

Mentoring 101:
An Introductory Workshop for New
Mentors

*Developed by:
Partners for Youth with Disabilities &
Mass Mentoring Partnership*

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Introduction

We are pleased and excited to present *MENTORING 101: An Introductory Workshop for New Mentors*, the result of a collaborative effort between Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) and Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP).

For over 27 years, Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) has been a pioneer in the field of mentoring for youth with disabilities. PYD's core program, Mentor Match, was founded in 1985, at a time when mentoring was gaining mainstream attention as a way to support at-risk youth. Despite the attention given to the field, youth with disabilities were overlooked and excluded from mentoring efforts. By focusing specifically on youth with disabilities, PYD became – and remains – a leader in Massachusetts and the nation in the area of mentoring for youth with disabilities.

MMP is committed to strategically expanding the availability of high quality mentoring programs to meet the needs of *all* youth statewide. MMP is solely dedicated to bringing youth mentoring to scale, ensuring that *all* young people will be connected with caring adults who will listen to them, stand by them, and guide them.

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About Mass Mentoring Partnership

With a network of more than 135 diverse mentoring programs representing close to 20,000 youth in formal mentoring relationships, MMP is the only statewide umbrella organization solely dedicated to the strategic expansion of youth mentoring in Massachusetts. MMP has a rich history of driving human, intellectual, and financial capital to the field of mentoring through many avenues, including training and technical assistance to organizations, mentors, and mentees; the execution of high-visibility mentor recruitment campaigns; and the attraction of increased public and private resources to the mentoring movement in Massachusetts.

The roots of MMP go back to 1989, when two Wall Street executives, Ray Chambers and Geoff Boisi, looked to act upon their belief in the impact of wise and trusted adults in the lives of youth. The idea of a National Mentoring Partnership was born—not to supplant direct service youth mentoring programs, but to learn from them, provide training and resources to expand them, and to multiply their number.

To expand quality formal mentoring opportunities for youth, MMP’s strategic focus is driving human, financial, and intellectual capital to the mentoring movement in Massachusetts.

Human Capital: We build awareness and motivation in key demographic segments to attract much-needed volunteer mentors, and we connect potential volunteers with mentoring opportunities.

Financial Capital: We provide information, advice, and guidance to promote mentoring and drive increased investment to the field.

Intellectual Capital: Mentoring programs are most effective when they are of high quality. We provide training and strategic services to ensure and increase the quality of mentoring programs.

About Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for designing curricula that enable all individuals to gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning. UDL provides rich supports for learning and reduces barriers to the curriculum while maintaining high achievement standards for all.

The creation of this training and its companion materials was guided by the principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), including the following:

- A. UDL provides a blueprint for creating flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments that accommodate learner differences.
- B. “Universal” does not imply a single optimal solution for everyone. Instead, it is meant to underscore the need for multiple approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- C. UDL mirrors the universal design movement in architecture and product development. Speakerphones, curb cuts, and close-captioned television—all were universally designed to accommodate a wide variety of users, including those with disabilities.
- D. Embedded features that help those with disabilities eventually benefit everyone. UDL uses technology’s power and flexibility to make learning more inclusive and effective for all.

What is Mentoring?

“Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee” (Elements of Effective Practice, MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership).

Qualities that Contribute to a Successful Relationship

A mentoring relationship has a longer-lasting positive impact on a young person when the mentor demonstrates the following qualities:

Commitment: Successful mentors have a genuine desire to be part of young people’s lives, help them with tough decisions, and see them fulfill their potential. They must be willing and able to be invested in the mentoring relationship for the full term of the program’s designated duration. Research has documented that a mentoring relationship that ends abruptly, or before the designated term expected by the mentee, is more harmful than if the mentee were never in a mentoring relationship at all.

Respect: Mentors who show respect for individuals—their abilities and the right to make their own choices—win the trust of their mentees and the privilege of providing guidance and advice. Mentors should not approach mentees with the attitude that *their* way is better, or that the mentees need to be “rescued.” Especially important to remember is that youth with disabilities do not want things done for them. Like other young people, they want to be part of all decisions that affect them.

Active Listening: Most people can find someone who will give advice or express opinions. Finding someone who will suspend his/her own judgment and really listen is much harder. Mentors often help simply by listening, asking thoughtful questions, and giving mentees an opportunity to explore their own thoughts with a minimum of interference. Very often, youth with disabilities and other challenges are “spoken for” by parents, teachers, and other adults in their lives. Mentors who demonstrate they value mentees’ thoughts and feelings can help build confidence and self-esteem as well as model how young people can communicate with other adults.

Empathy: “Empathy has been described as being able to listen with not only eyes and ears but also with hearts and minds.” (Jean Rhodes, *Stand by Me*). Effective mentors can feel *with* their mentees without feeling pity *for* them. Even without having had the same life experiences, mentors can empathize with their mentees’ feelings and experiences.

Resourcefulness: The ability to see solutions and opportunities as well as barriers leads to successful mentoring. Effective mentors balance respect for the real and serious problems faced by their mentees with optimism about finding realistic solutions. They are practical, sharing their insights and personal experiences to encourage mentees to keep on task and to set goals and priorities. Mentors use their personal experience and knowledge of resources to help mentees identify and fulfill their aspirations.

As a mentor, you don’t have to have all the answers. One of the roles of a mentor is to seek out help, first from program staff, when needed. Sharing and demonstrating the importance of seeking out help and resources when needed can provide a valuable learning experience for your mentee.

Patience: Mentoring is a challenging experience. Mentors who are able to be patient—even when feeling frustrated—will be most successful and will be able to work with their mentees get through difficult times.

Persistence and Consistency: As with all relationships, the mentoring relationship goes through stages. Often in the early stages, mentees will do some testing, perhaps to make sure their mentors are really going to stay around. Young people may be used to seeing adults come in and out of their lives.

You need to be persistent when you set up ground rules for the relationship and when you talk to your mentee about the commitment you have both made. If you keep your commitment, your mentee is more likely to keep his/hers.

Flexibility and Openness: Effective mentors recognize that relationships take time to develop and that communication is a two-way street. They are willing to take time to get to know their mentees, to learn new things that are important to their mentees (music, styles, philosophies, etc.), and even to be changed by the relationship.

Open-mindedness: Mentors and mentees can be very different from each other. Maybe you grew up in different countries, or maybe you come from different socio-economic backgrounds. Maybe your mentee has a disability and you do not. Or maybe you just do not seem to have any interests in common. The most important characteristics for a successful mentoring relationship include a willingness by the mentor to appreciate differences and the ability to help mentee do the same.

Value Driven: At various points throughout the mentoring relationship, mentors need to encourage and support mentees to think about their own values. To do this successfully, mentors must model their willingness to reflect on their own values and the capacity to show respect for others' values.

Adapted from: United Way of America and The Enterprise Foundation,
Partnerships for Success: A Mentoring Program Manual, 1990.

What Youth Need to Thrive

What do young people need to thrive? Research shows that mentoring can have a huge impact on the development of a young person. In her 2002 book, *Stand by Me*, Dr. Jean Rhodes, a leading expert on mentoring, writes that mentors influence young people in three important ways by:

1. Enhancing social skills and emotional well-being
2. Improving cognitive skills through dialogue and listening
3. Serving as role model and advocate

In its 1998 report to Congress, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention reported the following outcomes from the mentoring programs funded by the Juvenile Mentoring Program Initiative (JUMP): "...at-risk youth were less likely to use alcohol and drugs, avoided fights and friends who started trouble, did not join gangs, and did not use guns or knives....Mentoring activities could provide an at-risk youth with personal connectedness, supervision and guidance, skills training, career or cultural enrichment opportunities, a knowledge of spirituality and values, a sense of self-worth, and goals and hope for the future."

Youth have needs that must be met in order for them to thrive. Mentoring can help to meet these needs.

Young people need to have their basic needs—food, clothing and shelter—met, and they need to feel safe before they can learn and grow. Youth in survival mode do not thrive. As a mentor, a central goal is to assist your mentee to fulfill these challenges that all young people need to tackle as they grow into young adulthood.

Preparedness: Young people need to develop competencies and skills to ready themselves for work and adult life. Competencies can be academic, social, emotional, vocational, and cultural.

Connectedness: Young people need to belong—to be connected to family and community—to thrive. A growing body of brain research indicates that we are hardwired to connect. It is a core requisite for learning, developing, and interacting with the world.

Engagement: Young people need opportunities to engage in meaningful activities, have a voice, take responsibility for their actions, and actively participate in issues that impact their communities.



Adapted from ActForYouth.net

Primary Tasks of a Mentor

Establish a positive, personal relationship with mentee

1. Establish mutual trust and respect
2. Maintain regular interaction
3. Provide consistent support
4. Make your meetings enjoyable and fun

Help mentee with development of life skills

1. Work with your mentee to accomplish this mentoring program's goals of fostering positive attitude towards learning and school
2. Begin to provide a framework for developing broader life-management skills, such as decision-making, goal setting, and conflict resolution

Help mentee access resources

1. Provide awareness of community and educational resources available to this young adult and ways to access these resources
2. Act as a resource "broker" as opposed to a resource "provider"
3. Act as a guide, advocate, "coach" and supportive friend

Increase mentee's ability to interact with diverse people

1. Respect and explore differences among people and groups from various background

2. Provide an introduction to different environments, i.e. workplace vs. school setting; discuss differences in behavior, attitude, and style of dress

Adapted from Mentor Training Curriculum, National Mentoring Working Group convened by United Way of America and One to One Partnership, 1991.

The Role of a Mentor

Trusted guide or friend. Young people often do not have much opportunity to be friends with adults, especially adults who will listen to them.

Caring, responsible adult who provides access to people, places, and things outside his/her mentee's routine environment. It is important to provide mentees with access to opportunities they otherwise might not have. This does not mean just taking them outside their familiar physical environment from time to time or making introductions to new people, but also challenging them to broaden their own thinking and to consider new ideas or new ways of thinking about things.

