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MENTOR
THE NATIONAL MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

4TH EDITION

Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™

RESEARCH-INFORMED AND PRACTITIONER-APPROVED BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING AND SUSTAINING IMPACTFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS AND STRONG PROGRAM SERVICES

AUTHORS/STEERING COMMITTEE

- Michael Garringer, *MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership*
- Dr. Janis Kupersmidt, *innovation Research & Training*
- Dr. Jean Rhodes, *Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring, University of Massachusetts–Boston*
- Dr. Rebecca Stelter, *innovation Research & Training*
- Tammy Tai, *MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee would like to thank the members of the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™ Advisory Committee for their assistance in reviewing and strengthening the Benchmarks and Enhancements throughout this edition. This resource would not have been possible without their expertise and support.

- Heather Clawson – *Communities in Schools*
- Sue Anne Endelman – *Mass Mentoring Partnership*
- Janet Heubach – *Mentoring Works Washington*
- Celeste Janssen – *Institute for Youth Success*
- Dr. Michael Karcher – *University of Texas–San Antonio*
- Sarah Kremer – *Independent consultant (formerly of Friends for Youth)*
- Kristin Romens – *Big Brothers Big Sisters of America*
- Dr. Sarah Schwartz – *University of Massachusetts–Boston*
- Dr. Renee Spencer – *Boston University*

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INTRODUCTION

In 2015, MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership celebrates 25 years of serving as the unifying champion for the youth mentoring movement. Over this quarter century, MENTOR has led a series of signature initiatives to continuously improve our nation's ability to meet the mentoring needs of all young people—creation and coordination of National Mentoring Month, an annual campaign endorsed by every U.S. President since 2002; successful advocacy for increased public and private investments in the field; and the support and expansion of a national network of affiliate *Mentoring Partnerships* that provide leadership at the local level. The *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™ is the cornerstone of all of our efforts, developed and disseminated to ensure that as the quantity of mentoring grows, quality remains front and center. The *Elements* are widely accepted as the national and global standards for quality youth mentoring.

The very first edition of the *Elements* was created in 1990, when a coalition of youth-serving organizations came together to discuss service-delivery strategies and emerging "best practices" in the rapidly expanding youth mentoring arena. These organizations, convened by MENTOR and United Way of America, each approached mentoring from slightly different perspectives and utilized mentors in a variety of settings and contexts. Yet they had a common and pressing concern: How to ensure that mentoring programs offered their services in a "responsible" way, one that met the needs of both youth and volunteers while also ensuring participant safety and positive outcomes for young people and communities.

To meet this need, they developed "a set of guidelines, or common principles"[1] to help guide the development of quality mentoring programs across the country and support the growing field of mentoring professionals. This ethos continues in the *Elements* today—the guidelines presented here are intended to be applicable across almost every type of program to help ensure that the youth mentoring relationships are safe, effective, and well-managed to produce positive outcomes for the young people involved.

The third edition of the *Elements*, released in 2009, further invested in this notion of quality by diving deeply into the existing research on youth mentoring to find evidence of program practices and relationship strategies that facilitate meaningful mentoring relationships and positive outcomes for youth and adult participants. This was the first attempt to ensure that the core benchmarks of program quality were grounded in the best research available.

The fourth edition reinforces this application of research—our Steering Committee reviewed over 400 peer-reviewed journal articles and research reports, placing particular emphasis on research released since the third edition in 2009. And because research and practice must always be complementary, we also relied on the real-life experience and input of over 200 practitioners and mentoring organizations.

The end result is a document that reflects the best and most up-to-date thinking our field has to offer. It represents 25 years of evolution at MENTOR and in the mentoring field, and the continuous refinement of practices aimed at ensuring mentoring relationships deliver on the promise of being a powerfully driver of support and opportunity for young people of all ages.

Mentoring continues to grow in diverse directions and is embedded into myriad program contexts and services. The fourth edition of the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™ is intended to give this generation of practitioners a set of programmatic standards that will empower every agency and organization, and raise the bar on what quality mentoring services look like. We hope this edition benefits programs of all sizes and funders from every sector in creating, sustaining, and improving mentoring relationships because they are critical assets in young people's ability to thrive and strive.

David Shapiro
President and CEO,
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

Mike Garringer
Director of Knowledge Management,
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

1 National Mentoring Working Group. (1990). *Elements of Effective Practice*. Philadelphia, PA: United Way of America.

ABOUT THE 4TH EDITION

DEVELOPMENT

For the fourth edition of the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring*™, the Steering Committee had several goals in mind:

- Reviewing new research to identify potential best practices and promising innovations in service delivery
- Engaging a wide variety of mentoring program staff members, researchers, and technical assistance providers to ensure that the new edition reflected the best current ideas and trends in the field
- Revising old Benchmarks and Enhancements with updated information and research, while creating entirely new Benchmarks and Enhancements to keep pace with innovations in programming that have emerged

To meet these goals, our Steering Committee—comprised of representatives from MENTOR, the University of Massachusetts-Boston and MENTOR Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring (CEBM), and innovation Research & Training (iRT)—undertook the following process starting in the Fall of 2014:

1. **Conducting a literature review.** This review consisted of over 400 peer-reviewed journal articles and organizational research reports. We emphasized the findings of over 80 research articles published since the release of the third edition of the *Elements*. (A full description of our research methodology is available at the end of this document.)

2. **Developing a first draft.** The new research was the basis for the first draft. Old Benchmarks and Enhancements were revised or eliminated, while new ones were developed, as needed.

3. **Reflecting and refining with an Advisory Committee.** A select group of researchers, practitioners, and representatives from MENTOR's network of affiliate *Mentoring Partnerships* reviewed each section, providing input on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of cited research and ensuring that the recommendations for practice addressed child safety concerns and were achievable by programs.

4. **Engaging a broader set of stakeholders.** A second draft was reviewed by over 70 attendees of a Short Course on the new *Elements* that was sponsored by the Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring and MENTOR and held at the 2015 National Mentoring Summit. A subsequent draft was presented in a web conference to the entire Mentoring Partnership network to ensure that the new practices fit the expertise and experiences of these leading technical assistance providers.

5. **Finalizing and approval.** The Advisory Committee met one last time in the spring of 2015 to provide their final input on the version presented here.

The end result is a fourth edition that contains more nuance around the delivery of mentoring services, as well as a greater emphasis on youth and parent voices in the mentoring relationship. We have also emphasized the safety of the young person, with several new Benchmarks and Enhancements added to ensure that screening, relationship monitoring, and match closure are handled in a way that maximizes youth safety. This edition blends the latest research with the best practitioner wisdom and input, and should provide mentoring programs of all types with a roadmap for how to strengthen their services. We also encourage policymakers and funders to use the *Elements* as standards when making decisions about supporting youth mentoring programs or integrating mentors into broader youth development efforts.

USING THIS RESOURCE

As with the third edition, the fourth is primarily built around **six core Standards** of practice: 1) Recruitment, 2) Screening, 3) Training, 4) Matching and Initiation, 5) Monitoring and Support, and 6) Closure. These Standards cover the aspects of mentoring programs that directly support their mentoring relationships. We have also provided a **Program Planning and Management** section that offers recommendations for designing and strengthening youth mentoring services and providing high-quality oversight and leadership.

Benchmarks and Enhancements

Benchmarks are practices that mentoring programs must follow in order to meet the Standard. Two criteria were used to determine whether a practice should be considered a Benchmark: 1) evidence suggesting the practice is associated with effective mentoring relationships, and 2) whether the practice is designed to protect the safety of mentees across programs.

Enhancements are practices that are not required for programs to implement in order for the program to be in compliance with a Standard. The Enhancements are practices that do not meet the criteria described above for Benchmarks, but which were determined to be promising, innovative, and useful for mentoring programs. Recommendations from practitioners and researchers, as well as research from fields related to mentoring such as social work, clinical psychology, volunteerism, and positive youth development, were the primary sources of Enhancements.

Justifications and Exceptions

Detailed justifications are provided to support the inclusion of each practice as a Benchmark. For many of the Benchmarks, the justification also includes a review of the research evidence for that practice. Notable exceptions to the Benchmarks are also described. Most of the exceptions are relevant for program models that differ from traditional community-based youth mentoring programs, such as exceptions for school-based or site-based mentoring program models.

CONSIDERING THE ELEMENTS ACROSS DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROGRAMS

No two programs will look at the Benchmarks and Enhancements in this fourth edition in quite the same way. Often, the setting or the population served will influence how a program considers implementing each Benchmark and the importance they place on various practices. The following examples illustrate how programs of different types might have different takeaways and points of emphasis:

- A school-based program supporting the transition to middle school might emphasize the Benchmarks and Enhancements around pre-match training so that mentors are prepared to offer meaningful advice and aren't caught off-guard by the stressfulness of this transition point for mentees. This program might also pay special attention to the new Enhancements around closure, hoping to ensure that all mentees end their relationship on a positive note so as to not trigger or increase feelings of disconnectedness from school.
- A career-exploration and internship mentoring program for high school students might find value in the recommendations around monitoring and supporting matches, especially in checking in with worksite supervisors or other third parties who can help identify struggling matches. This program might also be excited about some of the new Enhancements around youth-initiated mentoring, hoping to teach mentees how to identify future mentors upon entering the workforce.
- A program serving youth aging out of the foster care system may follow the Benchmarks on mentor recruitment to better identify mentors who will stick through this critical juncture for mentees leaving care. They might also emphasize some of the more rigorous screening practices to ensure that their mentees are safe and don't experience additional abuses or trauma at the hands of unqualified mentors.
- A group mentoring program serving boys at risk of dropping out of high school might think carefully around how those groups are created (Matching and Initiation) and how the experience of individual participants will be monitored and supported, something that can be overlooked in a group model. They may also think about how the Benchmarks on match closure apply, since the group dynamic can make closure more complicated (one mentor or mentee leaves the group, several members leave at once, groups get reassigned, etc.).

There are infinite variations on how programs of different types will find value in these Standards. We encourage programs to keep an open mind about the evidence and advice in this edition and to think creatively about how they can meet or modify these practices for optimal effectiveness in their unique program circumstances.

APPLYING THE ELEMENTS TO YOUR PROGRAM

One of the mentoring field's great strengths is the diversity of programs and settings where mentors work with youth together. Since the *Elements* was first developed in 1990, mentoring has grown from being primarily a one-on-one community-based intervention to one that is delivered in a variety of settings and institutions (e.g., schools, clubs, clinical settings, online) and in myriad configurations (e.g., groups of youth working with one or more mentors, multiple adults working with one youth, mentor-mentee pairs working in a group setting). In many ways, each and every program is unique, which can make developing a set of guidelines that are globally applicable—as we've attempted here—a challenge.

When creating this edition, we *primarily considered the needs of one-to-one mentoring matches that work in either community- or site-based settings*. We recognize that programs with different structures or models may need to think carefully about how particular Benchmarks or Enhancements apply to the delivery of their services. This will be particularly true for mentoring programs that are embedding in their mentoring relationships within broader youth development programs or even clinical services. (See the sidebar for examples of how different types of programs might emphasize different aspects of the *Elements*.) We attempt to clarify some of these situational nuances in the Justification and Exceptions sections, which provide additional information about how to meet these Standards in different types of programs and when certain Benchmarks or Enhancements may be relaxed.

When considering the guidance in this edition, we encourage programs to think carefully about their program's theory of change and the logic model that articulates their actions and outcomes. Please see "The Critical Importance of a Theory of Change" for more information about this basic building block of program success.

Regardless of your program's model and setting, when using the guidance in this edition, we encourage you to ask questions such as:

- What would we need to change for our program to meet a particular Benchmark?
- Would a particular Enhancement add value to our program or increase participant safety?
- How much effort would go into changing a practice? Is that feasible, or even desirable, for our program?
- If we are unable to meet a Benchmark or implement an Enhancement, how would we justify that to a stakeholder in our program?

While we feel that these Benchmarks and Enhancements represent the ideal program delivery based on the latest research and practice wisdom, we also recognize that there is room for innovation in the field. We strongly encourage mentoring programs to deliver their services in innovative and creative ways, evaluating the effectiveness of these new approaches along the way. Indeed, that's the process that led to many of the new guidelines in this edition. To honor this ever-evolving field, MENTOR will continue to update and revise these *Elements* as new information and research becomes available.

THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF A THEORY OF CHANGE

If there is one "best practice" that cuts across almost all of the advice and research-informed information in the fourth edition, it is that every mentoring program must have a theory of change that explains how the mentoring services, and the activities that mentors and mentees engage in, will result in the desired outcomes at the participant and community/institution level. A good theory of change should:

- Illustrate how the program's work is designed to explicitly bring about change, as well as other external factors that influence program effectiveness.
- Explicitly show how a program, through the work of a mentor, achieves meaningful and measurable results.
- Draw on relevant research and theory, illustrating the validity of the program design and how the services align with local needs, contexts, and circumstances.

MENTOR feels strongly that every mentoring program needs to have this core framing document in place, as it essentially influences every decision a program makes moving forward (this is why it is included in the Planning and Program Design section beginning on page 77).

A logic model can further illustrate this action by showing the inputs, outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes that result from implementing the program. These types of graphical representations of program services and outcomes can be especially helpful in communicating with stakeholders or pursuing funding.

Your theory of change will be instrumental in determining how the Benchmarks and Enhancements of the *Elements* will apply to your program. No program will conform to all of the recommended practices in this edition, but a clear understanding of your theory of change will help you in determining when specific practices apply to your program and the degree of effort and detail you will have to put into them for your program to have its intended impact.

So as you read through these recommended practices, think about how important each is to what your program is trying to achieve. All of these Benchmarks and Enhancements are grounded in relevant research, practitioner wisdom, and principles of youth safety. But only *you* can determine the degree to which they might influence the achievement of your program's goals and outcomes.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Mentoring:** Mentoring takes place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) who are acting in a non-professional helping capacity to provide relationship-based support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee's development.
- **Mentoring program:** An organization or agency (often nonprofit) whose mission involves connecting mentors and mentees and monitoring and supporting the relationship over time.
- **Program model:** The framework and organizing structure under which mentoring is delivered to youth. Common models include one adult-to-one child, group mentoring (many adults working with groups of youth), and peer mentoring (in which older or near-age youth serve as mentors). These models can also be embedded within other youth services provided by the organization.
- **Program setting:** This most often refers to the location or mode of service delivery. Examples include community-based, site- or school-based, and e-mentoring (in which mentors and youth interact primarily online).
- **Evidence-based practice:** A framework for designing and delivering services in which research-derived information is blended with other forms of "evidence," such as practitioner experience and client perspectives, to arrive at optimal solutions for clients and produce the most impactful outcomes.
- **Research:** Scientific investigations of program outcomes, as well as the moderators and mediators of those outcomes. Mentoring research can be qualitative (such as analyzing participant reflections on the mentoring experience) or quantitative (such as analyzing mentees' school data). For the purposes of this document, an emphasis was placed on experimental research that included control or comparison groups of youth.

STANDARD 1

RECRUITMENT

Recruit appropriate mentors and mentees by realistically describing the program's aims and expected outcomes.

**Benchmark and Enhancement practices that are marked with an asterisk represent those that are either new or were substantially changed from the Third Edition. Mentoring programs are encouraged to give equal consideration to the implementation of all of the Benchmark practices that are listed under this Standard.*

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BENCHMARKS

MENTOR RECRUITMENT

B.1.1 Program engages in recruitment strategies that realistically portray the benefits, practices, supports, and challenges of mentoring in the program.

B.1.2* Program utilizes recruitment strategies that build positive attitudes and emotions about mentoring.

B.1.3* Program recruits mentors whose skills, motivations, and backgrounds best match the goals and structure of the program.

B.1.4* Program encourages mentors to assist with recruitment efforts by providing them with resources to ask individuals they know, who meet the eligibility criteria of the program, to be a mentor.

