Mentoring Programs Resource Guide

Welcome

We hope you are able to use this Mentoring Programs Resource Guide to meet the needs of your organization. While it is a requirement, and we strongly encourage that you attend our classroom-based Foundations of Successful Mentoring Programs training offered by Prevention First, we realize you may need some guidance and assistance ahead of time. If you have been to Prevention First's Foundations of Successful Mentoring Programs training, this resource guide will provide you with key points that can assist you in the planning and implementation of your mentoring program.

This Mentoring Programs Resource Guide will also provide you with some general information, guidance, and websites that can be used as resources as you plan and implement your mentoring program.

Prevention First is a nonprofit resource center committed to building and supporting healthy, drug-free communities through public education, professional training, and by providing effective tools for those working to prevent drug use and related issues such as violence, teen pregnancy, and academic failure.

Since 1980, the Professional Development Services Department at Prevention First has provided training, consultation, and information services in the prevention of public health problems, specializing in those associated with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse. Its mission is to provide leadership and develop leaders in the prevention of substance abuse and related issues.

Visit www.prevention.org to view additional resources and information regarding the current training calendar and opportunities. If you need further support regarding this topic, please reach out to your assigned Prevention First Provider Network Specialist.

PREVENTION FIRST
Building community capacity to prevent substance abuse

SAPP Program Standards for Mentoring Programs

Planning Phase

Reminder: The standards listed below are the minimum requirements for Mentoring Programs.

1. Demonstrate that each CGP staff member assigned to the program activity completes the SAPP approved mentoring professional development activities.

>   Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
> - All CGP staff members responsible for facilitating/supervising this program activity have attended the "Foundations of Successful Mentoring Programs" training or were granted waivers for this foundational program.

2. Develop a youth referral/recruitment and screening plan that includes a commitment from the referral source to identify youth who demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics: (a) single parent family status, (b) low socio-economic status, and (c) lack of positive adult role models.

>   Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
> - A youth referral/recruitment plan has been established.
> - At least one referral source has been identified.
> - A youth screening plan has been established.
> - Each referral source has entered into a linkage agreement with the CGP.

3. Identify and secure commitment of mentors. Mentor programs will maintain a ratio of one adult mentor to one youth. Set formal expectations for mentors to commit to at least one hour or class period per week for at least nine months or one school year.

>   Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
> - A mentor recruitment plan has been established.
> - The agency acknowledges that each mentor must meet with each youth individually.
> - A mentor commitment form has been developed.
> - The mentor commitment form includes the expectation of meeting for one hour or class period per week.

4. Develop a formal orientation session for each mentor that includes: (a) overview of roles and responsibilities, (b) key issues for building strong mentor/mentee relationships, and (c) handling difficult situations.

>   Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
> - Orientation materials have been developed.
> - Materials include an overview of the mentor roles and responsibilities.
> - Materials include key issues for building strong relationships.

- Materials include information on handling difficult situations.

5. Develop a formal screening process which includes: (a) a written description of the mentor's roles and responsibilities, (b) a written statement of the mentor's commitment to the mentoring relationship, and (c) background checks and reference checks.

Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
- A formal screening process has been established.
- A written description of the mentor roles and responsibilities has been developed.
- Criminal background checks are part of the screening process for all mentors.
- Reference checks are part of the screening process for all mentors.

6. Develop a process to gain parental consent for youth participation.

Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
- A parental consent procedure has been established.
- A parental consent form has been developed.

7. Develop a plan for communication, supervision, and support for the mentor/mentees.

Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
- A communication/supervision/support plan for mentors has been established.
- A communication/supervision/support plan for youth has been established.

Implementation Phase

8. Deliver a formal orientation session with each mentor that includes: (a) an overview of roles and responsibilities, (b) key issues for building strong mentor/mentee relationships, and (c) handling difficult situations.

Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
- Formal orientation has been documented for all mentors.

9. Conduct a formal screening process with each mentor that includes: (a) a written description of the mentor's roles and responsibilities, (b) a written statement of the mentor's commitment to the mentoring relationship, and (c) background and reference checks.

Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
- All mentors received a written description of their roles and responsibilities.
- All mentors signed a mentor commitment form.
- Criminal background checks were completed for all mentors.
- Reference checks were completed for all mentors.

10. **Gain parental consent for youth participation.**

Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
- Parental consent has been documented for all youth participants.

11. **Contact mentor/mentee pairs a minimum of once every six weeks.**

Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
- Documentation that all mentors were contacted by program staff at least once every six weeks.

12. **Mentor pairs must meet at least one hour or class period per week for at least nine months or one school year. The mentoring program will maintain a ratio of one adult mentor to one youth.**

Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
- At least 80% of mentor/mentee pairs made at least 80% of their weekly meetings.
- At least 80% of mentor/mentee pairs have been sustained for at least 9 months.
- Ratio of one mentor to one mentee has been documented for all matches.

13. **The mentoring program will serve youth who demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics: (a) single parent family status, (b) low socio-economic status, and (c) lack of positive adult role models.**

14. **Will not use mentor program as a substitute for intensive intervention services, such as mental health counseling, when needed.**

Characteristics of Standard Achievement:
- A plan for referring youth to intensive intervention services has been developed.

The above standards for Mentoring Programs were developed based on extensive review of research literature and adapted from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Positive Youth Development, Substance Abuse Prevention Programs.

Mentoring Programs

OVERVIEW

Many mentoring program providers find that selecting mentors, screening members, providing orientation for members, and supervising mentors takes a tremendous amount of time and effort. This section will provide you with some general information, guidance, and websites that will assist you as you work towards selecting your mentors, planning for your mentoring program, and implementing your mentoring program.

WHY MENTORING?

Growing up isn't always as easy as it seems. Even in the best circumstances, young people need someone on their side who is a positive role model. Whether it is someone to listen to them, someone to help them work through a new situation, or someone to give them genuine praise when it matters, children and young people thrive when they make a connection with a mentor.

Not only does the child or young person thrive in the mentoring relationship, but the mentor gains personal satisfaction knowing they have made a difference in a child's life. Supportive relationships with non-parent adults can powerfully influence the course and quality of adolescents' lives. Even the smallest time commitment of one hour per week can make a significant impact in a child's life.

UNDERSTANDING THE MENTORING PROGRAM STANDARDS

The SAPP planning and implementation standards for mentoring programs are the minimum requirements to which providers must adhere. The standards included in the planning stages are to be completed before providers begin matching mentors with mentees. The planning stage is the time providers dedicate to training staff, developing referral, recruitment and screening plans, developing formal orientation sessions, identifying the roles and responsibilities of mentors, developing a formal screening process, identifying procedures for gaining parental consent, and providing support and supervision for mentors and mentees. It is important to invest time in the planning phase to develop a program that adheres to standards and creates the foundation and structure for your mentoring program. Only after investing time and meeting planning standards are providers ready to move onto the implementation phase.

During the implementation phase, mentors and mentees are matched and the tools developed in the planning phase are used to structure and guide the mentoring program.

CPRD BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

The Center for Prevention Research and Development (CPRD) is contracted by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Positive Youth Development, Substance Abuse Prevention Programs to provide evaluation consultation and data management services that support the community-based substance abuse prevention system across Illinois. CPRD staff work to gather, analyze, and use evaluation data to drive decisions. This background research document outlines CPRD's research findings for mentoring programs. These findings are based on extensive review of academic journals, government documents, and consensus documents. CPRD background research findings inform the SAPP standards for mentoring programs.

TIPS FOR SELECTING MENTORS

Providers can spend a considerable amount of time recruiting mentors. Sometimes providers recruit friends and coworkers, and many providers spend a lot of time developing connections with organizations in their communities that might provide connections for recruiting mentors. After you have spent valuable time recruiting mentors it is important for providers to have a process for selecting mentors based on desired qualities, skills, and characteristics. Throughout the process of selecting mentors, your screening tools and processes become essential because they will help providers separate safe, committed, and appropriate mentors from those mentors who are less suitable.