Positive role model. Positive role models connect and interact with people in ways that demonstrate behaviors that inspire, encourage, and build confidence in young people. Mentors who are positive role models give mentees examples of who they can be/become.

Resource broker. Mentors strive to help young people understand how to access resources to meet goals, address problems, and make thoughtful decisions.

NOT the Role of a Mentor

Mentors cannot be all things to their mentees. Quite often when mentors run into problems in their relationships, it is because the mentor, the mentee or the parent/legal guardian did not understand the role of a mentor. The mentor may have taken on one of the following inappropriate roles:

Parent/legal guardian/family. The role of the parent or legal guardian (governed by law) is to provide food, shelter, and clothing. The mentor's role is not to fulfill these responsibilities. If the mentor believes the mentee is not receiving adequate support, s/he should contact the mentor program coordinator rather than try to meet these basic needs for the mentee.

Social worker. A social worker is a licensed professional with the skills and training to assist with family issues. If a mentor is concerned about something in the mentee's home life, the mentor should share this with the mentor program coordinator, not assume the role of a social worker and attempt to solve the problem.

Counselor, therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist. A mentor is not a formal counselor, therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist, all of whom are licensed professionals.

ATM. A Mentor does not need money in order to be a mentor. Mentors give through the time they spend with young people. The value of the support and guidance they provide cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

Stages of the Mentor/Mentee Relationship

Undoubtedly, you are excited about the opportunity that lies ahead and maybe a little nervous, too. Are you wondering what you will do when you first meet? Or how you will be received by your mentee and your mentee's peers and family?

Every mentoring relationship is different, and your relationship with your mentee may go through different stages as well. As you begin to spend time with your mentee, it will be helpful for you to keep this in mind. As with any relationship, you will experience ups and downs, but the rewards for your hard work will be great. Just remember: all the feelings and concerns you are experiencing are common to new mentors.

To help you get started, we describe the three general stages of a mentoring relationship, each with its own tips and recommendations:

Stage 1: Getting to Know Each Other

The mentoring relationship begins with a "getting to know you" phase. Remember the impact of mentoring is often not seen immediately. It takes time to gain momentum and is critical that mentors have patience and the ability to work through difficult stretches.

Being predictable and consistent

During the first stage of the relationship, it is critical to be both predictable and consistent. Keeping scheduled appointments with your mentee is important. Understandably, things come up at times, and appointments cannot be kept. However, in order to speed up the trust-building process, remaining consistent is necessary even if the young person is less consistent than you are.

Anticipating testing

Some young people may not trust adults. As a result, they use testing as a coping or defense mechanism to determine whether they can trust you. Your mentee might test you by not showing up to a scheduled meeting just to see how you will react. Patience is very important as you work through this together, but be firm when needed. This will help your mentee to understand when his/her behavior is inappropriate and hurtful.

Breaking the Ice

During this stage, you may encounter awkwardness, or become frustrated that your mentee "will not open up." Mentors may take this as a sign of boredom, ambivalence or dislike for the mentor. It is far more likely that your mentee is not yet comfortable, or guarded about expressing thoughts. Find an activity you both enjoy doing and try to frame questions that require more than yes or no. For example, instead of asking, "Do you like art?" try something like, "I'm not so good at drawing but I like using clay. What kinds of artwork do you like doing?" Aim for who, what, where, when, why questions.

Establishing confidentiality

Establishing confidentiality helps to instill a sense of trust between you and your mentee. Let your mentee know that whatever s/he wants to share with you will remain confidential, as long as—and it is important to stress this point—what s/he tells you is not going to harm him/her or someone else. Emphasizing these points in the first few meetings with your mentee will be helpful to the relationship.

Dealing with Disclosure

Many young people are not sure how to talk about certain issues in their lives. Youth with disabilities may be apprehensive about disclosing the nature of their disabilities. Young people in foster care may be embarrassed to talk about where they live and why they are not living with their birth parents. During the early stages of the relationship, be understanding and patient with your mentee. S/he might be confused about when and how to talk to you about difficult issues s/he is facing. Remember, it is up to your mentee to decide whether and when to disclose personal information.

Defining ground rules of the mentoring relationship

Right from the beginning, take some time together to set clear expectations for the relationship:

1. Talk about the best way to communicate (by telephone or e-mail) and how often you will each commit to being in contact. This is also a good time to talk about the types of activities you will do together.
2. Lay out the responsibilities of each party is important so both partners feel they are doing their share of the work.
3. Plan and create an environment in which you and your mentee have dedicated, uninterrupted time set aside to meet. This will contribute to a sense of safety and comfort for your mentee.

Working with Parents/Guardians

As a new mentor, you may be apprehensive about how you will be received by your mentee's family. Remember that your role as a mentor is to provide friendship and guidance. The role of the mentee's parent or guardian is to act as caregiver. Remember, too, that you are a new adult entering their child's life, so it may take time and patience to build trust with parents/guardians. That effort is worth it, though; research has demonstrated that mentoring relationships are more likely to have positive outcomes for youth when there is a sense of mutual support between parents/guardians and mentors.

Stage 2: Deepening of the Relationship

Once you have established trust and know more about each other, you can begin working in a more focused way toward the goals you are setting.

Getting Closer

Generally, at this stage of the relationship, the mentor and mentee can sense a genuine closeness.

Affirming the uniqueness of the relationship

Once the relationship is developed to this point, do something special or different from what you and your mentee did earlier to affirm the uniqueness of the relationship. For example, go to a museum or a sporting event, or get a photo of yourselves holding up a project you have worked on together.

Dealing with ups and downs

All relationships have ups and downs that continue throughout a relationship, even when you think you have moved on. Be prepared for rough periods and do not assume something is wrong with the relationship if these periods occur occasionally. Your mentee may act out and try to sabotage the relationship. Do not take it personally, or as sign dislike; it often has nothing to do with you, but signals that your mentee wants to prove that you are committed to the relationship. Rather than take

personally, see it as a manifestation of fear of being rejected one more time by one more adult. Stick by your mentee and continue to re-affirm your commitment to the relationship.

Dependence

Now that you have become closer, your mentee may become dependent on your support. You may receive more calls at home/work, or have requests for additional meeting times. Know and reinforce your own boundaries. “I” statements can be helpful. For example, “I care about you and am happy you feel comfortable calling me when you want to talk. But I feel overwhelmed when you call me every day at work. It would be better if you could call me at home on evenings/weekends.”

Seeking support from staff and other resource support

If a rough period continues, or if your mentor relationship with your mentee has not reached the second stage, do not hesitate to seek out support from the mentor program coordinator. Sometimes two people—no matter how they look on paper—just don’t “click”.

This stage may also just be a good time to check in with program staff. Sometimes it is helpful to have a discussion with someone outside the relationship about the commitment and responsibilities of both parties.

Stage 3: Time to Say Goodbye

Sometimes our lives go in directions we are not expecting. If this means that you and your mentee can no longer meet, spend sufficient time helping your mentee to understand the process of saying goodbye. Young people today often have many adults come and go in their lives and are very rarely provided the opportunity to say goodbye. You can help your mentee learn how to handle this process through your role as a mentor. When matches are approaching their one year mark, PYD has **three different options** for the mentoring going forward.

<p>Option 1: Continuing with same expectations</p>	<p>Staying with a commitment of talking weekly through phone or email contact and meeting 4-6 hours per month for in person activities. PYD staff will solidify “same expectations” with an in-person meeting with you and your mentee to sign a new match contract.</p>
<p>Option 2: Continuing with new expectations</p>	<p>New expectations could be meeting every other month for in person activities and talking every other week through phone or email contact. The important thing is that you commit to something concrete and manageable for your time. These “new expectations” will be solidified with an in-person meeting with you and your mentee to sign a new match contract.</p>
<p>Option 3: Closure</p>	<p>If after a year you are no longer able to continue we will “close the match” in PYD’s system and have a closure ceremony to celebrate all that your match has done and accomplished. PYD staff will facilitate this meeting. Your mentee can go back on the waitlist if he or she wishes to continue mentoring.</p>

Research has shown that mentoring relationships that end prematurely can end up having a more negative impact on the youth than if the mentoring had never been received in the first place. Proper closure is extremely important for maximizing the benefits that your mentee experiences and minimizing harm. The following will help facilitate a smooth transition.

Saying goodbye as an ongoing discussion

Initiating some things at the beginning of the relationship can help ease the transition when the time comes. Think about creating a journal together starting with your very first meeting, something that you can both take with you at the end. It could include photos of the two of you at each meeting, or it could be a place to write down thoughts that you each have as you go along your mentoring journey together. This will also eliminate the need to “cram” all your picture-taking into the last week or month of your relationship.

Providing opportunities for saying goodbye in a healthy, respectful, and affirming way

When a match comes to an end, PYD encourages matches to have a “closure celebration.” This meeting allows matches to recap the positive memories they have shared and the ways in which they have grown. It’s important to not wait for the very last meeting to tell your mentee the match is ending. Set expectations about closure from the beginning of your match.

Possible reflection points could include:

1. How mentee can apply lessons from match in other areas of their life.
2. Mentoring gifts/strengths that each brought to the match.
3. How did mentoring change you?
4. Discuss future hopes for your mentee.
5. Favorite qualities you admire about your mentee.
6. Things that surprised you in the match.

Identifying natural emotions, such as grief, denial and resentment

There may not be someone in your mentee’s life that can help him/her manage saying goodbye. You can help your mentee express emotions by talking about the feelings associated with a relationship ending. Helping your mentee understand that these emotions are common will be helpful throughout his/her life.

Previewing and Reviewing

In order to help your mentee adjust to the idea of the match ending, it can be helpful to set up a calendar together so that he or she can visually see how many meeting you will have. This can also help frame match closure in a positive ways as you can both look forward to the activities you have left together.

