



TEAMMATES™
MENTORING PROGRAM

Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

Mentoring Training Manual

Mentor Tips, Strategies, and Activities for mentors involved in a one-to-one relationship with a student

TeamMates of Nebraska is an affiliated fund with the Nebraska Community Foundation



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TeamMates of Nebraska Mission:

To provide the framework for adults to volunteer to serve as a positive role model for a student who would benefit from another caring adult in his or her life.



"Our society is changing! Students today face more challenges than ever before. We would like to thank you for personally volunteering to serve as a mentor to a young person. Your help is needed to support the students of today who will be our future leaders."

Tom Osborne

Nancy Osborne

Adults need to remember the importance of being a good example. Kids want values, but they are rightly suspicious of talk without action. Of all the things that can motivate people, the pursuit of excellence is one of the most effective ways to do so, especially when combined with a positive can-do attitude.

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Mentoring

Simple Solutions

Mentoring is an age-old concept. The word “mentor” comes from the Greek words for steadfast and enduring. It was the name Homer gave to the man Odysseus whom Homer entrusted with the guidance of his son before he departed to fight in the Trojan War. Throughout history mentors have been found in our society in the form of apprentices, extended families, and close-knit communities. Today we see mentors in the work place, schools, faith groups, coaching staffs, and the military.

An article from *Parade* magazine reveals how the Marine Corps transforms young people, many who come to the military from rebellious backgrounds, into confident, responsible leaders. Author Thomas E. Ricks attended boot camp at Parris Island, South Carolina to observe the life-changing training process that occurs with new recruits. The answer seems to lie in the fact that the Marine Corps emphasizes honor, courage, and commitment. They offer a powerful alternative to the loneliness and distrust that seems so widespread, especially among our youth today.

An Overview of Mentoring

What Mentoring Is and Is Not

Why Mentoring Programs Are Needed

How Mentoring Programs Meet Individual Needs

What is Mentoring?

According to a study on mentors conducted by Daniel Levinson and published in *A Season of a Man's Life*, a mentor serves “as a teacher, sponsor, guide, exemplar, and counsel. “Mentors,” Levinson says, “help their protégés clarify and achieve their dreams.”

Most mentor arrangements are informal. In the business world, for example, experienced professionals may work with promising new employees and groom them for future success.

Today, however, mentoring is emerging as a formal process. Many companies have begun mentoring programs to support the career development of new employees, notably women and minorities.

In the community, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, established in 1904, has arranged millions of mentoring relationships for children in need of nurturing adults. Increasingly, other national youth agencies such as YWCA, YMCA, and Camp Fire are including mentoring to enhance existing service.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines a mentor as “a person looked upon for wise advice and guidance.” A mentor has the ability to empower another person and reduce his or her capacity for passivity. A mentor says, “I'm here for you.” At one time or other, a mentor may play many roles, including those of:

Guide - - Partner - - Friend - - Wise and Trusted Teacher
Cheerleader - - Coach - - Listener
Link to Other Cultures, Other Attitudes and Behaviors
Visionary “seer” - - Confidant - - Role Model
Self-Esteem Booster - - Tutor - - Sounding Board - - Brother/Sister

Though a mentor may be a role model, a true mentor does not ask another person to “be like me.” A mentor says, “I will help you be whoever you wish to be.”

(Adapted from *Partnerships for Success: A Mentoring Program Manual*, 1990)

Mentoring has been a practiced art of developing and maintaining positive and helpful human relationships for hundreds of years, by nearly every culture, by varied individuals and groups, and in many different ways. It has survived the tests of time and has been of enormous value to individuals and societies. Today, as we embark on a new millennium, there is a revival of interest in mentoring by the business community, faith-based organizations, social agencies, service institutions, and school-based groups.

Simply said, however, a mentor is a wise and trusted friend with a commitment to provide guidance and support to the mentee. Regardless of the definition, mentoring works and it is most effective when it is supported with a structured mentor training program that is properly designed and seriously implemented.

A Training Guide for Mentors, Smink

***“Mentoring is a one-to-one caring, supportive relationship
Or partnership between a mentor and a [mentee] that is
Based on trust. This relationship focuses on the needs
Of the mentored individuals and encourages them to
Develop to their fullest potential based on their own
Vision for the future.”***

California Mentor Resource Center, 1996, p.3

TeamMates is:

**One-to-One
In School
One Hour a Week
For at Least One School Year**

TeamMates Mentoring Program

TeamMates was started in 1991 by Dr. Tom and Nancy Osborne. It is a one-to-one mentoring program that matches adult volunteers with students in need of an additional caring adult in their lives. The volunteers come from local businesses and community organizations and serve as positive role models for students. The adult *TeamMate* agrees to have regular, weekly contact with the youth *TeamMate* at school, during school hours. Adult *TeamMates* genuinely like and respect young people and are willing to make a sustained personal commitment to their student. In successful one-to-one mentoring relationships, it is found that mentors identify the youth's interests and take them seriously, allow the young people to take the lead in establishing trust, offer regular reassurance, and view their role as being there to give.

Although these young people are often bright and capable of achievement, they may receive very little support outside of school. With encouragement from someone whom these students can talk to, they have a greater chance to achieve academic success and ultimately, a greater opportunity to be a contributing member to their communities.

The mentoring component of school-business partnerships developed out of mutual need. To compete nationally, American businesses must prepare a skilled workforce, and schools need to stem their alarming dropout rate. The *TeamMates* mentoring program is modeled after successful programs in other parts of the United States.

"The mentors I've talked to are having a fantastic time, and they are doing so much for the kids. I look forward to seeing the progress of this program in years to come."

-Teacher

"The mentor and I talk about the week and what is new in our lives. I appreciate that someone is there to take me aside and show me that people really do care about how I do and what I can accomplish."

-Student TeamMate

"Mentoring has been one of the most uplifting, rewarding, life-affirming experiences."

-Adult TeamMate

The primary objectives of most mentoring relationships are to convey basic societal values, to add new personal skills and experiences, or to offer new insights, attitudes, and behaviors to the mentee. These common principles will add new vision and wider experiences to each mentee in any program whether the targeted goal is to increase academic achievement or gain new employment skills.

A review of successful mentor programs found in the FOCUS database, managed by the National Dropout Prevention Center, identified several other objectives. Among the most common objectives included the development of the attributes of honesty, self-esteem, responsibility, reliability, and commitment. Other objectives identified in local programs were developing students' resilience; learning how to work as members of a team; and applying techniques for problem-solving, decision making and goal setting.

Why Adolescents Need Mentors

Young people growing up today, and especially adolescent youth, have to cope with many more personal and social pressures than any previous generation of youth. These issues are prone to grow into a lifelong problem or even be an immediate life-threatening situation if not addressed early. Early intervention through a structured mentor program may be able to give young people the tools and support they need.

According to *The Commonwealth Fund 1998 Survey of Adults Mentoring Young People*, eight of ten young people in mentoring relationships have one or more problems that put their success in school, health, or development at risk. The survey reported the five most prevalent problems faced by young people as negative feelings about themselves, poor relationships with family members, poor grades, hanging out with the wrong crowd, and getting into trouble at school. (McLearn et al. 1998).

According to many parents and school counselors, normal adolescent development may not exist because youth face so many new and different social, psychological, and physical demands. Understanding these youth-related problems and issues, however, is extremely important for any individual about to undertake the task of being a mentor.

A Training Guide for Mentors, Smink

Benefits of the *TeamMates* Program

Youth TeamMates benefit by...

- ◆ Receiving the support and guidance of a caring adult
- ◆ Receiving assistance with academic endeavors
- ◆ Experiencing greater self-esteem and motivation to succeed
- ◆ Receiving encouragement to stay in school and graduate
- ◆ Receiving encouragement to avoid the use of drugs and alcohol
- ◆ Improving interpersonal relationships with peers, teachers, and family
- ◆ Receiving assistance in choosing a career path

Adult TeamMates benefit by...

- ◆ Increasing their involvement in the community
- ◆ Recognizing they can make a difference
- ◆ Making a new friend
- ◆ Gaining new experience and knowledge about youths and the schools
- ◆ Contributing to the quality of the future workforce

Business and organizations benefit by...

- ◆ Fostering good community relations
- ◆ Contributing to the quality of the future workforce
- ◆ Improving employee morale
- ◆ Enhancing employee skills

Schools benefit by...

- ◆ Improving student performance
- ◆ Improving student attendance
- ◆ Increasing student retention



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Mentor Training Guide

What Makes a Good Mentor?