B.1.5* Program trains and encourages mentees to identify and recruit appropriate mentors for themselves, when relevant.

MENTEE AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN RECRUITMENT

B.1.6* Program engages in recruitment strategies that realistically portray the benefits, practices, supports, and challenges of being mentored in the program.

B.1.7 Program recruits mentees whose needs best match the services offered by the program.

ENHANCEMENTS

MENTOR RECRUITMENT

E.1.1* Program communicates to mentors about how mentoring and volunteering can benefit them.

E.1.2 Program has a publicly available written statement outlining eligibility requirements for mentors in its program.

E.1.3* Program uses multiple strategies to recruit mentors (e.g., direct ask, social media, traditional methods of mass communication, presentations, referrals) on an ongoing basis.

MENTEE AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN RECRUITMENT

E.1.4 Program has a publicly available written statement outlining eligibility requirements for mentees in its program.

E.1.5* Program encourages mentees to recruit other peers to be mentees whose needs match the services offered by the program, when relevant.

JUSTIFICATION

The majority of mentors working with youth are volunteers who are directly recruited by mentoring programs. While there is a paucity of empirical research available to guide mentoring programs on mentor recruitment, the research on volunteerism and nonprofit organizations provides significant contributions to understanding effective means of recruiting and retaining volunteers in general. Hence, the justification section for this Standard relies heavily on this broader body of work. The available findings that are most relevant for justifying mentor recruitment practices come from the research on recruiting volunteers to work with organizations or on activities where the longevity or duration of service is important. Taken together, the research literatures on mentoring and volunteer recruitment constitute a rich set of resources for providing both guidance and recommendations for helping mentoring programs engage in effective recruitment practices.

Mentoring programs should have a written recruitment plan that includes all of the policies and procedures used to implement the Benchmark practices (and relevant Enhancement practices) included in the Recruitment Standard.

MENTOR RECRUITMENT

Content of Recruitment Materials

The content of the messages incorporated in recruitment materials can have a direct effect on the success of a marketing campaign. For example, recruitment messages that are inaccurate, misleading, or missing key information can result in short-term recruitment success, but long-term volunteer failure. The impact of messaging can be seen by examining factors that are associated with unsuccessful mentoring relationships. For example, mentors' unfulfilled expectations can contribute to an earlier-than-anticipated ending of mentoring relationships.[1] Thus, it is important for mentoring programs to realistically describe the requirements, rewards, and challenges of mentoring during the recruitment phase **(B.1.1)**. When imagined outcomes are not immediately realized or take a different form than what was originally expected, mentors may decide that the relationship does not meet their needs or they may doubt their efficacy or ability, and, consequently, may end the match prematurely. When recruiting potential mentors, it is important for mentoring programs to set realistic expectations regarding what a mentoring relationship is and what it can achieve. Practically speaking, one way to set realistic expectations for a prospective mentor is to provide him or her with written eligibility requirements, as is suggested in the Enhancements **(E.1.4).**

Photo courtesy of First Niagara

The most common barriers to volunteering are reports of lack of time, lack of interest, and health problems.[2] It is likely that there is little that recruitment efforts can do to motivate volunteers to mentor when they are busy, disinterested, or experiencing health problems. However, addressing practical barriers to mentoring or concerns of prospective mentors upfront, such as the time commitment involved, can help to overcome this barrier. The implementation of innovative mentoring models such as e-mentoring; content-focused, time-limited programs; or site-based approaches may be strategies that will directly address this barrier of limited time availability and potentially increase volunteerism.

When recruiting potential mentors, it is important for mentoring programs to set realistic expectations regarding what a mentoring relationship is and what it can achieve.

Marketing materials can also be designed to address other practical concerns of volunteers, such as whether or not they will be expected to use personal expenses in mentoring, defining the geographical distances involved, and explaining the commuting time from the mentor to the mentee or mentoring site, as well as addressing any safety concerns that volunteers might have about mentoring. This information can help to establish realistic positive expectations about choosing mentoring as a volunteer outlet.[3] Because time constraints are such a common barrier to volunteering, in order to successfully recruit prospective mentors, mentoring programs should do several things to address this concern. They should reduce barriers to enrolling new mentors, so that prospective volunteers believe that it will be an easy process to sign up with the mentoring organization and that they will be able to fit mentoring into their busy schedules.[4]

Individuals may be more attracted to a particular volunteering activity or opportunity if they think that they will receive adequate training and support to help them be efficacious in their volunteering role. In this case, recruitment materials need to inform mentors that they have or can acquire the basic skills needed to be an effective mentor.[5] They also need to be informed that they will receive sufficient training and support from the mentoring program to help them be prepared, feel ready to initiate the relationship, and feel efficacious as a mentor.[6]

Photo courtesy of Midlands Mentoring Partnership

Recruitment efforts might be more successful if mentors learn how mentoring and volunteering can be beneficial to them for both short-term[7] and longer-term volunteering opportunities **(E.1.1)**.[8, 9, 10, 11, 12] One well-established general benefit of volunteering is enhanced psychological and behavioral well-being.[13, 14] In addition, there are benefits specifically associated with being a mentor, including having enjoyable interactions with mentees, feeling satisfied and fulfilled as a mentor, and receiving professional development

opportunities both through receiving mentor training and helping a younger protégé.

Although not true for all volunteers, portraying mentoring as a fun and joyful activity as well as advertising the opportunities offered by the mentoring program for access to outings, cultural, sports, and food-related events, annual awards ceremonies, and recognition opportunities can increase the interest of individuals to volunteer **(B.1.2)**.[15, 16, 17]

Photo courtesy of The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania, © Renee Rosensteel, used with permission

Six common motivations for volunteering have been identified, including developing and enhancing one's career, enhancing and enriching one's personal development, conforming to the norms of significant others, escaping from negative feelings, learning new skills and practicing underutilized abilities, and expressing values related to altruistic beliefs.[18] Mentors report being highly motivated to learn new skills through hands-on experience working with youth as well as through satisfying their altruistic goals by experiencing gratification watching their mentee grow and develop.[19] Marketing materials can reflect these messages regarding these rewarding and satisfying aspects of mentoring **(B.1.2 & B.1.3)**. Furthermore, recruitment efforts may be enhanced by tailoring the content of recruitment messages to the motivations of prospective volunteers.[20, 21, 22, 23, 24] Also, findings on motivation suggest that volunteers frequently have multiple motivations[25, 26] suggesting that marketing messages might be more successful when including more than one goal for being a mentor.

Motivations to volunteer, in general, and to mentor, specifically, may vary by age, sex, culture, and other factors. For example, there is growing evidence to suggest that middle-aged and older adults and women may be more motivated to volunteer for social reasons (e.g., volunteering is valued by and important to their friends who may also be volunteers) than younger volunteers.[27, 28, 29, 30, 31] Young adults may be more motivated to volunteer by altruism or helping others and by opportunities for personal development.[32] One thing to note is that even though messaging consistent with values may enhance recruitment success, mentor retention may not be contingent on mentoring experiences being consistent with initial motivations in that matched mentors report experiencing benefits from mentoring that are unanticipated.[33]

Mentoring programs need to build upon their positive reputation and image to promote mentoring as a compelling and worthwhile volunteer activity.

The image and reputation of charitable or nonprofit organizations are also important factors associated with attracting volunteers **(B.1.2)**. Many nonprofit organizations implicitly compete for the time and attention of volunteers, thus, having a strong, positive, noncontroversial image and reputation in

the community can contribute positively to recruitment efforts and to commitment to the mentoring organization.[34, 35, 36, 37] Mentoring programs need to build upon their positive reputation and image to promote mentoring as a compelling and worthwhile volunteer activity.[38] Furthermore, mentor recruitment and retention may be enhanced if mentors share the core beliefs, goals, and values of the organization, which has been found to be highly motivating for employees.[39] Mentoring organizations should be encouraged to communicate about their mission to the general public and prospective mentors to generate interest and commitment.

Research on volunteer recruitment suggests that, in addition to being clear and realistic, the tone of recruitment materials is likely to be important for attracting dedicated and reliable mentors **(B.1.2)**. Positive emotional expectations predict volunteer persistence suggesting that by representing mentoring as a satisfying and rewarding activity mentor recruitment and retention can be enhanced.[40]

Target Audiences of Recruitment Efforts

Few mentoring organizations can afford the time and costs of screening a large number of inappropriate applicants. Thus, recruitment materials need to be designed to attract and engage appropriate target audiences whose skills and motivations best match the goals and structure of the mentoring program **(B.1.3)**. This information regarding eligibility criteria for being a mentor in the program needs to be clearly and publicly communicated to avoid misunderstanding by mentors, and optimally used to balance staff time and effort related to recruitment activities **(E.1.2)**. It is particularly important for short-term mentoring programs to define for themselves and then publicly articulate their desired target audience of mentors because adults volunteering for these types of programs may not be particularly dedicated to the program's mission in a long-term way. Instead, prospective mentors may be interested in the program, but have more focused interest in knowing specific information about the activities they will be doing as a volunteer.[41]

Recruitment materials need to be designed to attract and engage appropriate target audiences whose skills and motivations best match the goals and structure of the mentoring program.

Some mentoring programs serve very specific populations of youth (e.g., children with an incarcerated parent, children with a learning disability or attention deficit disorder) and seek mentors with particular expertise or experience related to the characteristics of the specific population. Recruiting mentors who have previously had or currently have similar experiences to the mentee population may result in mentees developing a closer bond to someone whom they believe is similar in an important way to themselves, and these mentors can serve as "credible messengers" of information and support.

Some age groups of volunteers may be better suited for serving as mentors than others. For example, youth matched with college-aged students were more likely to prematurely close than mentees matched with older mentors.[42] Changing life circumstances, academic pressures, and generally busy schedules may make it more difficult for college students to fulfill their mentoring commitment. Thus, mentoring programs may want to de-emphasize the recruitment of college students

as mentors, particularly when match length is a paramount concern.

The importance of the mentoring role can be publicized to a wide range of community groups such as faith-based and civic organizations.

Furthermore, some populations of individuals are more likely to volunteer than other groups of people and programs may choose to target them. For example, surveys of volunteers suggest that married or cohabitating people are more likely to volunteer than unmarried people. People who are better educated with higher incomes are more likely to volunteer.[43, 44] Also, younger and part-time working senior citizens are more likely to volunteer than retired or full-time individuals or middle-aged individuals.[45, 46] In addition, in a large national survey, volunteers are more likely to be citizens rather than immigrants, more educated, affluent, and homeowners.[47] Mentoring programs might consider targeting these populations in order to rapidly recruit volunteers and may likely have to reduce barriers to mentoring to target populations that tend to volunteer less frequently.

Methods of Recruitment

Mentoring programs often report being unsuccessful and encountering many challenges when trying to attract new, suitable mentors. Research on volunteer recruitment provides some guidance for enhancing the effectiveness of recruitment strategies. Specifically, three strategies may help mentoring programs increase their pool of potential mentors.

First, volunteerism in general increases when people are directly asked to participate in a volunteer activity by someone they know.[48] These kinds of personal connections promote a positive view of the organization and the volunteering activity.[49] This link has been established to be effective in the employment sector and could be broadly applicable for mentor recruitment efforts as well.[50] In a qualitative, non-peer reviewed study of mentor recruitment, word-of-mouth recruitment was cited as the most effective recruitment strategy.[51] Mentors can be asked to help and trained to use this word-of-mouth recruitment method to help their program increase the pool of eligible, appropriate, prospective mentors. Since mentors are already successfully participating in the mentoring program, they can be encouraged to be ambassadors for the program with the people they know and trust **(B.1.4)**. It is important to provide recruiting mentors with resources to assist them in their recruitment efforts, so that their messages incorporate key, accurate information about the mentoring program and experience **(B.1.1)**.

Word-of-mouth recruitment also helps volunteers have a defined role and identity within their mentoring organization. When the role of being a mentor becomes integrated into volunteers' views of themselves, it helps to engage prospective volunteers quickly and increases their commitment to the volunteer organization and experience.[52,53] The attitude of seeing oneself as a mentor can be fostered by the mentoring organization in several ways beginning with the organization's recruitment efforts. One way to advertise the importance of the mentoring role could be to communicate about it directly in marketing materials. In addition, conveying the importance of the mentoring role can be publicized to a wide range of community groups such as faith-

based and civic organizations. In this way, the mentoring program can facilitate making mentoring a normal and expected part of membership in the community group and attract more volunteers.[54]

Photo courtesy of First Niagara

By seeking to integrate volunteering to mentor into the culture and norms of a community group, one caution is to avoid creating a culture of "mandatory volunteerism." There is the potential problem that using a subtly coercive strategy could backfire for some groups of mentors. This type of externally imposed motive to mentor might inhibit the development of a volunteer role identity, which has been found to be critically important in the retention of internally motivated volunteers.[55, 56, 57] In other words, choosing to volunteer rather than being required to do so may have long-term positive effects on mentor longevity. Notably, it is not always the case that required volunteerism is associated with negative outcomes. For example, required community service by adolescents has been associated with the myriad positive behavioral and academic outcomes that have also been found when community service is voluntary.[58] In addition, requiring volunteerism might be beneficial in the recruitment of extrinsically motivated volunteers by providing them with external rewards for volunteering.

Second, research suggests another practical method or strategy to use for recruitment efforts that involves training mentees to identify and recruit appropriate mentors for their program or for their lives **(B.1.5)**.[59] This method is sometimes referred to as Youth-Initiated Mentoring. An example of a time this method may be well-suited for mentor recruitment is when youth are getting ready to age out of foster care. At this vulnerable time in a teenager's life, they still need support, advice, companionship, and friendship with a caring adult; however, many mentoring programs end at age 18, the time when foster care youth may most need the support of a mentor during their transition to adulthood.

Adults need to see an ad for an organization or program on a regular schedule and multiple times before they make the decision to mentor.

Third, although it may appear to be obvious, growing evidence suggests that mentoring programs should use more than one method for recruitment and that these recruitment messages need to be received by prospective mentors on multiple occasions **(E.1.3)**. Adults need to see an ad for an organization or program on a regular schedule and multiple times before they make the decision to mentor. Deepening and growing commitment to be a mentor through continuous reminders and recruitment efforts are needed. This process requires getting someone's attention, stimulating their positive curiosity to help, introducing them to the mentoring program's benefits and requirements, completing an application, getting screened, being trained, and ultimately, being matched with a mentee. Most adults require a period of time before making

this type of decision, because it requires making a long-term commitment. Therefore, programs need to build in enough time for mentors to contemplate whether mentoring is a good fit for their goals, lifestyle, and interests, so they can actively and thoughtfully decide to initiate a mentoring relationship.

MENTEE AND PARENT OR GUARDIAN RECRUITMENT

Content of Recruitment Materials

Mentees frequently report not knowing what to expect in a mentoring program and/or in a mentoring relationship.[60] Therefore, when mentees are recruited for participation in a mentoring program, it is important to provide them with information about what mentoring is and how it can be helpful to them **(B.1.6)**.

Programs should consider creating sets of recruitment materials in multiple languages for distribution to families where English is not the first language of the home.

Program staff should also inquire about prospective mentees' expectations about being mentored and about the mentoring program. In this way, program staff can help prospective mentees develop both positive and realistic expectations. It is equally important for mentees and their parents or guardians to be well-informed about mentoring and program requirements as mentors. If the mentoring experience is not what mentees and their parents or guardians expect, then they can just as easily end or sabotage the mentoring relationship as a mentor can. Thus, recruitment materials should accurately reflect the benefits, practices, supports, and challenges of being mentored in the program.

Photo courtesy of Midlands Mentoring Partnership

Programs should consider creating sets of recruitment materials in multiple languages for distribution to families where English is not the first language of the home **(E.1.4)**.