Be clear on future communication

There is discussion in the mentoring field about whether programs should encourage or allow mentors and mentees to stay in touch after the required time commitment. Most professional staff believe that the longer a mentor is involved in a youth’s life, the greater the impact. As a result, many programs encourage mentors and mentees to remain in contact even after the program has ended. Others, however, believe the value of learning about healthy closure is as important as the length of the relationship. Whichever option you chose, make sure you are clear with your mentee and do not make communication promises you cannot keep.

Communicate with Parents

Depending on the age and ability level of your mentee, parents are often an excellent resource for figuring out how to best facilitate closure. Use them as a resource for advice on how to broach the topic with your mentee, how soon to speak with your mentee, and strategies to foster the smoothest transition possible.

Goals

Research shows that a mentoring relationship with structure has a better chance of being successful, and setting goals together is one way you can build structure. Working together to help your mentee achieve his or her goals will also help you get to know each other and deepen your relationship.

PYD's mission is to empower youth with disabilities to reach their full potential for personal development. We like to break down goals into five broad categories:

1. **Self-esteem:** Mentee expresses increased pride about own abilities. Mentee is accomplishing goals set throughout mentoring relationship. Mentee expresses interest in setting new goals. Mentee expresses desire to learn new activities. Mentee discusses developing new friendships.
2. **Independent living:** Mentee has developed money management skills such as banking, writing checks, and using an ATM. Mentee is able to access internet independently. Mentee is able to arrange transportation for him or herself, or take public transportation independently.
3. **Education and employment:** Mentee improves grades in school. Mentee works to complete applications for further education or employment. Mentee writes resume. Mentee is researching or has enrolled in college, vocational program, or has obtained employment.
4. **Community involvement:** Mentee goes on social outings with friends. Mentee can arrange transportation. Mentee takes initiative to find and participate in accessible recreational and community activities. Mentee discusses developing new friendships.
5. **Healthy relationships:** Mentee talks to mentor about his or her concerns. Family and teachers report more positive interactions with mentee. Mentee is consistently interacting with mentor and peers. Mentee utilizes phone and/or Internet to chat with friends.

SMART Framework for Goal Setting

The **SMART** strategy is a helpful tool for setting and achieving goals for you and your mentee. It involves creating a plan where the goals are **Specific**, **Measurable**, **Achievable**, **Relevant**, and **Time-Framed**.

Specific: Goals need to be specific. Often we set goals that are so loose, it is nearly impossible to judge whether or not we reach them.

Measurable: Goals need to be measurable. Knowing how you will measure success makes it easier to see if you hit your target.

Achievable: Goals need to be reasonable and achievable. Setting goals that are out of reach is a setup for failure.

Relevant: Goals need to be appropriate. Working to achieve a goal that does not really matter to you is difficult, if not impossible.

Time-Framed: Goals need a time frame. Having a set amount of time will give your goals structure. Having a specific time frame gives you the impetus to get started and monitor your progress.

Goal Setting Tips

Write down goals.

Writing down goals serves two purposes: it helps you remember your goals over long periods of time. And it makes the goals feel more “real” and solid, making them harder to ignore.

Reward success.

We all need motivation, and youth tend to require more tangible positive reinforcement than adults do. In order to help keep your mentee motivated towards reaching their goals, provide them with small rewards for accomplishing each step along the way.

Welcome failure.

Sometimes we don't reach the goals we set for ourselves, and the same will be true of your mentee. Don't brush failure under the rug and ignore it; address it, and turn it into a learning experience for your mentee.

Inspect and reevaluate constantly.

You don't need to wait until your anniversary Match Meeting to evaluate your mentee's progress towards their goal. Evaluate your progress constantly, and if a goal seems too unrealistic or simple, make the needed adjustments.

Create positive and motivating goals.

Your mentee will be more likely to stay motivated about their goal if it's phrased in a positive and uplifting way. Don't write goals that are intimidating, scary, or negative.

Identify obstacles.

When you start working on a goal with your mentee, take some time to brainstorm with them on potential roadblocks or challenges they may face. This will allow you to both plan for these potential challenges, and to find ways to avoid getting stuck by them. If your mentee hits an unexpected issue, talk through it with them and help them make an action plan.

Make goals accessible.

It's easy to forget about a goal if we don't have a constant reminder about it. Unleash your creativity, and help your mentee find ways to keep their goal close at hand. This could be as simple as creating a sign to hang in their bedroom, sticky notes to place on their binders, or a little note they can carry in their pocket.

Be creative and have fun!

Make goal setting a fun experience! Turn goals into a game. Make it a competition. Create a map to help chart your mentee's progress towards their goal. There are a number of creative ways to make goal setting a fun experience for your mentee, so be creative and keep them engaged!

Community Involvement

What does this mean?

Community involvement refers to the mentee's participation in community and extracurricular activities. This could include recreational activities, social outings, volunteering or being a member of a club or group with community members who have similar interests.

Why is this important?

Youth with disabilities often face significant barriers when trying to fully integrate and participate in society. Youth may come up against physical, programmatic or attitudinal barriers. According to current research, 35% of youth with disabilities are completely uninvolved in their communities, compared to 21% without disabilities. In addition, 50% of youth with disabilities nationwide spend most of their out of school hours watching television.

Mentoring provides these youth with an opportunity to get out in the community and engage in new experiences. The youth benefits from exposure to a mentor who can provide a living example of full adult participation in vocational, recreational, and social activities.



Examples of goals:

1. Mentee goes on at least one social outing with friends per month.
2. Mentee finds and participates in at least one accessible recreational and/or community activity in the next three months.
3. Mentee participates in one volunteer activity per month for the next two months.
4. Mentee will meet one of their neighbors before their next get-together with their mentor.
5. Mentee will join one club at school before the end of the fall.

Education and Employment

What does this mean?

Educational and employment goals will reflect the steps a mentee needs to take in order to achieve academic and/or employment success. "Success" for a mentee may vary considerably depending on his or her age, interests, aspirations and abilities. In general, all goals will be designed to prepare the mentee to communicate his or her educational and employment needs/goals to teachers, mentors and family; demonstrate skills needed to access higher education and/or employment (application and financial assistance processes, job counseling, resume writing and interviewing); search for education or employment; and enroll in college or vocational program and/or obtain employment.

Why is this important?

In 2003-2004, the national dropout rate for high-school youth aged 14-21 receiving Special Education services was 31% (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2006; 2009). During the same school year, the Massachusetts dropout rate among youth with disabilities was 48%, which is 17 percentage points higher than the national average. In 2002-2003 Boston Public Schools analyzed dropout rates among students based on demographic data of gender, race, ethnicity, and language (Citizen Commission, 2006). The highest dropout rate of any group, 37%, belonged to Special Education students. Such factors also correspond with an overwhelmingly high proportion of adults with disabilities facing unemployment and poverty.

In 2008, PYD conducted a survey of mentees and parents in order to determine the impact of the mentoring relationship on the mentee. When asked about their potential to gain employment about three quarters of youth reported feeling more confident about their educational and employment goals. The additional positive support your mentoring relationship provides for youth with disabilities increases the chance that your mentee will experience a positive and successful educational and employment future.

Examples of goals:

1. Mentee will read one book to mentor during next visit.
2. Mentee will spend 30 minutes online during the next week researching job possibilities.
3. Mentee will practice completing one job application on his or her own by next month's meeting with mentor.
4. Mentee will improve his/her grades in English class by one letter grade next semester.
5. Mentee will create a resume over the next two weeks, and will then review it with their mentor the next time they meet.



Tayla - MERL Summer Intern

MERL's summer intern from Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Tayla, is coming back to the Cambridge, MA office to help out during the holidays!

Healthy Relationships

What does this mean?

Healthy relationship goals are meant to provide youth with skills that are necessary in order for them to develop and maintain positive interactions with teachers, family, employers, mentors, and peers with and without disabilities.

Why is this important?

The ability to maintain healthy relationships is necessary in order for one to engage individuals personally and professionally.

Many youth learn social skills subtly or indirectly, through imitating adults' behaviors or through developing relationships with family and peers. However, the development of social skills may be more challenging for some youth with disabilities. Youth with emotional, social and/or behavioral disabilities may not pick up on some subtle cues about human behavior and thus have a difficult time developing relationships.

In addition, youth with disabilities who may have experienced social isolation may not have had the opportunity to develop these skills fully. In order to make friends, learn in school, obtain employment, resolve conflict and live independently, youth with disabilities will need to enhance their social competency and relationship building skills.

Examples of goals:

1. Mentee utilizes phone and/or internet to chat with friends at least twice during the next month.
2. Mentee invites a friend to eat lunch with him/her at school at least once before the next match meeting.
3. Mentee will practice asking questions and making eye contact with mentor and other individuals he or she comes into contact with during the next match meeting.
4. Mentee will write a letter or email to a relative once a month.
5. Mentee will plan, budget, and purchase holiday gifts for their close friends and family this year.



Reference: Brember, C.D. and Smith, J. (2004, October) "Teaching Social Skills." Addressing Trends and Developments in Secondary Education and Transition 3, (5).

Independent Living

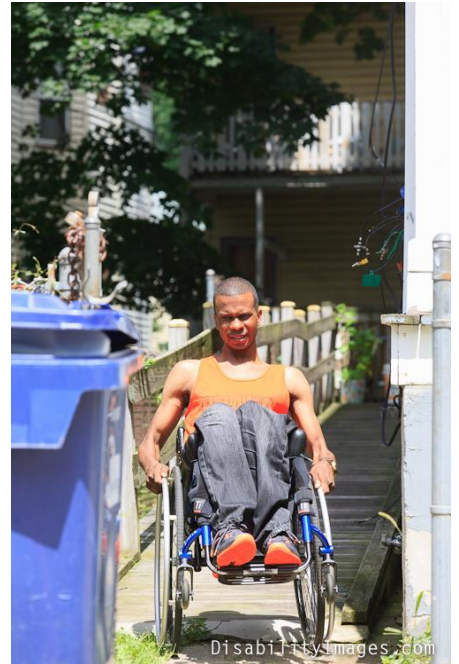
What does this mean?

