Formal and Intentional Mentoring as a Strategy for Working with High Risk Youth

A Resource Guide for the Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative

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Program Assessment for Implementation of Best Practices for a Formal Mentoring Program (Based on Mass Mentoring Partnership Quality-based Membership Initiative)

I. Introduction

The Senator Charles E. Shannon Jr. Comprehensive Gang Initiative (Shannon CSI) grant program, funded by the Massachusetts Legislature since 2005, supports collaborative approaches to combat gang and youth violence in Massachusetts. As the administrative agent for Shannon CSI, the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), seeks input from funded partners on gaps in services that could benefit youth involved in gang activity or youth violence. This input helps formulate topics for regular resource guides and technical assistance meetings. Past topics included street outreach work, police and school collaborations, and incorporating social media strategies, among others. In 2011, Shannon CSI sites, partner agencies, and youth identified a critical gap in services; matching youth in Shannon CSI program with caring adults that could mentor the youth and provide additional supports and resources.

For this resource guide, EOPSS has partnered with the Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP), an agency with 20 years experience in the mentoring field and the only statewide organization solely dedicated to strategically expanding quality youth mentoring in Massachusetts. This resource guide will answer many questions Shannon CSI sites and providers have about effective mentoring programs, including the basics of what mentoring is, what the elements of a mentoring program are, how to recruit and train mentors, how to recruit mentees, and how agencies can address some of the challenges specific to mentoring high-risk youth.

Mentoring Makes A Difference

Arturo (not his real name) is a 14 year old Puerto Rican male who attends a school for students with disabilities and behavioral issues. When he first joined our small-group mentoring program for youth at his school, he was considered at high risk for becoming gang-involved. He was known to associate with other youth who were being recruited by a local gang, and was often seen using gang symbols and signs. He was also often pulled aside for bullying behavior and for targeting other youth.

His attendance with our program was sporadic. His mentor worked relentlessly with Arturo to get him connected to our program, calling him, spending individual time, and giving Arturo special responsibilities during program hours. Over the course of the year he has become a leader in our program, and now has the highest number of hours of any youth, with over 200 hours! He has also made specific comments to our staff about staying away from youth he knows are gang-involved. His teachers have reported that change in him since his involvement at our program, and commented that he often shares what he has learned in our program with his classmates.

Mentoring Program Leader from the Boys and Girls Club of Holyoke

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."[1]

Formal Youth Mentoring Program versus Intentional Mentoring Practices

Many people can recall a mentor that had a positive influence on their lives. The mentor might have been a teacher, a coach, a family member, or just someone that took the time to develop a relationship and left a lasting impression. A mentor might also be a total stranger that has received formal training and is matched with a young person. Either way, research demonstrates that having a meaningful and substantial relationship with an adult is a key protective factor for youth development (MMP Power of Youth Mentoring, 2008.) Research has also shown that youth experiencing risk factors of violence who are involved with at least one caring adult are more likely to withstand the range of negative influences…than are peers who are not involved in a similar relationship (Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, 2000.)

The impact of a mentor on a youth is clear and can be an important part of a community's comprehensive efforts to reduce gang and youth violence. Depending on your site's community assets and resources, mentoring can be a formal program, or elements of mentoring can be used as part of any agency's collective efforts. For the purpose of the Shannon CSI grant program, only formal mentoring programs will be counted as mentoring activities though we encourage your site and program partners to incorporate mentoring practices if they cannot support a formal mentoring program. So what is the difference?

Formal youth mentoring programs are based on *one-on-one relationships between a caring adult mentor and a youth who meet at least four to eight hours per month* either at a community organization site, school or on their own in the community. Youth mentoring may also be *one*

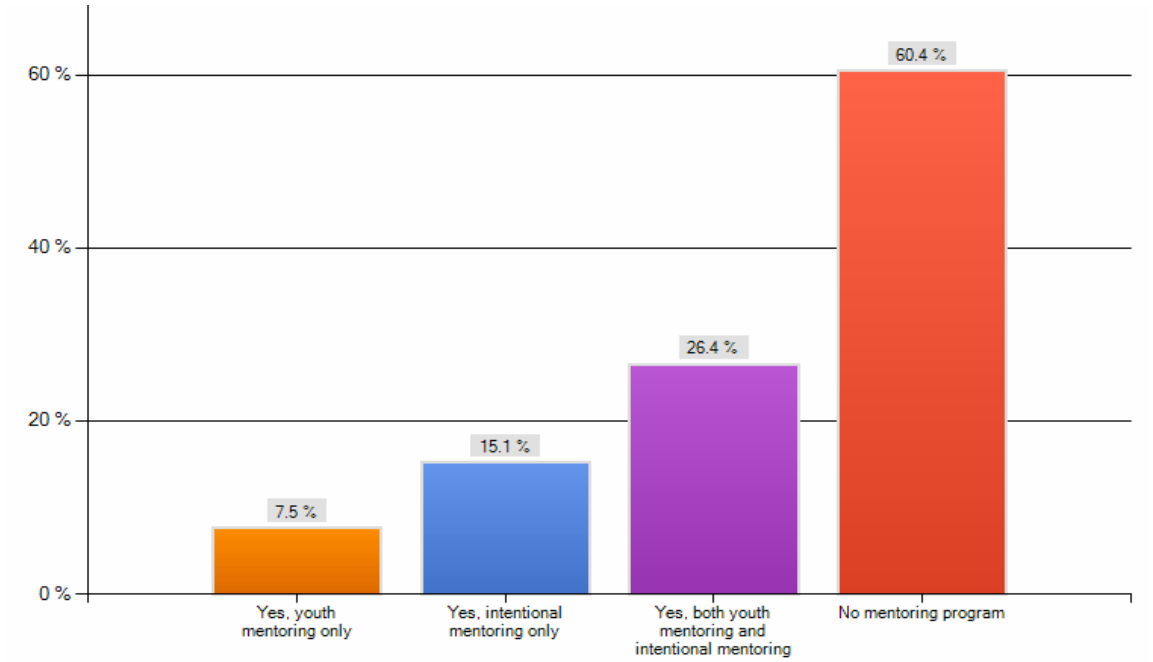
> ***Formal mentoring*** can be found at the Boys and Girls Club of Fall River's LEAD program. During 2011-2012 thirty-five adults have been matched to work one-to-one with targeted youth who participate in activities at the Club.
> The Police and Clergy Program in Worcester use ***intentional mentoring practices*** at many of its sites. The program is currently working with Mass Mentoring to strengthen the training for mentors and program leaders so that more formalized programming can be implemented.

