



DM&E Tips on Refugee Youth Mentoring

Definition of Refugee Youth Mentoring

Mentoring is the process by which an experienced person provides advice, support, and encouragement to someone less experienced. Generally, a mentor is a teacher or advisor who leads through guidance and example. Mentors can promote positive outcomes for refugee youth by serving as role models, provide emotional support and offer constructive and stable presences in refugee youth's lives.

Program staff should take into account particular skills and experiences the mentors bring to the relationships. Mentors should be provided regular support through monthly mentor support groups. A forum should also be implemented in which mentors may confidentially discuss any challenges they are having and share ideas with one another.

Types of Refugee Youth Mentoring Programs (1)



One-on-One Mentoring:

This example is similar to the community-based mentoring model shown to be effective in Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Mentors spend time talking with mentees, participating in events such as picnics, and bowling nights.

Group Mentoring:

One mentor is matched with five to eight young people and they engage in various activities such as computer-assisted education, field trips, meals, and recreation.

Team Mentoring:

This is an adaptation of the community-based mentoring model which provides each refugee with three to five mentors rather than just one.

Key Questions for Program Design (2)



What specific issues need to be addressed in the program?

Does the school have a high dropout rate? Is there a low rate of college attendance? Are there high rates of drug abuse?

Who will be the mentees and mentors in the program?

Once the target population of refugees and host community youth have been selected, the number of mentors needed and the type of commitment that will be required will become more transparent.

How will the program be coordinated?

Mentoring programs need specific leaders whose role is to plan and coordinate for the program.

Key Questions for Program Design Continued...

Who will lead the mentoring programs?

Successful mentoring programs need leaders to help plan, coordinate, and maintain the program's vision.

How will the program collaborate with school and other services?

In some cases youth may already be receiving some type of additional assistance, such as tutoring or after school programs. The mentoring program should not compete with school assignments and services, but rather support those services which already exist.

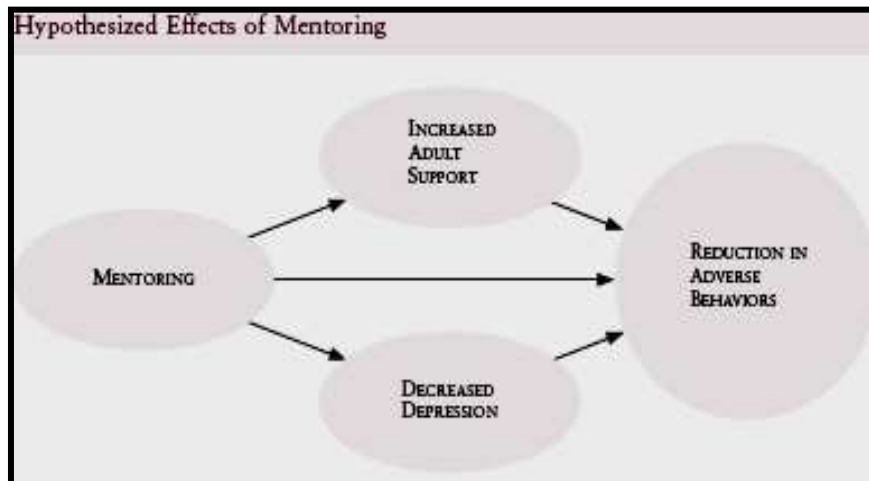
Which existing mentoring programs have a similar focus?

Program staff should examine existing programs which are designed to serve the same population before beginning their own. Those programs which have a similar focus could help identify potential obstacles, solutions, innovative practices and be used to recognize areas which have not yet been utilized.



Key Outcomes of Successful Youth Mentoring Programs (3)

Successful mentoring in DM&E Youth Mentoring Programs can help refugee youth to develop improved relationships with their families and other adults, through modeling positive interpersonal behaviors and increased social skills. Mentor relationships have also been shown to improve school attendance, academic achievement, self-esteem, language skills, and decision-making skills in refugee youth



As the above template shows, mentoring has been shown to both an increase adult support, and a decrease in feelings of isolation and depression in youth. In turn, this has lead to a reduction in adverse behaviors in mentee youth, such as violence and aggression.



Outcomes of Successful Youth Mentoring Programs Continued...

Various categories of change have been indicated in refugee youth mentoring programs, including: attitudes, behaviors, school and social competencies, and general development.

Categories of Expected Change	Indicators of Change
Attitudes	Increased interest in school, involvement in after school activities, and positive feelings about transition into the U.S.
Behaviors	Improved attendance and participation in school, civic involvement, and social interactions.
Competencies	Improved test scores and communication skills.
Development	Improved mental and physical health.

(5)

Key Partners of Youth Mentoring Programs

Partnerships are critical to any youth mentoring program. Examples of key partners in successful mentoring programs include:

- Refugee youth
- Host community youth leaders
- School administrators
- Teachers
- Community volunteers
- Mentor volunteers

Data Collection and Assessment Methods

Data collection is essential in order to assess the quality of the program and those areas which could be improved. Assessing the success of a refugee youth mentoring program can be done through:

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Observation
- Focus groups
- Collecting data on:
 - ◊ Activities
 - ◊ Mentee behavior
 - ◊ Attendance
 - ◊ Achievement

Both program staff and coordinators should participate in assessing the refugee youth mentoring program. Program staff can measure the extent to which the program is focused on appropriate issues for youth in that specific community and youth's overall satisfaction with the program. (8) Staff can also administer surveys to mentors after meetings or before trainings to gauge program effectiveness and overall mentor satisfaction. On the other hand, program coordinators can also evaluate the program by having mentors submit monthly logs to track activities and their own observation.





Checklist for Refugee Youth Mentoring Programs (6)

A long-range plan that includes:

- A statement of purpose.
- Details of who, what, where, when, why and how activities will be performed.
- Input from originators, staff, funders, potential volunteers and mentees.
- Assessment of community needs.
- Operational issues that are realistic, attainable, and easy-to-understand.
- Goals, objectives and timelines for all aspects.
- A funding and resource development component.

A recruitment plan for mentors and mentees that includes:

- Strategies that portray accurate expectations and benefits.
- Targeted outreach based on mentees' needs.
- Volunteer opportunities beyond mentoring.
- A basis in the mentoring program's statement of purpose and long-range plan.

Eligibility screening for mentors and mentees that includes:

- An application process and review.
- A face-to-face interview and home visit.
- Reference checks for mentors, which may include character references, child abuse registry checks, driving record checks and criminal record checks where legally permissible.
- Suitability criteria that relates to the program's statement of purpose and needs of the target population, including:
 - ◇ Level of education
 - ◇ Gender and age
 - ◇ Language
 - ◇ Motivation for volunteering
 - ◇ Academic standing
 - ◇ Skills identification
 - ◇ Career interests
 - ◇ Personality profile

A mentor matching strategy that includes:

- A link with the program's statement of purpose.
- A commitment to consistency.
- Use of appropriate criteria for matches, including some or all of the following: gender, age, language requirements, availability, needs, interests, preferences of participants life experience, and temperament.
- Pre-match social activities between mentor and mentee pools.
- Team building activities to reduce the anxiety of the first meeting.
- A signed statement of understanding in which both parties agree to the conditions of the match and the mentoring relationship.

A readiness and training curriculum by trained staff for mentors and mentees run that includes:

- Orientation to program and resource network, including: general information, referral sources, schools and other support services.
- Skills development as appropriate.
- Cultural sensitivity and appreciation training.
- Orientation to refugee background information.
- Guidelines for mentees on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship.
- Dos and don'ts of relationship management.
- Job and role descriptions.
- Confidentiality and liability information.
- Crisis management problem-solving resources, and communication skills development.



Checklist for Refugee Youth Mentoring Programs Continued...

An orientation for mentors that includes:

- Program overview.
- Description of eligibility, screening process and suitability requirements.
- Level of commitment expected, including time, energy, and flexibility.
- Expectations, restrictions, and accountability issues.
- Rewards they can expect.
- A summary of program policies, including written reports, interviews, evaluation and reimbursement.
- How to facilitate closure with mentees.
- Record keeping procedures.
- Goal setting strategies.

An orientation for mentees that includes:

- A program overview.
- Level of commitment expected, including time, energy and flexibility.
- Expectations and restrictions.
- Benefits they can expect.
- Goal setting strategies.

A support, recognition and retention component that includes:

- A formal kickoff event.
- Ongoing peer support groups for volunteers, mentees and others.
- Ongoing training and development.
- Relevant issue discussion and information dissemination.
- Networking with appropriate organizations.
- Social gatherings of different groups as needed.
- Annual recognition and appreciation event.
- Newsletters or other mailings to mentees, mentors, supporters and funders.

A monitoring process that includes:

- Consistent, scheduled meetings with staff for mentors and mentees.
- A tracking system for ongoing assessment.
- Written record keeping.
- Input from community partners, family and significant others.
- A process for managing grievances, praise, re-matching, interpersonal problem solving and premature relationship closure.

An evaluation process that includes:

- Outcome analysis of program and relationships between mentors and mentees.
- Comparison between program criteria and statement of purpose.
- Gathering information as needed by board, funders, community partners and other supporters of the program.

An closure process that includes:

- Private and confidential exit interviews between: mentee and staff; mentor and staff; and mentor and mentee without staff.
- Clearly stated policy for future contacts between mentors and mentees.
- Recognition of goals achieved.
- Assistance for mentees in defining next steps for achieving personal goals.



Resources

The following resources may be helpful for those who would like to read more specifically about mentoring and the specific needs of refugee youth.

Mentoring Tools:

- Tamasy, Robert and Stoddard, David A. *The Heart of Mentoring: Ten Proven Principles for Developing People to Their Fullest Potential*. Navpress Publishing Group, 2003.
- Taylor, Angela M. *Responding to Adolescents: Helping Relationship Skills for Youth Workers, Mentors and Other Advisers*. Russell House, 2003.
- Zachary, Lois J. *The Mentor's Guide: Facilitating Effective Learning Relationships*. Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Refugee Tools:

- Hamilton, Richard. *Educational Interventions for Refugee Children: Theoretical Perspectives and Implementing Best Practice*. Taylor & Francis, 2007.
- Pipher, Mary. *The Middle of Everywhere: Helping Refugees Enter the American Community*. Harvest Books, 2003.

References

1. Bauldry, Shawn. *Positive Support: Mentoring and Depression Among High-Risk Youth*. July 2006, 1-15. www.ppv.org/ppv/community_faith/community_faith_publications.asp?section_id_12
2. U.S. Department of Education Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. *YES, YOU CAN: A Guide for Establishing Mentoring Programs to Prepare Youth for College*. October 1998, 14.
3. International Rescue Committee (IRC). *Snapshots*. 10-12.
4. Smirk, Jay. *A Training Guide for Mentors*. National Dropout Prevention Center. 1999, 46.
5. National Mentoring Center. *Measuring the Quality of Mentor-Youth Relationships: A Tool for Mentoring Programs*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). August 2002, 4. <http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packeight.pdf>.
6. U.S. Department of Education Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, 51-52.

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(Bring photo ID to enter the building)

Directions: Take the 4,5,6,7, or S trains to GRAND CENTRAL STATION