“Independent Living philosophy emphasizes consumer control, the idea that people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, having crucial and valuable perspective to contribute and deserving of equal opportunity to decide how to live, work, and take part in their communities, particularly in reference to services that powerfully affect their day-to-day lives and access to independence” (NCIL.org).

Why is this important?

“Though many people have physical, intellectual, or mental attributes that deviate from the ‘norm,’ disability is manifested in society through purposefully created and maintained physical, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers” (NCIL.org).

Individuals with disabilities have the same wants, needs and aspirations as individuals without disabilities. One of these is the desire to live an independent lifestyle where one is free to pursue his or her own goals make his or her own decisions about life. The Independent Living movement seeks to ensure that individuals with disabilities are afforded the same Civil Rights as all individuals. “The Independent Living Model strives to eliminate discrimination by creating a society open to all people, regardless of labels, diagnoses, and society's gross misconceptions about life with a disability and people with disabilities themselves” (NCIL.org).



Examples of goals:

1. Mentee practices using the ATM and writing a check at least once by next match meeting.
2. Mentee arranges transportation for him/herself for next match meeting (including public transportation).
3. Mentee prepares meal for him/herself and mentor at next match meeting.
4. Mentee will help their parents with laundry over the next six months, with the goal of being able to complete their own laundry independently by the end of that time.
5. Mentee and mentor will create a monthly budget, so they must track and plan how much they will spend during their outings each month.

Self-Esteem

What does this mean?

An individual may be described as having high self-esteem if s/he expresses comfort and pride about own and other's abilities and disabilities, has identified his/her own talents and skills, is accomplishing goals, pursuing talents and setting new goals for the future.

Why is this important?

An individual's level of self-esteem is a strong variable in fostering his or her well-being. Youth often experience stressors that can build or damper their self-esteem, and youth with disabilities are no different. In fact, youth with disabilities may encounter illness or disability-related challenges in their daily lives that can sometimes result in lower self-esteem. For these youth, it may be especially crucial to bolster self-esteem so s/he learns how to cope with difficult situations. Higher levels of self-esteem provide youth with resilience, or an ability to successfully overcome difficult circumstances. Higher self-esteem may also result in higher life satisfaction and decreased levels of anxiety.

Examples of goals:

1. Mentee will keep a journal and write one positive comment about his or herself everyday for the next month.
2. Mentee will take initiative to plan an activity for next match meeting.
3. By the end of the month, the mentee will come up with a new goal for himself/herself to accomplish.
4. Mentee will create a list – with help from their mentor or parents, if need be – of all their strengths.
5. Mentee will teach their mentor or a friend about a particular subject that they enjoy.

Reference: Dahlbeck, D.T. & Lightsey, Jr., O.R. (2008). Generalized self-efficacy, coping, and self-esteem as predictors of psychological adjustment among children with disabilities or chronic illness. *Children's Health Care*, 37, 293-315.



SMART Goal Examples

Goal Area	Weak Goal	SMART Goal
Community Involvement	Mentee will do more things in their community.	Mentee will join at least one new program or club through school or in the community, and will attend meetings for the next three months.
Education & Employment	Mentee will improve their grades by the end of the year.	Mentee will improve their score in English class by one grade level (C → B) at the end of the semester.
Healthy Relationships	Mentee will make new friends in school.	Over the three months, mentee will sit with a new person at lunch at least once a week.
Independent Living	Mentee will ride the MBTA all over Boston.	Within the next two months, the mentee will ride the MBTA unaccompanied to one of our match meetings.
Self-Esteem	Mentee will be better able to express their strengths.	Mentee will keep a journal and write one positive comment about his or herself every day for the next month.

Goal Setting Activity

Jimmy is 8 years old and lives with his family in Brookline. He has cerebral palsy, so he tires easily and walking long distances can be a challenge for him. He also has trouble remembering things on occasion, but repetition and breaking things down helps. He enjoys anime (reading and watching), video games, and comic books. He's also quite creative, and he's a big fan of writing and drawing. His mother wants him to get a mentor because he doesn't have many friends in school, and they want him to get out of the house more often.

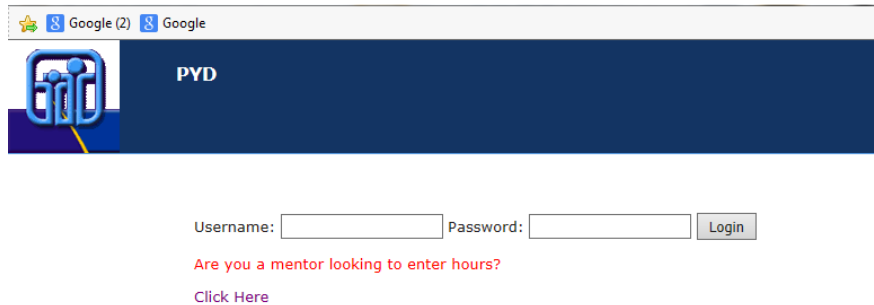
Shauna is 13 years old and lives with her mother in Dorchester. She has an intellectual disability, and she doesn't process information as easily or quickly as others. She needs people to be patient and to break complicated things down to her. She enjoys going to the movies, going to the park, going to the zoo, and playing basketball and soccer. She likes being active, but she's very shy and doesn't have many friends. Her mother would also love for her to start helping out around the house more often.

Miguel is 19 years old and lives with his grandparents in Malden. He has a learning disability and ADHD, and while he managed fine through high school, he has struggled in his first semester at community college. His grandparents feel like he's stalling; he isn't succeeding in school, he hasn't thought about potential jobs; and he's lacking any sort of direction. He enjoys music, and he currently plays guitar in a band with some of his friends.



Match Support and Activity Reporting

In order to best support your match and create a fulfilling experience for all, we require that matches report on their activity on a monthly basis for the first year. This requirement is in alignment with best practices for mentoring. Your match activity will be entered on a database called Civicore.

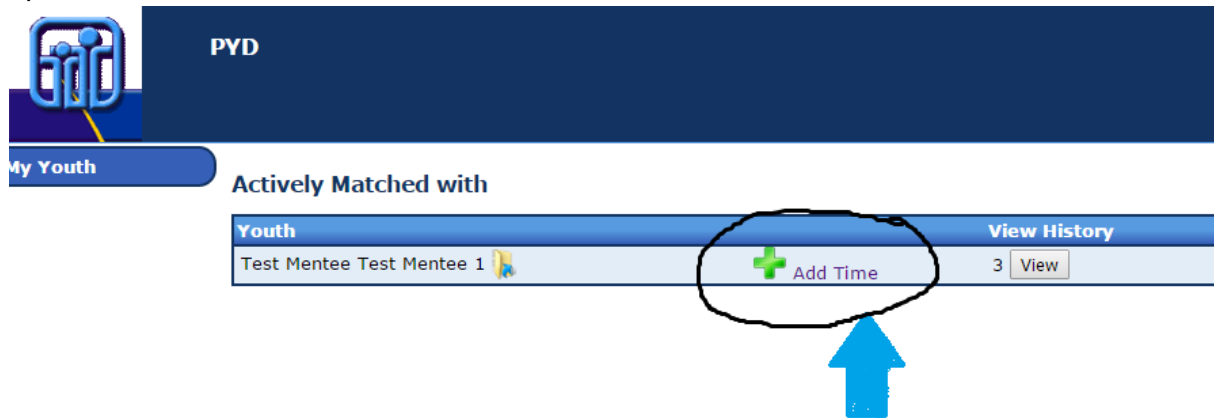


Once you are paired with a mentee, PYD staff will create a username which enables you to access Civicore. The picture above is what you will see when you login to the site. Ignore the username and password (that is for PYD staff). Below are the steps to follow.

1. **Step One:** Click on “Are you a mentor looking to enter hours?” Click Here. This can be found directly below the username and pass word section
2. **Step Two:** Once you have clicked “Are you a mentor looking to enter hours?” you will be brought to the mentor login. Below is a picture of what the screen will look like.
3. **Step Three:** Enter your username and password in the respective boxes and click login.
4. **Step Four:** Once you enter your username and password, you will find your mentee’s name (depicted on the next page).



- Step Five:** When you see your mentee's name (in this example: Test Mentee), click "add time" which is located in the middle of the screen. Do not click the mentee's folder; Civicore is not set up to allow access of that file.



- Step Six:** After you click "Add Time" you will see a variety of questions related to reporting on match activity. Start by clicking on "Session Date" and selecting the date you and your mentee met or communicated.

* - Required field.

[Submit](#) [Cancel](#)

* Session Date

* Session Type

A blue arrow points to the calendar icon in the Session Date field.

- Step Seven:** Click on "Session Type," you will have the opportunity to choose either phone, in person, or email/online.
- Step Eight:** Select the outcome area you focused on this month. Please check off all that apply. The picture below is what the choices will look like.

* - Required field.

[Submit](#) [Cancel](#)

* Session Date

* Session Type

How many hours did you spend or talk to your mentee during this session (numeric input only)

Please select any outcome areas you worked on during this session. You may select more than one.

- Community involvement
- Education & employment
- Independent living
- Healthy relationships
- Self-esteem

- Step Nine:** The last step is a series of match questions. Please fill out each question. Below is an example of what the questions will look like.

<p>What did you do with your mentee? Please share any notable activities or discussions</p>	
<p>Please note any concerns, questions or comments that would be helped by staff follow-up</p>	
<p>Please note any future training that would be helpful for you/your match.</p>	

10. **Step Ten:** The final step is to click submit! Below is what the screen will look like.