The Four Primary Tasks of a Mentor:

The following are the four primary tasks a mentor can employ to perform his or her role. While some programs may have more specific tasks for their mentors, at minimum, they all include the four primary tasks:

1. Establish a positive, personal relationship with student/mentee

- ◆ Establish mutual trust and respect
- ◆ May be unique to each specific match
- ◆ Maintain regular interaction and consistent support
- ◆ Make it enjoyable and fun

2. Help student/mentee to develop or begin to develop life skills

- ◆ Work with your student/mentee to accomplish specific program goals (i.e., drop-out prevention, general career awareness)
- ◆ Instill the framework for developing broader life-management skills (i.e. decision making skills, goal setting skills, conflict resolution, money management, etc.)

3. Assist student/mentee on obtaining additional resources

- ◆ Provide awareness of community, educational, and economic resources available to youth and their families, and how to access these resources
- ◆ Act as a guide and/or advocate, “coach” and/or model
- ◆ Avoid acting as a professional case manager, view the role of a mentor as a friend rather than a counselor

4. Increase student/mentee’s ability to interact with people/groups/things from various backgrounds (cultural, racial, socioeconomic, etc.)

- ◆ Respect and explore differences among people/groups from various backgrounds; do not promote values and beliefs of one group as superior than another
- ◆ Introduce student/mentee to different environments, i.e. workplace vs. school setting; discuss differences in behavior, attitude, and style of dress

Mentoring Relationship Cycle

Early Development Stage

- A. Anxiety/Uncertainty
- B. Honeymoon
- C. Testing of Limits

During the Early Development phase three phenomena may occur:

A. Anxiety and Uncertainty - Both parties are observing and assessing each other. Anxiety and uncertainty are present. It is especially important during this stage to keep the lines of communication open and acknowledge feelings. Give it time. TAKE IT SLOW!

B. Honeymoon – Participants are excited about their new roles and feel that nothing could deflate the relationship. The converse may occur. Everything is great but it is not. Remember problems arise in all relationships. After all we are human and need to accept people as they are.

C. Testing of Limits – Remember both participants in a mentoring match are usually new and in the process of exploring this type of relationship. During this stage, participants may be trying to “test” how loyal their mentoring partner is before confiding information.

Growth Stage

- A. Reciprocal Relationship
- B. Building Trust
- C. Guilt Feelings

During the growth stage relationships may experience the following:

A. Reciprocal Relationship – The comfort level with one another has improved. The participants find it easier to share their likes and dislikes. Decision-making is mutual.

B. Building Trust – Openness, honesty, and consistency play a big part in building a trusting relationship. Talking begins to reflect trust when you start self-disclosure.

C. Guilt Feelings – In the growth stage guilt feelings are normal. Everyone has times when they are unable to follow through with plans. Letting one another know when this occurs can alleviate some of these feelings.

Maturity Stage

- A. Flexibility without Guilt
- B. Tolerance of Negative Feedback

- A. **Flexibility without Guilt** – As the relationship matures, both parties accept flexibility without guilt. The trust that has developed allows acceptance of changes and other commitments in both your lives.
- B. **Tolerance of Negative Feedback** – As your relationship matures; you find it easier to accept negative feedback. This feedback may be in the form of negative behavior or constructive criticism.

Closure Stage

- A. Withdrawal
- B. Avoidant Behavior
- C. Denial

- A. **Withdrawal** – Letting go can occur at anytime. Be aware of this possibility if you start experiencing emotional distance from each other. You may feel you have nothing in common anymore. There may be resistance in sharing thoughts or feelings. Communication lines are breaking down.
- B. **Avoidant Behavior** – You may find excuses for not spending time together. When you are together you find physical distance is more comfortable. Goals you have set on your mentoring agreement begin to be ignored.
- C. **Denial** – It might be easier to say everything is great when it is not. Instead of denying the situation, face up to the problem and deal with it. In dealing with it you may return to the early development stage, growth stage, the maturity stage, or you may need to terminate.

Mentoring closures are endings to personal relationships. Make sure they are handled positively in a mature manner and with sensitivity.

*The job of the mentor is to highlight the students
Specialties and form a relationship
that tells this youngster
that an adult cares and accepts them
and is interested in their present and future.*

Characteristics of 8-10 Year-Olds

General Characteristics

Interested in people, aware of differences, willing to give more to others but expect more.
Busy, active, full of enthusiasm, may try too much, interested in money and its value.
Sensitive to criticism, recognize failure, capacity for self-evaluation.
Capable of prolonged interest, may make plans on own.
Decisive, dependable, reasonable, strong sense of right and wrong.
Spend a great deal of time in talk and discussion.
Often outspoken and critical of adults although still dependent on adult approval.

Physical Characteristics

Are very active; need frequent breaks from tasks to do fun activities which involve use of energy.
Bone growth is not yet complete.
Early matures may be upset with their size. A listening ear and your explanations will help.
May tend to be accident-prone.

Social Characteristics

Can be very competitive.
Are choosy about their friends: BOYS LIKE BOYS, GIRLS LIKE GIRLS.
Being accepted by friends becomes quite important.
Team games become popular.
Worshipping heroes, TV stars, and sports figures is common.

Emotional Characteristics

Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adult rules and friends' rules. You can help by being honest and consistent.

Mental Characteristics

Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
Are eager to answer questions.
Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
Wide discrepancies in reading ability.
Are very curious, and are collectors of everything, however, they may jump to other objects of interest after a short time.

Developmental Tasks

Social cooperation.
Self-evaluation.
Skill learning.
Team play.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies

Recognize allegiance to friends and "heroes".
Remind young person of responsibilities in a 2-way relationship.
Acknowledge performance: "Hey, watch this."
Offer enjoyable learning experiences. It's a great time to teach about different cultures.
Provide frank answers to questions about upcoming physiological changes.

Suggested Activities

Board games, video games, craft projects, and drawing.

Characteristics of 11-13 Year-Olds

General Characteristics

- Testing limits, know-it-all attitude.
- Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear rejection, mood swings.
- Identification with admired adult.
- Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

- Small-muscle coordination is good, and interests in art, crafts, models and music are popular.
- Bone growth is not yet complete.
- Early matures may be upset with their size. A listening ear and explanations will help.
- Are very concerned with their appearance and very self-conscious about growth.
- Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Girls may begin menstruation, and may begin sexual activity.

Social Characteristics

- Being accepted by friends becomes quite important. Cliques start to develop outside of school.
- Team games become popular.
- Crushes on members of the opposite sex are common; girls are ahead of boys.
- Friends set the rules of behavior. Feel a need to conform. They dress and act alike in order to belong.
- Are very concerned about what others say and think of them. Have a tendency to manipulate others.
- Interested in earning own money.

Emotional Characteristics

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
- Friends are very important during this time; there can be conflicts between adult rules and friends' rules.
- Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
- Loud behavior and showing off hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

Mental Characteristics

- Tend to be perfectionists. If they try to attempt too much, they may feel frustrated and guilty.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Attention span can be lengthy.

Developmental Tasks

- Social cooperation.
- Self-evaluation.
- Skill learning.
- Team play.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies

- Offer alternative opinions without being insistent.
- Be accepting of different physical states and emotional changes.
- Give frank answers to questions.
- Share aspects of professional life and rewards of achieving in world of work.
- Do not tease about appearance, clothes, boyfriends, sexuality. Affirm often.

Suggested Activities

- Board games, build models, creative writing, help with homework, talk about movies and music

(Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, Child Development Seminar, August 1990.)

Characteristics of 14-16 Year-Olds

General Characteristics

Testing limits, know-it-all attitude.
Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear rejection, mood swings.
Identification with admired adult.
Bodies are going through physical changes that affect personal appearance.

Physical Characteristics

Are very concerned with their appearance and very self-conscious about growth.
Diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
Rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence. Enormous appetite.

Social Characteristics

Friends set the rules of behavior. Feel a need to conform. They dress and act alike in order to belong.
Are very concerned about what others say and think of them. Have a tendency to manipulate others.
Going to extremes, emotional instability with know-it-all attitude.
Fear ridicule and being unpopular.
Strong identification with an admired adult. Strongly idealistic.
Girls usually more interested in boys than boys are in girls, resulting from earlier maturing of the girls.

Emotional Characteristics

Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings are easily hurt.
Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
Loud behavior and bravado hides their lack of self-confidence.
Look at the world more objectively, adults subjectively, critical.

Mental Characteristics

Can better understand moral principles.
Attention span can be lengthy.
Argumentative behavior may be part of trying out an opinion.

Developmental Tasks

Physical maturation.
Abstract thinking.
Membership in the peer group.
Heterosexual relationships.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies

Give choices and don't be afraid to confront inappropriate behavior.
Use humor to diffuse testy situations.
Give positive feedback, and let them know your affection is for them and not for their accomplishments.
Be available and be yourself, with strengths, weaknesses and emotions.
Be honest and disclose appropriate personal information to build trust.