[1] *Elements of Effective Practice*, MENTOR/The National Mentoring Partnership

adult mentor with a group of no more than four youth who meet at least four to eight hours per month either at a community site, school or in the community. Mentors may have more than one mentee, but they meet separately and exclusively. A mentor focuses on building a positive relationship with the mentee and follows the identified goals of the mentoring program for mentee success.

Intentional mentoring practices are not a type of a program. Intentional mentoring practices *utilize the basic practices of mentoring with groups of youth in a program that is well beyond the one-on-one or one to four ratio of adult mentor to youth*. Programs that serve large numbers of youth with one adult leading activities, such as many Boys and Girls Clubs and the Worcester Police and Clergy Program, are examples of organizations that work with youth using intentional mentoring practices but are not formal mentoring programs.

Chart 1. Percent of Shannon CSI Funded Programs Offering Mentoring Services
Respondents=53. In some instances there are duplicate responses which results in a total of more than 100%



As shown on Chart 1,[2] almost 40% of Shannon CSI funded programs offer some type of mentoring services. Of the 60% that did not have a mentoring program, 55% said they had considered including mentoring in their service strategy. The following sections will provide information that may help improve current mentoring programs, as well as help agencies considering utilizing mentoring as a tool to support high-risk and gang-involved youth.

[2] Of the 130 agencies funded through by the Shannon CSI and surveyed for this resource guide, 53 completed (a 40.7% response rate) completed questionnaires. It should be noted that of the 130 agencies funded, 32 are primarily suppression based and would not likely have a mentoring program.

II. Creating a Quality Formal Youth Mentoring Program Based on

The Elements of Effective Practice

Research on the positive impact of youth mentoring has led to quality standards of practice most likely to provide favorable outcomes for youth participants. The results of this research on the social, emotional, and cognitive development of youth are embodied in *Elements of Effective Practice* developed by the National Mentoring Partnership. Organizations working with high-risk youth will benefit from this research and will be better equipped to involve their organizations' stakeholders in supporting high-quality programs with the best potential to benefit targeted youth.

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:

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

Risk factors for many of the youth recommended for formal mentoring programs include these areas as critical needs that are lacking in the youths' environment. ACT (Assets Coming Together) for Youth Center of Excellence connects research to practice in the areas of positive youth development. ACT builds upon the research of Rhodes with recommending a mentor's focus on developmental necessities of youth, including the components below:

> *"…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."*
>
> - Taken from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention 1998 report to Congress on the outcomes from the mentoring programs funded by the Juvenile Mentoring Program Initiative (JUMP)

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.

To gain a better understanding of the risk factors of youth participating in Shannon CSI programs, we asked Shannon agencies to identify risk factors of youth they serve. The list below identifies the top eight risk factors.

1. Academic difficulties
2. Gang involved family member
3. Single parent
4. Socialization/behavioral difficulties
5. Youth dealing with bullying or who is a bully
6. Incarcerated family member
7. Learning disabilities
8. Experienced trauma

Implementing a formal mentoring program that addresses the developmental necessities of youth as an intervention will provide a proven starting point toward making a positive impact on the lives of youth served through Shannon CSI funded programs.

Planning to Plan: The Initial Phase of Program Development

The initial phase of program development may be the most significant stage of any new program initiative. This is the time to make sure that the external environment of the community and the internal environment of your organization are aligned on broad program goals so that there will be sufficient human and financial resources to carry out your program plan and fulfill your program's objectives. Using Shannon CSI funding, the Boys and Girls Club of Fall River is working with Mass Mentoring Partnership to add a formal mentoring program to complement their overall youth development practices they currently offer. Not all of the young people who attend the Club will be in the mentoring program – only a targeted number of higher risk youth will participate. To ensure the mentoring program was serving the youth intended, Mass Mentoring identified a number of steps to review before getting started, as well as conditions that must be met in order for the new program to be recognized as a formal mentoring program that meets national standards.

The questions below are based on programs reaching beyond paid staff as mentors and considering and utilizing the services of volunteer mentors. The questions are equally relevant for programs that currently only use paid staff and are considering a combination of paid and volunteer mentors.

1. **What is the need to be filled by the mentoring program?**
   - Who are the youth to be served? How will the program design assure the inclusion of high-risk youth within the scope of the organization's mission?
   - What effects on their lives does the program intend to make?
   - What programs are in place in your community to address the youth development needs? Will the youth be involved with additional social services to meet their needs beyond the scope of the mentoring program? How will the program collaborate with the service agencies?
   - Are there gaps in services that can be addressed by starting this mentoring program?
   - What model will the program be based on? Who are the adults who will be recruited as mentors? Will they be paid staff, volunteers or both?

2. **What is the plan to identify and develop the human and financial resources required for start-up and on-going operation of a high-quality mentoring program?**
   - What is the short-term plan to identify and develop the resources to fund the program?
   - What is the long-term plan to identify and develop the resources to sustain the program over time? A resource development plan includes resource development goals and objectives, strategies, timelines, and assigned responsibilities for making the plan happen. Remember that resource planning includes thinking about corporate, foundation and government grants, local business support, fundraising, community collaborations, and other forms of support, such as in-kind donations.
   - Will the budget in place detail both in-kind, funded and proposed line-items?

3. **What are the research-based practices that support positive outcomes for youth in mentoring relationships with volunteer adults?**
   - What kinds of staff structure and professional support are required to be in place for a mentoring program to maximize positive experiences for the youth and adult volunteer participants?