The image shows the bottom portion of a form. It features a horizontal line with a dashed border above it. Below this line are two buttons: a green button labeled 'Submit' and an orange button labeled 'Cancel'.

We thank you in advance for your diligence in filling out the match activity entries! This information is extremely valuable for assuring that PYD provides you with the best possible support and maintains high quality programming. Please complete your entry within 3 days of your match activity. If you did not meet that month, please still fill out an entry. If anything urgent comes up with your match, please reach out to us directly in addition to the support entry. Also, please feel free to contact us any time you need additional support or have an update to share, even if it does not coincide with the timing of your activity entry.

Additionally, you will be given a mentor satisfaction survey after three months of being matched and after your one year mark. When you have reached the year mark with your mentee, the activity reporting requirement will change to quarterly, given that you will be at a deeper stage within the mentoring relationship.

Boundaries & Communication

Navigating Boundaries

The definition of a boundary is a border or limit. It is very important for mentors to think in advance about setting appropriate boundaries with their mentees. When working with young people, there are *do's* and *don'ts* which are prescribed by the nature of the relationship, the context, and other factors specific to the mentees' age and developmental level. Just as you think about boundaries at work and with different groups of people, it is important for you to always be thinking about what is and is not appropriate in your mentoring relationships. Keep in mind the three types of boundaries:

Physical

Be clear with your mentee about what type of physical contact is appropriate. Decide what type of physical contact, if any, you and your mentee will have. For example, is it okay for your mentee to give you a hug at the end of your meetings? If you have a young mentee, will you hold hands when you cross the street?

Emotional

Deciding what and how much personal information to share with your mentee can be challenging. Your mentee may bring up sensitive issues such as sexual activity or drug use. Listen without judging, and remember to keep such conversations confidential unless the mentee or someone else may be harmed. How much information you share about yourself will depend upon the age of your mentee and the policies of your mentoring program. *However, do not share if a certain topic makes you uncomfortable or you are not sure whether you should.*

Social

Your program most likely has specified guidelines about the meeting schedule you and your mentee will follow. You might meet once a week for an hour. But what if your mentee would like to see you more often? What if s/he would like to talk on the phone every day? Let your mentee know how often and what type of contact is appropriate.

Here are five things you can consider as you make decisions about what is or is not acceptable in your mentoring relationship:

1. Is it safe? Is it legal? Is there potential for harm (physical, social or emotional)?
2. Is it within the rules and guidelines established by your mentoring program?
3. Have your mentee's parents/caregivers told you what they expect and will accept, and it is within those guidelines?
4. Will it contribute to the positive and healthy development of your mentee?
5. Does it fit your comfort level and expectations for your mentoring relationship?

If the answer to any of the five is no, this may be a sign of a potential boundary conflict. If you have any concerns about an activity or decision, follow up with your program coordinator, your mentee's parents/caregivers, or (depending on the age of the mentee) your mentee to clarify any uncertain areas.

*Reference: Search Institute for Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota
Copyright 2007 by Search Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

Effective Communication Skills

Many relationships end because of poor communication. Developing and practicing the following four communication skills will help when your goal is to open up communication with your mentee. You can also help your mentee develop these useful skills.

Active Listening

Active listening is an attempt to truly understand the content and emotion of what the other person is saying by paying attention to their verbal and non-verbal messages. To actively listen, you must focus, hear, respect, and communicate your desire to understand. It is *not* a time to be planning a response or conveying how *you* feel.

Do:

1. Make good eye contact
2. Use open and relaxed body language, e.g. forward lean, appropriate facial expressions, positive use of gestures, etc.
3. Use verbal cues, such as “um-hmmm”, “sure”, “ah”, “yes”, etc.

Don't

1. Slouch, turn away, or point a finger
2. Speak too fast or too slow
3. Inappropriate tone of voice (shouting, whispering in a loud setting, etc.)
4. Speak sharply, accusatively, over-emotionally

Be sure to understand what may or may not be acceptable in your mentee's culture, though. For instance, making eye contact may not be appropriate in some cultures.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a good way to make sure you heard correctly what your mentee said and lets your mentee know that you hear, understand, and care about his/her thoughts and feelings. This communication skill is particularly helpful with youth, since youth culture/language is constantly changing.

Phrases to use for deciphering fact:

- “So you're saying that . . .”
- “You believe that . . .”
- “The problem is . . .”

Phrases to use for deciphering feeling:

- “You feel that . . .”
- “Your reaction is . . .”
- “And that made you feel . . .”

Paraphrasing does NOT mean evaluating, sympathizing, offering advice, analyzing or questioning.

Questions

Open-ended questions are useful ways to collect information by exploring feelings, attitudes, and views. They are extremely helpful when dealing with young people, who often answer questions with as few words as possible.

- “How do you see this situation?”
- “What are your reasons for . . .?”
- “Can you give me an example?”

Roadblocks to Effective Communication

Certain styles tend to “close down” rather than “open up” communication. The following are examples of styles to avoid:

Ordering, directing, commanding

Instead of shutting down your mentee, honor them by redirecting them and giving them a choice.

1. “You have to meet me when I say so.”
2. “Tell your friend to stop talking to you like that!”
3. “Stop complaining!”

Moralizing, preaching

Does anybody enjoy when someone else moralizes to them? Mentors should be friends, not preachers.

1. “You shouldn’t act like that.”
2. “You ought to do . . .”
3. “Children are supposed to respect their elders.”

Lecturing, making logical arguments

Instead of just invoking your own point of view, have a discussion and encourage the mentee to express their thoughts.

1. “College can be the most wonderful experience you’ll ever have.”
2. “Young people must learn to get along with one another.”
3. “Let’s look at the facts about college graduates.”
4. “When I was your age, I had twice as much to do as you.”

Judging, criticizing, disagreeing, blaming

Mentors are there to build up and encourage their mentees, not tear them down.

1. “You’re not thinking clearly.”
2. “That’s an immature point of view.”
3. “You’re very wrong about that.”
4. “I couldn’t disagree with you more.”

Withdrawing, distracting, using sarcasm, humoring, diverting

Such responses can belittle a mentee and make them feel unwelcome, unimportant, or stupid.

1. “Just forget it.”
2. “Let’s not talk about it.”
3. “Come on, let’s talk about something more pleasant.”
4. “We’ve been through this before.”

Disregarding communication styles or needs

Be accommodating and flexible, just as you hope your mentee will be for you.

1. Assuming someone does not communicate or cannot understand because of his/her disability.
2. Yelling to make yourself understood to someone whose first language is not your own.

Behavior Management

Even though you might have a wonderful and meaningful relationship with your mentee, there are times in any match relationship when the mentor will need to address challenging behaviors. These behaviors do not necessarily reflect you or your relationship with your mentee, as many youth and young adults need help managing or channeling their behavior from time to time.

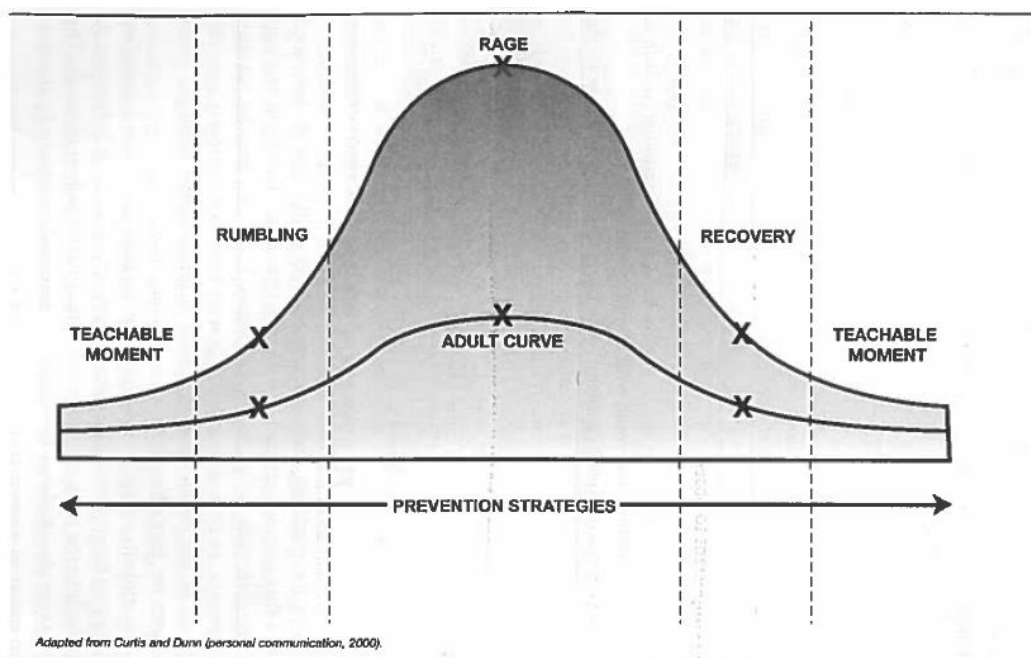
If you ever feel unsure about how to handle a behavioral situation with your mentee, or if you have tried to address the issue but it has continued, please get in contact your Match Support Specialist.

The Meltdown Cycle

Misbehavior in youth, particularly youth with disabilities, is often caused by:

1. The inability to communicate needs properly
2. A desire for attention
3. The need to remove themselves from a situation that they do not think they can handle

Remember the golden rule, **behavior = communication**. When a youth hits the end of their coping skills and they don't know what to do, their emotions (frustration, anger, fear) can begin to manifest as behavior. Meltdowns occur for a reason, and it's important to make an effort to understand the underlying causes that serve as triggers to prevent meltdowns from happening in the first place.