Suggested Activities

Active time in the gym, walks, and talks.
Cooking, car repair, career exploration, homework.
Talk about movies and music.

TIPS FOR MENTOR-MENTEE RELATIONSHIPS

- ◆ **Put your mentee first:** During the session, concentrate on his/her needs and problems. Leave yours at the door. Be flexible in your planning. If your mentee has something on his/her mind, drop your plans for the session and focus on the immediate needs.
- ◆ **Be your mentee's friend, but not a buddy:** A *friend* is a person who looks out for your best interest. Therefore, a friend never allows you to do less than your best; a friend does not allow you to shirk responsibilities; a friend does not allow you to do things that will be harmful to you; a friend is not a "back-scratcher."
- ◆ **Approach your mentee on a basis of mutual respect:** Your mentee has experienced many things you have not and has knowledge you have not. Show respect for these things and do not belittle them for things not known or skills not yet acquired.
- ◆ **Take time to get to know your mentee:** Some mentees will be very open; others will not. In order to be of the most help, you must gain an insight into behavior. Some questioning techniques that may help and will elicit more than the variations of "yes" or "no" include: *Descriptive*: What is it like? What kind of a situation is it? *Comparative*: How are two or more things different or alike?
- ◆ **Drop the authoritative role:** Be an interested human being.
- ◆ **Communicate by transmitting attitudes and feelings:** Do this by being yourself; it is more effective than simply to use words.
- ◆ **Arrange the physical setting so as to be close to the mentee:** Do not sit behind a desk or across a table. Rather, share a table by having the mentee sit beside you.
- ◆ **Talk ideally about one-third of the time when the mentee discusses a problem:** This gives the opportunity for the mentee to do most of the talking and shows that you are interested.
- ◆ **Ask questions that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no":** Instead of saying, "Do you like the class?" say, "What do you like or dislike about the class?"
- ◆ **Ask the questions, that allow a personal interest in the mentee:** Do not sound like an interrogator.
- ◆ **Do not interrupt the mentee when he/she is talking:** This communicates that what is said is important. However, if the mentee digresses from the subject, say "How does this apply to the subject we started talking about?" or "What does this mean to you?"
- ◆ **Give the mentee silence in which to think:** Realize that there will be periods of silence while thinking occurs. This takes practice, for in normal conversation, silence produces a feeling of awkwardness. Realize there are different kind of silence. Pause before talking. The mentee may wish to make additional remarks. A pause of a few seconds may enable conversation to continue.
- ◆ **Move the focus from intellectual thought to emotional responses when feelings are being discussed:** Ask such questions as, "What does this mean to you?" and "How did you feel about that?"
- ◆ **Observe and interpret nonverbal clues:** Notice body movement, finger tapping, and other obvious clues.
- ◆ **Be alert to notice the change in the rate of speech, a change in the volume of speech, or a change in the pitch or tone of voice:** Such changes may indicate that there are emotional feelings connected with the subject being discussed and that the subject needs further exploration.

- ◆ **Use brief remarks:** Do not confuse the student with long complicated questions or comments.
- ◆ **Don't give lectures on ways to behave:** Ask the mentee to suggest alternatives. But allow the mentee to make decisions. Together look at the consequences of the alternatives.
- ◆ **Share common experiences with your mentee, focusing more on the mentee and the mentee's problem.**
- ◆ **Clarify and interpret what the mentee is saying:** Use such remarks as, "What you are saying to me is..." At other times, make a summarizing remark. But be sure to make these brief interpretations only after the mentee has presented the idea.
- ◆ **Do not be alarmed at remarks made by the mentee:** Instead, focus on the reason behind what was said or done.
- ◆ **Do not make false promises or reassure the mentee that things will be all right:** This will be recognized as superficial. Instead communicate a feeling for the mentee and a desire to see and understand the problem. Do not appear to be overly concerned or to assume the mentee's problem.
- ◆ **Do not make moralistic judgements:** Instead, focus on what is behind the mentee's behavior. Ask yourself: "What is there about this person that causes the behavior to occur?" As a mentor, do not blame the mentee for failures; try to understand why there has been a failure, accept the failure, and go on from there.
- ◆ **Be sincere in your praise of the mentee:** Always praise the attempt as much or more than the right answer. Give positive reinforcement whenever possible.
- ◆ **Do not reject the mentee through your remarks or nonverbal clues, but instead attempt to be accepting:** Try not to show impatience! Do not threaten or argue; guard against any act that might appear to belittle.
- ◆ **Do not ignore the problem:** Seek immediate help from the school liaison or principal and support staff in your school building. You do not need to handle areas that require expert assistance from staff. Leave tough areas to them.
- ◆ **Do not become quickly discouraged:** Some of the mentee's behavior patterns have taken a long time to develop. Although some improvements may appear, permanent changes in behavior come slowly. Mentors become impatient and want change overnight. You must be patient. It may take ten years before a mentee says: "Do you know who made a difference in my life? My mentor when I was in second grade."

"Children have never been good at listening to their elders,
but they have never failed to imitate them."
-- James Baldwin

Strategies for Developing Effective Mentoring Relationships

Do's:

- ◆ Listen – In your eagerness to relate to the student/mentee, resist the impulse to interrupt with a similar story of your own.
- ◆ Be Flexible – Do it their way once and your way next.
- ◆ Be Consistent – If the student/mentee has suffered a lot of disappointments, this can be the crucial quality you can offer.
- ◆ Give Reason – You can increase your credibility if you can say why something is or isn't appropriate, e.g. "at work you could do this because..."
- ◆ Show Affection – There is a natural tendency for people to want and need affection. You should model appropriate behavior. You can show affection (a handshake, a hug, a pat on the back); letting the student/mentee know you've been thinking about them during their absence.
- ◆ Model Appropriate Behavior – Be conscious of your own behavior and what self-concept you are projecting.
- ◆ Have Fun – Find opportunities to be silly; release stress; take time to laugh.
- ◆ Acknowledge Accomplishment – In day-to-day activities note when the student/mentee tries and succeeds.
- ◆ Give Encouragement – Remind them of previous successes when something seems difficult. Tell them "you can do it."
- ◆ See the student/mentee as an Individual – Identify what is special and unique about them and acknowledge it.
- ◆ Practice Anticipatory Empathy – Although you may not have had the degree of loss your student/mentee has had, reach down and remember how you felt about losses you have had.
- ◆ Respect Boundaries – If you see that a question you've asked is "touchy," back away. People who have been "burned" need to protect their vulnerability.
- ◆ Make Frequent Deposits – Building a relationship is like building a bank account. Every time you do what you said you were going to do, have fun together, say the right encouraging word, it's like making a deposit that can be later drawn against.
- ◆ Spend Private Time – the time you spend with your student/mentee may offer the only time when they are away from peer groups and co-workers.
- ◆ Remember Details – Nothing is more flattering to any of us than to know we are truly being listened to and what we say is worth remembering.

Don'ts:

- ◆ Criticize the Past – Avoid bringing up past mistakes.
- ◆ Generalize Negative Behavior – Avoid words like "you always" or "you never."
- ◆ Share Lots of Your Personal Problems – You are there for the student/mentee. Only when there is a lesson to be learned is it appropriate to share personal problems.
- ◆ Pry – Be sensitive to verbal and nonverbal cues that indicate you are asking too many or too threatening questions.
- ◆ Constantly Teach – Recognize teachable moments using approaches such as "What do you think of the way that person just behaved?"
- ◆ Make Unnecessary Withdrawals – Each time you use corrective feedback or express your disagreement with behavior, you make a "withdrawal." You should try to have four deposits accumulated.
- ◆ Interrupt – Let your student/mentee finish telling you a story or giving you information without being interrupted.
- ◆ Pass Judgment – Wait to be asked before you offer your opinion.
- ◆ Criticize Family – It is inappropriate to criticize your student/mentee's family or employer. Even if you disapprove, do not voice your opinion. Help your student/mentee problem-solve issues involving their concern.
- ◆ Use a Lot of "Shoulds" – "Shoulds" provoke resistance. Find ways to say "how about if..." and other more positive phrases.
- ◆ Discourage Difference – Allow your student/mentee the freedom to explore various ways of thinking and behaving even if they are different from yours.
- ◆ Set Unrealistic Expectations – Understand that you are one force among many in the student/mentee's life and be patient and preserving. Be aware of very small changes.



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Mentor Skills

GOAL SETTING

Goal setting occurs early in the relationship, after trust and confidentiality of the relationship is understood. An effective way is for the mentor and student to keep a journal describing their goals and progress towards them.

One of the most important areas in which the adult TeamMate can assist the youth TeamMate is in setting goals. There are several things to consider before beginning the task of goal setting with a TeamMate.

