LA County
Youth Mentoring Nexus

An Initiative of OYC L.A. OPPORTUNITY YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

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Systems Alone Do Not Create Opportunity - Relationships Do:

Youth-Centered Recommendations for Improving & Sustaining Supportive Adult Relationships for Youth in LA County

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supportive relationships are essential to long-term stability and well-being. Access to a consistent, caring adult can make a significant difference in how a young person navigates systems, pursues goals, feels supported through transitions and challenges, and ultimately thrives into adulthood. Currently, too many Opportunity Youth in Los Angeles County lack this foundational support. In this context, Opportunity Youth refers to young adults ages 16–24 who are disconnected from school and work or who have experienced the child welfare, juvenile legal, and/or homelessness systems. Opportunity Youth report that supportive relationships are often fragmented, disrupted by transitions, and dependent on being in the right place at the right time. Essentially, access depends on luck rather than a youth-centered system and program design.

Over the past year, the Youth Mentoring Nexus Visionaries developed a set of recommendations to address the necessary shifts. As young people with lived experience navigating multiple systems, the Visionaries bring direct expertise about what support looks like when it works, where it breaks down, and what partners can do to better ensure supportive relationships are more consistent and sustainable.

Foundational to this work is the concept of Someone Who Cares, established by the Visionaries as a trusted, culturally grounded adult who consistently shows up, respects youth agency, and partners with young people rather than directing them. This represents a mindset and language shift away from the traditional term mentor—a label the Visionaries feel may suggest restrictive, hierarchical, or inauthentic relationships. The Visionaries describe having Someone Who Cares as necessary, not optional, to feeling supported while navigating systems and pursuing long-term goals.

The Visionaries are asking systems partners, funders, and community-based organizations to create the conditions for supportive relationships to form, continue, and be protected over time and to increase the number of adults who can serve as Someone Who Cares through intentional design and resource allocation. This includes centering youth choice and cultural responsiveness, prioritizing continuity and accessibility, and establishing clear connection points between system-impacted young people, supportive adults, and trusted resources. The following recommendations illustrate how leaders across LA can help improve outcomes for young people based on what they say actually works.

ABOUT THE YOUTH MENTORING NEXUS

The Youth Mentoring Nexus (YMN) is a countywide initiative designed to strengthen how young people build and sustain meaningful relationships with supportive adults. Led by the Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative, the YMN brings together public agencies, community-based organizations (CBOs), and youth leaders to align, coordinate, and elevate cross-system efforts—ensuring every young person has access to consistent, caring adult support.

ABOUT THE VISIONARIES

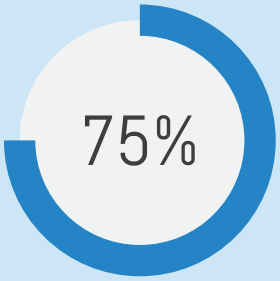
The Youth Mentoring Nexus Visionaries (YMNV) are a cohort of young people with lived experience navigating systems. The Visionaries serve as subject matter experts on what makes mentorship meaningful, trustworthy, and effective, drawing from their firsthand experiences across child welfare, education, workforce, housing, and youth justice systems.

Through facilitated dialogue, collaborative design sessions, and ongoing feedback, the Visionaries identified gaps in existing mentorship approaches and articulated the relational conditions that young people need to feel supported, respected, and empowered. Their insights ensure that these recommendations are rooted in lived experience and actionable guidance.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Systems alone do not create opportunity—relationships do. LA County has made significant commitments to preventing disconnection and prioritizing reconnection while elevating the need for holistic supports for young people. Efforts such as the Horizons 32K Strategic Plan (a countywide initiative to reduce youth disconnection), the new Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Youth Engagement Section (focused on strengthening youth voice and intentional engagement within child welfare), the Transition-Age Youth Table (a cross-sector collaborative addressing the needs of young people ages 16–26), and the Department of Youth Development (DYD) (which funds and supports youth development programming across LA County) reflect growing alignment around shared goals for youth connection, stability, and opportunity—goals that cannot be achieved without consistent, supportive relationships.

Research reinforces this importance, showing how positive connections with caring adults are linked to improvements in physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being, as well as increased resilience, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. MENTOR National studies identify mentoring relationships as a core component of healthy human development, supporting young people through skill building, expanded opportunities, and key life transitions.[1] This carries into adulthood:



of Americans who had a mentor growing up say that relationship was a major contributor to their success in life.[2]

These findings affirm what the Visionaries named through lived expertise: supportive adult relationships are not optional supports; they are a vital, protective factor.

> Mentorship can be the most impactful relationship that a young person can engage in. There's power in someone who is supportive, non-judgmental, respectful, and most of all intentional about a youth being well and supported in their development.
>
> - Adriana Segura
> Youth Mentoring Nexus Visionary

1. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, "Mentoring Impact," https://mentoring.org/mentoring-impact/.
2. Michael Garringer and Chelsea Benning, Who Mentored You? A Study Examining the Role Mentors Have Played in the Lives of Americans over the Last Half Century (MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2023), These findings affirm what the Visionaries named through lived expertise: supportive adult relationships are not optional supports; they are a vital, protective factor.

For Opportunity Youth, supportive adult relationships are often what make it possible to trust systems, persist through transitions, and move toward personal goals. At the same time, youth consistently describe gaps in how these relationships are supported. Too often, supportive relationships are unavailable, inconsistent, or dependent on individual effort rather than system design.

One of the clearest examples of this breakdown is staff turnover. In youth-serving spaces, turnover is a persistent reality, and youth experience its impact most directly through disrupted relationships and repeated transitions. When staff leave, young people are often forced to start over—rebuilding trust, retelling their stories, and adjusting to new adults. For youth, this is not just a service gap; it is the loss of crucial support.

Building on existing commitments, the Visionaries' recommendations respond to this reality by focusing not on creating new programs but on how youth programs and services are designed and how young people are connected to Someone Who Cares (SWC). Visionaries are calling for greater alignment between policy intent and day-to-day practice so that relationship building is intentional, protected, enduring, and accessible.

WHAT YOUTH MEAN BY *SOMEONE WHO CARES*

> "Someone Who Cares has expanded my understanding of mentorship and has allowed me to look at my experiences differently."
>
> - Iziko Calderon
> Youth Mentoring Nexus Visionary

During the design process, the Visionaries reflected on their experiences with mentorship and supportive adults, consistently returning to one core idea: what mattered most wasn't the title or the traditional concept of a mentor but whether someone in their lives genuinely showed up for them. From this, the Visionaries established the concept of SWC.

An SWC is an adult who is present, reliable, and genuinely invested not only during moments of crisis or formal check-ins but in the day-to-day interactions that build trust. These relationships are grounded in authenticity, in which young people feel seen, heard, and supported without judgment or pressure to perform or adhere to program specifications. Rather than directing or "fixing," SWCs partner with youth and honor their goals, choices, and lived experiences.

Importantly, the Visionaries emphasized that these relationships are not built through one-time interactions or transactional support. Trust develops over time through consistency, follow-through, and **small moments that demonstrate care. When these conditions are present, young people are more likely to engage, seek support, and stay connected through transitions.**

The Visionaries also shared that SWCs need not be part of a formal mentoring structure. These relationships can emerge across many settings, including workforce development, libraries, parks and recreation, arts and culture spaces, wellness and enrichment programs, schools, and everyday system interactions when environments are intentionally designed to prioritize connection.

Ultimately, the concept of SWC reflects a shift, defined by the Visionaries, from thinking of mentorship as a program to understanding relationships as essential infrastructure for healing, thriving, and feeling connected.

THE YOUTH MENTORING NEXUS VISIONARIES PRIORITY AREAS

The YMNV identified five interconnected priority areas based on their lived experience across youth-serving systems. These priority areas reflect the broader conditions that youth said are necessary for supportive relationships. To honor the depth of youth input, the full youth-developed guidance for each priority area is preserved in the appendix.

As the recommendations were refined, the five priority areas were translated into specific asks for systems partners and CBOs, with some recommendations addressing multiple priority areas.

The five priority areas include:

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS	HOLISTIC STABILITY	REPRESENTATION AND FOLLOW-THROUGH	LIVED EXPERIENCE AND SYSTEMS NAVIGATION	YOUTH-CENTERED PATHWAYS TO CONNECTION
Ensuring systems and strategies are responsive to young people's cultural backgrounds and intersectional identities, especially those who have been historically marginalized.	Recognizing that relationships cannot thrive when basic needs go unmet.	Committing to shared power and creating opportunities for youth to shape or lead mentorship-oriented initiatives from start to finish.	Valuing lived expertise and supporting diverse mentors who are familiar with navigating systems and have knowledge of programs specific to system-impacted young people.	Creating clear, accessible opportunities for young people to find and sustain supportive adult relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SYSTEMS PARTNERS

Youth recognize that LA County youth-serving systems—including DCFS, DYD, and the Department of Mental Health (DMH)—shape whether young people can build and sustain supportive adult relationships. These recommendations are about shifting conditions to enhance how services are designed, funded, implemented, and evaluated and how supportive adult relationships are experienced and sustained.

Youth are asking for greater fidelity to these existing policies and models

Ensuring that supportive adult relationships are not left to chance but are actively prioritized.

Many of the recommendations below build on commitments that already exist across County plans and youth-serving initiatives. For example, DCFS policies and federal transition planning requirements already emphasize youth-centered planning, permanent connections, and supportive adult relationships. DYD's youth development approach also reflects a growing County commitment to healing-centered practice, youth voice, and community-based supports. However, youth continue to experience a gap between what policies and strategic priorities intend and how consistently those commitments are felt in day-to-day practice.

Youth are asking systems partners to:

1. Embed youth co-design as a standard practice internally and externally.

Practice co-design with youth in the earliest stages of program and system design and request that any CBOs that receive funding demonstrate how youth are meaningfully engaged in the design and redesign of programs, as well as how youth feedback directly informs program structure, eligibility, engagement strategies, and training approaches.

2. Expand meaningful youth leadership and decision-making power.

Increase opportunities for paid youth leadership roles in program design, outreach, and evaluation, particularly for youth closest to system realities.

3. Strengthen accountability through intentional feedback-to-action loops.

Build ongoing, structured mechanisms for youth feedback (e.g., surveys, advisory boards, listening sessions) to continuously strengthen program design and outcomes and clearly demonstrate how youth input informs funding priorities, program models, and performance expectations. Establish transparent accountability systems to ensure those commitments are upheld through clear, youth-friendly communication, e.g., "You told us ___, so we changed ___."

4. Prioritize continuity of supportive adult relationships.

Set up and maintain conditions for continuity of supportive adult relationships as a core expectation within case planning, case management, and transition processes (e.g., for DCFS, this may include ILP, TILP, 90-day transition planning; for DYD and Probation-connected settings, this may include reentry supports like Reentry Action for Youth [RAY] and community-based pathways in camps, halls, and post-release settings). Across systems, relationship stability should be prioritized and preserved through transitions.

5. Recognize relationships as a core protective factor.

Treat trusted adult relationships as essential infrastructure across prevention, permanency, workforce, and transition efforts, not as an add-on or secondary outcome. Addressing immediate needs like housing, income, and food security is essential, but positive, supportive adult relationships are critical to securing and sustaining those supports over time.

6. Strengthen cross-system coordination and shared responsibility.

Resource cross-system coordination so that information transfers with the young person, enabling warm handoffs and preventing the loss of critical supportive relationships. Identify clear roles and expectations for systems partners and CBOs to mitigate fragmentation.

7. Align implementation with existing policy expectations.

Reinforce and monitor how current policies related to youth engagement, transition planning, and supportive relationships are implemented in practice so that policy intent is consistently reflected in youth experiences.

8. Design for continuity in a high-turnover environment.

Design programs and contracts to ensure continuity of supportive adult relationships during staff turnover, including expectations for team-based support, warm handoffs, and documentation to preserve relationships across transitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Youth recognize that many programs and services are delivered through public contracts with CBOs. For all youth-serving CBOs, the Visionaries are asking for environments and practices that prioritize relationship building as a core function of service delivery.

Youth are asking CBOs to:

1. Reframe mentorship around youth-defined trust and support.

Use language and models that feel less hierarchical or transactional and more youth centered, such as *Someone Who Cares*, *supportive adult*, *peer navigator*, or *growth guide*.

2. Treat lived experience as expertise, with feedback and accountability.

Create meaningful, compensated roles and accessible feedback structures for youth with lived experience to shape program design, outreach, training, evaluation, and decision-making. Establish clear accountability mechanisms to consistently listen to youth, act on their feedback, and share what supports or limits connection in practice.

3. Create welcoming and consistent environments for system-impacted young people.

Co-design youth-facing spaces and interactions so young people feel seen, respected, included, and emotionally safe.

4. Invest in culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and healing-centered training.

Prepare supportive adults to build trusting relationships, address bias and power dynamics, respond to youth needs, and practice shared decision-making with young people through initial and ongoing training.

5. Recruit and support representative staff, volunteers, and leaders.

Intentionally engage adults (staff or volunteers) who reflect the identities, cultures, communities, and lived experiences of the youth being served. Support these adults in contributing meaningfully, increasing retention, and strengthening trust and relatability.

6. Make organic relationship building intentional and supported.

Ensure staff capacity includes time for building trust. Leverage informal interactions and common interests such as arts, recreation, wellness, and events as opportunities for youth and adults to build connections over time. Incorporate relational outcomes into metrics, reporting, and program evaluation to elevate connection as a core goal.

7. Design youth-centered matching and connection pathways.

Create digital and in-person pathways that help youth connect with supportive adults based on their goals, interests, lived experiences, identity preferences, and support needs. Work strategically and transparently with system partners to ensure connections are streamlined and no youth fall through the cracks.

8. Connect mentorship to holistic stability and continuity.

Build partnerships and capacity to link youth to wraparound supports, basic needs, and trusted referral pathways while designing systems that sustain relationships beyond a single program, staff member, or referral.

INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

Indicators of progress were co-designed with the Visionaries, systems partners, and CBOs to reflect both partner priorities and lived expertise. These indicators are intended to support learning, adaptation, and accountability, not simply compliance.

Given what is available at this stage, the Visionaries focused on initial indicators on process and qualitative measures. Baselines and quantitative targets will be co-designed with implementation partners in the next phase of the work.

Sustainable change will be evident when trusted adult relationships are treated as essential infrastructure across youth-serving systems.

Short-Term Indicators: Process and Early Signals (12 Months)

- Increased use of structured youth-feedback mechanisms across programs
- Demonstrated use of youth feedback to adjust training, engagement strategies, and service pathways
- Inclusion of paid youth engagement in program design or redesign
- Increased alignment of program practices with existing policy expectations (e.g., continuity in transition planning)
- Updates to contract requirements and performance expectations that reflect relational outcomes

Long-Term Indicators: Outcomes and Sustained Impact (18–24+ Months)

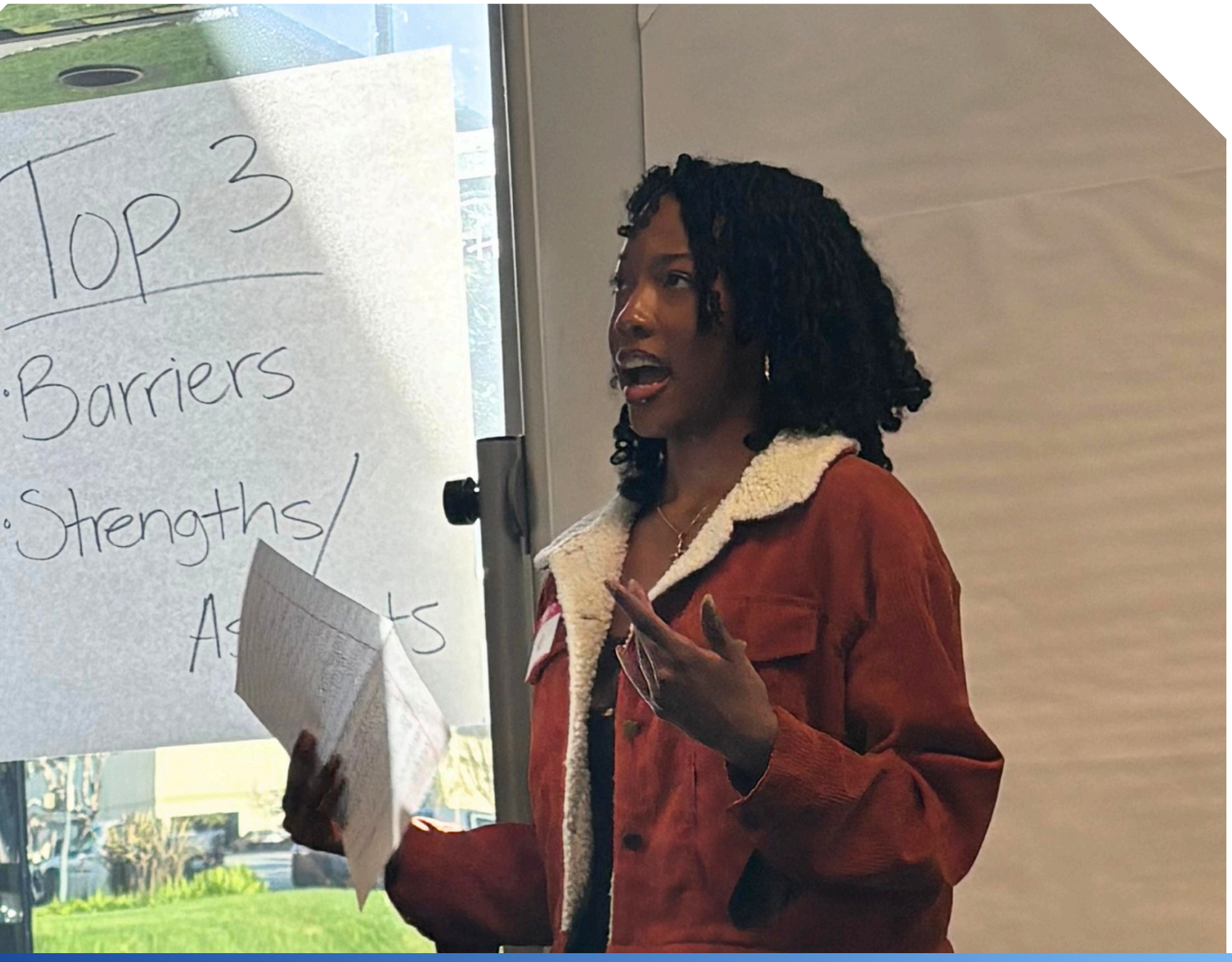
- Reduced staff turnover and stronger continuity practices when staff transitions occur
- Youth report access to at least one trusted adult or SWC
- Youth report increased trust and perceived support over time
- Youth report greater continuity of relationships across transitions
- Increased youth persistence in education, employment, housing stability, or other self-defined goals

CLOSING

Youth want to be connected to SWC. Authentic, lasting relationships do not happen by chance. They happen when systems are intentionally designed in partnership with youth and structured to protect connection over time.

The Visionaries are asking systems to work differently so that care is not dependent on luck, timing, or a single person staying in place but is built into how programs operate, how contracts are written, and how accountability is exercised.

When relationships are treated as essential infrastructure rather than optional supports, young people are more likely to experience stability, trust, and opportunity.



APPENDIX: YOUTH-DEVELOPED PRACTICE GUIDANCE

The following practice guidance was developed by Youth Mentoring Nexus Visionaries, grounded in the lived experience of youth-serving systems.

This appendix includes the full youth-developed practice guidance that informs the recommendations in this document and is included in full to support implementation, training, and accountability.

PRIORITY AREA 1: CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Ensuring systems and strategies are responsive to young people's cultural backgrounds and intersectional identities, especially those who have been historically marginalized.

In Practice, this Includes:

- **Hiring and elevating** staff who reflect the identities, cultures, and lived experiences of the youth they serve.
- **Ensuring** youth have opportunities to connect with adults who understand their realities and do not rely on stereotypes or assumptions.
- **Developing and using** video-based or multimedia training modules on cultural humility that allow staff and mentors to revisit content as needed.
- **Standardizing** a review of training participation, competency indicators, and feedback data to assess whether training improves adult readiness over time.
- **Creating** training spaces that support cultural identity, pathfinding, and belonging, reflected in training design, facilitation practices, and participant feedback.
- **Facilitating** joint or shared learning spaces across programs and organizations to support consistent, culturally relevant practices.

Visionaries identified training as one of the clearest ways for adults to learn to show up with **consistency, responsibility, and care** across formal programs and everyday interactions.

PRIORITY AREA 2: HOLISTIC STABILITY

Recognizing that relationships cannot thrive when basic needs go unmet.

In Practice, this Includes:

- ***Program and System Supports***
  - Building holistic stability and the provision of basic needs into all youth-serving programs and services.
  - Developing fundraising events to ensure the continuation of funding to protect holistic supports from budget cuts.
  - Creating opportunities that are accessible to youth, including nonclinical approaches to healing and holistic practices like gardening, somatic healing, art therapy, and emotional regulation.
  - Expanding the Full Service Partnership for mentors and supportive adults, including documented understanding of continuity of care, referral pathways, and cross-system coordination.

- ***Mentor and Supportive Adult Practices***
  - Strengthening mentor/mentee relationships by setting clear expectations around what type of support is available.
  - Creating a support system that allows/encourages mentors to grow in their knowledge about substance use spectrums, healing-centered care, and trauma.
  - Ensuring all supportive adults understand Enhanced Care Management (ECM) or have connections with organizations that offer ECM to youth to expand support and referrals to resources that include medical, dental, emotional, and all-around services (housing, rehab, etc.), all in one case manager.

Youth said relationships can feel unsafe or transactional when basic needs are unmet, ignored, or treated as separate from relationship building.

3

3. Wellbeing4LA, "Resource Detail," accessed June 1, 2026, https://learn.wellbeing4la.org/detail?id=401138&k=94702889

PRIORITY AREA 3: REPRESENTATION AND FOLLOW-THROUGH

Committing to shared power and creating opportunities for youth to shape or lead mentorship-oriented initiatives from start to finish.

In Practice, this Includes:

- **Training** adult partners in Authentic Youth Engagement that explicitly addresses adultism, bias, and power dynamics, with clear learning objectives.
- **Creating** clear pathways for youth to share expertise without being tokenized or overburdened, including meaningful, paid roles in youth program design, redesign, outreach, facilitation, and evaluation.
- **Establishing** a diverse board of system-impacted young people and professionals with lived experience to guide mentor selection and program design.
- **Creating and using** written quality assurance guidance that outlines expectations, commitments, and minimum standards for youth–adult relationship building.
- **Increasing** transparency on how youth input is used and how it influences decisions.

Visionaries pushed back on representation as symbolic. For them, authentic representation, backed up by follow-through, directly affects trust, relatability, and willingness to engage.

PRIORITY AREA 4: LIVED EXPERIENCE AND SYSTEMS NAVIGATION

Valuing lived expertise and supporting diverse mentors who are familiar with navigating systems and have knowledge of programs specific to system-impacted young people.

In Practice, this Includes:

- **Developing** structures that value youth knowledge alongside professional and formal credentials.
- **Creating** environments where youth feel seen, respected, and understood without having to explain or defend who they are or what they think.
- **Establishing** meaningful, paid roles for Opportunity Youth to become SWC, including opportunities such as near-peer navigators, youth advisors, peer support specialists, and youth program design consultants.
- **Supporting** youth to build skills in facilitation, communication, and systems navigation while contributing their insight.
- **Committing** to hiring supportive adults with deep knowledge in systems navigation to support youth.

Youth were clear that lived experience is expertise and should be valued alongside professional and technical knowledge.

PRIORITY AREA 5: YOUTH-CENTERED PATHWAYS TO CONNECTION

Creating clear, accessible opportunities for young people to find and sustain supportive adult relationships.

In Practice, this Includes:

5.1 Reframing *Mentorship* to Feel More Youth Led and Relatable

- **Replace** the term *mentor* with language that feels more welcoming and relevant (e.g., *life coach*, *growth guide*, *peer navigator*, *supportive adult*, or *Someone Who Cares*).
  - **SWC - Visionaries Selection**
    - *An SWC is a supportive, trustworthy, and consistent person who centers the needs, voice, and experiences of youth. Unlike traditional notions of "mentors,"[3] SWCs approach the relationship with humility, care, and collaboration rather than hierarchy. They may provide emotional support, guidance, encouragement, and access to resources in ways that honor young people's autonomy, culture, and lived experience.*

More specifically, SWCs exhibit the "5 C's":

CARE	CONSISTENCY	COLLABORATION	CULTURAL RESPECT	CONNECTION
Showing up with compassion, patience, and genuine interest in the young person's well-being.	Providing a reliable, steady presence, even in small ways, that builds trust over time.	Working with youth, not speaking over them, and empowering them to define their own goals.	Understanding and honoring the backgrounds, identities, and experiences that shape each young person.	Connecting youth to opportunities, resources, healing-centered practices, and community networks.

  - ***Integrate** narrative change, e.g., short video content or visuals explaining "What is an SWC?" in youth-friendly terms.*

5.2 Designing Connection Based on Youth Goals and Interests

- **Create** digital tools that allow youth to filter SWCs by multiple criteria, including their goals, interests, or lived experience (e.g., the "Tinder for Mentors" model).
- **Include** detailed mentor profiles with background, expertise, and personality insights to allow youth to choose and exercise agency in who they connect with.
- **Ensure** the platform is descriptive and interactive enough for youth to make informed decisions.
- **Integrate** storytelling, testimonials, and "meet your match" features to humanize the process.

5.3 Building Relationship Pathways Across Digital and In-Person Spaces

- **Develop** an integrated system that allows youth to connect digitally (via app/website, Instagram, or newsletters) and in person (through schools, community hubs, and youth centers).
  - **Key partner locations:**
    - Schools and college resource programs (NextUp, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, Guardian Scholars)
    - YouthSource Centers
    - Community centers, Transition-Age Youth drop-ins, parks and recreation hubs
    - Libraries and public resource spaces
    - Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs and transitional housing programs
- Encourage word-of-mouth and social media sharing to build trust and engagement.
- Launch a coordinated Instagram campaign featuring short videos that introduce CBOs, mentors, and opportunities.

5.4 Strengthening Community Collaboration and Visibility

- **Encourage CBO** collaboration by sharing mentorship updates and flyers across each organization's social media and newsletters.
- **Promote** mentorship awareness at youth events, summits, and community spaces (offer food, giveaways, and music to drive youth attendance).
- **Feature** organizations through interactive digital content, e.g., "Meet the Mentor" reels, youth testimonials, and storytelling posts.

5.5 Centering Accessibility, Trust, and Material Support

- **Build** systems that meet youth where they are, including those facing survival needs (housing, food, stability).
- **Prioritize** relationship building before one-on-one mentorship, allowing youth to build trust over time through casual interactions.
- **Partner** with organizations to curate experiences that help cultivate natural relationships between mentor and mentee.
- **Integrate** peer navigators that bridge the gap between digital connection and real-world support.

5.6 Fostering Youth-Led Development and Continuous Improvement

- **Implement** regular feedback loops so youth can help refine the digital platform and outreach strategies.
- **Use** insights to develop a best practices guide for youth-centered interface design.
- **Partner with youth-led groups** (like Nexus Visionaries) to co-design the interface and outreach.

Visionaries emphasized that **relationships should not depend on luck, timing, or one staff member staying in place.** Systems and programs should be **designed so that connections can continue over time.**

A SHARED COMMITMENT

The Youth Mentoring Nexus Visionaries' recommendations offer a path forward grounded in lived experience, partnership, and trust. They invite LA County and its partners to treat mentorship not as an add-on but as a shared responsibility and to invest in relationships as a foundation for prevention, continuity of care, and long-term opportunities for young people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We offer our deepest thanks to the **YMNV**, whose lived experience, insight, and leadership are the foundation of this work.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the funders whose investment made the Youth Mentoring Nexus Visionaries work possible. Their commitment to youth leadership, relationship-centered approaches, and systems alignment created the conditions for young people with lived experience to shape these recommendations with honesty, depth, and care.

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- LA County Center for Strategic Partnerships
- LA County Department of Youth Development

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- Rachael Parker-Chavez, Associate Director | LA Opportunity Youth Collaborative
- Vinny D'Averso, Mentor Program Director | Alliance for Children's Rights

Finally, we acknowledge the collective effort of the broader Youth Mentoring Nexus partners whose collaboration, trust, and willingness to learn together strengthened this process and helped translate youth insight into actionable recommendations.

This work exists because young people showed up with the courage to share and adults showed up to listen, support, and follow through.

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