The diagram above outlines the stages of a meltdown: Rumbling, Rage, and Recovery. The stages can be of variable length ranging from minutes to hours and will be different for every individual. The outside curve illustrates your mentee's progression through a meltdown while the inside reflects the stages you may simultaneously go through internally. Understanding your own cycle can help you better respond to your mentee's meltdown (Smith, B & Southwick, J, 2005 p.25).

Reference: Smith, B & Southwick, J. (2005). *Aspergers Syndrome and Difficult Moments*. Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Autism Aspergers Publishing Company

Tips for Encouraging Positive Behavior

Use positive reinforcement liberally!

Positive reinforcement occurs after a behavior (sometimes referred to as reward and incentive) and is anything that serves to increase behavior. Positive reinforcement will be different for everyone and it's important to keep in mind what is motivating for your mentee.

Giving attention to good behavior is the *first and most important step* in avoiding challenging behavior in youth. Positive feedback can remove the need to act out. We often skip over numerous positive behaviors and moments of success that could be rewarded, recognized, and appreciated simply because these behaviors are expected, while instead dwelling on negative behavior. This focus can unintentionally reinforce bad behavior, since you are giving them youth they want – attention – for the wrong reasons.

Ignore unwanted behavior.

Again, do not reinforce behavior that is unwanted. By giving children attention for negative behavior, it can reinforce the behavior instead of discouraging it. So if your mentee is engaging in attention-seeking behavior, don't reward them a response.

Know your mentee's triggers and avoid them.

Youth with disabilities generally have specific "triggers" (words, images, sounds, etc.) that disrupt their feelings of safety and security. These are specific to each child and often come from past experiences. If adults overlook these triggers, youth may escalate their behavior to a point where they completely lose control. By knowing what triggers anxiety, anger, or another negative reaction in your mentee, you can try to reduce some triggers and plan ahead to handle a situation if triggered.

Provide structure.

Youth succeed best with clear direction and routines, and this becomes even more important with youth with certain disabilities (notably autism). Be clear about your plans, and give warnings before transitioning between activities. Displaying a visual schedule for the sequence of activities and having a calendar for contact can help provide security and reduce anxiety.

Avoid power struggles at all cost.

Once you enter a power struggle with a child, you've already lost. We should be working alongside our mentees to help them with their issues, not butting heads with them.

Pick your battles.

Along those lines, sometimes it's just not worthwhile to engage in a topic where there's going to be a conflict. By letting some issues go, you can avoid power struggles and improve your relationship.

Address behavior issues promptly and directly.

Youth will forget if you don't address behavior in the moment. Even if you don't know exactly what to say or do, address the behavior immediately. If you don't get it right the first time, don't worry! The behavior will come back again and you'll get a second chance.

Provide explanations.

Explain why we need to do or not do certain things. Just saying "No" is not enough and may lead to defiance and power struggles.

Provide choices / Use redirection.

Sometimes, your mentee may get mentally stuck on something that you have to say no to. Instead of just saying “No”, respect the efficacy of your mentee and give them additional choices. “We can’t do this, but we can do this or this instead.”

Provide opportunities for empowerment.

Always be looking for opportunities for your mentee to discover or realize their talents (hidden or otherwise).

Interest boosting.

Make sure your mentee knows that you recognize his or her interests and preferences, and use this knowledge to structure lessons around a topic of interest. Interest boosting can also help prevent or stop acting out behavior (Smith, B & Southwick, J, 2005, p.25).

What to do When Your Mentee Escalates

“Escalating” can be anything from a tantrum to a panic attack to tears. When your mentee begins to climb the meltdown curve and none of your efforts are helping calm them down, it’s time to enter meltdown management mode using the following steps:

Contain

First and foremost, remove the mentee from the environment or person triggering their challenging behavior and make sure they are safe! By doing this, you will remove one of the stressors provoking the outburst, and will also show your mentee that you plan on giving them your full, undivided attention. Create an environment where the mentee feels comfortable speaking with you about what is wrong.

Just walk, don’t talk: During the rumbling stage, walking with your mentee without talking may be an effective strategy to help them calm down. Talking may not be an effective strategy during the rumbling stage as it may be hard for your mentee to think logically when they are in a mode of reaction. In this phase, allow your mentee to express themselves without getting into an argument and remaining calm with as little reaction as possible (Smith, B & Southwick, J. Aspergers Syndrome and Difficult Moments. 2005 Kansas Autism Aspergers Publishing Compan, p.31).

Discuss

When your mentees has progressed through the “recovery stage,” discuss what just happened. The incident could have been a larger outburst, or it could have been a smaller, more internal struggle. Either way, both you and the mentee will benefit from a clear discussion of what occurred.

To help guide the discussion, use *social narrating*. Social narrating is the act of talking youth through their behavior as seen from your perspective. It helps explain to the youth why their behavior may not have been the best, by helping them see their behavior from another person’s perspective. This allows youth to learn and grow, but without accusing them or negatively commenting on their behavior. Here are some helpful steps to guide these conversations:

1. **Explain what you saw happen through your own eyes.** “I turned around and saw you and Johnny arguing. You two had seemed to be good friend, so I’m curious what happened.”

2. **Ask the youth for their perspective and investigate the “Why” of the behavior.** Explore the mentee’s point of view. It is important to make no assumptions, and to instead be a “Behavior Detective”!
3. **Help youth connect their emotions with actions/causes.** “Okay, so when Johnny took your ball, you got angry. And when you got angry, you started yelling and calling Johnny names.”
4. **Help youth understand why their response was inappropriate.** “How do you feel when people call you names? Does it make you feel good or bad?”

By asking the right questions, you can help guide your mentee to appropriate answers and help them think through the interaction themselves. This strategy is also effective when you’re asked a challenging question that you don’t know how to answer (i.e. Did you drink in high school? What happens when you die?). Investigate *why* they’re asking the question, and ask them what they think. This way, you can help guide them towards the answer they’re looking for or need.

Plan

These situations can be challenging, but they can also be great teachable moments for your mentee! Encourage your mentee to create a plan for themselves (i.e. “So it sounded like you really wanted the ball and got mad when Johnny took it. What could you have done instead of calling him names? Let’s make a plan so you know what to do next time you feel mad.”). Be sure to practice this plan several times before heading back to any sort of triggering environment.

Keep in mind that teachable moments are at the ends of the meltdown curve. These are the **ONLY** times your mentee is available to learn a new skill. *Rumbling, Rage and Recovery Stages*, are not times to try to teach a new skill and trying to do so may further escalate your mentee and/or prologue the stage they are in (Smith, B & Southwick, J, 2005, p.25).

Reference: Carlson, KP & Cohen, A. (2007). *Developing positive behavior at camp: contain-discuss-plan*. Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, Oct;16(4):859-74, vii.

Appropriate Adult Behavior During a Mentee Meltdown

Dealing with outbursts can be challenging, and it’s common for adults to escalate alongside their mentee. If you want your interaction with your mentee to be productive, though, follow the following tips:

1. **Remain calm.** Youth will feed off the energy of the adults around them, so if you’re escalated, they will remain escalated. Keep yourself calm and your mentee’s energy will lose steam.
2. **Use a quiet voice.** Model the behavior you want to see, and youth will subconsciously start to follow along. It’s difficult to speak in a normal tone and remain upset, so help your mentee bring down the volume.
3. **Take deep breaths.** These will help keep you calm, and your mentee may model your behavior. Encourage them to take deep breaths as well.
4. **Prevent power struggles.** Work with your mentee to solve the issue; don’t blame them.
5. **Be flexible.** In this moment, your mentee cannot. Do what’s needed to get them to baseline.
6. **Less is more.** Don’t be afraid of silence. Don’t dominate the conversation, but ask your mentee questions and let them lead the discussion.
7. **Do not take behaviors personally.** Their behavior is *not* about you. If your mentee could cope with this situation, they would. Help them learn how to do so productively.

- 8. Be conscious of nonverbal cues.** When a youth goes into meltdown, it's because they have hit the limit of their coping skills and don't know how to deal with whatever trigger is causing the issue. They will be in a very emotional state, and may not know how to put those emotions into words. Pay attention to their nonverbal communication, and help them express themselves.

Reference: Smith, B & Southwick, J. (2005). *Aspergers Syndrome and Difficult Moments*. Shawnee Mission, Kansas: Autism Aspergers Publishing Company

Boundary Scenarios

Scenario 1

You arrive at your usual meeting place and your mentee has not arrived. You had previously called your mentee to let her know what time to meet. You both agreed that you would interview the head of the college art museum for a special school project. What should you do or say next time you talk to your mentee?

Scenario 2

You have been matched with your mentee for about six months and you are starting to "bond." One day your mentee asks you if you ever experimented with alcohol when you were younger. You did try alcohol in middle school, and more often in high school. What do you say?

Scenario 3

Every time you go to pick up your mentee, his father greets you at the door and spends at least half an hour chatting with you. You are glad he likes you, but his long greetings are getting in the way of the time you spend with your mentee. How should you handle this situation?

Scenario 4

During one of the group activities of the mentoring program, you notice that your mentee is being mean to one of the other children. You've noticed this behavior in the past, but have not said anything about it. Your mentee's attitude toward other children makes you feel uncomfortable. What should you do?

Scenario 5

You and your mentee hit it off right away. You were very excited about your match until a few weeks ago when your mentee started calling you a few times a day. You are excited she likes you so much, but are unsure if the amount of time you are spending on the phone is appropriate. You don't want to hurt her feelings, but you are feeling uncomfortable with the calls at work and tired from all the calls at home. What should you do?

Program Policies

Alcohol and Drug Use

Mentors are prohibited from using or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while in the presence of any PYD youth participant, and they may not provide youth participants with alcohol or drugs. Even if a youth participant is of legal drinking age, mentors are not permitted to consume alcohol with them.

Physical Discipline

Spanking, striking, or any other form of physical punishment of a youth by a mentor is prohibited.

