

Supporting the Match
Vignettes

Judy Taylor, Jerry Sherk, and Dustianne North

1. You are the new coordinator of a YouthBuild mentoring program and as you start the job you find that there are a very few records that provide any paper trail for the program or your matches. You have only a partial list of mentees and mentors, and it contains only some of the participants' phone numbers and addresses. A mentor calls in and says "We haven't had any organized training or activity in over 6 months and yet I am still with my mentee."
 - How would you address this situation?
 - What do you say to the mentor and the mentee?
 - What do you say to the other mentors and mentees?
 - What are your next steps that you will undertake with your program?

2. You have a mentor /mentee match that has been in place for four months and the relationship is progressing very well. Then the mentee quits YouthBuild.
 - How would you address this situation?
 - What should program staff do with this match?
 - What questions would you have for the mentee?
 - Would you have any questions for the mentor?

3. You have a mentor/mentee match that has been in place for four months and the relationship is progressing very well. The mentee has to quit YouthBuild because her mother was in a bad accident and the mentee has to take care of her family.
 - How would you address this situation?
 - What should program staff do with this match?
 - What questions would you have for the mentee?
 - Would you have any questions for the mentor?

4. A mentee just called you and told you that his mentor has not shown up for the last three weeks. He has called and left messages for his mentor but has gotten no response. The mentee said he would have told the program staff sooner but he was embarrassed because the mentor must not like him.
 - How would you address this situation?
 - What are your concerns?
 - Are there any other resources that you might want to bring in to help with this situation?

5. A woman in her 40's volunteers and is cleared through all phases of the screening process, including training. During preliminary group activities you notice that while interacting with female teenage mentees, the woman often overreacts. Her face gets red and she scowls. While in the "sharing circle" with other mentees and potential mentors, each time she speaks there is a discernable note of negativity in her delivery. Your program needs mentors.
 - How would you address this situation?
 - What are your concerns?
 - What do you know about effective practices that might offer guidance as to how this situation might be handled?

6. You are the only full time person working for your program. You have to recruit 25 mentors and you currently have 23. Recruitment is taking up a great deal of your time, but the matches that you have in place are now meeting and require much of your time as you monitor and support them.
 - What are your concerns here with regard to monitoring and supervision?
 - How would you address this situation?
 - What can you turn to for support?
 - What kind of support would you be requesting?

Mentor Match Support & Retention

Although most mentoring pairs will derive enough pleasure from their mentoring experience to keep them going, some reach an impasse that makes them begin to doubt their willingness to continue. Ongoing support and supervision is important to keeping these relationships growing.

Operational Standards for Monitoring & Support

Standard 5. Monitoring and Support:

Monitor mentoring relationship milestones and support mentors with ongoing advice, problem-solving support and training opportunities for the duration of the relationship.

Although most mentoring pairs will derive enough benefits from their mentoring experience to keep them going, some reach an impasse that makes them begin to doubt their willingness to continue. Ongoing support and supervision is key to keeping these relationships growing. Successful mentoring relationships do not just happen automatically. That's why providing ongoing monitoring and support is so important. The following benchmarks from the *Elements*, list recommended standards for monitoring and supporting matches:

Benchmarks: Monitoring and Support

- Program contacts the mentor and mentee at a minimum of twice per month during the first month of the match and monthly thereafter;
- Program documents information about each mentor/mentee contact, including, at minimum, date, length and nature of contact;
- Program provides mentors with access to at least two types of resources (e.g. expert advice from program staff or others; publications; Web-based resources; experienced mentors; available social service referrals) to help mentors negotiate challenges in the mentoring relationship as they arise. (See [Resources & Publications for mentors](#));
- Program follows evidence-based protocol to elicit more in-depth assessment from the mentor and mentee about the relationship and uses scientifically-tested relationship assessment tools; and
- Program provides one or more opportunities per year for post-match mentor training

Enhancements: Monitoring and Support

- Program has quarterly contact with a key person in the mentee's life (e.g., parent, guardian or teacher) for the duration of the match.
- Program hosts one or more group activities for mentors and their mentees, and/or offers information about activities that mentors and mentees might wish to participate in together.
- Program thanks mentors and recognizes their contributions at some point during each year of the relationship, prior to match closure.

Matches that are monitored and supported are more satisfying and successful, which in turn, leads to more positive youth outcomes. Continued monitoring of relationships should focus on

the development of close relationships. Youth who perceive a more trusting, mutual and empathic relationships with their mentors experience greater improvements than youth who perceive lower levels of these qualities.

Ongoing Support, Supervision and Monitoring

Successful mentoring relationships do not just happen automatically. Although most mentoring pairs will derive enough benefits from their mentoring experience to keep them going, some reach an impasse that makes them begin to doubt their willingness to continue. That's why providing ongoing support and supervision is so important.

Matches that are monitored and supported are more satisfying and successful, which, in turn, leads to more positive youth outcomes. Continued monitoring of the relationship should especially focus on the development of close relationships, as youth who perceive more trusting, mutual and empathic relations with their mentors experience greater improvements than youth who perceive lower levels of these relationship qualities. Mentoring programs that provide monthly calendars of low-cost events, offer tickets to events or provide opportunities to participate in structured activities are associated with positive outcomes.

Recognition and Retention

Providing recognition for significant contributions and accomplishments is an important component of a healthy, safe and rewarding mentoring environment. This section includes ideas for recognition events and sample tools to assist you.

This is especially important for mentees who may not have such experiences often. Your mentoring program can do wonders for a child's self-esteem and level of hope by making recognition of their accomplishments-both great and small-an integral part of your operations.

Providing recognition for significant contributions and accomplishments is an important component of a healthy, safe and rewarding mentoring environment. It is true, after all, those little things-the pat on the back, the positive mention of one's name-do matter. Both public recognition and private kudos for a job well done boost morale, foster team spirit and raise retention rates across the board: mentees, mentors, volunteers and staff alike.

The National Mentoring Partnership

Mentoring.org