A **long-term goal** may need to be articulated before a short-term goal can be explored with a *TeamMate*. A *TeamMate* may not see the need to work toward a short-term goal unless they see the relationship of the short-term goal to a long-term goal. (i.e., graduating from high school may be the motivating factor to help them work toward short-term goals such as completing homework, attending classes regularly, etc.).

A **short-term goal**, which can be immediately achieved by your *TeamMate*, is a good starting point (i.e., a short-term goal could be to complete all math homework assignments for the next week).

Time must be spent with the <i>TeamMate</i> .	You will need to establish a relationship of trust and confidentiality before goal setting should be attempted.
The youth <i>TeamMate</i> must be involved .	You can provide guidance, however, the <i>TeamMate</i> needs to articulate the goal -- not you.
The goal should be realistic .	If it is too difficult, it will lead to frustration and defeat.
The goal should be challenging .	If it is too difficult, it will lead to frustration and defeat.
The goal should have a deadline .	If it is too easy, there is little incentive to achieve it and little reward in getting there.
The goal should be specific .	Or there may be a tendency to put off completing it.
The goal should be obtainable .	So you know when you have gotten there.
The youth <i>TeamMate</i> should make a commitment to you and carry out the goal.	The best-laid plans in the world will never be achieved unless there is a commitment confirmed with a handshake, a written agreement, etc.
If the <i>TeamMate</i> fails to achieve their goal, the following points should be examined:	The goal may have been too difficult. The goal may have been developed without the active involvement and commitment of the <i>TeamMate</i> . The <i>TeamMate</i> may be fearful of achieving a goal -- many students believe themselves to be "losers" and become accustomed to making poor choices. This, in turn, reinforces their negative self-image.

MY GOALS

Date this plan is made for: _____

Date we will review this plan: _____

Academic Goals

My goal is: _____

I will do these activities to reach my goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I will know I have reached my goal when:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Personal Goals

My goal is: _____

I will do these activities to reach my goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I will know I have reached my goal when:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Behavior Goals

My goal is:

I will do these activities to reach my goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I will know I have reached my goal when:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Attendance Goals

My goal is:

I will do these activities to reach my goal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

I will know I have reached my goal when:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Youth *TeamMate*

Adult *TeamMate*

Communication Skills

Remember, it's not what you say, it's the way you say it.

Listening - Listening does not have to be passive. It can be as active as

talking, if you do it right. To listen effectively, you should:

- ◆ Pay attention.
- ◆ Be focused on what is being said.
- ◆ Be careful not to interrupt.
- ◆ Listen for the feelings behind the words.
- ◆ Keep an open mind - don't judge immediately.
- ◆ Encourage the speaker to continue and clarify what has been said.

Looking - People communicate with verbal and body language. Pay attention to the whole person. Take note of facial gestures and body movements. Many times the youth *TeamMate* does not know what they are feeling. Observe the feelings and see if they match the *TeamMate's* body language. Remember feelings are neither right nor wrong. Everyone is entitled to feelings, but how we handle or cope with feelings is important. These are ways to help you more fully understand what the *TeamMate* is saying-

- ◆ Maintain eye contact.
- ◆ Show that you are listening by leaning forward: say "Yes" or "Go on."
- ◆ Confirm what you are understanding - repeat back what you hear. Ask if that's what the *TeamMate* "said."

*Every time I sit down
to talk with another person,
I know that if I listen carefully
enough, I can make a difference
in their lives.
And if I can make a difference
in their lives,
it will surely make a difference
in mine.*

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

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

Active Listening

*Active listening is carefully listening to the **words** and **feelings** expressed. It also means responding in such a way that the other person knows they have been **understood**. Active listening takes **energy**. **Concentration** is vital. Open body language is necessary. It means "listening to" rather than just hearing.*

*Active learning attempts to **identify the emotion** underlying the words. What is the other person really experiencing? What is really being said? Active listening requires the listener to reflect the feelings heard. It means letting the speaker know what the listener believes they are saying. The listener **suspends***

ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES	
<p><u>Paraphrasing</u> The listener, in their own words, states their understanding of what has been heard and asks the speaker to verify or correct this interpretation.</p>	<p>“Do I hear you saying...” “I believe you mean.... right?” “Sounds like...”</p>
<p><u>Door Opening</u> The listener invites the speaker to elaborate. The listener must show interest, and must not allow their own viewpoint or judgment to contaminate the invitation.</p>	<p>“Give me an example.” “Please tell me more about it.” “I’d like to hear more about his.” “I’m not sure I understand.”</p>
<p><u>Probing</u> The listener raises a topic that is related to the speaker’s statement and asks the speaker to elaborate on that topic.</p>	<p>Mentee: “I like math. The only reason I got a “D” is that I can hardly hear the teacher.” Mentor: “Have you noticed you have trouble catching what other teachers are saying?”</p>
<p><u>Perception checking</u> The listener also pays attention to what is not being said to reach new insights and hunches, then checks the accuracy of these with the speaker. Body language, eye contact, topics systematically avoided, and the unmentioned feelings that lie behind the words are some of the things worth noticing.</p>	<p>“Every time you’ve mentioned your sister today, you’ve clenched your fists and gritted your teeth. I sense a lot of anger. Are you mad at her?”</p>

In empathic listening, you listen with your eyes and with your heart. You listen for feeling, for meaning. You listen for behavior. You use your right brain as well as your left. You sense, you intuit, you feel. Empathic listening is powerful because it gives you accurate data to work with.

-Stephen Covey

Tolerances and Expectations

It takes an appropriate balance of compassion and boundaries to work with young people. Sometimes adults who interact with youth outside of their own family tolerate a wider range of unacceptable behaviors because they feel sorry for the young person. They may lower their expectations about what the youth can and should achieve. Adopting alternate rules will likely become a source of discomfort and frustration for the adult and can lead to a feeling of a mentoring relationship that doesn't seem to be doing any good. Such frustration, when not appropriately dealt with, typically leads to the premature ending of the relationship. The end result is a youth who has been reinforced in their belief that adults can't be trusted and a volunteer mentor who is less likely to attempt work with young people in the future because they believe that mentoring doesn't work.

Tolerances

Adult *TeamMates* want to “bond” with their student. They want to build their relationship and become friends. Frequently adults establish an alternate set of rules in order to win the acceptance of a young person. It is an adult *TeamMate*'s compassion that allows them to accept inappropriate behavior from their student *TeamMate*. A student *TeamMate* may do something small, such as showing up late for a scheduled meeting or littering in the hall. It may be a larger concern, such as inappropriate language, talk about drugs, or rude behavior. Adult *TeamMates* may try to justify the behavior, thinking, “I would probably do those things if I lived in the kid's world.”

However, having unlimited tolerance will ultimately lead to a weak relationship. Testing behavior is a natural part of all new interactions, and it is important to begin your relationship based on admirable standards of behavior. Establishing a low tolerance for inappropriate behavior sends the message, “How you act matters to me.” Keep in mind that sending a clear message to young people requires a compassionate delivery or it will feel didactic and hurtful.

Expectations

Adult *TeamMates* can and should have expectations for young people to live up to. In some cases, young people have not lived in an environment that encourages high standards. Mediocrity may be an engrained and acceptable way of life. Establishing realistic, achievable expectations for the student *TeamMates* is the foundation of a successful relationship. Many of the young people chosen for the *TeamMates* program have the ability to excel but need extra encouragement in order to do so. It is crucial to focus on the individual student when verbalizing your expectations. In other words, what works for one student may or may not work for another. Their unique abilities must be considered when working on personal growth issues.

When youth *TeamMates* meet expectations, it is important that they feel rewarded. Verbal recognition is very effective in nurturing achievements and should be their primary method of reinforcement. Cards, notes, a pat on the back, a cookie, etc., are other ways to reward successes on an occasional basis.

Talk about the consequences of behavior. For example, if the youth *TeamMate* is consistently late for your scheduled time together then there is less time available to play a favorite card game or shoot hoops in the gym.

It is also important to recognize what is and what is not under the direct control of the student. Lack of transportation, poor nutrition, and low economic status are a few examples of challenges faced by many young people. It is essential that adults help young people to help themselves whenever possible. *We should not be working to solve problems for them but rather teach them how to solve their own problems.* This fosters the development of personal competence rather than co-dependence and powerlessness.

(Adapted from *TeamMates of Nebraska/Lincoln Mentoring Training Manual*)

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is closely tied to family and environment. As long as young people feel listened to, taken seriously, and genuinely cared for, their self-esteem will be high. If youths are raised in an environment where important adults have consistently criticized, corrected, or restricted them, they may lose faith in themselves. They may begin to feel there are limited opportunities for their future. When young people feel they are unimportant, they may experience difficulty in sustaining positive relationships, making decisions, and planning their lives.