Harassment

Any form of harassment is prohibited. Unsolicited remarks, gestures or physical contact, display or circulation of written materials or pictures derogatory to either gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, sexual orientation, political belief, appearance or disability group is prohibited. Harassment is any conduct that the victim feels interferes with working or learning or creates an offensive environment.

Individuals who feel harassed by a staff member, peer leader, mentor, youth participant or anyone else during a Partners program activity or who witnesses harassment should immediately report such incidents to a Partners for Youth with Disabilities staff member.

Overnight Sleepovers

Mentors and mentees are prohibited from any overnight visits.

Match Support and Activity Reporting

Mentors are expected to communicate with staff regularly to provide updates on the match. Mentors should complete a civicore entry within 72 hours after meeting with their mentee for the first year of the match.

Online Communications

PYD Volunteers should not use social media or other online platforms to connect or communicate directly* with any youth under the age of 13 years old. For youth 13 years old or older, PYD Volunteers may communicate with them via social media *if the youth's Parent/Guardian has given their written consent to PYD* (to be kept on file with PYD). If the youth's Parent/Guardian has given consent, volunteers must still alert the youth's Parent/Guardian and their supervising PYD Staff Member on which online platforms they plan to use to communicate *before* beginning to use those platforms.

If you do choose to engage in online communications with *or concerning* a PYD Youth, you must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Never post any pictures of a PYD Youth online unless they or their Parent/Guardian have given their written consent to PYD. That consent form should be on file with PYD.
2. Never post any identifying information about a PYD Youth Participant (e.g. last name, school they attend, where their parent(s) works, information concerning their disability, etc.).
3. Never post any contact information for a PYD Youth Participant (e.g. phone number, email, home address, etc.).

4. Ensure that *all content* that a PYD Youth might see (e.g. personal posts, “tagged” photos, shared or liked content) is appropriate for the age and developmental level of that PYD Youth. Do not post about drug or alcohol use, use profanity, make sexual jokes, use ethnic slurs, make personal insults, and other inappropriate conduct.
5. Do not phrase personal posts in such a way to imply that your opinions or comments are made on behalf of Partners for Youth with Disabilities. PYD’s official social media accounts are the medium through which we express PYD’s official stance on any particular topic.

Example of an appropriate post:

John saw his mentee today and had a great time playing putt putt golf!

Example of an inappropriate post:

John saw his mentee Ralph Wilcox at Highland Middle school today where they ate lunch with his 4th grade class. His teacher Ms. Molly Maroni is awesome!

When in doubt about whether or not something is appropriate, consult with a member of PYD’s staff. These guidelines are in effect for the full tenure of your official involvement with PYD, and failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the termination of your eligibility to volunteer with PYD.

** If a youth is under 13 years of age, PYD Volunteers may still communicate with them via a family or linked email address. In these cases, families must still have signed consent on file with PYD.*

Mandated Reporting

What is mandated reporting?

Massachusetts law requires professionals whose work brings them in contact with youth up to the age 18 and/or adults with disabilities to notify state authorities if they suspect that a child or adult with a disability has been—or is at risk of being—abused or neglected.

How are abuse and neglect defined?

Under the Department of Children and Families regulations (110 CMR, section 2.00):

Abuse means: The non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker upon a child under age 18 which causes, or creates substantial risk of, physical or emotional injury; or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth; or any sexual contact between a caretaker and a child under the care of that individual. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., abuse can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).

Neglect means: Failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth, or other essential care; provided, however, that such inability is not due solely to inadequate economic resources or solely to the existence of a handicapping condition. This definition is not dependent upon location (i.e., neglect can occur while the child is in an out-of-home or in-home setting).

Physical Injury means: Death; or fracture of a bone, a subdural hematoma, burns, impairment of any organ, and any other such nontrivial injury; or soft tissue swelling or skin bruising, depending upon such factors as the child's age, circumstances under which the injury occurred and the number and location of bruises; or addiction to a drug or drugs at birth; or failure to thrive.

Emotional Injury means: An impairment to or disorder of the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by observable and substantial reduction in the child's ability to function within a normal range of performance and behavior.

Who is a mandated reporter?

According to state law, mentoring program staff are mandated reporters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and required to follow the procedures outlined in Chapter 119, sections 51 A-E of Massachusetts law. Only paid employees are mandated reporters.

What does this mean for me as a mentor?

As a volunteer mentor, you are not mandated by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. However, you do have a moral responsibility to care for and protect the young person you are mentoring. If you suspect your mentee is being abused or neglected, your response is to immediately report to your mentoring program manager or coordinator. If you cannot reach them, follow the protocol on page 32.

What should I do if my mentee discloses abuse or neglect to me?

1. Be calm and supportive
2. Never agree to keep the information secret
3. Seek privacy so the individual is protected from disclosing in public
4. Assure the individual that she/he did the right thing by telling you about the allegation
5. Never blame the victim
6. Do not investigate
7. Immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect
8. Maintain confidentiality

What makes reporting abuse difficult?

Professionals may be:

1. Shocked, angered or embarrassed by information
2. Hearing information that is very contrary to their own personal standards
3. Unclear of their responsibility to report or what constitutes abuse or neglect
4. Reluctant to become involved
5. Fearful that reporting will make the situation worse
6. Reluctant to break the "Code of Silence" among employees
7. Fearful of being brought into a legal matter, where their reputation and character may be questioned
8. Fearful of retaliation from the alleged abuser or agency
9. Fearful of alienating the caretaker/abuser and having needed services refused

Victims may be:

1. Unable to explain what happened because of the nature of their disability
2. Uncomfortable sharing very private, personal information
3. Having intense feelings of fear, shame, and guilt
4. Dependent on the abuser/perpetrator for assistance
5. Fearful of rejection
6. Fearful of being blamed for the incident
7. Fearful of threats of further harm to self or others
8. Fearful of getting the abuser/perpetrator in trouble
9. Fearful of being left without a home or family
10. Fearful of violating the abuser/perpetrator's orders

How to Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect

How do I make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect?

If you suspect your mentee is being abused or neglected, your response is to immediately report to your mentoring program manager or coordinator. If you cannot contact the program (i.e. at night, on a weekend, or another time when the program is closed), you should contact the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the Massachusetts Disabled Protection Commission (DPPC) directly.

Which agency you contact depends on the age of your mentee. If your mentee is between the ages of 6-17 you will contact DCF. If your mentee is between the ages of 18-24 you will contact DPPC. DCF and DPPC procedures for reporting abuse or neglect are included in the handbook appendix along with contact phone numbers for both organizations.

Remember, you are expected to make an immediate oral report *not a judgment* about an incident or circumstance. It is the role of the DCF/DPPC to investigate and make a determination about the information you provide.

Contacting DCF (Youth 6-17 years old)

To contact DCF to make a report, you should telephone the DCF Area Office serving the child's residence and ask for the Protective Screening Unit. Offices are staffed between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. weekdays. To make a report at any other time, including after 5 p.m. and on weekends and holidays, please call the Child-At-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200.

DCF Area Office Directory

(Ask for the Protective Screening Unit)

Arlington - 781-641-8500
Cambridge/Somerville - 617-520-8700
Cape Ann/Salem - 978-825-3800
Chelsea - 617-660-3400
Hyde Park - 617-360-2500
Lynn - 781-477-1600
Malden - 781-388-7100
Park Street - 617-822-4700
Roxbury - 617-989-2800
South Weymouth - 781-682-0800

Contacting DPPC (Youth 18 years old and above)

When you suspect that abuse or neglect of a person with a disability has occurred, call the DPPC 24-Hour Hotline at 1-800-426-9009. Additional contact information for them is provided below:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)
300 Granite Street, Suite 404, Braintree, MA 02184
Office Hours: 9:00AM – 5:00PM Monday – Friday

(617) 727-6465
(888) 822-0350 V/TTY
(617) 727-6469 FAX

Mass.gov/dppc/

HOTLINE (800) 426-9009 V/TTY

What happens after DCF/DPPC receives a report of suspected abuse or neglect?

There are several possibilities, depending on case-specific circumstances:

If the Department determines there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected, a social worker is assigned to investigate the report. The investigation, called a 51B, includes a home visit during which the social worker meets and talks with the child and the care-taker. If DCF determines that the situation is an emergency, the investigation is completed within 24 hours after the report is designated as an emergency. Investigations of all other reports are completed within 10 days.

If the Department determines that there is reasonable cause to believe that an incident of abuse or neglect by a caretaker did occur, the report is supported and the Department provides the family with services to reduce the risk of harm to the child. If the report is unsupported but the family appears to be in need of services, the Department may offer the family services on a voluntary basis. DCF will notify the mandated reporter, in writing, of its decision.

Disability Etiquette

Person First Language acknowledges that a disability is *one* characteristic a person HAS, not something a person IS, i.e. “people with disabilities” not “the disabled.” Another example, would be saying a child with Autism instead of an Autistic Child. A child with Autism is also a brother, a soccer player, a Massachusetts resident, a hard worker, etc. Person First Language avoids the assumption that Autism should be the characteristic weighted more than all of the other characteristics of the child.

Person first language helps avoid making assumptions that people with disabilities are a homogeneous group with same needs, desires and thoughts. Saying “the disabled” can lead to the impression that individuals with disabilities are a homogenous group of people who are alike simply by virtue of having a disability.

One in five Americans has a disability. You may interact every day with someone who has a disability and not even be aware of it. Sometimes people are uncomfortable around people with disabilities and do not know how to act or what to say. In addition to person-first language, the following are general tips to make communicating easier.