- Will the program follow the national standards for mentoring,[3] the best practices of intentional mentoring, and the best practices for working with high-risk youth?

4. What are my organization's assets for and challenges to implementing these practices?

- What infrastructure is in place at my organization to support the practices required to implement high-quality practices? What additional infrastructure and support will my organization need to access?

Design the Parameters for the Mentoring Program

Once able to answer the questions above, a mentoring program should create a mission statement, and the core goals and objectives of your program, use the twelve points below taken from the *Elements of Effective Practice* as a guide for developing basic parameters for your program. (This document may be structured to form a planning/operational document that is easily readable by potential funders, evaluators and other stakeholders.)

1. Define the youth population that the program will serve; youth at the high-risk end of the risk spectrum benefit from mentoring when there are additional supports in place.
2. Identify the types of individuals who will be recruited as mentors (such as, agency or program staff only, senior citizens, corporate employees and college students).
3. Determine the type of mentoring model: one-to-one, group, team, peer or e-mentoring.
4. Structure the mentoring program - stand-alone program or as part of an existing organization.
5. Define the nature of the mentoring sessions (such as career involvement, academic support and socialization).
6. Determine what the program will accomplish and what outcomes will result for the participants, including mentors, mentees and sponsoring organizations.
7. Determine when the mentoring will take place.
8. Determine how frequently mentors and mentees will meet per month and how long the mentoring matches should endure.
9. Decide where mentoring matches primarily will meet - workplace, school, faith-based organization, juvenile corrections facility, community setting or virtual community.
10. Identify program stakeholders, including parents, and how to promote the program.

[3] For more information about national standards for mentoring, use the online resources and downloadable materials based on research from *The Elements of Effective Practice* created by the National Mentoring Partnership at www.mentoring.org.

11. Decide how to evaluate program success.
12. Establish case management protocol to assure that the program has regular contact with both mentors and mentees concerning their relationship.

What Are the Different Types of Mentoring Models?

The table below identifies several different types of mentoring models recognized by *The Elements of Effective Practice*. Traditional one-to-one models are the most common and the most effective for high-risk youth. One adult with one young person is the strongest way to build a relationship that supports the needs of the young person. Group and Team models are both effective and common. E-mentoring and Peer-to-Peer Mentoring are models that are less common, but when implemented can provide benefits to the youth involved. The key for making a positive impact is the adherence to mentoring standards, strong staff support, a clear vision of the expectations of the program by the mentor and the mentee, consistency and duration of at least one year.

Table 1. Types of Mentoring Models

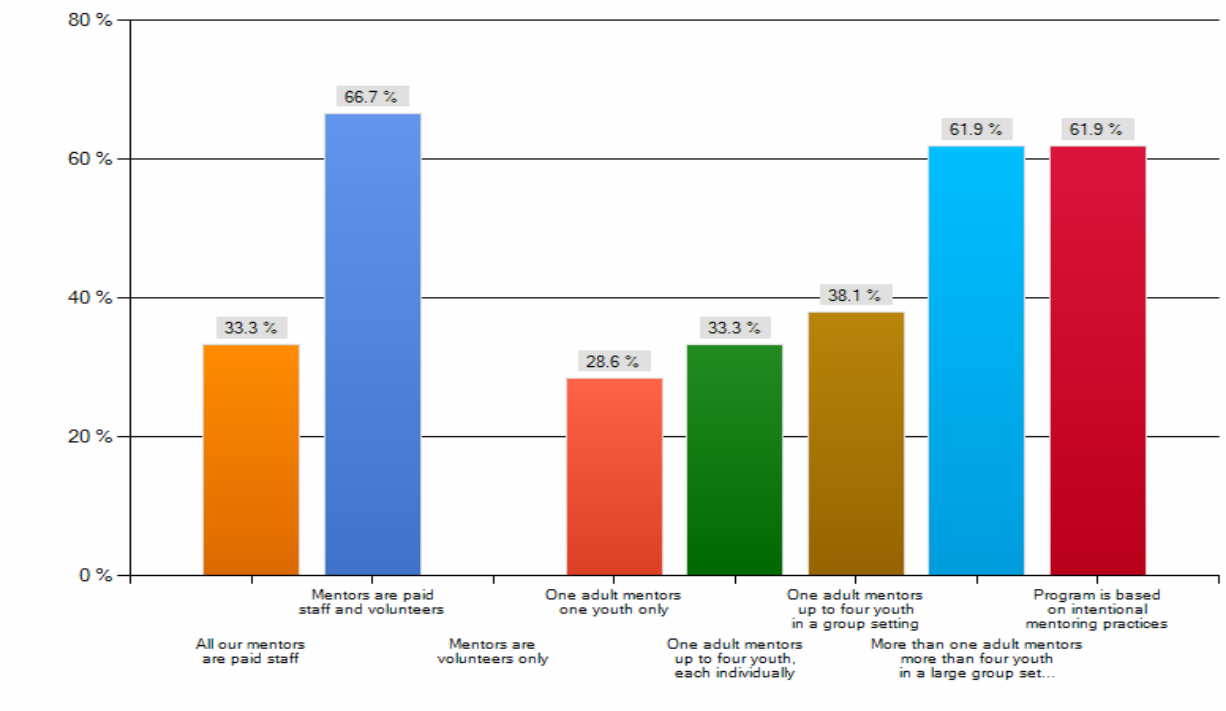
Mentoring Model	Type of Mentoring Relationship	Location of Mentoring	Communication Method
Traditional one-to-one	One-to-one between an adult and a youth.	At a school, place of employment, community center, faith-based organization, or in the community.	Face-to-face meetings, email, telephone, letters.
E-mentoring	One-to-one between an adult and a youth via email and Internet.	Places where mentees and mentors access the Internet.	Email, chat, forums, text messages or instant messaging. In person meetings also arranged.
Peer-to-peer	One-to-one and/or group; youth mentor each other; often older youth serve as mentors to younger youth.	At a school, place of employment, community center, faith-based organization, or in the community.	Face-to-face, telephone, email, letters and/or face- to-face group interactions.
Group	One adult mentor to a group of up to four youth mentees.	At a school, place of employment, community center, faith-based organization, or in the community.	Face-to-face group interactions; may include Internet forums and/or chats.
Team	Several adult mentors to a small group of youth mentees in which the adult to youth ratio is not more than 1:4	At a school, place of employment, community center, faith-based organization, or in the community.	Face-to-face group interactions; may include Internet forums and/or chats.

Factors to Consider When Choosing Among Different Mentoring Models

The first factor to consider is whether your program will be a stand-alone program – one that is not part of a larger agency, or a formal mentoring program housed within a larger agency. There are benefits to both models. Being housed within a larger agency provides infrastructure benefits, access to established human resources, marketing, and a connection with a known agency within a community. For a stand-alone program, the management and operations decisions are made independent of the requirements of a larger agency, giving more control to the staff.

There may be one or several mentoring type models that your agency is considering. Having different models in place does occur at a number of programs across Massachusetts. The key is that each program follows mentoring standards as recommended in this resource guide. Mass Mentoring Partnership has a list of more than 220 mentoring programs across the state and can connect Shannon grantees to programs with models they are considering. Visit Mass Mentoring Partnership at www.massmentors.org.

Chart 2. Types of Mentoring Models used by Shannon CSI Programs
Respondents=21. In some instances there are multiple responses which results in a total of more than 100%



The Boys and Girls Club of Holyoke uses Shannon CSI funds to support both a one-to-one traditional mentoring program and a group mentoring program that uses staff as mentors and a one staff to up to four youth as mentees. The high risk youth are in the group mentoring program, which is seeing tremendous success. The Director of Program Development, Megan Grant, attributes the growing success of the group mentoring for high risk youth to a number of factors, including:

- Mentors receive standard mentor training as the foundation;
- Mentors receive advanced training in crisis management and working with trauma;
- Mentors understand realistic goal setting and the need to revisit and adjust goals on a regular basis depending on youth circumstances;
- Mentors don't get discouraged and understand commitment and the real work that is involved; and,
- Mentors mentor more than the six hours a month minimum and up to 15 hours a month, which includes many outings on Saturdays.

In Boston, Adoption and Foster Care Mentoring (AFC), a full partner member of

Housing a Mentoring Program Recommendations: Summer Institute on Youth Mentoring, Portland State University, Oregon

Takeaways for Stand-Alone Mentoring Programs

- Consider working closely with clinicians, academics, and other professionals with knowledge of high-risk youth. They can help determine which aspects of your mentoring model may need reconsidering to serve these youth well; recommend curriculum that can guide match activities; offer guidance on how mentors should be trained to connect with your mentees.
- Don't overextend your program. Focus on what you do best and only branch out your services if you know your program can serve vulnerable youth well.
- Explore partnerships with systems of care.
- Consider a team approach to your mentoring relationships.
- Consider recruitment mentors with similar background as the youth.
- Provide extensive training and ongoing support which is critical for mentors who will be working with high risk youth. Mentors must be able to connect with and help transform youth.
- Don' set your mentors up for failure by asking them to be the only solution for these youth. Give your mentors a clear role, explain how their work fits in with other supports, and help them understand both the power of their support and the limitation of their mentoring relationship.

Takeaways for Multi-Service Agencies Utilizing Mentoring

- Analyze your theory of change and your program's logic model. Ask: what forms of support might be best delivered by a mentor, as opposed to a clinician or other staff? How can mentors support the work of other services? How will you keep the mentoring component from getting lost in the shuffle?
- As Roger Jarjoura, Assistant Professor at Indiana U-Purdue U Indianapolis states, "Don't aim too low." Have high expectations of your staff and your mentors.

The entire report can be downloaded at http://pdx.edu/youth-mentoring/summer-institute-on-youth-mentoring-learning-hub

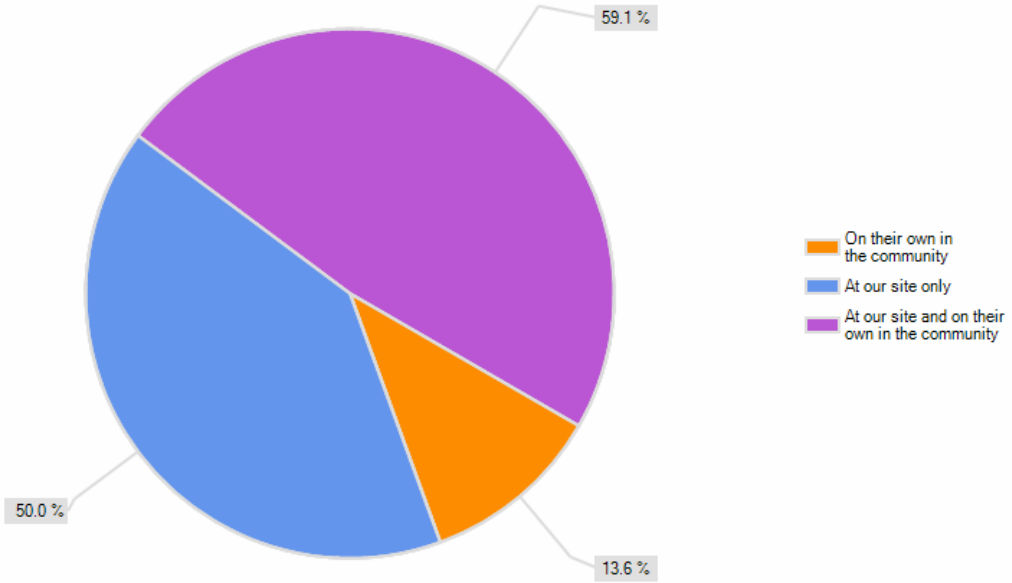
Mass Mentoring Partnership (not funded through Shannon CSI) has been recognized for its work with youth in foster care. AFC serves youth ages seven and older through AFC*Mentors*, its one-to-one mentoring program, and through AFC*Leaders*, its group mentoring program for youth ages 14 and older who are preparing to "age out" of the child welfare system. AFC*Leaders* includes a specialized group mentoring program for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth in care, for whom adolescence and the transition to adulthood can be especially difficult. In 2011, AFC served over 130 youth through its two mentoring programs, AFC *Mentors* and AFC *Leaders*.

Mentor and Mentee Activities

The activities that the mentors and mentees participate in together vary depending on the model of the program. For example, when the mentors and mentees meet on their own in the community, activities tend to focus on fun, adventure and enriching activities, with the mentees having a stronger influence on what activities take place. There is less of a focus on homework, specific curriculum, and skill building. In a program where the mentors and mentees meet at the program site, there tends to be more structure with some built in free time. One model is not preferred over another. The key is to have activities that are youth centered and build upon the overall goals of the youth and the program.

Chart 3. Shannon Grantees' Location of Mentoring Activities

Respondents=22. In some instances there are multiple responses which results in a total of more than 100%



Emerging practices for programs mentoring youth in systems of care include mentors: leading curriculum activities, helping with transition plans, setting up connections with other community supports, encouraging youth to talk about systems experiences, and personal growth as their core goal. In many ways, these programs have mentors taking on a much more practical and purposeful role.

Table 2. Mentor-Mentee Activities

Answer Options	***Response Percent***
Take part in specific activities organized by the program	90.9%
Work on goals, such as academic or career	81.8%
Focus on building a good mentor/mentee relationship	81.8%
Work on homework	72.7%
Hang out together talking	72.7%
Play sports	68.2%
Play board games	50.0%
Eat out – for snacks or meals	45.5%
Play video games	40.9%
They follow a mentor led curriculum	36.4%

Shannon CSI mentoring programs were asked to list the activities that mentors and mentees do together regardless of location. As Table 2 shows, the mentoring program often plays a critical role by identifying specific activities for the mentor and mentee to participate. The other most common responses focused on building relationships and focusing on academic and career goals.

III. Formal Mentoring Programs for High-Risk Youth

Research has shown that positive mentoring experiences have proven to be an effective tool to help youth overcome the risk factors that can lead to educational failure; dropping out of school and involvement in delinquent activities, including gang crime and drug abuse (Jurovy, 2009).

Youth exposed to two or more risk factors (e.g., homelessness, truancy, gang involvement), like most youth served with Shannon CSI funding, are faced with a compounded risk of disconnection to social support systems and need tailored and holistic support to achieve sustained life success. Creating pathways to success for youth at high risk requires organizations to adopt specific practices and provide foundational youth development services that meet youth where they are and enable them to benefit from academic and workforce programs (Root Cause, 2011). Mentoring appears to be most effective for children facing high risk when used in conjunction with other services. It is not advised to use mentoring as a lone intervention with youth in high risk environments (EMT Group, Inc., 2003).

This section will cover the *Essential Functions for a Formal Youth Mentoring Program's Operations* that deal directly with:

- **recruiting** mentors and mentees;
- **matching** mentors and mentees;
- **providing a framework for the mentoring sessions**;
- **ongoing support**, **recognition;** and
- the **closure process.**

Mentor Recruitment for High-Risk Youth

Recruiting adult mentors to serve youth is challenging for many programs in Massachusetts and even more challenging when recruiting for high-risk youth. Some programs recruit mentors with similar backgrounds and experiences as the youth. Considering an "alumni" of the program is also a good option. A structured and well implemented recruitment plan will increase the chances of success. These guidelines address how it is possible to effectively promote volunteer opportunities within your organization with limited resources and funding. The basic principles for marketing include the elements below:

1. **Target your recruiting message.** Potential mentors for high-risk youth should reflect the population of the youth served and whenever possible have a similar background and come from a comparable community (The 2011 Summer Institute). Messages that have a call to action and include testimonials for your organization are most effective. For example, if you are seeking men of color, have a mentor or staff person of color involved in the recruitment. Advertise in the community, with specific affinity groups at a corporation, and through networking opportunities. Keep in mind that men, generally, like to volunteer as part of a group or organized team. **Mentors are where *you* find them!** There is no "right" method that works for all programs.

> ***Common Reasons Why People Become Mentors***:
> - Someone they know asks them to mentor in a specific organization.
> - They learn about mentoring through an organization to which they belong.
> - A family member or friend would benefit from their volunteering.

2. **Describe your program positively and in simple language.** Communicate a clear mission as well as a clear "job description" for volunteers. When getting your message out to the public, always include contact information on all communications.

3. **Recruit for quality over quantity.** Do not recruit volunteers if you are not ready to move them into your screening and training process. High-risk youth require well trained mentors.

Recruitment of Mentees

Stand-alone mentoring programs target specific youth for participation depending on the goals of the program. Teens are more interested in participating if the stated goal of the program is clear and there is something specific "in it" for them. Research shows that teens want access to jobs, assistance with career and college planning and general support. For larger organizations who serve a number of youth from the general population as well as high-risk youth, it is easier to identify and select the youth to participate in the mentoring program. When recruiting high-risk youth who are not currently participating, programs will want to consider other services the youth is receiving or should receive, support from the youth's school and family, connections to systems of care, the commitment of the youth to the program, and the overall capacity of the program to have a positive influence on the youth's growth.

Additionally, Shannon CSI steering committee meetings can be an excellent place to identify new opportunities for development for specific youth using connections from the police department, local and state agencies and local community and faith-based institutions.

Recommended Mentor Screening Guidelines

Proper screening for mentors who will work with high-risk youth is a critical component of the recruitment process. Youth with significant needs thrive best with mentors who are fully screened for appropriateness for the program and are thoroughly trained. Mentoring programs are strongly encouraged to utilize these guidelines during the mentor screening process. This holds true for staff as well as for volunteer mentors.

Table 3. Screening Recommendations

Mentor Screening Process	Community-based Unsupervised Match Activities	Site-based Unsupervised Match Activities*	Site-based Supervised Match Activities
Written application	Required	Required	Required
Reference check: personal and professional (not relatives)	Three Required	Two Required	One Required
Criminal history check (fingerprint check) **	Required	Required	Required
Driving record review	Required	Recommended	Recommended
In-person interview	Required	Required	Required
Home assessment	Strongly Recommended	Optional	Optional
Interview of significant others residing in home	Required	Optional	Optional
Check of prior volunteer experience	Optional	Optional	Optional
Written mentor–mentee matching criteria	Required	Required	Required
Mentor training	Required	Required	Required

* Site-based programs include school-based, workplace and other facility-based programs. In supervised activities, the program coordinator is present to observe the mentor–mentee interaction. In unsupervised, site-based programs, a program coordinator is usually in the building but not always in the same room where the mentoring is taking place.

** Criminal history may or may not automatically disqualify a potential mentor. This is an individual decision to be made by the program.

Elements of Effective Practice: Courtesy of The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership, Business Guide to Youth Mentoring, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Standards of Practice for One-To-One Service.

Orientation and Training for Mentors

Consistency in operations provides staff and all program participants with a clear understanding of what to expect and how to fulfill their respective roles and responsibilities. Orientation and training for mentors should include the following questions.

About the Program

- What are the program's primary and secondary goals?
- Does the program have specific "DO's" and "DON'Ts"?
- Who does the mentor contact in an emergency?
- Who is the program's primary contact person and how/when can the person be reached?
- What things are considered when a match is made?
- How much time do mentors spend time with their mentees, and how often do they meet?
- What kind of training is provided for mentors?
- Are mentors expected/allowed to contact their mentees by phone or email?
- Does the program plan mentor/mentee support sessions or social gatherings?
- Do mentors need to complete reports, logs, or evaluation tools?

About the Mentees

- What are the mentees like?
- What challenges do the mentees face?
- What is the typical background of the mentees in this program?
- Why would a mentee apply to be a part of this program?

Mentoring is not just a relationship

Tim Clavell of the University of Arkansas explores the idea that mentoring is not just a relationship, but rather a "context" that we provide to youth. His work on mentoring programs for highly aggressive youth has led him to draw from socialization theory, which states that ***adolescents will find and participate in contexts that offer greater and more reliable "payoffs."*** This can be both positive and negative – certainly youth can find internal value in anti-social behaviors and with deviant peers, especially when pro-social contexts are lacking in their lives. This means that the process of mentoring is not simply a top-down transmission of wisdom and guidance from mentor to mentee. ***Youth are active players in their development and if programs are to be successful they, along with their mentors, have to provide youth with experiences and opportunities that are consistently rewarding and engaging.***

Mentoring programs serve youth in systems of care that, hopefully, will draw the youth away from the negative contexts that lead to, or resulted from, their system involvement. Mentors must not only provide this healthy context, but help the youth succeed in it. Clavell notes that a mentoring relationship is only one context, competing with many others, which cautions us to perhaps temper our expectations of what a stand-alone mentoring program can do for high-risk youth.

Mentoring standards recommend that the matches meet for at least 9 months. The longer the relationship, the stronger the impact on youth.

Tim Clavell, Ph.D. Summer Institute on Youth Mentoring- Portland State University. July 2011

Video presentation by mentoring researchers participating in the 2011 Summer Institute can be found on the Web at www.youthmentoring.pdx.edu

About the Relationship

- What is the role of a mentor?
- How does a mentor know if s/he is doing or saying the right things?
- What if the match does not seem to be going well? What do mentors do if they are not feeling satisfied with the mentoring relationship?
- What should mentors and mentees talk about?
- Do mentors answer questions about sensitive issues?

About the Mentee's Family or Caregiver

- How might the family respond to a mentor?
- Are mentors expected and/or allowed to contact the mentees' parents or caregivers?
- How do mentors deal with situations when they think they might be giving guidance to their mentees that may be in conflict with parental guidance?

Purpose and Benefits of Ongoing Mentee Training

Mentoring relationships often fail to thrive in part because mentees show a lack of interest, are unresponsive to the mentor or miss meetings. Adolescents may be reluctant to "hang out" with an adult mentor when they would prefer to be with their peers. They may want to set goals and make decisions without having the skills and knowledge to do so or ask for help. In short, mentees may be able to start the relationship, and may want the support of a mentor, but are often not prepared to help the relationship develop. Orientation and training for mentees can:

- Explore subjects covered in initial mentee orientation in depth
- Present information that will help mentees build positive relationships with their mentors over time
- Strengthen mentees' developmental assets by building skills and competencies

Adapted from *Mentoring Resource Center Fact Sheet #29*, July 2009.

Matching Mentors with High-Risk Youth

Programs need to put a lot of thought into the matching process. Think carefully about who would make an ideal mentor in the program – who will you want to match with each of your youth? What skills would they need? What kind of personal background? What does the time commitment look like and how can you ensure their level of involvement? Can you get your mentors through a partnership with an existing mentoring program? Boys & Girls Club of Fall River, a Shannon CSI grantee, considers a mentor's experience with high-risk youth, the mentor's primary occupation and involvement with the community when making a match with a high risk youth. The Club's mentees range in age from 10- to 14-years-old.

Some programs allow youth to nominate their mentor through a natural matching process. Dr. Roger Jarjoura, a senior advisor for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

funded Center for the Advancement of Mentoring, recommends starting with group activities that allow the mentees to get to know the mentors and see how many "natural" pairings develop. Consider matching mentors with similar personal backgrounds as the youth they will be serving or perhaps some experience in the helping professions. Mentees can benefit greatly from the mentor's personal experience if they get a sense that their challenges are challenges similar to what their mentor experienced, and that they can learn from the mentor's successful coping strategies.

Mentor Qualities that Contribute to a Successful Relationship

Besides an ongoing training component, the other strong correlation to a successful mentoring program is a committed mentor and mentee relationship with established and regular meeting schedules (Dubois, 2002). This framework of bringing mentors and mentees together regularly should take into considerations the unique challenges that high-risk and gang-involved youth may bring into the relationships. For high-risk youth, there is more accountability and higher expectations of mentors than with lower-risk youth. Mentoring relationships for higher-risk youth has a longer-lasting positive impact on a young person when the mentor demonstrates the qualities described below[4].

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 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.

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

Mentors should not approach mentees with the attitude that *their* way is better, or that the mentees need to be "rescued."

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. 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.

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 to get through difficult times.

Persistence and Consistence

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.

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 and even to be changed by the relationship.

Open-mindedness

Mentors and mentees can be very different from each other. 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 own willingness to reflect on their own values and the capacity to show respect for others' values.

Define Mentoring Relationship Ground Rules

From the beginning, take some time together to set clear expectations for the relationship.

- Confirm guidelines established by the program.
- Talk about the best way to communicate (by telephone, texting 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.
- Lay out the responsibilities of each party is important so both partners feel they are doing their share of the work.
- 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.

Stages of a Mentor/Mentee Relationship

It is important to note that every mentoring relationship is different, and each relationship will have different stages and different struggles. As with any relationship, there will be challenges and as a mentor begins to spend time with the mentee, it will be helpful to keep this in mind. For a relationship with a high-risk youth, the challenges may be more pronounced and a mentoring program needs to account for these challenges so that a mentor will have the tools he/she needs to be most successful during each stage of the relationship.

Ongoing Support and Training for Mentors

Extensive training and ongoing support are critical for mentors who will be working with this population. Mentors must be able to connect with and help transform the youth.

Don't set your mentors up for failure by asking them to be the only solution for these youth. Give your mentors a clear role, explain how their work fits in with other supports, and help them understand both the power of their support and the limitations of their mentoring relationship.

Emphasize the following training concepts:

- Being able to listen to how the youth feels
- Responding in positive and appropriate ways, even when the mentor is frustrated
- Being nonjudgmental
- Not being surprised or upset if the youth lies about something: recognizing that this is often just a coping mechanism for deeper issues that the mentor can address
- Offering suggestions about problems the youth is having, but not dictating what the youth should do; and accepting that the youth may make some bad decisions
- Keeping the commitment over time; no quitting!
- Knowing that there will be ups and downs along the way, and using disappointments and frustrations as an opportunity to grow the relationship.

Portland Summer Institute 2011

Stage 1: Getting to Know Each Other

The mentoring relationship begins with a "getting to know you" phase. Here are some things to keep in mind during this stage.

- **Be 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 critical. 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.

- **Anticipate 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. It is helpful to set expectations and acknowledge when those expectations have not been met. This will help your mentee to understand when his/her behavior is inappropriate or hurtful.

- **Establish 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. *Be sure you know the*

policies of your program around confidentiality and what to do if your mentee gives you information that makes you think s/he will harm her/himself or someone else.

- **Understand disclosure issues.**

  Many young people are not sure how to talk about certain issues in their lives. 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.

  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 certain 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.

  To address disclosure issues, a mentor can develop a disclosure "script" with the mentee. Role-play the script so he/she is comfortable when the time comes to do it for real. Assist

Distinguishing Between What a Mentor IS, and What a Mentor IS NOT

A Mentor IS:

- **A trusted guide or friend, and a caring adult** who provides access to people, places, and things outside his/her mentee's routine environment
- **A positive role model** that can connect and interact with people in ways that demonstrate behaviors that inspire, encourage, and build confidence in young people
- **A resource broker** who helps his/her mentee understand how to access resources to meet goals, address problems, and make thoughtful decisions.

A Mentor IS NOT:

- **A social worker.** A social work 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 rather than assuming the role of a social worker and attempting to solve the problem. Volunteer mentors are NOT mandated reporters, but SHOULD have training on signs of abuse and neglect by the mentor program.
- **A counselor, therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist.** Similar to a social worker, counselors, therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists are all licensed professionals with experience in working with personal issues.

your mentee in choosing the appropriate person to whom to disclose the information, and talk with the 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.

- **Understand the role of parent/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. Research has demonstrated that mentoring relationships are more likely to have positive outcomes for youth when there is a connection and sense of mutual support between parents/guardians and mentors.

Stage 2: Deepening of the Relationship

After a mentoring relationship has been established and the mentor and mentee become more comfortable with each other, additional challenges might present. Embrace the uniqueness of your new relationship, but also be patient and prepare for rough periods. Do not assume something is wrong with the relationship if these rough periods occur occasionally.
High-risk mentees have more risk factors and may be dealing in his/her own way with a life event that has affected how he/she communicates or acts with you. It is also 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 mentee's age and developmental level.

Keep in mind the three types of boundaries.

1. **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?

2. **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.*

3. **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.

Boundaries are Determined by Your Program Model and Program Expectations

Beyond the basic, physical, emotional and social boundary recommendations, boundaries will vary depending on the type of program: site-based compared to community-based where mentors and mentees meet on their own. For example, those who meet on their own may share phone numbers, text, email.

CASA, Inc. of Winthrop, a Shannon CSI grantee, uses intentional mentoring practices with groups of no more than 1 adult to 10 youth**,** does not allow "friending" on Facebook nor the exchange of cell phone numbers. Winthrop is a small community where mentors and mentees and their families may see each other around the neighborhood, so there is an emphasis of understanding the differences between "secrecy vs. privacy".

Stage 3: Time to Say Goodbye – the Closure Process

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. Of course, some programs by design are limited to a certain duration. However, young people today often have many adults come and go in their lives and may very rarely be provided the opportunity to say goodbye. You can help your mentee learn how to handle this process through your role as a mentor.

Initiating some activities 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 when the formal relationship ends. 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.