It is important to be extremely sensitive to a *TeamMate's* self-esteem and avoid sending the message, "You are not okay, so I'm going to fix you." View the *TeamMate* as a young person with potential and work toward a healthy friendship.

HOW CAN MENTORS RAISE SELF-ESTEEM IN *TEAM-MATES*?

- **Be a Friend** Do you remember how empowering it was to have an adult view you as important when you were a young person? When you actively listen to your *TeamMate* it shows you value them because you care enough to pay attention. Share your own beliefs and personal goals while encouraging your *TeamMate* to share what is important to them. Affirm their values and opinions even if they are very different from your own. Take this opportunity to help them establish realistic short-term and long-term goals for the future.
- **Expect the Best** We all live up to the expectations placed upon us. If we are expected to be the best, we have a better chance of achieving great things. If you visualize success for your *TeamMate* they will begin to believe they can succeed. Your continued encouragement will be an important element to their growing confidence. Even if their success is partial, recognize their effort.
- **Trust Them with Responsibility** Young people need to be trusted in order to prove themselves and develop competence and confidence. Teach your *TeamMate* that personal responsibility includes being accountable for what they do any how they feel. Discuss the idea that being responsible will sometimes bring criticism of their actions. Talk about how to accept criticism without becoming defensive or making excuses.
- **Teach Citizenship** When young people learn to care about others they begin to feel more confident in their own ability to act responsibly and make good decisions. Encourage your *TeamMate* to participate in cultural programs and community service projects. Accept them as unique individuals and help them to identify their own special talents that can benefit others.
- **NEVER GIVE UP** It has taken many months for your *TeamMate* to become the person they are. Change takes time. You will need to be patient and steadfast in your support to them. Allow room for mistakes and remain honest, yet supportive, regardless of their behavior. Refer back to your problem solving and help them to become aware of their own decision-making process. Emphasize their strengths, never their weaknesses.

Praise

Why do young people misbehave? Because they don't know any better or they want attention? If appropriate behavior is acknowledged, it will be repeated. We all need praise; we all react positively to genuine praise. Praise is a powerful tool. Praise alone can change behavior. For praise to be effective it should be genuine, specific, and contingent on positive behavior.

Look carefully for opportunities to praise and reinforce a TeamMate's efforts toward positive behavior. Try to "catch 'em being good." Seizing the chance to praise appropriate behavior increases the odds that the desired behavior will occur again.

How to Praise

Acknowledge the appropriate behavior.

"Hey, way to go!" or "Good job."

Be Specific about what behavior they did that is worthy of praise.

"You showed up on time like you said you would."

"Your grade has improved from a D to a B in math."

Give the Reason why the behavior is appropriate. Reasons should be brief and meaningful to the student, not necessarily meaningful to the mentor.

"Now **we**'ll have plenty of time to spend together."

"Now **you** can try out for the basketball team like **you** wanted to."

Avoid: "Now I'll be able to make my next meeting on time."

Problem Solving

The “SODAS” Method

One of the major obstacles that teenagers face is learning to make good, rational decisions. Often youth simply do the first thing that comes to mind or what everyone else is doing, instead of examining their situation and thinking logically of their choices and the possible consequences of those choices. This is a simple method that can be used to help *TeamMates* develop better problem-solving skills.

Situation

Look at the situation and describe the problem.

Options

List at least three ways to solve the problem.

Disadvantages

List at least three disadvantages of each option.

Advantages

List at least three advantages of each option.

Solution

Select the best option based on the advantages and disadvantages.

This method helps to examine problems in a rational way that is easy to remember. For most of us, this process seems very simplistic and tedious, but many young people have never had the guidance of a trusted adult and do not know how to look at situations realistically. This is something that can be taught. Practice using this skill.

(Developed by Jan Rosa, 1973)

Different Types of Diversity

Ethnic Diversity

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

Socio-economic Diversity

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

There are psychological effects of chronic poverty, including stress and depression. Some students/mentees may develop a "culture of survival frame of mind." Poverty often prevents people from believing their future holds any promise of getting better. Thus, they have no motivation to save money to invest in the future. It becomes realistic to have a belief in "taking what you can get while you can get it."

Youth Culture

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

Take time to remember what it was like to be your student/mentee's age. Think about the following questions:

When you were in your student/mentee's grade:

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

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

Suggestions for Dealing with Diversity

- ◆ **Remember that you are the adult – the experienced one.** Imagine what your student/mentee must be thinking and feeling. In general, young people of all ages, particularly teens, believe they are not respected by adults and worry about whether a mentor will like them or think they’re stupid. They are coming to you for help and may already feel insecure and embarrassed about the problems in their lives. It is your responsibility to take the initiative and make the student feel more comfortable in the relationship.
- ◆ **Remember to be yourself.** Sometimes with the best of intentions, we try to “relate” to young people and try to use their slang, etc. Students/mentees can see through this and may find it difficult to trust people who are not true to themselves.

You may learn a lot about another culture, lifestyle, or age group – but you will never be from that group. Don’t over-identify with your student/mentee. Your student/mentee realizes you will never know exactly what she or he is feeling or experiencing. Your student/mentee may actually feel invalidated by your insistence that you “truly know where she or he is coming from.”

Guidelines for Sharing Personal Information

Building a trusting relationship between a mentor and a mentee will involve sharing personal information about each other as the relationship grows. Just how much personal information should the mentor share is a major issue that has not specific answer, but several general guidelines have been found to be helpful. Intimate personal, family or financial information is considered to be private and confidential information and should not be shared. It is very common, however, to share limited personal information and general information about your family, your community or neighborhood, and your job.

Information about the mentor's past experiences is normally useful to help start and build a relationship. In addition, insights about how the mentor thinks and his or her views about the future are excellent ways to invite mentees to think and begin to vision what their own future might offer. Specific information will vary in different relationships but as a guide the following categories are usually acceptable to share with mentees. They are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Job description and skills required◆ Job-related responsibilities◆ Previous jobs and experiences◆ Likes and dislikes about the job◆ Career goals◆ Community responsibilities◆ Neighborhood involvement◆ Family names and interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Family histories◆ Family vacations◆ Personal habits◆ Personal likes and dislikes◆ Personal hobbies and leisure time activities◆ Personal accomplishments in education, business, sports, arts, etc.
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Guidelines for Difficult Situations

Regardless of the real-life situations that mentors will encounter, there are a few guidelines that apply in almost all cases (Faddis, et al. 1986b). Several suggestions are offered below to guide mentors as they interact with the mentees in difficult situations.

- ◆ Face the problem. Ignoring it won't make it go away. Inappropriate attitudes and behaviors in the work context will, if they continue, only increase your anxiety level and probably those of your co-workers, too. If a problem is really a problem, it's best to deal with it early, before it gets bigger.
- ◆ Think beforehand about what you want to accomplish in dealing with a sensitive issue or situation. For example, do you want only to know whether or not the student is aware of a behavior and its effect, or do you want to import your viewpoint? Do you want to change the student's behavior? Knowing your purpose helps keep things focused.
- ◆ Bring things up early in a visit; don't wait till the end of the visit or for an "opportune time" to present itself. There is probably never a good time to bring up a hard topic and so it's best to get to it right away. You'll never regret how much better you feel after you've discussed and resolved a difficult situation.
- ◆ Separate the behavior from the person. Speak objectively about the behavior and positively about the person. For example, "I like your energy, but when you do ____ it puts me in an awkward position."
- ◆ Don't overdo humor, teasing, or jokes. A teenager will not always grasp issues presented in a half-joking but serious manner. Also, adolescent egos can be unpredictable; what might seem funny one day may not be received in the same vein the next day. The best guideline is to stay serious but supportive, don't tease or joke, and save humor for lighter times.
- ◆ Discuss sensitive issues in a private place, if possible. Think twice about using your office, if you have a private one, because it may feel too formal and stiff if you and your student are not accustomed to meeting and talking there. Private space in the cafeteria, employee lounge, or conference room might be better. You may even want to take a walk to talk and talk out-of-doors.
- ◆ Consider relating something personal about yourself during the discussion with your student. For example, tell him or her about a similar incident in your youth and how you handled it. This kind of self-disclosure and empathy makes you seem real and special to the student, not just another adult giving a lecture.
- ◆ Reinforce at a later time something positive about your student, and emphasize that the issue was about behavior, not personally.

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Mentoring Tips for Teenage Girls

The teen years are a special challenge for girls-both socially and in school. It is also a very difficult challenge for mentors working with girls during these turbulent years. This topic serves as an excellent example for a specialized on-going training session with an external consultant leading a discussion on understanding this risky period for girls. The participants could gain insights and tips for mentoring with these girls.

