Research Brief

TITLE: Mentoring

Question: What characteristics make an effective mentoring program?

Summary of Findings:

"Mentoring is the process that awakens our confidence in our abilities. It is a complex developing, nurturing, and empowering relationship that requires mutual sharing, growing, and learning" (Mentoring-the essential connection-President's message). An effective mentoring relationship includes mutual respect and trust in an environment of understanding, cooperation, and mutual sharing of information. According to research conducted by the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization, students who regularly meet with a consistent and caring mentor academically do better than their peers, are 52% less likely to skip a class, are 46% less likely to start using illegal drugs, and 27% less likely to start drinking. An on-going substantive mentoring relationship lets the adolescent know that there is a caring adult available to them. For the majority of young people who spend about 40% of their time without supervision and/or are alone, this relationship can make the difference in the quality and caliber of decisions they make about their lives (How mentoring helps).

There tend to be two types of formal mentoring structures: School based and community based.

School based is usually sponsored by the school:
- Students to be mentored are often selected because they are considered to be "at risk."
- The majority of time is spent doing academic work, including homework.
- The mentor usually has on-going contact with teachers.
- Academic gains are often made by students because someone is paying attention to them.
- The mentor has more of an influence on academic rather than social behavior.
- This format often attracts more mentors from minorities and the same racial and/or socioeconomic backgrounds as the students.
- The school is a safe and supervised location, so more cross gender mentoring can be successfully done. This is especially helpful because there tends to be more female than male mentors, yet there are many males in need of a mentor.
- When done at a school, there is less out of pocket expenses.

Community based is usually sponsored by a business or agency in conjunction with a school:
- Selected students to be mentored are selected to meet the reason(s) the community based group has chosen to provide mentors.

- The majority of time may be spent doing academic work, exploring careers, attending community events, and/or participating in social activities.
- The mentor usually has contact with parent(s) or guardian(s).
- The mentor may have more of an influence on social rather than academic behavior.
- This format often attracts Caucasian mentors.
- There are more out of pocket expenses because of travel and the nature of activities in which the mentor and mentee choose to participate.

Regardless of the style of mentoring program, there tends to be three types of configurations: 1-to-1, an adult and a youth meet on a weekly basis; Team, two adults may work together with one or several youth. This commonly happens in the workplace and in families; and Group, one adult meets with a group regularly. The adult acts as a facilitator or guide.

Guidelines for establishing mentoring programs:
- Select a coordinator for the program, who will have the time to realistically devote to the program.
- Establish a purpose for and goals of the program. Determine who the targeted recipients will be (i.e. at risk, low achievers, career exploration, civic awareness, etc.).
- Develop a list of potential mentors and determine from where they might be recruited.
- Solicit input from the stakeholders, including the students. Determine what mentors can provide to mentees and vice-versa.
- Educate the stakeholders about the importance of mentoring, including how to work with mentors.
- Contact and recruit the appropriate group of potential mentors who will meet the program's goals.
- Establish a tracking system of program evaluation and progress and use the data to inform the program's growth.
- Provide on-going training and support to the mentors.
- Publicize the program, its goals, objectives, and successes.

Online Resources:

- America's promise
  The homepage for the The Five Promises Program.
  http://www.americaspromise.org/whyhere/5promises.cfm

- Benefits of mentoring
  This is part of the Oregon Mentoring site.
  http://www.ormentors.org/about_benefits.asp

- Business and community mentoring in schools
  These are the results from a mentoring program in England, complete with detailed lists
  of components of an effective school-business mentoring program.
  http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/RRP/u013183/index.shtml

- Common types of mentoring programs
  This is part of the Oregon Mentoring site.
  http://www.ormentors.org/about_program_types.asp

- How mentoring helps
  This article provides succinct descriptions of ways in which mentoring programs can
  help in education and the workplace.
  http://www.mentoring.org/caring_adults/about_mentoring/how_mentoring_helps.php

- Mentoring children and youth: Principles, issues, and policy implications for community
  programmes in New Zealand
  A brief history of mentoring is provided in this article.
  http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3848/is_200006/ai_n8923824

- Mentoring-the essential connection-president's message
  Several definitions of mentoring are provided in this article.
  http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FSL/is_3_75/ai_84183528

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- National mentoring partnership
  This is the home page with active links to descriptions of various types of mentoring programs along with guidelines for each type of program.
  http://www.mentoring.org/

- Passing the baton: A mentoring program could help young people get more involved in community leadership
  Ideas for the mentoring of young people to help them develop civic mindedness is described in this article.
  http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m5012/is_8_22/ai_112314805

- Types of mentoring
  This is from the Oregon Mentoring site and describes three mentoring structures.
  http://www.ormentors.org/about_benefits.asp

- What is mentoring?
  This is from the Oregon Mentoring site and briefly cites what a mentor is and is not.
  http://www.ormentors.org/about_what.asp

- Why is mentoring important?
  This is from the Oregon Mentoring site and provides a brief rationale for the importance of mentoring.
  http://www.ormentors.org/about_why.asp

Specific Programs:
- Community partners
  This is a detailed description of the 5 Promises Programs.
  http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3962/is_200311/ai_n9308469

- Del. governor finds funding, time for mentoring efforts
  A description of an initiative to support mentoring that was introduced in 1997 by the Delaware governor is provided.
  http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/1997/10/22/08carp.h17.html?querystring=Mentoring&print=1

- How you can help. Community groups
  This includes a description of three things that need to be done in order to begin a community mentoring program and contact information for the Fairfax, VA mentoring program.
  http://www.mentorfairfax.org/Help/Mid/Community.htm

- Mentoring
  A description of a mentoring program sponsored by the Marion County, OH prosecutor's office.
  http://www.indygov.org/eGov/County/Pros/Protect/Children/Mentoring.htm

- Mentoring milestone
  A brief description of a mentoring program called YouthFriends where the mentors and mentees meet weekly is provided.
  http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2004/12/01/14take.h24.html?querystring=Mentoring&print=1

- Family Service of Chester County
  This is a Senior Citizen Volunteer Rebate program in Dowingtown, PA where those over age 65 can earn a tax rebate if they volunteer in the school district for 62.5 hours.
  Email information: rsvp@familyservice-cc.org

- Mentoring on the margin: A ministry to public schools
  This is a description of the City Impact Program in CA that is a mentoring program between the city's churches and public schools.
  http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_1_122/ai_n8703014

- Mentoring program pairs students with youths at risk
  This is a brief description of a mentoring for credit program sponsored by Harvard in a school for students with special needs.
  http://focus.hms.harvard.edu/2003/March7_2003/in_the_community.html

- National center to strengthen student mentoring projects
  A description of the center to provide support for mentoring programs is given.
  http://www.nwrel.org/nwreport/feb99/article1.html

- Oregon mentors

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This is the home page for a mentoring program in Oregon. It defines mentoring and includes descriptions of the importance of mentoring programs and how to become a mentor in this program.
http://www.ormentors.org/default.asp

•   Portland General Electric Mentoring Programs
    This describes several community mentoring programs in which this company's employees participate, including Bridge Builders that deal with African-Americans' rites of passage programs.
    http://www.portlandgeneral.com/community_and_env/community/people/mentor.asp

Submitted   Date: 11/29-05   By: Dr. Karen Walker Lebanon Valley College

http://www.principalspartnership.com