationships with mentees and their families from a variety of backgrounds, including different cultures, lifestyles, and abilities.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.2	Mentors receive pre-match training on family-driven, strength-based approaches and on respecting mutual boundaries, goal setting, and managing expectations of mentees and families.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.3	There are defined opportunities for parents/caregivers to provide feedback on training materials.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.4	Parents/caregivers participate in pre-match training of new mentors to provide the parent/guardian perspective.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.5	Mentees and their parents/caregivers receive a pre-match training on family-driven, strength-based approaches and on respecting mutual boundaries, goal setting, and managing expectations.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.6	The program has a clear and concise handbook for parents/ caregivers that explains all the program policies and procedures that families need to know.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.7	The program has a clear and concise handbook for mentees that explains what mentoring is, what they can expect from the mentoring relationship and as the result of participating in the program.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.8	The program has a policy that staff review with mentors, mentees, and their parents/caregivers about taking siblings or other family members along for mentoring outings.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.9	The program offers information about trainings in the community or within their organization for parents/caregivers on topics like advocating for the child in school, adolescent substance use prevention, or communicating with teens.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.10	Staff provide training and written guidance on the obligation of mentors to consult program staff about issues that could violate the mentee's confidentiality or negatively impact the mentoring relationships (e.g., a mentee coming out as LGBTQA+, conflicts with other family members).	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 4: Training Continued

Rarely True

Sometimes True

Consistently True

Priority for
Improvement

If the program does NOT use a youth-initiated mentoring model skip to Section 5.

4.11	Staff provide training and support to mentees and mentors, as well as, when relevant, to parents/caregivers, about how mentees can identify and connect with natural mentors in their lives.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.12	Staff include an open discussion of how boundary issues between family members and the YIM mentor might change as the result of the formal mentoring role.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.13	Staff teach mentees how to ask someone in their social network to be their mentor and respond to the potential rejection.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.14	Staff train mentors on techniques to help mentees develop their networking skills e.g., conversational, co-switching, and relationship skills.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
4.15	Staff train mentees relationship building skills and learn how to address conflicts and other challenges in mentoring relationships.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 5: Match Initiation

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
5.1	Parents/caregivers attend the in-person meeting where the mentor and mentee are introduced to each other.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
5.2	Staff review a written statement with parents/caregivers that includes the expectations of the parent/caregiver, mentor, and mentee in the mentoring relationship.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
5.3	During the match introduction, parents/caregivers are given the opportunity to share their hopes and dreams for the mentee's future and about the mentoring relationship.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
5.4	Staff facilitate a conversation between the mentor, mentee, and the family during the match introduction about culturally and lifestyle-based expectations and concerns.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
5.6	Staff solicit feedback from the family during the initial stage of the match to enable families and mentees to have a say in whether the match is working for them and determine whether a rematch is necessary.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
5.7	Staff give parent/caregivers a handbook that contains information about mentoring, program expectations, and the role of parents/caregivers for successful mentoring relationships.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
5.8	Staff lead a discussion between mentors, mentees, and their parents/caregivers where they share their expectations about family engagement during the mentoring relationship.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
<p><i>If the program does NOT use a youth-initiated mentoring model skip to Section 6.</i></p>						
5.9	Staff guide/coach mentees on how to approach perspective mentors and prepare them for the possibility that someone may decline becoming their mentor.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 6: Match Support

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
6.1	At each monitoring contact with the parent/caregiver or a responsible adult in the mentee's life, program asks about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentee using a standardized procedure.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.2	During your regular match support check-ins with families, staff specifically ask about areas for improvement regarding cultural responsiveness and encourage them to speak openly about any times they may have felt anxiety or misunderstood in the relationship.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.3	Program provides parents/caregivers with access to relevant resources and referrals to help parents/caregivers partner with Staff and mentors to address challenges in their mentoring relationships as they arise.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.4	Staff keep families fully informed about any changes or modifications to the program design, policy, procedures, or staffing.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.5	Staff conduct monthly check ins with parents/caregivers to get feedback on the match.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.6	Staff document the date, time, names of the persons involved, and reason for all contacts with family members.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.7	The program has a support group for parents/caregivers where they can discuss parenting issues, mentoring concerns, and access resources, and materials.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.8	Staff document information about each contact with a family member including, at a minimum, the date, length, and description of the activity completed.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.9	Staff provide opportunities for parents/caregivers to build supportive peer connections with mentors in the program.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.10	Staff provide opportunities for parents/caregivers to learn how to effectively work with schools, juvenile probation, and child welfare staff to support their child.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.11	The program offers opportunities to support positive connections and relationship-building between the mentor and the mentee's family.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 6: Match Support

Continued

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
6.12	The program offers volunteer and/or paid positions for family members to assist with program activities or events.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.13	At least annually, program thanks the parent(s)/caregiver(s) and recognizes their contributions in supporting the mentee's engagement in mentoring.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.14	Family members are invited to program events and activities (e.g., potlucks, back-to-school events, and recognition ceremonies).	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.15	Program hosts one or more group activities for matches and mentees' families.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.16	The program offers childcare for younger siblings during program events.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.17	The program provides transportation for families to attend program events and activities.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.18	The program provides food and refreshments at activities and events that include family members.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.19	Staff have a variety of ways to recognize families who have youth in the mentoring program e.g., photo boards, newsletter stories, and recognition events.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.20	Staff greet parents/caregivers in the front office or at the door as they arrive to program activities and events.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.21	Staff phone parents/caregivers to remind them of meetings and events.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.22	Staff contact parents/caregivers after they attended an event to thank them for their participation e.g., a thank you card or call.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.23	Family activities are planned at various times of the day or week and consider the parent's work or childcare schedule.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
6.24	The programs offers activities for mentors, mentees, and families together.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 6: Match Support

Continued

Priority for
Improvement

Consistently
True

Sometimes
True

Rarely True

If the program does NOT use a youth-initiated mentoring model skip to Section 7.

6.25

The program holds events or shares information with mentors, mentees, and their families about events in the community where mentees can learn networking skills.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

Section 7: Closure

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
7.1	The parent/caregiver feedback about the mentoring relationship is solicited after the closure of the match.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
7.2	The parent/caregiver participates in the mentor-mentee closure meeting.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
7.3	Parents/caregivers participate in planning for the match closure activities.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
7.4	Program provides a written public document that is given to parents/caregivers, mentees, and mentors that outlines the terms of match closure and the policies for mentor/mentee contact after a match end.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
7.5	Staff have discussions with mentors, mentees, and parent/caregivers about potential of match termination, the need to prepare for match termination, and having a formal match end celebration or meeting.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
7.6	The match closure process that includes sending the mentees' families e.g., parents/caregivers an email or letter or calling them to inform the family of the match closure; inviting them to the match closure meeting when possible and doing something celebratory to mark the end of the match that includes family members.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
7.7	Staff conduct an exit interview with parents/caregivers that includes their input on the following topics: a. Discussion of mentee's feelings about closure b. Discussion of reasons for closure, if relevant c. Discussion of positive experiences in the mentoring relationship d. Procedure preparing the mentee for the closure of the match e. Review of program rules for post-closure contact f. Input on a plan for post-closure contact, if relevant g. Input on a plan for the last match meeting, if possible h. Discussion of possible rematching, if relevant	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
7.8	At the conclusion of the agreed upon time period of the mentoring relationship, staff discuss the possibility to continue the match for an additional period of time with mentors, mentees, and parents/caregivers.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
7.9	Program has a written policy and procedure regarding involvement of parents/caregivers in the decision to rematch, when relevant, for managing rematching.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

Section 7: Closure

Continued

*Priority for
Improvement*

*Consistently
True*

*Sometimes
True*

Rarely True

If the program does NOT use a youth-initiated mentoring model skip to Section 8.

7.10

Staff lead a discussion with the mentor, mentee, and their parent/guardian about how the relationship has changed as the result of being in the mentoring program and how will look after the end of participation in the mentoring program.

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

Section 8: Program Evaluation

		Rarely True	Sometimes True	Consistently True		Priority for Improvement
8.1	The program conducts a needs assessment at least annually that includes feedback from families in the communities served.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
8.2	The program has mechanisms to solicit and respond to feedback from mentees and their parents/caregivers.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
8.3	The program has a logic model/theory of change that includes family participation.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
8.4	The program documents and tracks activities and inputs specific to the involvement of families and parents/caregivers.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
8.5	The program provides opportunities for families served to provide feedback on program evaluation and related findings.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
8.6	Staff collect data to document changes in mentor's knowledge about working with families in a culturally responsive and respectful manner.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4
8.7	The program uses regular feedback surveys or focus groups to solicit their input from youth about service gaps and programming.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3		<input type="radio"/> 4

SCORING

SCORING MATRIX FOR PROGRAMS NOT IMPLEMENTING YOUTH-INITIATED MENTORING

Section	(A) Number Answered “Consistently True”	(B) Total Points Possible	(C) Percent (A ÷ B) X 100
1. Environment		14	
2. Recruitment		11	
3. Screening		16	
4. Training		10	
5. Match Initiation		8	
6. Match Support		24	
7. Closure		9	
8. Evaluation		7	
TOTAL SCORE		99	

SCORING

Continued

SCORING MATRIX FOR PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTING YOUTH-INITIATED MENTORING

Section	(A) Number Answered “Consistently True”	(B) Total Points Possible	(C) Percent (A ÷ B) X 100
1. Environment		17	
2. Recruitment		15	
3. Screening		19	
4. Training		15	
5. Match Initiation		9	
6. Match Support		25	
7. Closure		10	
8. Evaluation		7	
TOTAL SCORE		117	

PART 3:

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

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Resources:

- [Culturally Responsive Family Engagement Tool](#)

[The National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards Adapted for Mentoring Providers](#)

- [20 Activities to Support Family Engagement](#)
- [Sample Family Engagement Calendar](#)



DOWNLOAD

The National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards for Mentoring Providers

The National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards are intended to advance health equity, improve quality, and help eliminate healthcare disparities by establishing a blueprint for health and healthcare organizations. This document applies these standards to mentoring to advance social equity and eliminate disparities.

CLAS Standard

Applied to Mentoring Providers

Principal Standard

1 Provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs.

Provide effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality program services to mentees, their families, and mentors that are responsive to diverse cultural beliefs and practices, gender identities, sexual orientations, differing abilities, preferred languages, literacy, and other communication needs.

Governance, Leadership, and Workforce

2 Advance and sustain organizational governance and leadership that promotes CLAS and health equity through policy, practices, and allocated resources.

Advance and sustain organizational governance and leadership that promotes culturally responsiveness, CLAS, and social equity through policy, practices, and allocated resources.

3 Recruit, promote, and support culturally and linguistically diverse governance, leadership, and workforce that are responsive to the population in the service area.

Recruit, promote, and support diversity in governance, leadership, and staff and volunteer workforces that reflect the diversity of the youth and families served by the mentoring program and/or the organization that houses the program.



Governance, Leadership, and Workforce

- 4** Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.

Educate and train governance, leadership, and staff and volunteer mentors in culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate policies and practices, including gender identities, sexual orientations, and differing abilities, on an ongoing basis.

Communication and Language Assistance

- 5** Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.

Offer language assistance to youth and families who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, including those who are visually, hearing, or physically impaired, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all program services.

- 6** Inform all individuals of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing.

Inform all youth and families of the availability of language assistance services clearly and in their preferred language, verbally and in writing, including using pictures, large print, braille, and captioning.

- 7** Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.

Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.



Governance, Leadership, and Workforce

- 4** Educate and train governance, leadership, and workforce in culturally and linguistically appropriate policies and practices on an ongoing basis.

Educate and train governance, leadership, and staff and volunteer mentors in culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate policies and practices, including gender identities, sexual orientations, and differing abilities, on an ongoing basis.

Communication and Language Assistance

- 5** Offer language assistance to individuals who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all health care and services.

Offer language assistance to youth and families who have limited English proficiency and/or other communication needs, including those who are visually, hearing, or physically impaired, at no cost to them, to facilitate timely access to all program services.

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- 7** Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.

Ensure the competence of individuals providing language assistance, recognizing that the use of untrained individuals and/or minors as interpreters should be avoided.



Communication and Language Assistance

8 Provide easy-to-understand print and multimedia materials and signage in the languages commonly used by the populations in the service area.

Provide easy-to-understand and accessible print, multimedia material, and signage in the languages commonly used by youth and families in the communities that your program serves, including the visually and hearing impaired, including using pictures, large print, braille and captioning.

Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability

9 Establish culturally and linguistically appropriate goals, policies, and management accountability, and infuse them throughout the organization's planning and operations.

Establish culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate goals, policies, and management accountability, including those that address cultural, social, gender identities, sexual orientations, and differing abilities, and infuse them throughout the organization's planning and operations.

10 Conduct ongoing assessments of the organization's CLAS-related activities and integrate CLAS-related measures into measurement and continuous quality improvement activities.

Continuously assess the implementation of culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate policies and procedures and integrate this assessment into quality improvement activities.

11 Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor and evaluate the impact of CLAS on health equity and outcomes and to inform service delivery.

Collect and maintain accurate and reliable demographic data to monitor and evaluate the culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate activities and program outcomes, including those that address cultural, social, gender identities, sexual orientations, and differing abilities, and to inform service delivery.



CLAS Standard

Applied to Mentoring Providers

Engagement, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability

12 Conduct regular assessments of community health assets and needs and use the results to plan and implement services that respond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of populations in the service area.

Conduct regular assessments of community assets and needs and use the results to plan and implement services and program activities that respond to the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of populations in the service area, including social, cultural, gender identities, sexual orientations, and differing abilities.

13 Partner with the community to design, implement, and evaluate policies, practices, and services to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness.

Partner with youth, families, and other stakeholders in the communities that your program serves to design, implement, and evaluate policies, practices, and programming to ensure cultural responsiveness and linguistic appropriateness.

14 Create conflict and grievance resolution processes that are culturally and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints.

Create conflict and grievance resolution processes that are socially and culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate to identify, prevent, and resolve conflicts or complaints.

15 Communicate the organization's progress in implementing and sustaining CLAS to all stakeholders, constituents, and the general public.

Communicate the organization and program's progress in implementing and sustaining socially and culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate services to all stakeholders, constituents, and the general public, including the youth and families served by your mentoring program and in the communities that your program serves.

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20 Family Engagement Activities for Mentoring Programs

Make family engagement a routine part of your mentoring program by planning a year's worth of activities and events that encourage families to participate. Ensure that at least once a month you have something specifically for families. Need some ideas? Here are a few to start.

1. **Create an unofficial Facebook Support Group** for parents/caregivers that is fully administered by a parent/caregiver of a mentee who has successfully completed the program or a major program milestone e.g., 6-months of consistent one-to-one mentoring. The group can offer support, wisdom, and guidance to help current parent/caregiver in their journey.
2. **Interview the parent/caregiver** for a newsletter story or social media post to highlight a successful mentor-mentee relationship or celebrate a mentee's accomplishments or simply talk about a wonderful family that takes part in your program.
3. **A potluck dinner for families, mentors, and mentees.** Have families and mentors sit together. Supply a jar of conversation starters to add some fun and give them an opportunity to get to know each other better.
4. **Movie night for families.** Events that give other family members a chance to participate can offer parents/caregivers an activity for the whole family. Order some pizzas, buy some bottled water and some fresh fruit, and you've got some fun!
5. **Offer volunteer opportunities for parents/caregivers** and other family members during program events (e.g., helping set up, greeting people as they arrive, taking photos, or chaperoning).
6. **Annual family recognition** event honoring the families who take part in your program. Add a fun twist like having the mentor and mentees as servers or add a team building activity like building balloon towers with balloons and masking tape.
7. **Offer trainings for parents/caregivers** on topics of interest such as advocating for the children in school, internet safety, or accessing community resources.
8. **Have a school supply drive at your organization** for mentees and their siblings.

9. **Have an “angel tree”** where employees at your organization and/or mentors can pick a family to buy gifts for the holidays.
10. **Organize a “Earth Day Park Clean-Up” activity** for mentors, mentees, and their families to come together to pick up trash in the neighborhood. This could be another opportunity for a family leader to organize. Get garbage bags, plastic gloves, and hand sanitizer and get going!
11. **Enlist parents/caregivers or other family members to organize a celebration of a cultural event** that is important to them like Hispanic Heritage or Black History month.
12. **Find any excuse to send a handwritten note or card**—Congratulations, Happy Birthday, Valentine’s Day, Chanukah, Christmas, Eid, or Kwanzaa.
13. **Invite parents to attend mentor recruitment events** or take part in social media to support your program’s recruitment efforts.
14. **Display pictures of mentors with the mentees** and family members in your office space.
15. **Organize family and youth advisory boards** that can provide feedback about your program.
16. **Collect information using brief surveys** via online software such as Survey Monkey or brief telephone calls.
17. **Invite parents/caregivers to participate in training** for new mentors. They can give a fresh look from the parent/caregiver perspective on the benefits of mentoring for their children, mentoring strategies, and qualities of successful mentors.
18. **Have an accessible resource library or virtual space** where families can find information on resources available in their community as well as books and reference materials of interest to families (e.g., mental, physical health, housing, nutrition, schools, heating programs, and free resources).
19. **Enlist a team of mentors, mentees, and family members for local fundraiser** like a 5k Run/Walk. This can be a wonderful way to encourage mentees to advocate for change and it offers another opportunity for a family leader to organize.
20. **Make regular monthly check-in calls** with families to get their perspective on how the match is going, as well as to learn of any changes in their family or unmet service needs that could affect their well-being or the mentoring relationship. Regular communication sends the message that families are important partners in mentoring and encourages family engagement.

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[Sample Family Engagement Calendar](#)



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SAMPLE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CALENDAR



	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
Celebrations & Observances	National Mentoring Month	Black History Month	Parenting Appreciation Month	National Cannabis & Alcohol Awareness Months	Mental Health Awareness Month	Juneteenth & National LGBTQIA Pride Month	National Anti-Boredom Month	National Back to School Month	Suicide Awareness Month & Hispanic Heritage Month	Hispanic Heritage Month	Thanksgiving	Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, & Sometimes Eid Holidays
Match Support	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins	Monthly Check-ins
Family Advisory Board Meeting		Family Advisory Board Meeting			Family Advisory Board Meeting				Family Advisory Board Meeting			
Parent/Caregiver Feedback Survey				Parent/Caregiver Feedback Survey						Parent/Caregiver Feedback Survey		
Event	Mentor Appreciation Celebration		Family Appreciation Dinner			Juneteenth BBQ		Back To School Book Bag Giveaway		Latin Music & Dance Party for Mentors, Mentees & Families	Staff send holiday cards to mentors and families	Holiday Party for Mentors, Mentees & Families
Parent/Caregiver Training *	Communication Skills for Parents and Caregivers	Strong African-American Families	Understanding the Juvenile Justice System for Parents & Caregivers	How to Talk to Your Teen About Drug Use	Local Behavioral Health Services & Supports	Resources for Adult Caregivers of LGBTQIA Youth	No Cost/Low Cost Family Fun Activities	Supporting Youth in Foster Care	QPR for Parents & Caregivers	When Your Child Is Struggling in School: Advocacy Skills for Parents & Caregivers	Supporting Resilience in Troubled Times	Encouraging Healthy Eating Habits

* Trainings may be offered in house by the program staff or available through partnerships with other community partners. The mentoring program regularly shares information via its newsletter with parents/caregivers about a variety of free trainings about parenting skills and topics of interest to parents/caregivers.