Target Audiences of Recruitment Efforts

Given that most mentoring programs have a clear mission, goals, and target population of mentees, targeted efforts to recruit mentees is suggested **(B.1.7)**. Similarly, mentee recruitment materials should include information about who is eligible to participate in the mentoring program **(E.1.2)**. This approach can reduce staff time spent in recruitment efforts as well as in screening of potential mentees, since the pool of available mentees should include a larger percentage of appropriate applicants.

Group-based mentoring programs should be cautious about recruiting and grouping together a large percentage of high-risk youth that engage in aggressive, delinquent, sexually risky, or substance abuse behaviors. A growing body of research suggests that when deviant or high-risk youth are grouped together in therapeutic

or residential settings, they can negatively influence one another, often referred to as deviancy training. These behaviors may, in fact, get worse over time.[61] In other words, deviant behavior has been shown to be both coercive and contagious.[62] It is important to note that the negative effects of deviancy training aren't restricted to high-risk behavior. In fact, peer contagion has been found for other behaviors such as depression and obesity, suggesting that group-based mentoring programs should recruit broadly and avoid grouping together youth who are similarly deviant in their behavior. Furthermore, because of the robust contagious effects of deviant peer influence, mentoring programs that primarily serve delinquent or violent youth should strongly consider avoiding engaging in any group mentoring or group-based activity programming.

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Methods of Recruitment

Programs can encourage their mentees to recruit other peers whose needs match the services offered by the program **(E.1.5)**. Just as mentors can serve as program ambassadors, mentees and their parents or guardians can also serve in a recruitment role to assist with identifying and attracting appropriate prospective mentees.

EXCEPTIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are several Benchmark practices that have reasonable exceptions to them or special factors to consider in operationalizing their implementation. One that has at least one reasonable exception is **B.1.5**, which refers to having mentees contribute to identifying and recruiting mentors for themselves. Some mentoring programs may find this practice unsuitable for their population of mentees or inconsistent with their model. For example, mentees who are children or young adolescents may not have the social network, capacity, or self-efficacy needed to recruit mentors. Thus, assigning a mentor to youth in this age range may be more developmentally appropriate. In addition, in some programs, mentors are paid employees who are recruited and trained for a job. This paid mentoring program model may not be well-suited for having mentees assist with mentor recruitment.

One program model that also has at least one reasonable exception is a mentoring model that solely utilizes youth-initiated mentoring (YIM). In a YIM model, youth are trained and supported to ask someone in their social network to serve as their mentor. This model involving mentees doing mentor recruitment would be logically inconsistent with **B.1.4** in which a mentoring program is expected to encourage mentors to assist with recruitment efforts.

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STANDARD 2

SCREENING

Screen prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time, commitment, and personal qualities to be a safe and effective mentor and screen prospective mentees, and their parents or guardians, about whether they have the time, commitment, and desire to be effectively mentored.

**Benchmark and Enhancement practices that are marked with an asterisk represent those that are either new or were substantially changed from the Third Edition. Mentoring programs are encouraged to give equal consideration to the implementation of all of the Benchmark practices that are listed under this Standard.*

Photo courtesy of First Niagara

BENCHMARKS

MENTOR SCREENING

B.2.1* Program has established criteria for accepting mentors into the program as well as criteria for disqualifying mentor applicants.

B.2.2 Prospective mentors complete a written application that includes questions designed to help assess their safety and suitability for mentoring a youth.

B.2.3 Program conducts at least one face-to-face interview with each prospective mentor that includes questions designed to help the program assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.

B.2.4 Program conducts a comprehensive criminal background check on prospective adult mentors, including searching a national criminal records database, along with sex offender and child abuse registries and, when relevant, driving records.

B.2.5 Program conducts reference check interviews with multiple adults who know an applicant (ideally, both personal and professional references) that include questions to help assess his or her suitability for mentoring a youth.

B.2.6* Prospective mentors agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or a minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.

B.2.7* Prospective mentors agree in writing to participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentees that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by their mentoring program.

MENTEE SCREENING

B.2.8* Program has established criteria for accepting youth into the program as well as criteria that would disqualify a potential youth participant.

B.2.9 Parent(s)/guardian(s) complete an application or referral form.

B.2.10 Parent(s)/guardian(s) provide informed permission for their child to participate.

B.2.11* Parent(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing to a one-year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship, or the minimum time commitment that is required by the mentoring program.

B.2.12 Parents(s)/guardian(s) and mentees agree in writing that mentees participate in face-to-face meetings with their mentors that average a minimum of once a week and a total of four or more hours per month over the course of the relationship, or at a minimum frequency and amount of hours that are required by the mentoring program.

ENHANCEMENTS

MENTOR SCREENING

E.2.1 Program utilizes national, fingerprint-based FBI criminal background checks.

E.2.2* Program conducts at least one home visit of each prospective mentor, especially when the match may be meeting in the mentor's home.

E.2.3* Program conducts comprehensive criminal background checks on all adults living in the home of prospective mentors, including searches of a national criminal records database along with sex offender and child abuse registries, when the match may meet in mentors' homes.

E.2.4 School-based programs assess mentors' interest in maintaining contact with their mentees during the summer months (following the close of the academic school year) and offer assistance to matches in maintaining contact.

E.2.5* Programs that utilize adult mentors prioritize accepting mentor applicants who are older than college-age.

E.2.6* Program uses evidence-based screening tools and practices to identify individuals who have attitudes and beliefs that support safe and effective mentoring relationships.

MENTEE SCREENING

E.2.7* Mentees complete an application (either written or verbally).

E.2.8* Mentees provide written assent agreeing to participate in their mentoring program.

JUSTIFICATION

Volunteer-based youth-services like mentoring are considered as potentially "high-risk" contexts for the occurrence of abuse.[1] The practices that are included in this Standard are designed to keep all program participants safe. Furthermore, these practices are designed to enhance the likelihood that everyone served by the mentoring program is suitable and committed to making the mentoring relationship a positive experience.

Mentoring programs should have a written screening plan that includes all of the policies and procedures used to implement the Benchmark practices (and relevant Enhancement practices) included in the Recruitment Standard.

EMPHASIZING SAFETY

Most of the Benchmarks and Enhancements under this Standard are primarily in service of keeping program participants, especially youth, safe from harm during their time in the program. Several of the Benchmarks **(B.2.2, B.2.3, B.2.4, & B.2.5)** support program practices for determining that volunteer mentors are safe individuals and suitable to be working with children.[2] This begins with the **mentor application (B.2.2)**, which gathers, among other things, critical information that is used in other safety-related practices, such as conducting background checks and speaking with personal and professional references.

Conducting **criminal history records checks (B.2.4)** is the practice that most programs emphasize in the mentor screening process, but it is also one that can create the most confusion and questions. The rules and processes for conducting criminal history checks on volunteers unfortunately vary from state to state, making it difficult to issue a general Benchmark on these checks that will be applicable to all mentoring programs across America. But doing these checks is essential to participant safety, and programs are encouraged to conduct the most thorough check they can of criminal history repositories given the laws of their state. It is important to note that, for adult volunteers, juvenile criminal history information is typically sealed or expunged. It may be noted in a record that there is information that was expunged from an individual's record, but the nature of the crime may be unavailable. Crimes committed before the age of 18 are disseminated to the public only when the individual was taken into custody for an offense that would be a felony if it was committed by an adult. For these reasons, it is important to round out the background information collected about a prospective volunteer through obtaining information from other sources such as conducting home visits **(E.2.2)** and obtaining personal references **(B.2.5)**.

Photo courtesy of Midlands Mentoring Partnership

To further emphasize the importance of thorough checks, it is recommended that programs use the FBI's fingerprint-based background checks **(E.2.1)** whenever possible. The FBI database contains, in theory, the aggregate criminal records from all federal, state, county, and municipal courts. However, even in this system there may be missing records or inaccurate information. Because criminal history databases are imperfect, programs are encouraged to also consult the national sex offender and child abuse registries when screening prospective mentors. For programs where the mentor may transport the youth in their vehicle, driving histories or motor vehicle records should also be checked **(B.2.4)**. Community-based programs in which the youth may occasionally visit the mentor's home are also encouraged to conduct criminal history checks on other adults living in the home **(E.2.3)**. While this practice may feel intrusive to the applicant, and does entail more staff time and costs, it can also be critical in identifying potential hazards to the mentee's safety.

Mentor interviews (B.2.3) are another critical component of the screening process in that it can uncover safety-related red flags and other information that might influence a program's decision to accept a mentor applicant (e.g., revealing a criminal history beyond what a record check uncovered, problematic personal interests, a negative attitude about youth). Conducting the interview at the prospective mentor's home (or at least visiting once as part of the screening process) can reveal even more information about the individual. This practice **(E.2.2)** will be most relevant for community-based programs where the mentor and mentee may be occasionally meeting at the mentor's home. Site-based programs may also consider this practice, as it can provide a window into the mentor's life outside the program and uncover inappropriate behavior (e.g., drug use, illegal activity) or attitudes that make them unsuitable for working with a child, even in a controlled, site-based setting.

Reference checks (B.2.5) also provide valuable information about the prospective mentor's private and professional life and their suitability for mentoring a child. This practice can fill in missing or incomplete information not addressed by the other practices under this Standard. It is recommended that programs speak to at least two non-familial references, inquiring about the applicant's home and work life, background, personality, and possible motivations for mentoring a child.

One of the recent trends in the mentoring field is the use of youth-serving *professionals* in the mentoring role. Many programs use teachers, school counselors, and youth development or afterschool program staff members as formal mentors. This is often a voluntary "add-on" to their normal job duties and responsibilities. In these instances, these professionals have often undergone a criminal history check as part of their hiring in to their position. Mentoring programs utilizing volunteers of this type are still strongly encouraged to complete the other benchmark practices required under this Standard (interviews, reference checks, etc.), even if they do not conduct a new criminal history check. These activities ensure that the program is doing its due diligence and learning more information about the individual's motivations, personal history, and ability to fulfill their obligations as a mentor. Regardless of whether the criminal background check is conducted by the mentoring program or by another youth-serving agency (e.g., school, positive youth development program), mentoring programs should consider repeating the background check on a prescribed, regular basis or utilizing the services of a live screening tool that conducts updated criminal records checks in real-time.

Conducting the interview at the prospective mentor's home can reveal even more information about the individual.

Mentoring programs must follow these safety-related Benchmarks, as the welfare and well-being of young people and their families must be the primary consideration in offering a service such as mentoring. Programs are encouraged to think carefully about the information gathered and revealed by these practices and develop **criteria that would exclude a potential mentor**[3] from participating in the program **(B.2.1)**. Interviews, reference checks, home visits, and criminal records checks only have value if the program knows how to interpret the information and has

policies governing the types of information that would prohibit some applicants from volunteering.

COMMITMENT AND SUITABILITY

Additional Benchmark and Enhancement practices included in the Screening Standard are primarily included to ensure that program participants are suitable for, and committed to, the mentoring experience, as the program defines it. First and foremost, mentoring programs need to determine their target population of mentors through establishing the parameters and criteria for acceptance of volunteers **(B.2.1)**. These decisions will drive both mentor recruitment practices as well as screening methods and procedures.

Programs should engage in practices that ensure all participants, including youth and their parents or guardians, are committed to seeing the relationship through its intended duration, with an emphasis on committing to the minimum length, frequency, and total hours of the mentoring relationship that are required by the mentoring program **(B.2.6, B.2.7, B.2.11, & B.2.12)**.

This commitment is critical for several reasons:

- Longer-term mentoring relationships are consistently associated with more benefits to youth than shorter-term relationships. Evidence for the importance of relationship duration has emerged from many studies of community- and school-based models of volunteer youth mentoring.[4,5,6,7] For example, in one study[8], adolescents who participated in a relationship that lasted at least 12 months had more positive benefits as compared to youth in relationships that lasted fewer than 12 months. Other studies have confirmed the value of meeting frequently and regularly.[9]
- The most critical aspect of a mentoring relationship is that it lasts for the intended duration of the original commitment.[10] Prematurely ending a match may result in negative child outcomes as the mentee may feel rejected, abandoned, or at fault for a mentor failing to follow through on his or her commitment (especially if the match ends suddenly or on bad terms).[11]
- Matches lasting the intended duration is a critical factor in achieving program outcomes. Mentoring relationships are intended to produce measurable positive change and growth in a young person. Programs where significant numbers of matches do not meet their intended duration have little chance of meeting their overall goals and youth outcome objectives.

Photo courtesy of Midlands Mentoring Partnership

While there is substantial evidence that longer matches tend to produce stronger outcomes, the topic of "ideal" match length becomes more complicated when considering the goals, theory of change, and structure of any particular program. While research has consistently found strong effects for programs that last one calendar year (or one academic year, in the case of school-based programs), there are examples of targeted programs[12,13] that achieve meaningful results with mentoring relationships of a much shorter duration. Programs may

consider modifying the Benchmarks governing match length and meeting frequency **(B.2.6, B.2.7, B.2.11, & B.2.12)**, provided that the shorter duration has resulted in positive outcomes in rigorously conducted empirical research studies, that the duration makes sense given the program's theory of change, and that participants are adequately prepared for the closure of the match. This type of modification in program duration and intensity is most likely to be applicable to programs with very targeted and limited goals, such as those with an emphasis on using a mentoring-like relationship to deliver specific lessons or develop specific skills (typically using a defined curriculum taught over a short period of time).

Photo courtesy of First Niagara

There are several other practices, offered here as Enhancements, that are designed to promote or provide information on participant suitability for the mentoring experience. These practices build on the notion that some individuals may be more inclined or able to honor their commitments and fit a program's values more than others:

- Keeping school-based matches in contact over the summer months may be a way of maintaining the bond between mentor and mentee and carry the impact of mentoring into the following school year **(E.2.4)**.[14]
- Mentors' age, and the lifestyles and commitments that accompany certain ages, may make it challenging for some individuals to sustain a mentoring relationship. For example, matches with college-aged students have been found to be more likely to prematurely close than those where the mentee is matched with older mentors.[15] Changing life circumstances, academic pressures, and generally busy schedules may make it more difficult for college-age volunteers to fulfill their mentoring commitments. While programs should feel free to recruit mentors of all ages if appropriate, they may want to de-emphasize using college students as mentors **(E.2.5)** when match length and consistency are a paramount concern, such as in programs that serve youth with high levels of risk or who are at a major transition point in their lives.
- Programs may also want to consider gauging the suitability of mentors using validated instruments that measure characteristics of volunteers' personalities and motivations **(E.2.6)**. These types of instruments can be helpful in determining which volunteers might be the best fit for a program's values and activities. There have been several examples of using these types of tools in the mentoring literature. For example, one study found that peer mentor responses on the Social Interest Scale predicted those mentors' likelihood to meet regularly with their mentee and to sign up for another year in the program.[16] Another found that mentors who indicated more negative feelings toward youth in their community at the beginning of their participation anticipated poor behavior from their mentees, interacted with those mentees in a more prescriptive fashion, and

may have had a negative impact on those mentees' academic performance.[17]

There are other research-based assessment tools that can also be used for assessing mentor risk. For example, there are several assessment tools that claim to measure a volunteer's understanding of appropriate sexual boundaries and even estimate the probability that a potential mentor will engage in inappropriate sexual behavior with a child (or has in the past).

Factors that programs might consider before utilizing one or more of these types of screening tools include the cost of the tool, the validity of the tool for achieving its screening goal, and the degree to which their program might need that level or type of screening. MENTOR does not formally endorse the use of any particular mentor screening tool; however, MENTOR does encourage mentoring programs to consider the use of screening tools as well as to thoroughly examine information about these tools prior to incorporating them into their screening process.