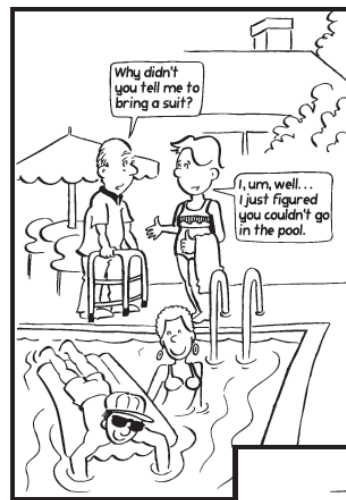
1. First and foremost, treat people with disabilities with dignity and respect. People with disabilities have different personalities and preferences—to find out what a person wants, ask.
2. When you meet someone with a disability, it is appropriate to shake hands, even if that person has limited hand use or artificial limbs. Touching hands (or prosthesis) or shaking the left hand in greeting is also appropriate.
3. Always ask before assisting a person with a disability, and listen carefully to any instructions. Do not interfere with anyone’s full control over his/her assistive devices. For example, before you push someone’s wheelchair, make sure to ask if s/he wants to be pushed. Likewise, never move crutches or communication boards out of reach without the owner’s permission.
4. Most people with disabilities enjoy assisting others and want to serve as well as be served.
5. Do not ask personal questions of someone you do not know well. People with disabilities usually do not want to make the origin or details of their disability the first topic of conversation.
6. Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to get some things done.



Always
ask before
you help.



7. Speak directly to the person with a disability rather than to a companion or sign language interpreter who may be present.
8. Do not be embarrassed to use common expressions such as, "I've got to run now," "See you later," or "Have you heard about..." even if the person you are speaking with does not run, see or hear well. People with disabilities use these phrases all the time!
9. Some terms that were acceptable in the past, such as "crippled", "deaf and dumb" and "wheelchair-bound" are no longer appropriate because of negative associations. Instead, say "person with a disability," "Mary is deaf (or hard of hearing)", and "Denise uses a wheelchair." This type of language focuses on the person rather than the disability.
10. Avoid excessive praise when people with disabilities accomplish normal tasks. Living with a disability is an adjustment, one most people have to make at some point in their lives and does not require exaggerated compliments.
11. Do not lean on a person's wheelchair, which is considered an extension of personal space.
12. When talking to a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, try to sit to be at eye level.
13. Do not pet a guide or companion dog who is working.
14. Give unhurried attention to a person who has difficulty speaking. If you cannot understand what the person has said, do not pretend; ask him/her to repeat it.
15. Speak calmly, slowly and directly to a person who is hard of hearing. Do not shout or speak the person's ear. Your facial expressions, gestures, and body movements help in understanding. If you are not certain you have been understood, write your message.
16. Greet someone who is visually impaired by telling him/her your name and where you are. you offer walking assistance, let the person take your arm and then tell him/her when you are approaching inclines or turning right or left.
17. Many people have disabilities that are not apparent. Just because you cannot see a disability does not mean it does not exist.
18. Do not let fear of saying or doing something wrong prevent you from getting to know someone who has a disability. If you are unsure of what to say when you first meet, try "Hello!"
19. Help make community events available to everyone by holding them in accessible locations.



Don't make decisions for people with disabilities....

.... about what they can or can't do.



in

If

Pictures from: United Spinal Association. "Disability Etiquette." 2007.

www.unitedspinal.org

“Person First” Activity

Change the phrase in in the first column to represent “person first” language. Write your answers in the second column.

He is a blind person.	
She is wheelchair bound.	
She’s autistic.	
He is special ed.	
They are disabled.	
Ray Charles was a blind musician.	
Roosevelt was a disabled politician.	

Inclusive Etiquette Scenarios

A participant who has difficulty speaking due to a disability comes to your office to ask you a question. How can you communicate with him and ensure you understand what he is saying?	
A participant who is deaf and is accompanied by a sign language interpreter comes to art club. How do you use inclusive communication in this situation?	
One of your participants is hard of hearing and reads lips. How do you use body language and non-verbal communication to ensure that she can participate fully?	

Handling Disclosure

Disclosure occurs when a person reveals personal information about himself/herself for a specific purpose. If you have a disability, it may be necessary at some point to disclose information about your disability in order to receive needed accommodations at school, work or in the community.

If your mentee chooses to share personal information, you may be able to assist in finding ways to disclose this information to other people in his/her life. For example, your mentee may want to think about disclosing information to employers, friends, and colleges. Also, it can be beneficial for youth to disclose disabilities or other sensitive information to colleges and employers so they can have access to accommodations that will increase their chances for success. As a mentor, you can help your mentee decide when, how, why, and whether to disclose information.

How you can help:

1. Develop a disclosure “script” with your mentee. Role-play the script so s/he is comfortable when the time comes to do it for real.
2. Assist your mentee in choosing the appropriate person to whom to disclose the information.
3. Talk with your mentee about choosing an appropriate time for disclosure. This will depend on the individual situation, but it is best to be proactive. Of course, some settings and times are more appropriate than others.

However, it is not always necessary to reveal *all* personal information about one’s disability in order to receive accommodations, the most helpful information to share includes:

1. How the disability affects one’s capacity to learn and/or perform effectively.
2. The environment, supports and services one will need in order to access and participate in school, work and the community.

Advantages of disclosure

It allows you to receive reasonable accommodations.

Disadvantages of disclosure

It can lead to you being treated differently by others

The SHARE Model

You can help your mentee feel more comfortable disclosing with other by helping them with the following things:

- Script**
- Help build confidence**
- Accommodations**
- Right setting (time, place, person)**
- Evaluate Pro’s and Con’s**

Putting It All Together

Identify the stage of the relationship, create one SMART goal to address the issue, and identify one resource that could help with this goal.

1. You were paired with a mentee named Michelle less than a month ago. You have met with Michelle for three weeks in a row. Michelle is very quiet. You have tried for the last three weeks to encourage her to talk by asking her about her school, friends and family. Every attempt you make at conversation is quickly squashed by Michelle's difficulty to overcome her shyness. You are starting to get very frustrated by the situation and doubt whether Michelle is even interested in having a mentor.
2. Your mentee Isaiah is a junior in high school. He has a physical disability that necessitates the use of a wheelchair. He has average grades and is a writer for the high school paper. You have talked to Isaiah about the possibility of going to college. He has expressed to you that he is worried about living on his own and caring for himself.
3. You and your mentee Justin have been paired together for almost a year. You are moving to Florida for a new job in 2 months. You have a great relationship with your mentee and have accomplished the goals you set together. However, Justin is worried and upset about your imminent departure.
4. Your mentee Johnny is in the fourth grade and you have been paired with him for 6 months. He has told you a number of times that he hates school and wishes he didn't have to go. When you try to help Johnny with his homework, he loses focus and sometimes even gets angry. You feel frustrated because last week Johnny angrily reminded you that you are not his teacher and you can't make him do his homework.
5. Your mentee Maria has been receiving low grades in school. Her principal told her that she may be kicked off the basketball team if her grades do not improve. Basketball is extremely important to her and she hoped to someday get a basketball scholarship.
6. Luis is in the second grade and you were paired with him about a month ago. You know that Luis has had a lot of changes in his life over the past several months. You don't know all the details, but you do know that in August he went to live with his father. (Luis had previously lived with his mother and two sisters.) Luis has been acting out in school and he has gotten into numerous altercations with other kids.
7. Alexis is 16 years old and has just gotten a part time job. Learning to save money is one of the goals you and your mentee Alexis have set. She is spending the majority of her paychecks on new clothes. She tells you that she has decided that saving money is not that important to her anymore.
8. You have only met with your mentee Tanya once - at the initial mentor/match meeting. You seemed to hit it off with Tanya when you met her. She was very talkative and outgoing. You make plans to meet for lunch the following week. You made sure that Tanya wrote the date down in her calendar. The day of your lunch date arrives and Tanya does not show up. You are disappointed and questioning whether or not to contact Tanya again.
9. You and your mentee Kasi have met with each other four times. Each time the activity has been something that you have chosen. Kasi is outgoing and opens up to you about things that are going on in her life but when you ask her for suggestions for activities, she never has any ideas.

Agency Policies Consent Form

I, _____, the Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD) volunteer, have read, understand, and agree to abide by the following Program Policy for PYD Volunteers:

- Although alcohol use is legal for adults ages 21 and over, liability concerns require a position regarding alcohol on the part of Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Inc.

Drugs are illegal and Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Inc. cannot condone their use.

The agency policy is that use of alcohol or drugs or intoxication of a peer leader and/or mentor in the presence of a youth Partner or during youth programs is prohibited.

- It is also the policy of Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Inc. that spanking, striking, or any other form of physical punishment of a youth Partner by a peer leader and/or mentor is prohibited.
- Any form of harassment is prohibited. Unsolicited remarks, gestures or physical contact, display or circulation of written materials or pictures derogatory to either gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, sexual orientation, political belief, appearance or disability group is prohibited. Harassment is any conduct that the victim feels interferes with working or learning or creates an offensive environment. Individuals who feel harassed by a staff member, peer leader, mentor, youth participant or anyone else during a Partners program activity or who witnesses harassment should immediately report such incidents to a Partners for Youth with Disabilities staff member.
- Direct online communication with any youth under the age of 13 years old is prohibited unless supervised by a parent, and I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the PYD Online Communications Policy.

Violation of these policies will result in termination from the program.

I agree that if I am accepted into the program and matched with a youth Partner or placed in service in any of the Partners for Youth with Disabilities, Inc. programs, I will abide by these policies.

Signature

Date

Evaluation Form

I will be able to apply what I learned today to my mentoring experience.

agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree disagree

Ideas were presented in a clear manner.

agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree disagree

There was sufficient opportunity for interaction and discussion

agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree disagree

The trainer was knowledgeable about the topics presented.

agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree disagree

I know more about what mentoring is.

agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree disagree

I understand my role as a mentor.

agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree disagree

I feel confident about goal setting with my mentee.

agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree disagree

I know more about mentoring youth with disabilities than I did before the training.

agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree disagree

What did you like best about the session:

What could be better next time:

Do you have any other comments you'd like to share: