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YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

Strengthening Youth and Peer Mentoring: Best Practices for Planning, Marketing, and
Engagement
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Presentation Slides: [HERE](#)

Presentation Recording: [HERE](#)

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Please complete this evaluation of the webinar, and we appreciate your feedback and ideas for future topics.

- Access the Evaluation Survey [Here](#)

Questions:

Is there a difference between a mentor and youth coach?

- Yes, there is a difference. A mentor can support a mentee in various areas and help support them generally. But a youth coach can also be a mentor. The general difference

between a mentor and a coach is that a mentor is less prescriptive, meaning that they do not place emphasis or expectations on doing something a certain way.

Are there California or national guidelines outlining mentor and mentee roles that we are expected to adhere to?

- Yes! There are core areas that programs should focus on for mentor/mentee expectations that are evidence-based.
Mentors are: guides and coaches, consistent and dependable, positive and helpful, good listeners and role models, accessible and resourceful, open-minded and supportive. They should have no personal agendas, such as politics, religion, etc. Successful mentors focus on the development of trusting relationships and they respect the autonomy of their mentees—they don't tell them what to do.

Mentees should: Understand that mentors are not there to provide them with financial resources. They are also not replacement parents, and they are not someone who will fix all problems, but instead they are there as sounding boards and as individuals who will walk alongside them in their journey.

There are templates out there, but they are more customizable based on what your program is hoping to achieve. An available template, valuable and much used, is the Generic Mentoring Program Policy and Procedure Manual, a customizable document that uses tasks outlined in the Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring Programs. <https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/policy.pdf>

What criteria have you found most important for effective mentor–mentee matching (e.g., career interests, lived experience, personality, availability), and how do you prioritize them?

- Your program goals will help to determine the best matching criteria but generally matches are successful when they are able to build and sustain relationships. Relationship development is easier if there are shared experiences and between a mentor and mentee, especially in peer-to-peer programs.

What challenges exist that hinder organizations like CMP from improving the effectiveness of their mentor programs?

- CMP is a mentoring training and support organization and does not directly run mentoring programs. One of the things we see in working with agencies who run mentoring programs is challenges around funding and staffing support to run a comprehensive program. Having dedicated staff to implement and track program

services is key (which requires funding support). These staff recruit, train, match, monitor, and many times serve as evaluator to assess ongoing program outcomes and impact. There is a need to effectively look at capacity and infrastructure when planning a mentoring program.

What is the dynamic between mandated reporting responsibilities and mentoring youth?

- Mentors are expected to report to mentor program staff, who are mandated reporters. For both adult and peer programs, part of our initial training was to inform both the mentors and mentees that the program staff were mandated reporters and what they were responsible for reporting. This step provided transparency for program participants regarding staff duties and responsibilities to ensure participant safety.

How often do you recommend checking in with mentors and mentees for evaluation purposes?

- Weekly as the relationship starts is preferred. Monthly for adult to youth, and bi-weekly for peer programs if possible.

How quickly do you intervene once check-in data suggests a match may be off track?

- It depends on the way a match may be off track. In general, you respond ASAP. Depending on the situation you may want to give it more time (especially if there's not a safety issue). One fairly common complaint is "my mentor is too demanding." Sometimes the program coordinator can coach the mentor to back off. But in another situations, if someone isn't showing up for meetings, you probably want to intervene quickly. Mentors and mentees are also made aware they can contact the program coordinator/staff at any time any issue comes up.

Are there distinct stages in foster youth mentorship that correspond to entry into care, time in the system, and aging out of the foster care system?

- There is no formalized standard. iFoster is in communication with DCFS to think about how to formalize some of the work into becoming standardized when youth age out.

Is there a recommendation for how many matches an individual staff should be responsible for when it comes to monitoring and supporting?

- On the safe end, 20-30 matches per program coordinator would be ideal to ensure appropriate management and check-ins with the matches.

How do you recommend organizations realistically assess capacity and decide what to implement at launch versus phase-in over time for a mentoring program?

- When thinking about capacity and staff availability a ¾ to full time staff is needed. It is recommended to look at the core elements on the feasibility checklist and see what is feasible. Another consideration is cost where some estimates range at 2,000-3,000 per match with the largest cost being staffing. In addition, the more vulnerable a population the more staffing and funding that is needed. The six core elements should be developed before launch.

Additional Resources:

- MENTOR, *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™* <https://eepm.mentoring.org/>
- MENTOR, Peer Mentoring Supplement to the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™* <https://www.mentoring.org/resource/peer-mentoring-supplement-to-the-elements-of-effective-practice-for-mentoring/>
- National Mentoring Resource Center, Peer Mentoring Guide <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NMRC-Peer-Mentoring-Guide-edited-11.2.21.pdf>
- https://eepm.mentoring.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/EPPM-V5-Checklist_FN.pdf
- <https://www.mentoring.org/resource/elements-of-effective-practice-for-mentoring/>
- Free training and technical assistance support on the topics of mentoring, substance use disorder prevention, youth engagement, and other topics. Advance Behavioral Health Prevention California (ABHPC) funded by the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS): <https://abhpc.org/>
- [Lived Experience: Empowering Authentic Change on Vimeo](#)
- [Los Angeles County Youth Mentoring Nexus](#)

Upcoming Trainings

- [An Introduction to Motivational Interviewing: Something In Your Back Pocket Tickets, Tue, Jan 27, 2026 at 9:00 AM | Eventbrite](#)
- [Fentanyl Crisis: Enhancing Awareness and Saving Lives, Tuesday, February 3, 2026 10am-11am](#)