- Finally, programs may want to consider getting written assent from mentees regarding their participation in a mentoring program **(E.2.8)**. This practice can be especially important in programs where mentees are referred to the program by a third party (e.g., parent, teacher, court) and their participation may not be entirely of their choosing. Youth who have considered the opportunity and expressed some willingness to participate are much more likely to have a successful match than those who are unenthusiastic or who haven't really considered what their participation would mean.

INFORMATION FOR MATCHING

There are several important reasons for having mentors **(B.2.2)**, parents **(B.2.9)** and mentees **(E.2.7)** complete applications. At a practical level, these applications gather contact information in case of an emergency, as well as information regarding any allergies or medications that may impact match meetings. But most importantly, applications should be designed to also provide information for creating effective matches, including the locations and schedules of each match member. This information will be instrumental for constructing the initial pool of eligible mentors to match with a mentee by considering the geographic proximity of each match member to one another, as well as their scheduling availability and preferences. The application should also collect some information about the participants' personalities and interests. Given the consistent positive youth outcomes found for programs that match mentors and mentees based upon shared interests,[18] applications completed by mentors **(B.2.2)** and mentees **(E.2.7)** should include questions regarding their hobbies, skills, interests, and goals to assist in the matching process. Note that for younger mentees, programs may consider gathering this application information through an interview, provided they record the youth's responses and retain the information as they would a written application.

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EXCEPTIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As noted above, some programs may want to modify the Benchmarks in this Standard related to match length and meeting frequency and duration **(B.2.6, B.2.7, B.2.11, & B.2.12)**. Programs can deviate from these Benchmarks so long as there is some empirical evidence to support the idea that the variation will still result in positive outcomes for mentees (e.g., combining in-person meetings with online communications or telephone calls; meeting less frequently than once a week, but each meeting lasting for more than an hour, on average). But as a general rule, programs should aim to meet these Benchmark practices for match length and meeting consistency, and deviate only when there is a clear rationale for doing otherwise.

But even site-based programs may want to consider still conducting a home visit to mentors' homes (E.2.2), as it may unearth critical safety or suitability information.

Two additional exceptions noted here pertain to the mentor's home life and the backgrounds of other adults living with the mentor **(E.2.2 & E.2.3)**. Site-based programs, where mentees are not allowed to visit the mentor's home, may justifiably choose to bypass these practices, especially background checks on other adults living in the home. But even site-based programs may want to consider still conducting a home visit to mentors' homes **(E.2.2)**, as it may unearth critical safety or suitability information not discovered during other screening procedures.

Finally, for peer mentoring programs utilizing mentors who are under the age of 18, conducting criminal background checks is not possible in the United States. Juvenile crime records are not available for non-criminal justice purposes, and most records are sealed. Programs using peer mentors should still consider the use of other screening practices recommended here, even if criminal history checks are not available or appropriate.

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STANDARD 3

TRAINING

Train prospective mentors, mentees, and mentees' parents (or legal guardians or responsible adult) in the basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to build an effective and safe mentoring relationship using culturally appropriate language and tools.

**Benchmark and Enhancement practices that are marked with an asterisk represent those that are either new or were substantially changed from the Third Edition. Mentoring programs are encouraged to give equal consideration to the implementation of all of the Benchmark practices that are listed under this Standard.*

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BENCHMARKS

MENTOR TRAINING

B.3.1 Program provides a minimum of two hours of pre-match, in-person, mentor training.

B.3.2 Program provides pre-match training for mentors on the following topics:

- **a.** Program requirements (e.g., match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing, being late to meetings, and match termination)
- **b.** Mentors' goals and expectations for the mentee, parent or guardian, and the mentoring relationship
- **c.** Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles
- **d.** Relationship development and maintenance
- **e.** Ethical and safety issues that may arise related to the mentoring relationship
- **f.** Effective closure of the mentoring relationship
- **g.** Sources of assistance available to support mentors
- **h.*** Opportunities and challenges associated with mentoring specific populations of youth (e.g., children with an incarcerated parent, youth involved in the juvenile justice system, youth in foster care, high school dropouts), if relevant
- **i.*** Initiating the mentoring relationship
- **j.*** Developing an effective, positive relationship with mentee's family, if relevant

B.3.3* Program provides pre-match training for the mentor on the following risk management policies that are matched to the program model, setting, and population served:

- **a.** Appropriate physical contact
- **b.** Contact with mentoring program (e.g., who to contact, when to contact)
- **c.** Relationship monitoring requirements (e.g., response time, frequency, schedule)
- **d.** Approved activities
- **e.** Mandatory reporting requirements associated with suspected child abuse or neglect, and suicidality and homicidality
- **f.** Confidentiality and anonymity
- **g.** Digital and social media use
- **h.** Overnight visits and out of town travel
- **i.** Money spent on mentee and mentoring activities
- **j.** Transportation
- **k.** Emergency and crisis situation procedures

l. Health and medical care

m. Discipline

n. Substance use

o. Firearms and weapons

p. Inclusion of others in match meetings (e.g., siblings, mentee's friends)

q. Photo and image use

r. Evaluation and use of data

s. Grievance procedures

t. Other program relevant topics

B.3.4 Program uses training practices and materials that are informed by empirical research or are themselves empirically evaluated.

ENHANCEMENTS

MENTOR TRAINING

E.3.1 Program provides additional pre-match training opportunities beyond the two-hour, in-person minimum for a total of six hours or more.

E.3.2 Program addresses the following post-match training topics:

a. How developmental functioning may affect the mentoring relationship

b. How culture, gender, race, religion, socioeconomic status, and other demographic characteristics of the mentor and mentee may affect the mentoring relationship

c. Topics tailored to the needs and characteristics of the mentee

d. Closure procedures

E.3.3 Program uses training to continue to screen mentors for suitability to be a mentor and develops techniques for early trouble-shooting should problems be identified.

MENTEE TRAINING

E.3.4* Program provides training for the mentee on the following topics:

a.* Purpose of mentoring

b. Program requirements (e.g., match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing or being late to meetings, match termination)

c.* Mentees' goals for mentoring

d. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles

e. Mentees' obligations and appropriate roles

f.* Ethics and safety in mentoring relationships

g.* Initiating the mentoring relationship

h.* Effective closure of the mentoring relationship

E.3.5* Program provides training for the mentee on the following risk management policies that are matched to the program model, setting, and population served:

a. Appropriate physical contact

b. Contact with mentoring program (e.g., who to contact, when to contact)

c. Relationship monitoring requirements (e.g., response time, frequency, schedule)

d. Approved activities

e. Mandatory reporting requirements associated with suspected child abuse or neglect, and suicidality and homicidality

f. Confidentiality and anonymity

g. Digital and social media use

h. Overnight visits and out of town travel

i. Money spent on mentee and mentoring activities

j. Transportation

k. Emergency and crisis situation procedures

l. Health and medical care

m. Discipline

n. Substance use

o. Firearms and weapons

p. Inclusion of others in match meetings (e.g., siblings, mentee's friends)

q. Photo and image use

r. Evaluation and use of data

s. Grievance procedures

t. Other program relevant topics

PARENT OR GUARDIAN TRAINING

E.3.6* Program provides training for the parent(s) or guardian(s) (when appropriate) on the following topics:

a.* Purpose of mentoring

b. Program requirements (e.g., match length, match frequency, duration of visits, protocols for missing or being late to meetings, match termination)

c.* Parents' and mentees' goals for mentoring

d. Mentors' obligations and appropriate roles

e. Mentees' obligations and appropriate roles

f.* Ethics and safety in mentoring relationships

g.* Initiating the mentoring relationship

h.* Developing an effective, working relationship with your child's mentor

i.* Effective closure of the mentoring relationship

E.3.7* Program provides training for the parent(s) or guardian(s) on the following risk management policies that are matched to the program model, setting, and population served:

a. Appropriate physical contact

b. Contact with mentoring program (e.g., who to contact, when to contact)

c. Relationship monitoring requirements (e.g., response time, frequency, schedule)

d. Approved activities

e. Mandatory reporting requirements associated with suspected child abuse or neglect, and suicidality and homicidality

f. Confidentiality and anonymity

g. Digital and social media use

h. Overnight visits and out of town travel

i. Money spent on mentee and mentoring activities

j. Transportation

k. Emergency and crisis situation procedures

l. Health and medical care

m. Discipline

n. Substance use

o. Firearms and weapons

p. Inclusion of others in match meetings (e.g., siblings, mentee's friends)

q. Photo and image use

r. Evaluation and use of data

s. Grievance procedures

t. Other program relevant topics

JUSTIFICATION

MENTOR TRAINING

Purpose of Mentor Training

Mentor training is a vital component of any successful mentoring program.[1] It appears that most, but not all, mentors currently involved in a mentoring program have received some type of pre-match training or orientation.[2] Volunteers who receive training tend to be more satisfied which, in turn, can promote greater retention, a key component of effective mentoring relationships.[3] Mentor training is particularly important because it has documented implications for match length, as well as both mentors' and mentees' perceptions about the quality of their mentor-mentee relationship, including their feelings of closeness, support, satisfaction, and effectiveness as a mentor.[4,5,6,7] Further, these perceptions of the mentor-mentee relationship are thought to influence the positive outcomes and continuation of the mentor-mentee relationship, suggesting the lasting importance of mentor training for youth outcomes.[8] One important factor to note is that pre-match mentor training has not yet been shown to have a direct effect on youth outcomes;[9,10] however, no studies have been found that were designed to directly test this hypothesis, so additional research is needed. Despite the paucity of studies on the effectiveness of mentor training, taken together, the findings from a substantial body of research underlines the importance of this practice for enhancing mentor and match-related outcomes.

Another important function of mentor training is to provide mentoring program staff with an opportunity to learn more about prospective mentors. Whether training is solely conducted in-person, web-based, or a blended learning approach of both in-person and web-based, people can be screened for suitability to be a mentor **(E.3.3)**. Programs also should develop techniques for early troubleshooting should problems be identified **(E.3.3)**. For example, a single behavior is not necessarily indicative of a problem; however, programs should carefully observe patterns of behaviors that together may indicate a budding problem.

Photo courtesy of First Niagara

Some suggestions of possible behaviors that might serve as red flags to staff that a mentor might engage in unsafe practices:

- mentors who focus primarily on their own personal needs,
- mentors who are over-involved with children (especially combined with under-involvement or superficial connections with adults),
- mentors with unhealthy beliefs or attitudes such as treating children as peers,
- mentors who engage in developmentally inappropriate behaviors,
- mentors who display excessive physical contact with others including mentees,

- mentors who are secretive about the activities they do with their mentees or have several cursory conversations with program staff without sharing much information about their mentoring relationship,
- mentors who are unable or unwilling to set limits or boundaries with their mentees or other youth,
- mentors whose references do not know him or her well, and
- mentors who have problematic background characteristics such as a history of victimization or rejection from volunteering at other youth development programs.

Length of Mentor Training

The amount of time spent providing pre- and post-match training to mentors has been found to be related to match outcomes. More training and support provided with a coherent approach (e.g., interpersonal, behavioral) is related to increased mentor effectiveness when compared to less training implemented with a nonspecific approach.[11,12] Specifically, less than two hours of pre-match training has resulted in mentors who reported the lowest levels of closeness with their mentees, spent less time with their mentees, and were less likely to continue their relationships with their mentees in a second year compared to mentors who received at least six hours of training **(B.3.1 & E.3.1)**.[13,14,15]

Post-match training can play a central role in helping mentors understand setbacks, and maintain or restore momentum in the relationship.

Timing of Mentor Training

Training needs will likely vary according to the stage of the mentoring relationship.[16] **Pre-match training** is important when prospective mentors are anticipating and preparing for their upcoming mentoring relationship with the primary goals being to increase readiness to mentor and a sense of self-efficacy to be a mentor, as well as preparing mentors with training in safety, ethics, and risk management policies of the program (described in the section on Training Content). Pre-match training builds feelings of self-efficacy as a mentor,[17] which is important because pre-match mentor self-efficacy affects the quality of the mentoring relationship, as well as youth outcomes.[18,19, 20,21,22,23]

Photo courtesy of Mentoring Works Washington

Post-match training is also important after mentors have had some experience mentoring and may have some specific targeted questions.[24] Training can be individualized or tailored to help mentors continue to build their relationships, and address more complex issues that may have arisen in the context of an actual relationship. For example, when mentoring particularly challenging youth, such as highly aggressive youth, mentors' perceived self-efficacy can decrease after the relationship starts, even when mentor perceived self-efficacy is high pre-match. This suggests that post-match training can play a central

role in helping mentors understand setbacks, and maintain or restore momentum in the relationship **(E.3.2)**.[25,26] Closure must also be addressed post-match, even when mentors have already been trained or exposed to issues associated with relationship closure. It is important for post-match training to review and provide more in-depth information regarding closure procedures and approaches that increase the likelihood of a successful transition out of mentoring **(E.3.2)**.

Content of Mentor Training

Pre-match training should include an opportunity for mentors to consider their motives or goals for being a mentor **(B.3.2)**. Mentors' motivations are especially influential in the early stages of the mentoring relationship.[27,28] Mentors' motivations also influence whether they obtain information about mentoring prior to the match, plan for future activities with their mentee, and form expectations about the mentoring relationship.[29] Mentors who report a discrepancy between their initial expectations of their relationship with their mentee and their actual post-match experiences with their mentee are less likely to report an intention to stay in the mentoring relationship.[30,31] Mentors and mentees may also experience difficulties when their motivations and goals for the mentoring relationship do not match. Helping mentors to identify multiple motivations for being a mentor during training can have long-term benefits by helping to sustain mentors' commitment to and satisfaction with their mentoring relationship when one goal is not being met.[32, 33, 34] Consequently, mentor training should help mentors to identify their goals, modify unrealistic expectations, and compare their goals with their mentees' goals to identify and address discrepancies between the two.

Mentors and mentees may experience difficulties when their motivations and goals for the mentoring relationship do not match.

Pre-match training should be designed to help mentors learn about different styles of relationships that may be employed within a mentoring relationship **(B.3.2)**.[35] This topic is important because mentors can approach mentoring relationships from a range of different perspectives, some of which are associated with better outcomes than others. Because there is typically a difference in age and power between an adult mentor and younger mentee, relationship styles can greatly influence relationship quality and closeness. There are two principal frameworks that are currently used by mentors and recommended by mentoring programs: *developmental* and *instrumental* approaches. Both styles share several commonalities including being youth-centered and collaborative. They also both emphasize relationship building and goal-directed activities. However, the two relationship styles differ in terms of how they prioritize the original or early focus of the mentoring relationship.[36,37]

The *developmental* style focuses on fostering relational interactions first, and then, may later incorporate competency or skill-building activities. In contrast, the *instrumental* style promotes beginning the mentoring relationship with a focus on goal-directed activities and then, later attends to growing the interpersonal relationship between the mentor and mentee. The *developmental* relationship style is associated with a range of positive outcomes including more positive quality mentoring relationships and longer relationship

durations.[38,39,40] Researchers have endorsed using both the *developmental* approach[41] and the *instrumental* approach,[42,43] as particularly effective for mentoring at-risk youth. Although providing some structure in the mentoring relationship (e.g., similar to an instrumental style mentoring relationship) has been shown to be beneficial for mentee outcomes, research suggests that the provision of structure in the relationship should not be at the expense of a primary focus on having fun and developing the relationship.[44]

Photo courtesy of Midlands Mentoring Partnership

Mentoring programs may choose one relational style to be implemented within their agency over the other depending upon the agency's goals, context, aims, and the population they serve.[45,46] Regardless of which style is endorsed by a mentoring program, it can be a complex task for nonprofessional volunteers to understand and engage in either relationship style. Mentoring programs need to clearly address the relationship orientation of their program in both pre- and post-match mentor training.