For example, some research indicates there are specific dangers faced by all teenage girls in five key areas: physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual development, and financial accountability. (Echevarria, 1998). These areas are important to understand so that, throughout the mentoring experiences, they can be recognized by the mentor and dealt with in a satisfactory manner.

Furthermore, when a teenage girl is confronted with situations from any of the key troublesome areas, she is likely to try to talk to a mentor before she talks to a parent. Mentors should be aware of these crises and have an understanding of how to respond to any questions or situations that may arise in the mentoring relationship. Echevarria (1998) lists thirteen crises that girls are more likely to tell a mentor:

- ◆ I had sex last night.
- ◆ I had unprotected sex.
- ◆ I'm pregnant.
- ◆ I've been smoking for awhile.
- ◆ I got drunk last night.
- ◆ I want to kill myself.
- ◆ I throw up after each meal.
- ◆ My mom doesn't care about me.
- ◆ I hate myself.
- ◆ I want the pill.
- ◆ He hit me.
- ◆ An older male friend keeps coming on to me.
- ◆ This guy made me do something I didn't want to do.

How the mentor recognizes and responds to any of these situations is critical. For example, the general guidance to mentors is to be a good listener, and do not condemn or find fault with the person. Discuss the situation with the mentee: then allow the mentee to make the decision to take the appropriate action. If the situation appears harmful to the person or the situation cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the people involved, then the mentor should seek external professional assistance.

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TEAMMATES™
MENTORING PROGRAM

Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

Mentor Issues

MENTOR ISSUES

Boundaries

Adult *TeamMates* decide to volunteer for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons usually includes an altruistic desire to help others. While this is obviously an admirable quality, it can sometimes get mentors into serious trouble if appropriate limits are not set. You must set healthy limits on the amount of time you are willing to spend with your *TeamMate* and your level of personal involvement. Youth *TeamMates* need to know very concretely and specifically what the rules are. Remember your role is not to “rescue” kids; rather you are there to be a role model and help them develop skills for effective living.

Confidentiality

There are several sides to the issue of confidentiality.

If a staff person shares information with you about your *TeamMate* – keep that information to yourself. Failure to do so may be a violation of the law, and it is a definite violation of trust.

If your *TeamMate* shares personal information with you – keep that information to yourself. It may be tempting to return to the office or home and confide in others, however, communities are very close knit. You never know who knows whom. Use the same level of respect with your *TeamMate* as you would use with a close friend or spouse. The only time you should break the rule of confidentiality is in the following situations:

IF A TEAMMATE CONFIDES THAT HE OR SHE IS:

- ◆ A victim of sexual, emotional or physical abuse
- ◆ Involved in any illegal activity
- ◆ Involved in any life-threatening activity

You **must** notify the school contact person immediately.

Should it become necessary to report an incident, make a note on your calendar of when this information was reported and to whom it was given. Remember this information is extremely personal and capable of damaging lives; DO NOT share it with anyone except the appropriate authorities.

Do not allow yourself to make a promise to a *TeamMate* that you will keep confidential secret information. Tell the *TeamMate* that they are free to share confidential information with you, however, there are certain things that you are required by law to report to school staff.

Gift Giving

Gift giving is discouraged for many reasons:

- ◆ Some mentors do not have the financial resources or the desire to give gifts.
- ◆ Young people are very sensitive to fairness. It is not “fair” for some *TeamMates* to receive gifts and not others.
- ◆ Your *TeamMate* may feel the need to reciprocate.
- ◆ Your *TeamMate*’s parents/guardians may not approve of your gifts.
- ◆ Your relationship should be based on trust, not “What did you bring me?”

Physical Contact

Many young people have a strong need and desire for positive, physical contact with a caring adult. You are encouraged to be a positive role model, however, your physical contact should be limited to giving a soft pat on the back or the sharing of a hug in full view of other school officials. Remember that what you see as simple friendly affection between the *TeamMate* and yourself may be viewed as something entirely different by someone else.

Closure Process

The manner in which a relationship ends can shape the view the mentor and student/mentee retain about the entire experience. Also feelings about ending previous relationships can intensify the response to the present experience. Therefore, closure must be handled thoughtfully and with genuine care.

Allow the relationship to close gradually, and allow both parties room to acknowledge and address feelings and concerns about closure. Closure can sometimes be seen as a celebration of the student/mentee's independence and newly acquired ability to make decisions and live well and autonomously.

Sometimes the closure is at the request of the mentor, sometimes at that of the student/mentee. Both can be assisted by preparing for closure by taking a number of steps:

- ◆ Alert each other ahead of time about the upcoming closure.
- ◆ Remain non-judgmental if the other party expresses anger or denial, often in the form of missed appointments.
- ◆ Encourage them to share feelings when appropriate. For example, the mentor may openly express sadness about the closure, yet affirm the student/mentee's ability to move on successfully.
- ◆ Use the closure process as a time to re-evaluate and celebrate accomplishing goals.
- ◆ Discuss reasons why saying goodbye is difficult.
- ◆ Create a series of fun activities to prepare for closure, e.g. exchanging photographs.
- ◆ Mutually agree about how, or when, closure will take place, or if staying in touch is appropriate.
- ◆ Answer all questions honestly, and follow through on any commitments made in the process.

Student Issues

All youth face peer pressure and emerging sexuality as part of normal adolescent development. However, such behaviors too often escalate to self-destructive behaviors, such as substance abuse or early parenting. In addition, public awareness has been raised recently on such issues as family violence and teen suicide. While mentoring programs are not intervention programs, they can help young people make decisions or seek professional help regarding these serious issues. The following list discusses the degrees and kinds of help that mentors can provide.

Child Abuse and Family Violence

Physical abuse detracts from a youth's self-esteem in ways that sometimes only professionals can help change. A young person may become withdrawn. They may turn to peers for support and away from authority figures, no matter how well meaning. The young person may recreate a family history of violence or abuse in other relationships, thus continuing a cycle of self-hatred, shame, and hatred or suspicion of others. These problems require professional help, and adult *TeamMates* should contact program coordinators to find such help without breaking the young person's trust. An adult *TeamMate* may need to say, "I'm concerned for you, and I have to report what is happening to the principal/nurse/etc."

Depression and Suicide

Depression and suicide are often related to one or more of the issues discussed in this section. In addition, these problems are compounded by a young person's inability to find answers to serious questions or emotional support for difficult problems. It is important, first of all, to acknowledge the "seriousness" and the "difficulty" because adolescents are often encountering such problems for the first time. Telling them "It's just a phase," or "You'll grow out of it," only verifies any beliefs they may have that you just don't understand. Suicide counseling is a matter for professionals. Adult *TeamMates* should report suicide threats to the principal or other school contact personnel with the adolescent's knowledge. Once the *TeamMate* has been referred to a professional, the adult *TeamMate* can listen and provide support for the youth while the young person and professionals seek solutions.

In a case where a young person's friend or schoolmate has committed suicide or died unexpectedly, counseling and emotional support are necessary to prevent others from following suit. Other students may contemplate suicide as a "solution" to problems, as a cry for help or attention, as a form of revenge, or as a way to resolve feelings of helplessness over the first death. School counselors, psychologists, and social workers can organize and implement school-wide or area-wide counseling in such cases.

Gangs

Gangs are no longer a bunch of kids with baseball bats and trash can lids having a rumble in the alley. Many gang members carry sophisticated weapons, traffic drugs, and commit violent crimes with little remorse. Schools come in contact with more at-risk kids and those in gangs than any single group within the community. Mentoring can make a difference for a young person considering gang affiliation. Your relationship should focus on listening to their concerns, doing things together, encouraging them, and influencing them as best you can by modeling concern, acceptance, and a healthy lifestyle. You can also encourage their connections to positive groups where they feel like they belong. This might include sports, music, clubs, etc. Gangs are successful because people want to belong.

Influence of the Media

Children grow up learning some unusual lessons from TV: karate chops and trickery can get you what you want; most people stick with their own ethnic group; it's okay for superheroes to kill off their enemies; sex is far more common than abstinence; and it's funny, not bad, to disobey your parents.

At a time when most Americans believe we are facing a "crisis in values" in this country, are these really the messages we want TV to send our children? Even most kids say no. In a recent Children Now poll, two-thirds of young people ages 10 to 16 said that sex on TV encourages kids their age to have sex before they

are ready, and that some shows encourage kids to disrespect their parents. Some shows send the message that "being bad is cool," says fourteen-year-old Rayelyn Rodriguez. And when it comes to sex, "They tell kids 'Everybody's doing it.' Then some kids think, 'Well, if everyone's doing it, why don't I?'"