Some common qualities and characteristics commonly preferred in the selection of mentors include volunteers who:

- **Enjoy being a part of the team.** Mentors will be asked to participate in orientation, training, group activities, and celebrations. Finding someone who likes and enjoys the company of others and understands they are part of the mentoring program's team is important to the success of your program.
- **Communicate well and in a positive manner.** The ideal mentor has a positive attitude that is contagious and generates an encouraging environment for not only the youth, but other adults and program staff as well.
- **Complete paperwork and required documentation in a timely manner.** Mentors will fill out a tremendous amount of paperwork in the beginning and throughout their volunteer time as a mentor with your agency. This paperwork is incredibly important and must be completed correctly and within the time frame provided to the mentor.
- **Understand mentoring is privilege.** Mentoring, while voluntary, is a privilege that comes with great responsibility. Your potential mentors should be excited about this opportunity to give back. Mentors should also demonstrate enthusiasm for your mentoring program and represent the program with excitement to others in your community.

- **Understand characteristics of the youth your mentoring program serves and shows respect for youth in your program.** A successful relationship requires that both the mentor and mentee receive and give respect. Potential mentors should have a realistic view of mentoring. Any potential mentor should be aware of the benefits and challenges of working with young people ages 10-17.
- **Meet the minimum mentor commitment requirements.** Mentor pairs must meet at least one hour or one class period per week for at least nine months or one school year. It is also important to inform mentors that providers will be checking in with mentors at least once every six weeks for supervision. It is alsoimportant to tell mentors up front they will have opportunities throughout the year for professional development and training opportunities on top of their weekly time commitment with their mentee.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUR PARTICIPANTS

It is always important to remember you are the expert when it relates to the youth in your program. You will know best if a mentor can meet the needs and be a supportive adult for the mentee.

RESOURCES TO HELP MENTORS CONNECT WITH TODAY'S YOUTH

Generation Z refers to the group of people born after the Millennial Generation (1980's to the late 1990's). Typically this group's beginning birth years range from the late 1990's to the present day.

Members of Generation Z are often referred to as "digital natives" due to the fact members of this generation are extremely connected with technology. Generation Z youth have had lifelong use of communication and media technology like the World Wide Web, IM-Instant Messaging, text messaging, mobile phones with internet capabilities, and MP3 players. This generation was born with and is technologically savvy.

Generation Z youth have the ability to constantly multitask, are used to information overload, have smaller attention spans, have the need for instant gratification, have been relentlessly tested, and are set to be the least physically active generation of children.

Generation Z youth can be a challenge when it comes to mentoring! Understanding Generation Z youth helps us build a connection with them and lays the groundwork for developing strong and supportive relationships.

It is helpful for mentors to have resources to help them learn more about and how to relate to Generation Z youth. Many times interactions with youth come naturally, but other times a little bit of knowledge and education on how to connect with Generation Z youth goes quite a long way.

RESOURCES TO HELP MENTORS CONNECT WITH TODAY'S YOUTH – CONTINUED

Listed below are a few resources mentors and providers can use to help educate and learn more about this technology driven generation of youth.
Click on the article you would like to read.

Generation Z Characteristics – The Good, the Bad, and the Unheard Of.

Meet Generation Z

Consumers of Tomorrow: Insights and Observations about Generation Z

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF BOUNDARIES

Setting boundaries is necessary and healthy for mentors. Mentors need to be aware of what those boundaries are when they are with their mentees so they can understand their limitations. Boundaries provide a safe structure for relationships. It is much easier for mentors to set very strong boundaries and loosen them over time with their mentees than it is to strengthen weak boundaries.

Providers should set some boundaries through their mentoring program rules and policies, but mentors should incorporate strong boundaries into their relationship and communicate their boundaries with the mentee from their very first meeting and interactions. While setting and modeling appropriate boundaries may come naturally for some mentors, others may need some extra guidance, professional development opportunities, and training to address how to work with young people to define and establish boundaries that will guide and strengthen the mentoring relationship.

Since mentors will also have some contact and interaction with the parent or guardian of the mentee it is important to work with mentors to establish boundaries with the mentees parent or guardian as well. Through orientation and training the provider can provide a clear list of roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the mentoring role.

Mentors also need to understand mentees and their parent or guardian will likely have some boundaries of their own that must be respected.

Listed below are a few resources mentors and providers can use to help educate and learn more about the importance of setting and modeling appropriate boundaries.
Click on the article you would like to read.

Why Boundary Setting Matters in Mentor-Mentee Relationships

Tools for Mentoring Adolescents: Setting Mentoring Boundaries

Mentoring Fact Sheet: Overcoming Relationship Pitfalls

BACKGROUND CHECKS AND REFERENCE CHECKS

Providers are responsible for taking reasonable measures to protect youth in their mentoring program from harm. A comprehensive screening process that includes a formal background check can be used by providers to closely examine the backgrounds of individuals who want to mentor and volunteer with their organization and have direct access and contact with youth. A formal background check is part of a comprehensive screening process, not just one selection criterion. Providers should establish clear guidelines stating which offenses will disqualify an applicant from volunteering as a mentor.

It is important for providers to establish screening criteria relevant to their organizations rules and regulations and State and local laws.

It is important to note here that mentors are often friends or coworkers of the mentoring program provider or the organization. While is it common to recruit among friends and coworkers, both groups are held to the same background check and reference check standards as any other volunteer. All paperwork and background check and reference checks are required.

Checking references is another tool in the provider's comprehensive screening process. While the formal background check will tell you about the criminal history of a mentor applicant, reference checks help determine if the potential mentor is a right fit for your mentoring program. By asking a potential mentor for the names of a few people who can speak to their character, you are able to have a conversation with someone who has worked or interacted with your mentor applicant. While checking references listen for phrases such as "she is a good listener," "he is patient and understanding and not judgmental," or "she is a positive role model and people look up to her." Other desired qualities include a person's ability to be organized, communicate effectively, being on-time, respectful, and responsible.

CONCLUSION

Choosing the right mentors for your prevention program can create a life-changing opportunity for youth in need in your community. With careful attention to the planning phase standards and the implementation phase standards, you can create a mentoring program that provides a positive experience for youth, mentors, and your organization.

Listed below are websites and resources offering information on mentoring that may be helpful as you plan or implement your own mentoring program.

Corporation for National and Community Service
Offers a resource center equipped with tools, training, event calendars, printed publications, videos, and other information to strengthen programs. The CNCS focuses on serving your community, building your capacity, and impacting our nation.

EMT-Evaluation, Management, and Training

EMT is a leading consulting service to public sector organizations in the fields of health, human services, and education. Information is provided on Education, Early Childhood Development, and Mentoring. Information on the EMT Mentoring Resource Center (MRC) is provided when you click on the link under Past Project by Policy/Program Area for Education, Early Childhood Development, and Mentoring.

Peer Mentoring Resources

This website provides various resources, documents, training materials, and network opportunities for those who are interested in or are currently offering mentoring programs.

National Mentoring Partnership

The National Mentoring Partnership holds the largest database of mentoring opportunities, offers support, resources, legislative advocacy, and information to strengthen youth mentoring programs and encourage adults to serve as mentors. The National Mentoring Partnership is also home to the yearly National Mentoring Summit.

Online Mentor Training

Offers an online mentor training touching on topics such as mentoring the adolescent, widening your mentee's world/cultural dynamics, life skills for success, and successful community-based mentoring relationships.

U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Resource Center

The MRC website provides online resources, guidebooks, and evaluation tools for mentoring programs. Topic include: background checks and screening, training, research, program design, and program management.

Washington State Mentoring

Washington State Mentoring provides assistance with training, recruitment, resource development, data collection, public awareness, and policy to support quality mentoring programs.

Illinois Mentoring Partnership

The Illinois Mentoring Partnership (IMP) is a champion for quality youth mentoring in Illinois. IMP provides resources, technical assistance, heightened public awareness, and advocacy for the State's mentoring movement.

The Search Institute

In 1990, the Search Institute released a framework of 40 Developmental Assets, which identifies a set of skills, experiences, relationships, and behaviors that enable young people to develop into successful and contributing young adults. Using the 40 Developmental Assets providers can encourage mentors to plan activities with their mentees that promote the development of positive internal and external strengths that help young people thrive.

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