Given that having realistic expectations is associated with relationship longevity, training should address the needs of special populations of mentored youth, such as the children of prisoners, children in foster care,[47] children in the juvenile justice system, children who have dropped out of school, and immigrant children **(E.3.2)**.[48,49] For example, immigrant youth face unique challenges, including stress related to discrimination, poverty, and separation from family members.[50] Training for mentors of immigrant youth should raise volunteers' awareness of these challenges, as well as heighten their cultural sensitivity. In addition, training should stress the negative outcomes associated with early termination, as research suggests that the termination of a mentoring relationship may be particularly destructive for immigrant youth, especially if they have already experienced the loss of family members during the process of migration.[51]

In another example of a special population, children of incarcerated parents struggle with issues of trust and social stigma.[52] These children often believe that no one trusts them because of their parent's criminal history and have trust issues themselves due to their unstable family situation.[53] Training for mentors of this population should emphasize building trust, for example, by being consistent and following through with plans. Mentors of children of prisoners should also be aware of the possibility that their mentees may feel embarrassed about their parent's incarceration, and they should be equipped with the skills necessary to respond effectively in the event that these feelings are disclosed.[54] Because these families often experience a lot of additional stressors associated with having a parent incarcerated, mentors may also need training related to these challenges including awareness about the impact of mentees' contacts with their incarcerated parents, unplanned cancellations, expectations about money, and managing their stress.[55]

Photo courtesy of Midlands Mentoring Partnership

In addition to providing training on special populations of mentees, training may need to be provided for specific types of programs hosting mentoring programs or for mentoring programs being conducted in place-based settings. For example, when mentors serve in school-based settings or at youth development organizations, mentors may need training on issues associated with working in the facility (e.g., wearing name tags, signing in and out). Another example is that training may be needed on group dynamics when the program model includes group mentoring.

Long-term positive mentoring relationships develop through demonstrating positive relationship behaviors such as authenticity, empathy, collaboration, and companionship.[56,57] Training should also focus on developing and sustaining these relationship-enhancing behaviors. Furthermore, training on how to foster a developmental (i.e., cooperative, mentee-driven relationship designed to meet the needs of the mentee) versus prescriptive (i.e., mentor as authority figure) relationship is recommended.[58]

For mentoring programs where mentors will interact with the mentee's family, the Standard now requires that mentors receive training in how to develop an effective, positive relationship with their mentee's parents or guardians **(B.3.2)**. Parent (or guardian) involvement in and engagement with the mentoring relationship can positively contribute to match outcomes.[59,60, 61,62,63,64] In addition, when mentors collaborate with parents or guardians, it is viewed as a central means of facilitating positive youth outcomes.[65] Importantly, parents' lack of support of the mentoring relationship can undermine the growth of a close and supportive mentoring relationship, and in turn, contribute to its unplanned dissolution.[66,67] By establishing a congenial, collaborative working relationship with parents or guardians, mentors can simultaneously focus their time and energy primarily on their mentee while helping parents feel included in and important to the mentoring relationship.[68] Mentoring programs need to be explicit in training mentors about the nature of the relationship that is expected between mentors and family members, so that expectations are clear to everyone involved in the match and mentors have a clear sense of how to behave with parents.

Parents' lack of support of the mentoring relationship can undermine the growth of a close and supportive mentoring relationship.

General training on ethics and safety in mentoring, as well as training on the specific risk management policies of the mentoring organization, are critical for keeping both the mentee and the mentor safe and healthy **(B.3.3)**. A landmark paper in 2009 outlined five principles of ethical mentoring that could serve as a guide for structuring the content of this part of the training.[69]

The first principle of ethical and safe mentoring suggests that mentors should promote the welfare and safety of their mentees. Consistent with this principle, mentor training could include training in decision-making contrasting decisions that are egoistic versus beneficent. For example, mentors need to be aware of possible boundary issues to avoid engaging in uncomfortable and sometimes even unsafe dual relationships with mentees.[70] Furthermore, mentors can be trained in being sensitive to power differentials that are inherent in adult-child relationships, and relatedly, in skills associated with collaborative decision-making and communication. One important aspect of communication skills is learning methods for resolving conflict with mentees which can occur in a variety of contexts including having conflicting goals, interests, and preferences.

Photo courtesy of Midlands Mentoring Partnership

The second principle is being trustworthy and responsible; helping mentors translate this concept in the context of a mentoring relationship is key. Third is that mentors need to act with integrity. Fourth, mentors need to promote justice and not engage in discrimination towards their mentees. Finally, mentors need to respect the rights and dignity of their mentees and their mentees' families. Mentors need training so that their behavior with their mentee is consistent with their mentee's family values.[71,72]

There are many program policies that are relevant to protecting the safety and health of the mentee, mentor, and the mentee's family. The need for these policies are not based upon empirical research per se, rather they are based upon a canvass of the possible situations that might arise in a mentoring relationship that could prove to be unsafe. For example, driving without a license, insurance, or seat belt, or driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs are clearly unsafe, and in this benchmark, mentoring programs are required to have a stated policy that is communicated to mentors and families. Program policies need to be regularly reviewed and updated. This practice is recommended, because of the rapidly changing nature of some cultural and technological innovations such as use of digital media by matches for communication purposes (e.g., social media).[73] Furthermore, being prepared to deal with distressing situations, as well as strategies for coping with challenging and upsetting situations such as contacting match support staff at the mentoring program, may help improve mentor satisfaction and retention,[74] and keep everyone safe.

Cultural competency training is also recommended as part of training related to ethical mentoring **(E.3.2)**. Notably, it has been positively associated with mentor satisfaction and retention.[75] Pre-match training can raise the awareness of mentors about how they are both similar to and different from their mentees, and be better prepared to build their relationship.[76,77] Ethnocultural empathy, or empathy towards people in racial and ethnic groups that are different from one's own, may contribute to more positive outcomes in cross-cultural mentoring matches.[78]

MENTEE TRAINING

Training has recently been considered to also be a fundamental method of preparing someone to be in the new role of a protégé or mentee. Providing a prospective mentee with both orientation and training is particularly important because having knowledge and expectations about program requirements, as well as about this new type of relationship, can contribute significantly to its success. Despite the value of pre-match mentee training, there remains a lot of variability in the extent to which programs require orientation with or training of mentees, as well as whether training of mentees is conducted one-to-one with a staff person, with a group of other mentees, with their parent, or jointly with their mentor.[79]

Training in everyone's roles, including mentors, mentees, parents or guardians, and staff, will help mentees understand the boundaries in the relationship.

Some of the benefits associated with mentee training include the fact that understanding the potential benefits of being mentored and setting goals for the relationship can help build motivation in mentees and empower young people to be active contributors to building their mentoring relationship **(E.3.4)**. Pre-match training can also contribute to understanding of the mentee's contribution to the relationship in terms of their roles and responsibilities, enhance the likelihood of their commitment to the mentoring relationship, and result in mentors being more involved and satisfied in the mentoring relationship.[80] Training in everyone's roles, including mentors, mentees, parents or guardians, and staff, will help mentees understand the boundaries in the relationship, and can reduce any anxiety regarding what things are appropriate and not appropriate for each party to do in the mentoring relationship.

Most mentees are enrolled in a mentoring program by a caring adult and did not initiate the engagement in the program. Hence, prospective mentees may not fully understand what it means to be mentored. In fact, they express some anxiety about who their mentor will be and what kinds of activities they will be doing together. By preparing mentees for their first meeting with their mentor, it can alleviate their anxiety about these issues and can help the relationship be initiated in a positive, memorable experience. Furthermore, by providing mentees with training on ethics, safety, and their mentoring program's risk management policies, mentees can contribute to participating in keeping themselves safe **(E.3.5)**.

PARENT OR GUARDIAN TRAINING

Pre-match orientation and training of the parents or guardians of prospective mentees has recently been considered to also be a core practice for mentoring programs. Parent training is particularly important, because parent involvement in and support of the mentoring relationship is associated with positive youth outcomes **(E.3.6)**.[81,82,83] However, many programs still do not provide a formal orientation or training experience for parents or guardians of mentees.[84]

Parents need to have knowledge and expectations about program requirements, as well as about how this new type of relationship can significantly contribute to their child's success. For example, understanding the potential benefits of being mentored and setting goals for the relationship can help build

motivation in family members and who can help support and empower their children to be active contributors to building the mentoring relationship. Furthermore, parents can help calm children's worries and demonstrate their confidence in their child's mentor.[85] Parents of mentees can also support the relationship by setting expectations for the child's behavior when he or she is with the mentor. In addition, parents can assist with scheduling and planning outings, and with addressing any concerns or conflicts that arise.

Parents need to have knowledge and expectations about program requirements, as well as about how this new type of relationship can significantly contribute to their child's success.

When parents provide background information about their child to their child's mentor and share their parenting and family values to the extent that he or she feels comfortable, mentors will ideally reinforce those values, or at minimum, avoid undermining them.[86] This type of communication is viewed as a factor in developing a strong match and helping mentees achieve positive outcomes. When mentors have background information on their mentees and their mentees' families, they can better anticipate and address any challenges that might arise in the match, and they can more accurately interpret their mentees' behavior.[87] Pre-match training can contribute to understanding of the mentee's and family's contribution to the relationship in terms of each party's roles and responsibilities, and enhance the likelihood of a commitment to the mentoring relationship. Training in everyone's roles, including mentors, mentees, parents or guardians, and staff will help parents to understand the boundaries in the relationship which can, in turn, reduce any anxiety regarding what things are appropriate and not appropriate in the mentoring relationship **(E.3.6)**.

Most positive mentoring results have been achieved when mentors did not take on the role of a surrogate parent and did not appear to the child to be too closely aligned with the parents.[88] When mentors understand the distinction of their role from that of the parent's, mentees are likely to feel closer to their mentors than they do when the parent is shaping the direction of the relationship.

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Unfulfilled expectations, pragmatic concerns, and frustrations often emerge in the early, vulnerable stages of relationship development.[89] In fact, when parents' expectations differed from those of mentors, parents were often less satisfied with the mentoring experience for their children.[90] In contrast, when parents were able to form friendly relationships with their children's mentors, they tended to play a more supportive or collaborative role in the relationship than when they felt more distant. These findings support the notion that training provided to both mentors and parents should

address what can be expected in a mentoring relationship as well as how to communicate about expectations to one another and how to form a close working relationship. Families who are not trained on the realities of mentoring may experience disappointment and in turn, may undermine or prematurely terminate the mentoring relationship. Hence, mentoring programs need to be explicit in training parents about the nature of the relationship that is expected between the mentor and family members, so that expectations are clear to everyone involved in the match **(E.3.6 & E.3.7)**.

Despite some theoretical and empirical support for the importance of pre-match parent training and positive support of the mentoring relationship, empirical evidence to support this practice is still lacking.[91] A recent Parent Engagement Model which included a range of practices (e.g., parent orientation, parent handbook, new mentor training, match support on enhanced topics, monthly post cards on each topic, and biannual family events) resulted in an increase in parent knowledge and positive consumer satisfaction with the training, but no effects were found on match or youth outcomes. Thus, the content and methods used in delivering pre-match training for parents and guardians likely need additional work if they are to have an impact on matches or youth.

Finally, by providing parents or guardians with training on ethics, safety, and their mentoring program's risk management policies, family members can contribute to participating in keeping their children safe **(E.3.7)**. Pre-match training for parents can guide caregivers in how to determine if the mentor is a caring and safe adult, and provide parents with information about how they can work with mentoring program staff to understand program policies and maintain safety for their child within the program. Parent training should also empower parents to monitor the match, providing them with tips of what things to look for in their child. Parents are more likely to engage in their children's education when they develop an interest in playing an influential role, have a sense of efficacy for helping their children, and see opportunities and invitations to get involved.[92] These principles can easily be applied to a parent's relationship with a mentoring program, and should be featured in training.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR CONDUCTING TRAINING

Use of evidence-informed or evidence-based curricula for conducting training of mentors, mentees, and parents has many advantages **(B.3.4)**. Currently, there are few evidence-based training programs available in the mentoring field. In order for a training program to be evidence-based, it needs to have been reviewed by experts in the field according to accepted standards of empirical research. In other words, just incorporating findings from research into the content of a training program does not make the training program evidence-based. The program itself needs to have reliable evidence that it works to achieve its stated goals. There are many benefits to using evidence-based training programs in that they can provide standardized, manualized, and validated methods for achieving the desired cognitive and behavioral outcomes in trainees which may include mentors, mentees, and parents or guardians. A current reasonable alternative to evidence-based training is to utilize evidence-informed training materials with content that combines findings from the research literature, input from practitioners, and feedback from trainees together to create training practices that are well-grounded in the literature and best practices of the field.

Photo courtesy of Midlands Mentoring Partnership

Online training, in particular, can be a medium that is well-suited for delivering high quality, engaging, standardized, easily accessible, and scalable education to anyone involved in a mentoring relationship. This is particularly true when the online training incorporates multimedia and interactive pedagogical methods. For example, compared to mentors who received only in-person training-as-usual, mentors who received both an online training program and in-person training-as-usual had greater knowledge about mentoring, were more aware of the roles mentors should and should not play, had less positive expectation biases, and felt more efficacious, more ready, and better prepared to mentor.[93]

Just incorporating findings from research into the content of a training program does not make the training program evidence-based.

Online or Web-based training is well-suited for developing knowledge and attitudes about a topic. In the case of mentoring, the use of a *blended* learning approach is desirable and optimal because developing or enhancing behavioral skills are also important, and these skills can best be practiced and role played in an in-person training context. In addition, not only does the content of instructional materials need to be based upon research findings, but the methods used in conducting in-person training should also be based upon research results. For example, in-person training programs should accommodate different learning styles, as well as give learners the opportunity to practice and apply the behavioral skills that they have learned to examples that may occur in mentoring situations. Using a range of approaches to communicate, learn, and practice new skills and information that includes visual, auditory, writing, and kinesthetic methods help to reach the wide variety of different types of learners who may be participating in a training workshop.[94] Interactive engagement and cooperative group work in place of some lecturing were associated with higher gains in students' learning.[95] Inclusion of interactive activities and teaching methods has also been found to be important in the prevention literature in that interactive programs have better outcomes for children and adolescents, as well as greater implementation fidelity.[96,97] Thus, integrating active approaches to instruction, such as active learning, experiential learning, and problem-based learning, increases mastery of material, rather than simply treating the trainee as a passive learner.

Equally as important as the pedagogical methods employed during in-person, instructor-led training is the preparedness and skills of the trainer. The prevention science literature provides useful guidance on this issue in that pre-intervention training is an essential strategy for increasing quality of implementation, because it familiarizes educators with the program's theoretical basis, content, skills targeted for development,

and instructional methods.[98] Also important is the quality of delivery and interaction with participants, which is associated with successful outcomes.[99] A similar pattern of results has been found for the benefits of teacher training and professional development in that it contributes to producing high-quality implementation of new education curricula[100] and preventive intervention programs.[101]

EXCEPTIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

No exceptions to the Benchmark practices included in this Standard were identified. All of the benchmarks in this Standard refer to mentor training and are considered fundamental to effective mentoring program practices. Mentee training and parent or guardian training practices are only included as Enhancement practices here; hence, they are not required.

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STANDARD 4

MATCHING AND INITIATING

Match mentors and mentees, and initiate the mentoring relationship using strategies likely to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure and be effective.

**Benchmark and Enhancement practices that are marked with an asterisk represent those that are either new or were substantially changed from the Third Edition. Mentoring programs are encouraged to give equal consideration to the implementation of all of the Benchmark practices that are listed under this Standard.*

Photo courtesy of Rhode Islanders Sponsoring Education (RISE)

BENCHMARKS

B.4.1 Program considers the characteristics of the mentor and mentee (e.g., interests; proximity; availability; age; gender; race; ethnicity; personality; expressed preferences of mentor, mentee, and parent or guardian; goals; strengths; previous experiences) when making matches.