Television has become today's storyteller. The problem is, there are too few morals to its tales. Even kids sorely miss them -- eight out of ten kids polled said television should teach them right from wrong. And they should know. By age 18, the average child will have watched 22,000 hours of TV - more time in front of the tube than in the classroom. Children Now's survey showed that two-thirds of kids live in households with three or more sets; over half have a TV in their bedroom and usually watch TV without their parents.

Peer Pressure

Adolescence is a time of socialization. Young people are gathering information, advice, ideas, and signals from people other than their parents and teachers. They look to their peers for approval, comparison, self-esteem, and their own identity. It is important to instill a sense of self into young people if they are to learn to make educated decisions in situations where input from authority differs from peer input. Adult *TeamMates* should avoid trying to replace either the authority figures or the peers. The role of adult *TeamMates* is to equip adolescents with decision-making skills, so that young people can learn to feel responsible for the outcome of their decisions.

Sexuality and Teenage Parenting

Body changes and social changes, not to mention the influence of popular culture, makes sexuality an issue at a very young age in our society. In the age of AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, and high teen pregnancy rates, sex education needs to include sensitivity to emotional needs as well as physical causes and effects of sexual activity. Young people in need of intimacy, emotional support, or personal prestige may turn to or seek out sexual relationships to fulfill these needs. For this reason, effective education on sexual issues should include skills for making decisions, setting goals, setting limits for relationships, fulfilling emotional needs without sex, and taking responsibility for decisions and their consequences.

Substance Abuse

Peer pressure, family history, and popular culture can all contribute to a young person's experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Encouraging young people to discuss and ask questions about substance abuse is an important step towards engaging their trust and allowing them to educate themselves regarding its dangers. Your role as a mentor is to make literature and other resources available to them and help them use those resources. In addition, explaining to them why you have chosen not to abuse these substances - if they ask - gives them a role model for a non-substance abuser, without preaching. A mentoring program is not an intervention service. Young people who already have substance abuse problems require more rigorous intervention than a mentoring program can offer.

Nutrition and Health Care

Many young people feel they are immortal and tend to ignore good health practices. In addition to modeling a healthy lifestyle, mentors can provide excellent discussions in this area and initiate visits to health-related institutions or engage in special activities related to good health. From *A Training Guide for Mentors, Smink*

Two of the best predictors of teen drug use are how often teens have dinner with their family and whether or not they have a curfew.

National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse

Signs of Success

Adult *TeamMates* frequently ask, “Am I making a difference?”
These are signs that some mentors may observe as a result of their relationship.

Remember: all relationships are different. You may not feel like you are having an impact. Your *TeamMate* may not exhibit any of these “signs of success,” but that does not mean you are not making a difference or not doing a good job. Be patient – give your *TeamMate* and your relationship time.

Categories of Expected Change	Indicators of Success
A. ATTITUDES	More interest in school, involvement in after-school activities, feels better about home life, etc.
B. BEHAVIORS	Less discipline referrals, less absenteeism, etc.
C. COMPETENCIES	Improved test scores, new job-related skills, etc.
D. DEVELOPMENTAL	Improvement in areas of mental and physical health, economics, drug use, etc.
E. EVERYTHING ELSE	Family participation, civic responsibility, parent involvement, recidivism rates, social interactions, team participation, etc.



TEAMMATES™
MENTORING PROGRAM

Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Nebraska

Activities

ICEBREAKER

Mentors can initiate conversation with their mentees by asking open-ended questions.
(Adapted from TA for Tots)

1. My name is... What's yours? (Be sure to get the pronunciation right; one's name is a precious and highly valued thing. Call the mentee by name at every opportunity.)
2. How old are you? What grade are you in?
3. Do you like school? Why or why not? Which are your favorite subjects? Which subjects don't you like as much? What do you like to read about?
4. What did you do in school today that made you feel good? Comment briefly on the answer and move on...
5. What are some things you like to do? (**Listen carefully**—there might be something in this response that you can build on later. You can explain schoolwork or other issues to mentees within the context of their interests.) What are your hobbies/favorite television shows/favorite sports?
6. When do you feel important?
7. Who are some of your heroes?
8. What is your family like?

(Reprinted with permission: *Campus Partners in Learning/Campus Compact*)

First Day Interview

How is your name spelled?	
How many brothers do you have?	
How many sisters do you have?	
What do you like about your brothers or sisters?	
What do you dislike about your brothers or sisters?	
What is your favorite subject in school?	
What is your least favorite subject in school?	
Who is your best friend?	
What is your favorite food?	
What is your favorite color?	
What is your favorite movie?	
What is your favorite TV show?	
What do you like to do in your free time?	

- **Make two copies** – one for yourself and one for your student *TeamMate*

This is ME

Today I feel _____

When I graduate from school I want to _____

I get angry when _____

My idea of a good time is _____

I wish my parents knew _____

School is _____

I feel bad when _____

I wish teachers _____

On weekends, I _____

I hope I'll never _____

I am at my best when _____

I feel proud when _____

I like to read when _____

When I take my report card home _____

I sometimes worry that _____

People think I _____

I wish I could _____

If I could go anywhere it would be _____

If I could be anything it would be _____

Tips for Improving Reading Skills

Students need to practice:

- ◆ Reading orally
- ◆ Reading silently
- ◆ Retrieving information from what they read
- ◆ Thinking about what they read
- ◆ Discussing what they read
- ◆ Applying what they read to their life situations

Ways to help students practice:

- ◆ Check for *TeamMate* understanding after reading.
- ◆ Ask *TeamMate* questions that help them retrieve information.
- ◆ Ask them questions that encourage them to think about what they read.
- ◆ Try to connect what is being read to their own lives or interests.

Ways to read a book together:

- ◆ Both of you read the same chapter silently, then discuss it.
- ◆ Read a page out loud to the young person, and then have them read a page out loud to you. Discuss what was read at the end of each chapter. If a page is too long, take turns reading every other paragraph. It is important to divide the reading into doable parts for the young person. Never make the reading overwhelming for them.
- ◆ Read one chapter or page silently, then read the second chapter or page out loud. Always discuss the material at the end of each chapter.
- ◆ Read out loud in unison.
- ◆ Take periodic discussion breaks. Base the timing on the young person's attention span and ability to remember.

Suggestions for book selection:

- ◆ Make sure the book is interesting to the young person. If the young person likes mysteries, then read mysteries.
- ◆ Make sure the book you are reading is not too difficult for the young person. One way to check for the right reading level is to have the young person read a page of the book. If there are five words on a page (not including proper names) that the young person doesn't know, the book is too difficult.
- ◆ Some young people enjoy short story books. Each story is different and can be completed in one session. You may find that reading something that can be completed before you discuss is helpful for some young people.
- ◆ Some young people enjoy simplified classic books, i.e., *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* or *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.
- ◆ Teachers can be helpful in selecting reading material at the appropriate level.

Bringing it all together:

- ◆ When you discuss a chapter, section, or book, be sure to check for student understanding. If the young person does not understand something that was read, reread the section and explain it to them.
- ◆ When you take a break from the book between sessions, always review what happened the last time you read. Do this by asking the young person what happened the last time, and use leading questions to help them remember.
- ◆ Try any combination of these suggestions. Each young person is an individual; stay with the strategy that works best for your *TeamMate*.

25 Ways to Respond to a Book

Below are 25 ways to get kids to respond to books. Allowing young people a variety of ways to respond helps develop thought, language, and love of books and reading.

1. Write the story in a book from a different point of view. Take an entire story, or part of it, and write a version as someone else would tell it. For example, the third pig in the *Three Little Pigs* might say, "I told my brother that straw and sticks just wouldn't do. Those are no protection from a hungry wolf. Now me, I'm using bricks!"
2. Write the diary a main character might have written. Imagine you are the person in the book. Write a diary for a few days or weeks as the character would have done.
3. Write a character sketch of someone in a book. This might be the central character or a minor supporting character. Tell what he looked like but also include his favorite color, horoscope sign, favorite sports, the bumper sticker on his car, even what was on his T-shirt.
4. Rearrange a passage as a "found" poem. Find a particularly effective description or bit of action that is really poetry written as prose. Rewrite it. Leave out words or skip a sentence or two, but arrange it to create a poem.
5. Write a parody of a book. This kind of a humorous imitation appeals to many students. Parody the entire book or one scene.
6. Write a promotion campaign for a movie about a book. This could include newspaper ad layouts, radio and television commercials, and any special events.
7. Write a letter to the author of a book. While authors may not have time to respond to each letter they receive, they do enjoy letters from their readers, especially those that discuss the book in a reader's own terms. Send letters in care of book publishers if you can't locate the author's address in *Who's Who*, *Current Biography*, or other references.
8. Put together a cast for the film version of a book. Imagine the director-producer wants a casting director to make recommendations. Decide who would be the actors and actresses. Include photos and descriptions of the stars and tell why each is perfect for the part. Write a report to convince the producer of the selections.
9. Make a new book jacket out of a brown paper sack. It should include an attractive picture or cover design, a summary of the book, information on the author and illustrator, and information about other books by that author.
10. Convert a book to a radio drama. Give a live or taped version about the story - or a scene from it - as a radio play. Include an announcer and sound effects.
11. Convert a book into a puppet show. Make simple puppets (stick puppets, finger puppets, paper bag puppets...) and present the story or an exciting scene from it.
12. Do a "You Are There" news program reporting on a particular scene, character, or event in a book.
13. Prepare a television commercial about a book. Imagine a book is the basis for a miniseries on television. Prepare and give the television commercials that would make people want to watch it.
14. Use body masks and present a scene from your book. Make full-sized cardboard figures with cutouts for the face and hands. Use these to dramatize a scene.
15. Make a soap or paraffin carving about an event or person in a book. These are inexpensive materials and soft enough so there is little danger from the tools used for carving.
16. Make life-sized-paper stuffed animals, people, or objects found in a book. Cut out two large sheets of wrapping paper in the shape desired. Staple the edges almost all the way around. Stuff with crumpled newspaper, finish stapling, and paint.
17. Make handlooms and weavings that portray a design in a book. Almost anything from paper plates to forked sticks will make a loom when strung with yarn, rope, or cord. Check art and craft books for directions. Then use the creations as wall hangings or mobiles.
18. Impersonate a character and tell an episode in a book.
19. Interview the reader as if they were a character from a book. Or have them make up questions and interview you.
20. Make a talking display of a book. Tape a dialogue or description about an event, scene, or character.
21. Draw a scale model of an item in a story. Making an object from the story to scale presents many challenges.
22. Design your own T-shirt of an illustration from a book.
23. Learn to play a game mentioned in a book. (This might be an old-fashioned game or one from another country.)
24. Interview a book's author. The reader becomes the author and you are the interviewer.
25. Convert the events of a story into a song. Write the lyrics to go with the melody of a song you already know.

Adapted from Carol Fisher's
50 Ways to Respond to a Book

Recommended Activities for *TeamMates*

Adult *TeamMates* have shared these strategies that have worked in their one-to-one relationships:

- ◆ Ask how they are doing in school.
- ◆ Keep a journal.
- ◆ Research and talk about famous people who used their abilities to get ahead.
- ◆ Make greeting, get-well, or holiday cards to give to other people.
- ◆ Bring a board game.
- ◆ Look at a map and talk about places you would like to visit.
- ◆ Look at magazines in the library or read the newspaper, including the want ads.
- ◆ Attend a school concert or school activity together.
- ◆ Keep a planner/calendar and set personal goals.
- ◆ Play sports in the gymnasium.
- ◆ Work on the computer in the media center.
- ◆ Use post-it notes to write down all the things you...
 - Like about yourself
 - Like to do
 - Would like to learn how to do, etc.
- ◆ Write stories together.
- ◆ Do a jigsaw puzzle on a reusable mat.
- ◆ Walk outside on the playground.
- ◆ Have a picnic outside (if school regulations permit).
- ◆ Build a model.
- ◆ Plan an activity with another pair of *TeamMates*.
- ◆ Bring in a photo album, and share pictures of your family, house, and pets.
- ◆ Discuss favorite hobbies.
- ◆ Read the same book and talk about your favorite parts.
- ◆ Write a letter to a former teacher, a cousin or relative in another community, an old friend, the editor of a local newspaper, etc.
- ◆ Tell your *TeamMate* about your work and how you reached your position. Complete a resume together.
- ◆ Give your *TeamMate* a job application to complete.
- ◆ Administer a career interest inventory.
- ◆ Offer interviewing ideas and discuss proper dress codes for work.
- ◆ Work together on a budget.
- ◆ Discuss the college selection process and entrance examinations.
- ◆ Ask the questions for the driver's license test.
- ◆ Listen, listen, listen.
- ◆ **Ask your *TeamMate* what they like to do.**

Summer Options

Meeting Out-of-School

You do have the option of meeting with your TeamMate outside of the school setting. To do this you will need to contact the TeamMates Coordinator to complete the necessary paper-work – outlining a plan of what you and the student will do together. This plan must be agreed upon and signed by you, the student, and the student’s parent.

Write Letters

Provide your *TeamMate* with a supply of self-addressed stamped envelopes for them to write to you. Each time you receive a letter from your *TeamMate* be sure to respond quickly. Watch for articles in newspapers and magazines that interest your *TeamMate* and send them along with your letters.

Exchange Phone Calls

If you are comfortable giving out your phone number, call one another. You will want to consider whether your work number is appropriate or your home phone number is a better choice. You may want to designate certain times that work best for you to receive phone calls. Or, you may want to initiate all phone calls at a time your *TeamMate* will plan to be available.

Summer Camps

There are summer camp opportunities at free or reduced cost to many of the students in the *TeamMates* program. Help your student to explore these options and encourage them to attend a camp that will be beneficial and fun.

Apply to be a Big Brother/Big Sister throughout the BBBS Program

This is a separate application process. BBBS will need to know your student’s name and their guardian’s address and phone number in order to process the application. There is a small fee to become a Big Brother/Big Sister, which is used to cover the costs of your background checks. A program representative from BBBS will also arrange a home visit with you prior to your acceptance in that program. Allow approximately 60 days from the time of your application until you are approved as a Big Brother or Big Sister. (Note: Be sure to ask your *TeamMate* if they already have a Big Brother or Big Sister. If the student is already matched with one, they cannot be matched with another.)

NOTE: Always ask your student how they would like to stay in touch. Don’t assume they are interested in letters, calls, or the Big Brother/Big Sister program until you talk to them about these options.

TeamMate

Mentor's Journal

Men.tor (mentor) n.
A wise and trusted friend and guide

The following page is a sample of a mentor journal. It is good to keep a journal to record your thoughts, reactions and experiences with your TeamMate. It also brings satisfaction and allows you to see even subtle progress. We keep a journal because the memory is fallible; we easily forget.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

MENTOR'S JOURNAL

Date of first meeting _____

Date _____

Date _____

What to write in your journal...

- Things you like about your *TeamMate*.
- Things you think you can accomplish together.
- How your attitude about young people has changed.
- How your *TeamMate*'s school compares to yours.
- What you need to focus on.
- Talents you have that will help this relationship.
- Personality traits you have that are helpful.
- Mentors from your own childhood.
- Why you are mentoring.

(Remember to date your entries.)

My Goals

Date this plan is made: _____

Date we will review this plan: _____

ACADEMIC GOALS

PERSONAL GOALS

My goal is: _____

My goal is: _____

I will do these activities to reach my goal:

I will do these activities to reach my goal:

1. _____

1. _____

2. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. _____

I will know I have reached my goal when:

I will know I have reached my goal when-

Steps to Becoming a *TeamMates* Mentor

TeamMates Program Orientation

An introduction to the *TeamMates* program helps volunteers decide if one-to-one school-based mentoring is right for them.

Required Training

A session to prepare mentors for scenarios they may encounter while volunteering in the schools is required of every adult *TeamMate*.

Application Agreement

Adult *TeamMates* are asked to fill out an application and agreement to indicate their name/address/interests/hobbies/etc. This information is given to school staff to match the adult and student *TeamMates*.

Background Check

TeamMates staff performs confidential criminal history background check and child/adult abuse inquiries for all mentors. Adult *TeamMates* are asked to provide the necessary information and fill out forms for this process to be completed prior to meeting with their student.

Character Reference Process

Each adult *TeamMate* provides a minimum of three character references. References must reply before the adult *TeamMate* is allowed to spend time with a student one-on-one in the school.

Interview with School Staff

The adult *TeamMates* may be asked to meet briefly with a staff person at the school in order to help solidify the best match.

School Orientation

The adult *TeamMate* will receive a brief orientation of the school building on the day the adult and student *TeamMates* meet for the first time. This includes instructions on where to sign in at the school, where to hang your coat, and any other protocol.

Student Match

First-time visits are typically scheduled in a small group format. Adult *TeamMates* will meet their students and the students will give their *TeamMate* a tour of the school. Together, the *TeamMates* will determine a good time for meetings to occur in the future.

Weekly Meetings

Adult *TeamMates* are responsible for scheduling their weekly meetings and being consistent with their promise to see their *TeamMate* every week.

Year-End Program

The adult and youth *TeamMates* will be invited to a program/celebration at year's end.