B.4.2 Program arranges and documents an initial meeting between the mentor and mentee as well as, when relevant, with the parent or guardian.

B.4.3 Program staff member should be on site and/or present during the initial match meeting of the mentor and mentee, and, when relevant, parent or guardian.

B.4.4* Mentor, mentee, a program staff member, and, when relevant, the mentee's parent or guardian, meet in person to sign a commitment agreement consenting to the program's rules and requirements (e.g., frequency, intensity and duration of match meetings; roles of each person involved in the mentoring relationship; frequency of contact with program), and risk management policies.

ENHANCEMENTS

E.4.1* Programs match mentee with a mentor who is at least three years older than the mentee.

E.4.2* Program sponsors a group matching event where prospective mentors and mentees can meet and interact with one another, and provide the program with feedback on match preferences.

E.4.3* Program provides an opportunity for the parent(s) or guardian(s) to provide feedback about the mentor selected by the program, prior to the initiation meeting.

E.4.4* Initial match meeting occurs at the home of the mentee with the program staff member present, if the mentor will be picking up the mentee at the mentee's home for match meetings.

E.4.5* Program staff member prepares mentor for the initial meeting after the match determination has been made (e.g., provide mentor with background information about prospective mentee; remind mentor of confidentiality; discuss potential opportunities and challenges associated with mentoring proposed mentee).

E.4.6* Program staff member prepares mentee and his or her parents or guardians for the initial meeting after the match determination has been made (e.g., provide mentee and parent(s) with background information about selected mentor; discuss any family rules that should be shared with the mentor; discuss what information family members would like to share with the mentor and when).

JUSTIFICATION

Creating an effective and enduring mentoring relationship begins with the matching of a mentor and mentee and formally establishing the mentoring relationship. Mentoring programs should have a comprehensive plan for matching and initiating mentoring relationships that address all the Benchmarks of this Standard.

Photo courtesy of First Niagara

PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH MATCHING

Matching mentors and mentees based on similarities such as age, gender, race, and ethnicity, and mutual interests is frequently recommended.[1] However, research comparing cross-race and same-race matches has found few, if any, differences in the development of relationship quality or in positive outcomes, suggesting that matching on race may not be a critical dimension of a successful mentoring relationship.[2,3] Thus, although the research is not yet conclusive, it has been suggested that matching based on common interests should take precedence over matching based on race.[4,5] Further, programs should consider the theory of change and mission of their program when prioritizing characteristics for matching mentors and mentees **(B.4.1)**.

Research on mentoring programs that allow mentees to choose their mentor has demonstrated some promising preliminary support for this practice.

There should be a sufficient difference in age between mentors and mentees for the mentor to be truly considered "older" **(E.4.1)**. The rationale for this enhanced practice is particularly important for programs enlisting teenaged (or even pre-teenaged) mentors. These mentors typically lack the independence in perspective-taking to not make assumptions about their similarly-aged peers and experience a greater embeddedness in, and need to respond to, pressures to be accepted and popular with peers. This lack of objectivity, where adolescent mentors may feel a need for the approval of their similarly-aged mentees, can be most problematic in terms of serving as role models, trusted friends, and empathic mentors to their mentees. Karcher[6] recommends at least a two-year or two-grade gap between mentors and mentees to achieve this goal. In other words, a freshman in high school would never be mentored by a sophomore, and likewise, an 8th grader would be considered an adequate mentor to a 6th grader only in the case of the mentor demonstrating high levels of maturity. Some situations where mentors and mentees do not share the same peer group may be able to utilize a smaller age difference between match members. For example, when mentors who are high school sophomores are mentoring freshman from a different school, they might

not be affected by peer pressure in the same way that they could be affected if they are from the same school. Nonetheless, even in this type of situation, programs need to be cautious because small-age gap relationships could still be subject to within-program social demands to be liked. Adolescent mentors might be hampered by a lack of true independence of objectivity by struggling with the same age-specific social demands.

To assist in the process of matching mentors and mentees, some mentoring programs host a group event where prospective mentors and mentees can meet and interact with one another in an organized fashion, and then provide feedback to the mentoring program regarding their preferences for matching **(E.4.2)**.[7,8] This process gives mentors and mentees some "voice and choice" in matching and is based on the idea that this practice will be associated with greater engagement in the program. Research on mentoring programs that allow mentees to choose their mentor has demonstrated some promising preliminary support for this practice.[9] In a similar vein, mentoring programs where mentees select their mentors—youth-initiated mentoring—have been found to be promising in relation to match longevity and long-term youth outcomes.[10]

Many programs also allow parents or guardians to give feedback about the selected mentor prior to matching **(E.4.3)**. This practice is designed to reinforce parent engagement and parent voice in the mentoring program. Parents may have the greatest insight into the type of mentor that would connect best with their child and thus, their input and feedback can help create a better match.

INITIATING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Once matched, mentoring best practices suggest that mentors and mentees should have a formal, initial meeting that is documented and attended by the program staff, and when relevant, a parent or guardian of the mentee **(B.4.2 & B.4.3)**.[11] It is recommended that someone from the mentor program prepare the mentor, mentee, and when relevant, the mentee's parent or guardian, for the first meeting so that everyone knows what to expect **(E.4.5 & E.4.6)**. During this preparation discussion, the program staff should provide background information about everyone who will be involved in the mentoring relationship. This is an opportunity to discuss with the parent or guardian any specific rules they have for their child that they would like to mentor to know and what information the parent or guardian wants to share with the mentor about their family.

Photo courtesy of Mentoring Works Washington

It is also recommended that the initial match meeting take place at the mentee's home, especially if the mentor will be picking up the mentee at the home **(E.4.4)**. Meeting in this location allows the mentor to learn where the mentee lives and can contribute to the mentor, mentee, and parent or guardian feeling

more comfortable with the mentor visiting the mentee's home.

It is recommended that someone from the mentor program prepare the mentor, mentee, and when relevant, the mentee's parent or guardian, for the first meeting so that everyone knows what to expect.

Signing a commitment agreement consenting to the mentoring program's rules and requirements is one of the tasks that must be accomplished at the initial meeting **(B.4.4)**. Formally signing this commitment agreement will help to establish clear expectations for the mentoring relationship. These expectations have been linked to premature closure of the mentoring relationship,[12] and premature closure has been associated with negative outcomes for mentees.[13] Thus, it is particularly important for everyone involved in the mentoring relationship to have clear expectations from the beginning.

EXCEPTIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Group mentoring programs must carefully consider how these Benchmarks can be integrated into the matching and initiation plan. Some important things to keep in in mind are the fact that group dynamics will be created and need to be considered during the mentoring process. Also, the program needs to articulate how mentoring can be most effective within the group context. The plan should address what characteristics of group members are most important, procedures for how the initial match meeting will be conducted, whether group members will have the opportunity to provide input regarding who is included in the group, and how new group members will be integrated should they need to be added after the initial match meeting occurs.

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STANDARD 5

MONITORING AND SUPPORT

Monitor mentoring relationship milestones and child safety; and support matches through providing ongoing advice, problem-solving, training, and access to resources for the duration of each relationship.

**Benchmark and Enhancement practices that are marked with an asterisk represent those that are either new or were substantially changed from the Third Edition. Mentoring programs are encouraged to give equal consideration to the implementation of all of the Benchmark practices that are listed under this Standard.*

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BENCHMARKS

B.5.1 Program contacts mentors and mentees at a minimum frequency of twice per month for the first month of the match and once a month thereafter.

B.5.2* At each mentor monitoring contact, program staff should ask mentors about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentor and mentee using a standardized procedure.

B.5.3* At each mentee monitoring contact, program should ask mentees about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentee using a standardized procedure.

B.5.4 Program follows evidence-based protocol to elicit more in-depth assessment from mentors and mentees about the quality of their mentoring relationships, and uses scientifically-tested relationship assessment tools.

B.5.5* Program contacts a responsible adult in each mentee's life (e.g., parent, guardian, or teacher) at a minimum frequency of twice per month for the first month of the match and once a month thereafter.

B.5.6* At each monitoring contact with a responsible adult in the mentee's life, program asks about mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentee using a standardized procedure.

B.5.7* Program regularly assesses all matches to determine if they should be closed or encouraged to continue.

B.5.8 Program documents information about each mentor-mentee meeting including, at a minimum, the date, length, and description of activity completed.

B.5.9 Program provides mentors with access to relevant resources (e.g., expert advice from program staff or others, publications, Web-based resources, experienced mentors) to help mentors address challenges in their mentoring relationships as they arise.

B.5.10* Program provides mentees and parents or guardians with access or referrals to relevant resources (e.g., expert advice from program staff or others, publications, Web-based resources, available social service referrals) to help families address needs and challenges as they arise.

B.5.11 Program provides one or more opportunities per year for post-match mentor training.

B.5.12* Program provides mentors with feedback on a regular basis regarding their mentees' outcomes and the impact of mentoring on their mentees to continuously improve mentee outcomes and encourage mentor retention.

ENHANCEMENTS

E.5.1* Program conducts a minimum of one in-person monitoring and support meeting per year with mentor, mentee, and when relevant, parent or guardian.

E.5.2 Program hosts one or more group activities for matches and/or offers information about activities that matches might wish to participate in together.

E.5.3* Program hosts one or more group activities for matches and mentees' families.

E.5.4 Program thanks mentors and recognizes their contributions at some point during each year of the mentoring relationship, prior to match closure.

E.5.5* At least once each school or calendar year of the mentoring relationship, program thanks the family or a responsible adult in each mentee's life (e.g., guardian or teacher) and recognizes their contributions in supporting the mentee's engagement in mentoring.

JUSTIFICATION

Much of the work of mentoring programs is dedicated to monitoring and supporting mentoring relationships, and there are many reasons why this is critical to the success of mentoring. For example, mentoring relationships that are monitored and supported by program staff are more satisfying,[1] which, in turn, leads to more positive youth outcomes.[2,3,4,5] In addition, mentoring relationships develop over time and therefore must adjust to changing developmental needs of the mentee. As the mentee changes, the mentoring relations must also change. Further, there is no guarantee that a lengthier mentoring relationship will be an easier relationship and thus monitoring and support must remain consistent and frequent throughout the match in order to help the match navigate any challenges that arise. Finally, monitoring and support of mentoring relationships is critical for ensuring child safety. Thus, mentoring programs should have a comprehensive written plan for monitoring and supporting mentoring relationships that addresses all the Benchmarks of this Standard.

MONITORING OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Monitoring of the relationship should be consistent and frequent over the course of the mentoring relationship. Regular contact between mentors and mentees with program staff has been associated with longer-lasting mentoring relationships, as well as more frequent meetings between mentors and mentees[6] and stronger mentoring relationships.[7] The frequency of mentor and mentee monitoring contacts should take into consideration any challenges that the mentor and/or mentee are currently experiencing. Thus, monitoring and support contacts may need to occur more frequently should challenges arise **(B.5.1)**.

Monitoring of mentoring relationships should follow a standardized procedure for both mentors and mentees in order to solicit information about the mentoring relationship **(B.5.2 & B.5.3)**. The goal of assessing this information on a monthly basis is to help protect child safety and allow program staff to provide feedback and tailored support to the mentoring relationship. The procedure should include questions about recent mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and perceptions of the impact of mentoring on the mentor and mentee. The standardized procedure must also include instructions for documenting each monitoring contact, including the date, time, and key information gathered during the contact.

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When program staff members are in regular contact with parents, matches meet more frequently **(B.5.5)**.[8] Monthly contact with a responsible adult in the mentee's life such as a parent, guardian, or teacher provides an opportunity for involving parents and other supportive adults in the mentoring relationship and for monitoring the mentoring relationship. As with mentors and mentees, this contact should follow a standardized procedure designed to solicit information about the mentoring activities, mentee outcomes, child safety issues, the quality of the mentoring relationship, and the impact of mentoring on the mentee **(B.5.6)**. The standardized procedure must also include instructions for documenting the monitoring contact, including the date, time, and information gathered during the contact.

Contact with mentors, mentees, and a responsible adult in the mentee's life would ideally occur through an in-person or phone conversation that provides the opportunity to have an engaging, collaborative discussion about the mentoring relationship. Mentoring program staff should practice active listening, ask open-ended questions, and ask thoughtful follow-up questions in order to elicit as much information as possible about the mentoring relationship, as well as the impact of the mentoring relationship on the mentee. Email or other Web-based forms of communication may be used for stable or long-term mentoring relationships but should not be the only method of maintaining contact with mentors, mentees, and a responsible adult in the mentee's life.

When program staff members are in regular contact with parents, matches meet more frequently.

In addition, annual in-person contact with the mentor, mentee, and parent or guardian provides program staff with additional opportunities to solicit more in-depth information about the mentoring relationship and the impact of the relationship on the mentee **(E.5.1)**. Child safety issues may also be observed and addressed more directly through an in-person meeting.

ASSESSMENT OF THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Monitoring of the relationship should especially focus on the development of a strong bond between mentor and mentee, as youth who perceive more trusting, mutual, and empathic relations with their mentors experience greater improvements than youth who perceive lower levels of these relationship qualities.[9,10,11,12] Assessing the quality of each mentoring relationship from the perspective of both the mentor and mentee can yield valuable information for supporting individual matches **(B.5.4)**.[13,14,15] Many surveys have been developed for this purpose, but only a small number are evidence-based and have been rigorously evaluated for reliability and validity[16] (see Nakkula, 2014[17] for a review of existing surveys). Programs could benefit by seeking out and using scientifically-validated surveys when assessing mentoring relationship qualities.

Assessing the quality of each mentoring relationship from the perspective of both the mentor and mentee can yield valuable information for supporting individual matches.

In addition, the activities mentors and mentees do together during their meetings contribute to determining the style or approach (e.g., developmental, instrumental) and quality of the mentoring relationship, which can, in turn, contribute to youth outcomes.[18,19] Keeping records of the date, length, and activities completed during each match meeting can aid program staff in assessing the style of the mentoring relationship and in providing more tailored support **(B.5.8)**. Regular monitoring of the mentor-mentee meetings allow program staff to observe the activities of the mentor and mentee, and assess if their meetings are consistent with the goals, rules, and guidelines of the mentoring program. In addition, the information in these records can help to protect child safety.

Photo courtesy of First Niagara

Through consistent monitoring of mentoring relationships, program staff can periodically assess whether a mentoring relationship is encountering any challenges that could lead to closure **(B.5.7)**. Anticipating closure and then preparing mentors and mentees for closure will help prevent any negative consequences occurring as a result of the ending of the relationship.

SUPPORTING THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Support for the mentoring relationship should be provided directly to mentors and should be tailored to address the strengths and challenges within the mentoring relationship **(B.5.9)**. When mentors receive high-quality support from their mentoring program, they report stronger relationships with their mentees[20,21] and are more likely to continue their mentoring relationships.[22] This support may come

in many forms and may include access to resources such as advice from program staff or other mentors, printed materials, and web-based resources. The majority of mentors who receive support phone calls from the mentoring program agree that they are helpful in strengthening their match, and mentors who attend mentor support groups find them helpful as well.[23] Ongoing training can also contribute to more effective,[24] longer lasting,[25] high-quality[26,27] mentoring relationships **(B.5.11)**.

Providing feedback to the mentor about the mentee and the mentoring relationship serves several support functions **(B.5.12)**. For example, given that altruistic reasons, such as giving back to the community, are the most common reasons for why individuals volunteer to be a mentor,[28,29] providing feedback to the mentor about the impact of the mentoring relationship on the mentee may reinforce mentors' motivations for volunteering and encourage them to continue to volunteer as a mentor. In addition, mentors' expectations for the mentoring relationship influence whether they will continue to be a mentor[30] and their perceptions of the mentoring relationship.[31,32] Thus, providing mentors with feedback about their mentee and the mentoring relationship gives program staff the opportunity to ensure that mentors have realistic and positive expectations, so that mentors are less likely to end their relationship prematurely. In addition, feedback to mentors could also impact their feelings of self-efficacy as a mentor. We know that when mentors experience greater self-efficacy about the mentoring relationship they are more satisfied,[33] meet more frequently with their mentees, report fewer challenges in their mentoring relationships, perceive more benefits for mentees,[34] and have higher quality mentoring relationships.[35,36] When mentors are given feedback about how their mentees fare on various outcomes of interest, mentors can modify their approaches, behaviors, and activity suggestions in order to help mentees meet their needs and goals.

Mentors' expectations for the mentoring relationship influence whether they will continue to be a mentor and their perceptions of the mentoring relationship.

Mentees and their parents or guardians should receive support from the mentoring program that is tailored to address the strengths and challenges within the mentoring relationship **(B.5.10)**. Parents or guardians may need support from the mentoring program to ensure they have accurate expectations for the mentor and the program, understand the mentor's role and how they can best support this role.[37] This support can include expert advice from the program staff or other parents, printed materials, and web-based resources. In addition, mentees and their parents or guardians may have needs or be facing challenges that cannot be addressed through the mentoring relationship. Referrals to social service providers should be provided to mentees and their families as needs arise.

ADVANCED PRACTICES FOR MONITORING AND SUPPORT

Mentoring programs that provide monthly calendars of low-cost events, offer tickets to events, or provide opportunities to participate in structured activities are usually associated with positive outcomes **(E.5.2)**.[38] In addition, providing mentors with a list of possible activities and developmentally appropriate activity suggestions is associated with longer average match lengths and greater match retention.[39]

Parent support and involvement in the mentoring relationship impacts the effectiveness of mentoring on youth outcomes[40] and the strength of mentoring relationships.[41] Hosting group activities for mentors, mentees, and mentees' families provides an opportunity for parents or guardians to be involved and express their support for the mentoring relationship **(E.5.3)**. Fun group activities can also enhance the relationships between program staff and volunteer mentors, which are thought to increase volunteer retention.[42]

Volunteers report that informal, personal forms of recognition such as thank you notes are the most meaningful.

Finally, recognizing and celebrating volunteer achievements is considered an important practice in promoting participation in a volunteer program **(E.5.4)**.[43,44,45] Volunteers report that informal, personal forms of recognition such as thank you notes are the most meaningful.[46] Annual recognition of mentors is recommended to increase mentors' perceptions of self-efficacy and encourage mentors to continue volunteering. Likewise, families who are participating in the mentoring relationship should be thanked on an annual basis for their contributions to the mentoring program **(E.5.5)**.

EXCEPTIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Exceptions to these Benchmarks may occur primarily in the practices associated with the monitoring of mentoring relationships. Site-based mentoring programs are more likely to be able to observe the activities and interactions of mentors and mentees in the program and thus, monitoring contacts may focus primarily on gathering information about the quality of the relationship, challenges in the mentoring relationship, and how the mentoring program can support the mentoring relationship and mentee. Group mentoring programs may need to consider gathering additional information during the monitoring contacts such as any concerns about the group dynamics or challenges common to the group. mentees may need to increase the frequency of monitoring contacts and provide additional support, particularly if the peer mentor has less experience serving in roles similar to those of an adult mentor or less experience working with youth.

Finally, programs that serve older youth or adult mentees may not need to contact a responsible adult in the mentee's life on a monthly basis, although in many cases programs could benefit from contacting another important individual in the mentee's life in order to gather additional information about mentee outcomes, challenges faced by the mentee, and perceptions of the impact of mentoring on the mentee. This information can enhance match support regardless of the age of the mentor or mentee.

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STANDARD 6

CLOSURE

Facilitate bringing the match to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of the mentor and mentee, and offers them the opportunity to prepare for the closure and assess the experience.

**Benchmark and Enhancement practices that are marked with an asterisk represent those that are either new or were substantially changed from the Third Edition. Mentoring programs are encouraged to give equal consideration to the implementation of all of the Benchmark practices that are listed under this Standard.*

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BENCHMARKS

B.6.1 Program has a procedure to manage anticipated closures, when members of the match are willing and able to engage in the closure process.

B.6.2 Program has a procedure to manage unanticipated closures, when members of the match are willing and able to engage in the closure process.

B.6.3* Program has a procedure to manage closure when one member of the match is unable or unwilling to engage in the closure process.

B.6.4 Program conducts exit interview with mentors and mentees, and when relevant, with parents or guardians.

B.6.5* Program has a written policy and procedure, when relevant, for managing rematching.

B.6.6* Program documents that closure procedures were followed.

B.6.7* Regardless of the reason for closure, the mentoring program should have a discussion with mentors that includes the following topics of conversation:

- **a.** Discussion of mentors' feelings about closure
- **b.** Discussion of reasons for closure, if relevant
- **c.** Discussion of positive experiences in the mentoring relationship
- **d.** Procedure for mentor notifying the mentee and his or her parents, if relevant, far enough in advance of the anticipated closure meeting to provide sufficient time to adequately prepare the mentee for closure
- **e.** Review of program rules for post-closure contact
- **f.** Creation of a plan for post-closure contact, if relevant
- **g.** Creation of a plan for the last match meeting, if possible
- **h.** Discussion of possible rematching, if relevant

B.6.8* Regardless of the reason for closure, the mentoring program should have a discussion with mentees, and when relevant, with parents or guardians that includes the following topics of conversation:

- **a.** Discussion of mentees' feelings about closure
- **b.** Discussion of reasons for closure, if relevant
- **c.** Discussion of positive experiences in the mentoring relationship
- **d.** Procedure for notification of mentor, if relevant, about the timing of closure
- **e.** Review of program rules for post-closure contact
- **f.** Creation of a plan for post-closure contact, if relevant

g. Creation of a plan for the last match meeting, if possible

h. Discussion of possible rematching, if relevant

B.6.9 Program has a written public statement to parents or guardians, if relevant, as well as to mentors and mentees that outline the terms of match closure and the policies for mentor/mentee contact after a match ends (e.g., including contacts using digital or social media).

ENHANCEMENTS

E.6.1 At the conclusion of the agreed upon time period of the mentoring relationship, program explores the opportunity with mentors, mentees, and (when relevant) parents or guardians to continue the match for an additional period of time.

E.6.2 Program hosts a final celebration meeting or event for mentors and mentees, when relevant, to mark progress and transition or acknowledge change in the mentoring relationship.

E.6.3* Program staff provide training and support to mentees and mentors, as well as, when relevant, to parents or guardians, about how mentees can identify and connect with natural mentors in their lives.

JUSTIFICATION

Closure or termination is a normal stage in the life of a mentoring relationship.[1] Mentees, parents or guardians, and mentors may experience some negative emotions (e.g., disappointment or sadness) following the conclusion of a mentoring relationship.[2] Mentoring relationships that end prematurely may lead to particularly negative consequences for mentees, including declines in indicators of youth functioning, such as self-worth or their self-confidence in their school work.[3,4] However, with agency support and proper notice of the timing of and reasons for closure, mentees and other members of the match may fare better in coping with the loss of the mentoring relationship.[5] Thus, mentoring programs should have a comprehensive written plan for closing mentoring relationships that addresses all the Benchmarks of this Standard.

PLANNING FOR CLOSURE

Communication regarding closure policies and procedures should occur throughout the life cycle of the mentoring relationship with all members of the match.[6] To plan for closure, the mentoring program should have a conversation with all members of the match to discuss their interest in continuing the mentoring relationship beyond the original commitment **(E.6.1)**. This conversation allows everyone the opportunity to formally commit to continuing the mentoring relationship for an additional period of time and discuss any challenges they are experiencing that need to be addressed in order for the relationship to continue.

Closure of the mentoring relationship may be predictable (e.g., conclusion of the academic year) or unpredictable (e.g., change of address, illness).[7] Mentors, mentees, parents or

guardians, or the mentoring program may initiate the closure of the mentoring relationship for interpersonal (e.g., dissatisfaction with the relationship, communication difficulties) or practical reasons (e.g., mentor or mentee may fail to attend scheduled meetings, residential mobility).[8,9] Subsequently, it is imperative that agencies plan for both unanticipated and anticipated closures, and have clear policies in place to address and document both of these types of scenarios **(B.6.1, B.6.2, & B.6.6)**.[10,11] In addition, members of the match may, for various reasons, also avoid the sometimes difficult process of closure. Staff should anticipate some resistance to closure by match members and have procedures in place, if a member of the match is unavailable to participate in the closure process **(B.6.3)**.

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CLOSURE PROCEDURES

Closure activities can take many forms, such as exit interviews, a match meeting with or without agency staff, or a larger group event.[12,13] Exit interviews provide opportunities for mentees, mentors, and parents or guardians to reflect on the positive experiences they shared and the impact of the mentoring relationship **(B.6.4)**.[14] Moreover, staff may gather information from mentees, mentors, and parents or guardians that could be used to improve agency practices[15] or guide future recommendations for match members (e.g., a counseling or support services referral or another mentoring agency).[16]

Communication regarding closure policies and procedures should occur throughout the life cycle of the mentoring relationship with all members of the match.

All members of the match, including the mentee, mentor, and parents or guardians, should be included in closure activities.[17,18] Regardless of the circumstances, each closure should be formally discussed in conversations between mentors, mentees, and their parents or guardians, when relevant, and mentoring program staff to allow everyone an opportunity to reflect on and process the mentoring relationship **(B.6.7 & B.6.8)**. Research suggests that if closure is not formally processed, even for mentoring relationships characterized as weak, this may contribute to negative emotional outcomes for the mentees such as feelings of disappointment or anger.[19] Likewise, mishandling closure procedures for strong, favorable mentoring relationships can lead to negative feelings about an otherwise positive experience. Mentors and mentees should discuss memories of fun times they have had together and participate in a special activity for their last meeting.[20] These conversations also provide the opportunity to create a plan for the closure activities. One best practice recommendation for closure activities is to hold a graduation night for all member of the mentoring relationship in order to end the relationship with a positive celebration **(E.6.2)** that formally marks the transition in the relationship.[21]

POST-CLOSURE CONSIDERATIONS

Following the closure of a mentoring relationship, mentees or mentors may wish to continue their involvement with the mentoring program.[22,23] If appropriate, the agency may consider renewing the match or rematching interested mentees or mentors **(B.6.5)**.[24,25] There is some evidence to suggest that there may be some negative outcomes for mentees who experience premature closure and have been rematched.[26] Thus, it is recommended that agencies should have specific, written policies for rematching. In addition, relationships with natural mentors have been associated with positive outcomes for youth outside of a formal mentoring relationship.[27,28] Upon exiting a formal mentoring relationship, agency staff may help guide mentees to identifying contexts and methods in which to identify potential adults who may be a positive natural mentor **(E.6.3)**.

It is not uncommon for members of the match to wish to continue their relationship beyond their involvement with a mentoring agency.[29] However, although not specifically studied, continuing contact between mentors and mentees beyond agency involvement (e.g., through social media) may pose both risks and benefits to members of the match.[30] Therefore, agencies should make their policies for post-match contact clear to all members of the mentoring match during closure proceedings **(B.6.9)**.

EXCEPTIONS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Exceptions to these Benchmarks may occur primarily for mentoring programs that do not have contact with parents or guardians and thus, cannot include them in the closure procedures. In addition, group mentoring programs must consider how these Benchmarks can be incorporated into the closure plan, particularly when a member of the group leaves for anticipated or unanticipated reasons. The closure procedures should address whether that group member will be replaced, as well as what support needs to be provided to the remaining group members and the departing group member. Finally, the closure plan should describe how the mentoring program will explore the option of continuing the mentoring relationship beyond the original commitment to the mentoring program with all group members.

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ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Photo courtesy of First Niagara

PLANNING AND PROGRAM DESIGN

The following recommended practices (and associated documentation) can provide mentoring programs with clear direction and purpose, both in terms of the goals and objectives of the mentoring relationships they create and the long-term viability of the program. For mentoring programs embedded within larger youth-serving organizations, please note that some of these practices may need to be integrated with those of the larger parent organization. *A document symbol (🗎) denotes practices which should be codified in a written document approved by program leadership and periodically reviewed and revised.*

Please see the "Additional Resources and Sources of Training and Technical Assistance" section for links to other organizations that can support nonprofit leadership and development.

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
🗎 Program mission statement of overall vision	Mentoring programs need a guiding mission statement that clearly describes why the program exists and the meaningful change it hopes to produce at the participant and/or community level. For embedded programs, the goals and objectives of the mentoring relationships should align with the agency's overall mission and vision.
🗎 Program theory of change (ToC) and a formal logic model	A program's theory of change (ToC) should explain how the mentoring services, and the activities that mentors and mentees engage in, will result in the desired outcomes at the participant and community level. Ideally, it will draw on relevant research and theory, illustrating the validity of the program design and how the services align with local needs, contexts, and circumstances. MENTOR feels strongly that every mentoring program should have this core framing document in place—it influences every decision a program makes over time. A logic model can further illustrate this action by explaining the inputs, outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes that result from implementing the program. Additional information on theories of change can be found in the "Using This Resource" section.
🗎 Resource development plan and budget	The mentoring program should have a written budget for the current fiscal year and beyond, as well as a resource development plan that articulates how the program will secure diversified ongoing funding to ensure sustainability of services. For embedded programs, the budget and resource development plan should identify the funds that specifically support the mentoring staff and activities, as well as how the mentoring services will be supported by future fundraising efforts. It is critical that all mentoring programs maintain sufficient funds to see their current matches through the completion of their initial commitment and that funding levels support sufficient staffing for monitoring and support of mentoring relationships.

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
Marketing and communications plan	Programs should have a formal plan that determines how the services are marketed to participants (including mentor and youth recruitment), key messages, imagery, and branding about the program, and strategies for working with local media. This plan can also articulate how and when to engage in public relations efforts and other strategies for garnering publicity for the program. All activities and costs for these efforts should be articulated in the program budget. Once again, for embedded programs, there should be clear explanations of how marketing and communications efforts will directly support the mentoring services. This plan should also clarify who is responsible for marketing and communication activities, as well as how the efficacy of the strategies will be tracked.
Evaluation plan *(see also the Program Evaluation section that follows)*	The evaluation plan is, in many ways, the companion document to the theory of change and the logic model: It specifies what the program will measure to determine that the program is being implemented with fidelity and that it is achieving its stated goals for participants and the community. The evaluation plan should describe all activities, staff roles, data to be collected (as well as sources and tools), the statistical analysis process, and the types of information that will be reported to various stakeholders. These activities and staff expenses should all be reflected in the program budget. For embedded mentoring programs, it is critical that the Evaluation Plan offers some strategy for determining the mentoring services' contribution to the overall program outcomes, so that the "value added" of mentoring can be captured and articulated.
Policy and procedure manual	Lastly, a policy and procedure manual is a critical document for codifying many of the tasks and processes specified in this section. It ensures consistent service delivery, especially when programs experience staff turnover or rapid growth. There are numerous policies a mentoring program will need to develop (see the Training Standard for detailed information about the types of policies you may want to develop and share with mentors, youth, and families), but equally important are the procedures that govern how clients experience participating in your program on a day-to-day basis. These procedures, and accompanying forms and staff actions, should all be clearly articulated and revisited periodically for improvement (see "Monitoring and oversight for continuous improvement" in the next section).

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND OVERSIGHT

These recommended practices support the ongoing growth, sustainability, and reliability of services. They are all tasks that program leadership should embrace and facilitate. For mentoring programs embedded in larger youth-serving organizations, it is critical that the mentoring program gets support in these areas to ensure effective coordination of services and fidelity of implementation for the mentoring component. *A document symbol* (🗎) *denotes practices which should be codified in a written document approved by program leadership and periodically reviewed and revised*.

Please see the "Additional Resources and Sources of Training and Technical Assistance" section for links to other organizations that can support nonprofit leadership and development.

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
Advisory committee (or Board of Directors)	Depending on the structure and setting of the mentoring program, there should be either a formal Board of Directors or an advisory committee that approves program plans, provides input and feedback on program decisions, and offers general oversight and leadership to the program. Some programs even have both, with the formal Board handling typical governance and fiduciary responsibilities, and an advisory committee to provide voice to constituents and stakeholders as the program evolves over time. It is especially important for embedded programs to have their own dedicated advisory committee so that youth, volunteers, and other stakeholders have a say in how services are delivered and to help ensure that the program gets the support it needs to recruit volunteers, provide meaningful match activities, and effectively engage with the community. Members of this group should have clear roles and responsibilities and meet on a regularly scheduled basis.
Adequate and appropriate staffing	The program should have enough full-time equivalent staff to implement the program model as intended for the desired number of youth participants. In spite of the significant concern around staff-mentee ratios by the field, there is no known "perfect" number of staff needed to implement a program. There simply needs to be sufficient staffing to follow all procedures as intended, especially the critical ones that impact youth safety and the quality of the mentoring experience. In addition to the amount of staffing, programs must demonstrate that they have the right blend of staff skills and competencies to fulfill the mission. Key staff should have experience or formal education in youth development programming, child psychology, education, social work, or other relevant fields. They should reflect the diversity and lived experience of the population served and reflect the values of the program. And ideally, staff should be able to fill fundraising, advocacy, partnership development and other program leadership roles as needed.

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
Staff development, compensation, and recognition	To ensure that program staff have the right skills and competencies, programs should have a formal plan (with dedicated resources) for staff professional development and ongoing training. The exact content of this development will look different depending on program goals, populations served, and challenges, but every program should provide growth opportunities for staff at all levels. Additionally, programs should provide adequate compensation (for programs where the staff are employees, rather than volunteers) and meaningful staff recognition opportunities. Both of these practices are critical in retaining program staff and ensuring a consistency of service delivery for youth, families, and volunteers.
Data and information management	Among the policies and procedures a program must develop are those that relate to keeping program data and information secure, confidential, and properly archived. This set of policies and procedures should address considerations such as: • Which staff members can access program data, especially the personal information of youth and mentors, financial information, and staff personnel records • Protocols for how program information (both electronic and paper) is stored and procedures for retrieving it • Technical aspects of how electronic records are secured and archived • Data sharing agreements with partner organizations, schools, or external evaluators • How often old program data is reviewed, retained, or destroyed
Advocacy for mentoring	The leadership of mentoring programs should be involved in advocacy work that promotes both awareness of mentoring at a community level and adequate resources from public and private sources for the field as a whole. Program leadership should keep informed about trends, collaborative opportunities, legislation, and research projects at the local, state, regional, and national levels and participate in advocacy campaigns to the degree possible. In the course of doing this advocacy work, programs should follow any and all regulations that govern allowable advocacy activities and avoid conflicts of interest.
Partnerships with other local programs and services	Because mentoring programs cannot provide everything youth or their family members may need, it is imperative that they build strong relationships with other local service providers. These relationships can result in a referral network that can be used to direct youth, families, and even mentors to other community services to meet specific needs not supported by the mentoring program. In addition to building organizational relationships, mentoring programs may need to enter into formal partnerships with schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, or other community organizations. All partnerships should be governed by a Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement that details the roles and responsibilities of each party.

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
Monitoring and oversight for continuous improvement	Regardless of how a mentoring program tries to meet the Benchmarks of the *Elements* and the recommendations outlined in this section, it is critical that program leadership has clear processes for monitoring their implementation of the program services, their adherence to set procedures and protocols, and the efficiency of the operations. Program leaders should have ongoing monitoring activities and common data points that they analyze to ensure that the program is operating as intended. Opportunities for improving operations or changing policies or procedures should be documented, discussed by the program Board or Advisory Committee and acted upon in a continuous improvement framework.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

These recommended practices can help a mentoring program be intentional about collecting data related to program implementation and participant outcomes, as well as how that information is used to improve program practices and educate various stakeholders. These practices are often collected into a formal program evaluation plan that governs both annual data collection and analysis, as well as more infrequent formal program outcome evaluation activities, including those conducted by external evaluators. For embedded mentoring services, it's important that any agency-wide evaluation efforts attempt to examine how well the mentoring program is being implemented and to identify, if possible, mentoring's particular contribution to the overall outcomes for youth and families. *A document symbol (🖹) denotes practices which should be codified in a written document approved by program leadership and periodically reviewed and revised.*

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
🖹 **Indicators and benchmarks of successful program implementation**	Programs should determine indicators and specific benchmarks that can be tracked to determine if the program is being implemented as efficiently as intended and with fidelity to the theory of change. Common indicators include: the number of mentors recruited and available for matching, participation in training opportunities, time spent waiting to be matched, the frequency and duration of match meetings, overall match length, and adherence to match monitoring and support procedures. This set of benchmarks will look differently across program models and settings, but it's important that every program collects data on their compliance with policies and procedures, the delivery of the mentoring services, and their staff's implementation of the program as intended. This practice is especially important in relation to program outcomes, as program results should be analyzed within the context of whether the program was delivered with fidelity to the model.

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
Feedback from participants and stakeholders on service delivery	Programs should gather feedback from mentors, youth, parents or guardians, and other key stakeholders as to the quality and satisfaction with the program experience. This feedback should examine aspects of the services that are going well and improvements that can be made to address participant concerns.
Expected participant outcomes and benchmarks	Developing a strong theory of change and logic model will identify several measurable indicators of positive outcomes for program participants. While these outcomes are most likely to be focused on youth and families, programs are also encouraged to think about outcomes for mentors and the community as a whole. Embedded mentoring programs should think about identifying leading indicators for their participants that can be attributed to the mentoring services and contribute to youths' overall outcomes. It can be very tempting for a mentoring program to try to achieve outcomes in as many areas as possible, making the program conceptually more attractive to parents, youth, and funders. But these outcomes are ideally tightly focused on what the program is specifically designed to achieve, using past program performance to set the benchmarks that future results will be measured against.
Valid and reliable instruments to capture participant outcome data	If a program is collecting data from participants before, during, and after their mentoring experience as a way of gauging program impact, it is vital that these data be collected using tools that have adequate reliability and validity. Reliability means that the tool collects accurate and consistent information about the topic. Validity means that the tool has been previously tested to assure the extent to which it gathers meaningful information about the topics it addresses. Programs should ensure that all formal outcome measurement tools have an acceptable and known level of reliability and validity, and should avoid using "home grown" instruments for evaluation purposes, unless you establish their psychometric properties first.
Valid and reliable instruments to gauge match closeness and satisfaction	There are several tools available that can assess the quality of mentoring relationships—a good summary of these tools can be found here: **www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_623.doc**. It is important that mentoring programs assess the quality of the mentoring relationship fairly early in the match and at various points over its duration. For programs that last one calendar or school year, MENTOR recommends assessing the relationship after six months and, at least, at program exit. These results should be compared against outcome data, since the quality of the mentoring relationship has been positively correlated with stronger outcomes for participants in numerous studies.
Use of archival data sources	In addition to using pre-post tools to assess program impact, most programs will also collect archival data by examining records and external sources of data to prove that mentored youth are benefitting from the program. Examples of this kind of external archival data include school grades and attendance data, recidivism and delinquency statistics, or tracking completion of life milestones.

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
Periodic evaluation of program outcomes using experimental research designs	While this can be a challenging proposition for smaller mentoring agencies, we encourage all mentoring programs to periodically evaluate their services and outcomes using some form of experimental design. These types of evaluations can demonstrate the impact of a program on participants when compared to a group of similar youth who did not receive services or had their services delayed. Programs are encouraged to participate in larger scale studies in partnership with other service providers when possible. They should also explore options for partnering with local higher education institutions to keep the costs of these projects down while giving students a valuable opportunity to apply their evaluation skills in a real-world setting under the guidance of a senior researcher. Rigorous evaluations help not only the program doing them, but also the entire research community and the mentoring field as a whole.
Sharing data and evaluation results with stakeholder groups	All of this data collection and evaluation work is meaningless unless programs share the information with the youth, families, funders, volunteers, and partners that care so deeply about the results. Programs need a formal plan that articulates when and how data is shared with various stakeholder groups, as well as how that information is used to improve the program and more effectively meet client expectations and needs.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS AND PROGRAM DELIVERY

The recommendations in this section combine some common principles from related human services fields and promote ethical guidelines that give mentoring programs a clear sense of purpose and a set of values that can make mentoring impactful for youth and their communities. While mentoring is a powerful strategy for transforming individual lives, MENTOR feels that our field has potential for even greater impact at a societal level—one child, mentor, and family at a time—if we can adhere to these principles. Most of these principles apply to both the work of the individual mentor and the program as a whole, especially in how the program leadership makes decisions and engages their clients and broader community. Programs should take note of how (and how well) they honor these core principles in their work, especially around the Standards, as every step from recruitment and screening all the way through match closure should be delivered with the best interests of the youth in mind.

Note: *Many of these principles are adapted from the work of Drs. Jean Rhodes, Belle Liang, and Renee Spencer in their seminal article,* First Do No Harm: Ethical Principles for Youth Mentoring Relationships.[2]

2 Rhodes, J., Liang, B., & Spencer, R. (2009). *First do no harm: Ethical principles for youth mentoring relationships*. Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 40, 452-458.

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
Promote the welfare and safety of the young person	There are moments in mentoring relationships when constraints (e.g., time, skills, life circumstances) make it challenging for a mentor to consistently promote the welfare of the young person and avoid actions that may cause harm. It may sound obvious, but mentors are human and they will make mistakes. Similarly, there can be constraints (e.g., staffing, resources) that make it difficult for programs to adequately support mentors in putting the needs of the youth first. But the intention is what matters here. This principle is simply a reminder to all involved that mentoring needs to be provided in a way that does not harm the youth served and that no interest or circumstance of the mentor or program outweighs the needs or best interests of the child. Mentors and programs need to keep this critical principle in mind when making decisions and considering their actions.
Be trustworthy and responsible	Mentors need to take their obligations to the mentee and the program seriously. They should take care to honor their commitments and assume responsibility for the quality and duration of their mentoring relationship, even when facing challenges. Programs should provide support that allows mentors to do their best and fulfill their responsibilities to the best of their ability.
Act with integrity	Mentors and program staff have an obligation to communicate with mentees and their families in ways that are honest, transparent, and respectful. Mentors must especially be attentive to honoring their time commitments and meeting schedules, while always carrying themselves in a way that reflects positively on the program and the work of mentors more globally. They should adhere to program rules at all times and truly live up to the term "role model" in how they act around the mentee.
Promote justice for young people	This principle starts with the notion that mentors must be aware of their own personal biases and histories and be mindful about not bringing their prejudices and prior experiences into the mentoring relationship in a way that harms the child or the family. Cultural competence and intercultural empathy and understanding are critical to a successful mentoring experience. Mentors can also use the mentoring experience to go beyond just helping the mentee—they can use their relationship as a springboard to other work that more broadly advocates for the disadvantaged or seeks to address social ills. Helping the mentee is the core goal, but programs should also work towards positive social change, as well.
Respect the young person's rights and dignity	This principle is rooted in notions of self-determination and empowerment. The mentor's job is not to "fix" the challenges that confront the mentee or their family, but to empower them to take the lead in the direction of their own lives while respecting the choices they make. Mentors must do this in a way that is free of judgment and respectful of the confidentiality of the mentee (except for cases where the mentee is in imminent danger of harm).

RECOMMENDATION	EXPLANATION
Honor youth and family voice in designing and delivering services	Mentoring programs must incorporate the values, ideals, and preferences of their clients into the design of their services and the ways in which participants experience the program. This not only empowers youth and their families, it honors them as partners in this work. A young person who has a say in the purpose and activities of their mentoring relationship is more likely to be engaged and reach their goals, a family whose experiences and opinions are respected is more likely to support the work of the mentor, and programs that embraces the individuals they serve as equal partners rather than passive recipients are more likely to have a strong impact.
Strive for equity, cultural responsiveness, and positive social change	This principle recognizes that mentoring does not happen in a vacuum; it takes place in communities, and a nation, that increasingly seek to address issues of class, race, and systems of oppression. Mentoring programs should be responsive to the racial and cultural perspectives of its clients and stakeholders. Program staff should be aware of their own cultural biases and experiences and understand how this impacts their work with clients. Programs should support efforts in their communities to fight systemic racism and other forms of oppression while promoting greater equity for all. While mentoring services are most often intended to benefit an individual mentee, this work is also part of a larger movement to bring more equity and justice to our society. Mentoring programs should embrace this and work with others in their community to advocate for meaningful systemic social change.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used to create the fourth edition focused on building upon the foundation of the literature review conducted in the third edition of the *Elements*. This edition was informed by the latest research in the field of youth mentoring and research conducted in related fields including social work, clinical psychology, developmental psychology, volunteerism, and positive youth development. In addition, best practice recommendations from practitioners and researchers are integrated into the document. First, an extensive literature search was conducted which primarily focused on locating peer-reviewed articles published since 2008, the year before the third edition of the *Elements* was published. Searches were conducted of the following online databases including PsychInfo, PubMed, and GoogleScholar. General search terms such as mentoring, mentor, youth mentoring, positive youth development, as well as specific search terms related to each of the six *Elements* Standards (e.g., volunteer recruitment, volunteer screening) were also used to gather possible sources. Recommendations were also solicited from members of the Advisory Committee for unpublished or recently published empirical papers. In addition, references were also recommended by individuals who attended the Short Course on the *Elements* that was held prior to the 2015 National Mentoring Summit. The reference sections of reports, chapters, and peer-reviewed papers were examined to determine if the references included additional research findings that could be relevant to any Benchmarks.

Results from these searches were saved, catalogued, reviewed, and coded in a web-based reference management application. References were coded into a primary category that reflected one or more of the six Standards (e.g., recruitment, screening, training, matching, monitor, support, closure). Additional codes were added for the type of mentor (i.e., adult, peer, youth-initiated), type of mentoring relationship (i.e., one-to-one, group, team), mentoring setting (i.e., site, community, online), and the type of research study (e.g., randomized controlled trial, quasi-experimental, qualitative).

Once articles were coded and tagged into one or more of the six Standards categories, then the articles were read and annotated for their relationships to the existing benchmarks and enhancements. Edits were made to the justifications in the third edition to reflect new scientific findings. In addition, notes were written about program practices that were not mentioned in the benchmarks in the third edition and that needed to be added to the fourth edition. New Benchmarks were drafted and reviewed by the Steering Committee for adoption and then, reviewed and endorsed by the Advisory Committee.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND SOURCES OF TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

MENTORING PROGRAM TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- ***Mentoring Partnerships*** – MENTOR's network of affiliate *Mentoring Partnerships* provides access to training and technical assistance opportunities across the nation. Please visit the MENTOR website to find the *Partnership* nearest you. **http://www.mentoring.org/mentoringpartnerships**
- **National Mentoring Resource Center** – This center is funded by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and operated by MENTOR to provide free training and program improvement services to service providers nationwide. **http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/**
- **National Mentoring Summit** – This annual event, convened by MENTOR, brings together approximately one thousand mentoring leaders, practitioners, researchers, corporate partners, and youth for several days of learning, networking, and advocacy work, with an eye on innovation and key advancements in the field. **http://www.mentoring.org/summit**

NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE

- Board Source – **https://www.boardsource.org/eweb/**
- Foundation Center – **http://foundationcenter.org/**
- National Council of Nonprofits – **https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/**
- Nonprofit Finance Fund – **http://nonprofitfinancefund.org/**
- Nonprofit Risk Management Center – **http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/**

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