- **Know when/how to say good-bye.**

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 staff believe that the longer a mentor is involved in a youth's life, the greater the effect. 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. Programs that follow this philosophy may discourage you from sharing contact information with each other at the end of the required time commitment. *Check with the mentor program coordinator to learn the policy for staying in touch with your mentee once the program ends.*

> *As you get to **closure**, it is important to spend some time recognizing the commitment of the mentor and the mentee to each other and to the program. Acknowledge the successes achieved by the mentee and thank the mentor for his/her role and dedication to the youth. Many programs hold recognition receptions, award certificates, publish accomplishments in a newsletter and publicly thank the mentor.*

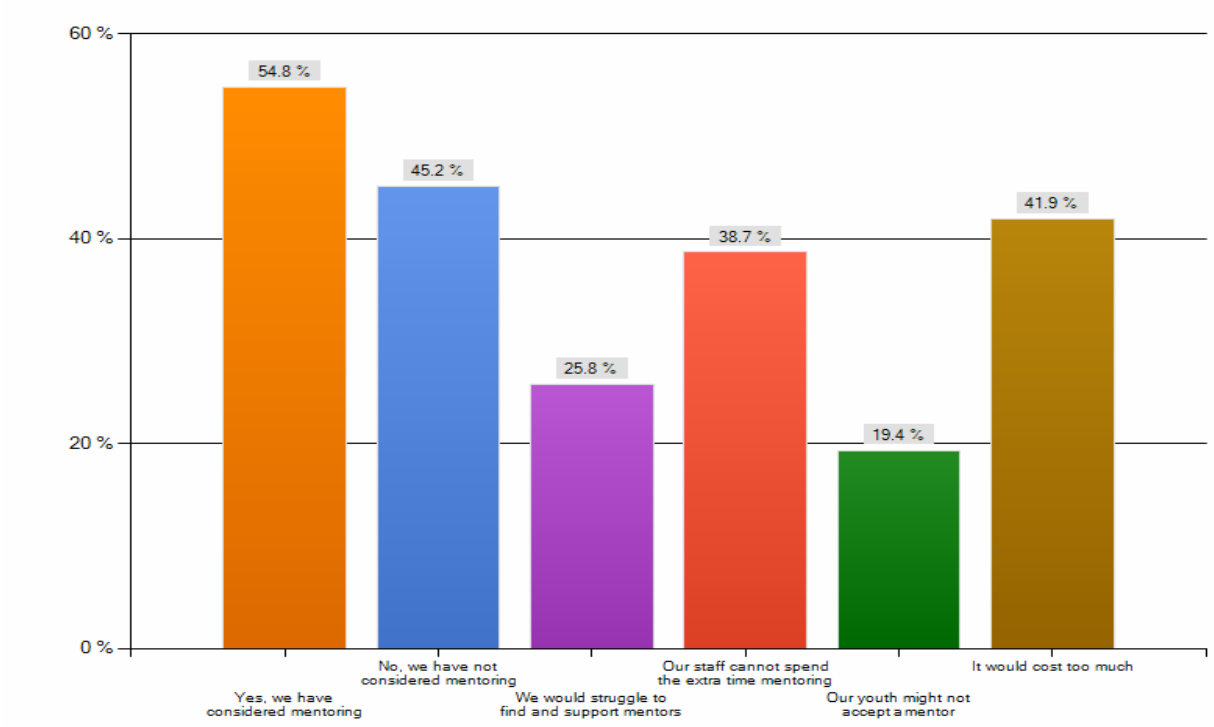
- **Identify natural emotions, such as grief, denial, and resentment.**

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

IV. Challenges to Implementing a Formal Mentoring Program for High-Risk Youth

In the introduction to this report, we identified that almost 40% of Shannon CSI funded programs utilize some type of mentoring component. We also indicated that of the 60% that did not have any mentoring component, nearly 55% told us they had considered mentoring. These agencies identified a number of challenges for not incorporating mentoring. Chart 4 illustrates the top four challenges.

Chart 4. Reasons Shannon CSI Programs Have Not Incorporated Mentoring Services
Respondents=31.



Earlier this report covered some of the challenges to incorporating mentoring services including agencies that identified that it would be a struggle to find and support mentors and to those that identified that their youth might not accept a mentor. The other two challenges for not incorporating mentoring for grantees are funding and staff time. These two challenges are not uncommon for agencies who are considering mentoring as well as for traditional mentoring programs. General recommendations to these challenges are included below.

Funding

Funding is a major concern for Shannon CSI grantees and other organizations across Massachusetts. In this economy the resources available to support mentoring programs have diminished. Mass Mentoring Partnership (MMP) has leveraged some funding for programs and continues to seek additional funding from state and federal grant programs, foundations and corporations. MMP lists funding opportunities on its web site: http://www.massmentors.org/funding-sources

Some larger organizations start with small mentoring programs with ten or fewer matches in place and seek external funding to help sustain and grow the program. MMP recommends working with a larger organization or a school department as an alternative to starting a mentoring program without funding. Incorporating mentoring practices with staff already in place is an option.

Staffing

One Shannon CSI grantee stated that, "Mentor training and supervision in the youth setting is critical and we do not have the staff to provide sufficient time to these supports." MMP does not encourage any agency to add mentoring to its programming if mentor training and ongoing supervision and support are not available. In this scenario, incorporating intentional mentoring practices to the work and staff already in place is a recommended option.

In both cases, Mass Mentoring Partnership may be able to consult with a program to review current financial needs and practices and offer guidance for next steps toward implementing formal mentoring programs or intentional mentoring practices.

V. Program Evaluation

The ultimate success of your program depends on how well you are able to assess its effectiveness, address any weaknesses and demonstrate that it is meeting goals and objectives. Therefore, as you create an evaluation process for your program, be sure to include components that allow you to:

- Analyze your program regularly;
- Apply lessons learned;
- Address the information needs of your program's board, funders, communication partners and other supporters;
- Share evaluation results and lessons learned with program stakeholders and the broader mentoring community; and
- Continually improve program quality.

The *Elements of Effective Practice* notes the following reasons programs should conduct evaluations and have an evaluation plan in place early on in the development process of a mentoring program.

- To increase understanding of effective practices in youth mentoring relationships and programs;
- To make the programs accountable to the entities that support them;
- To promote effective resource allocation;
- To avoid unintended harmful effects of interventions;

What will success look like for your program?

The following guidelines will help you identify the criteria and procedures you'll use to measure your program's success. Be sure that you include them in your program's policies and procedures manual.

- Decide how to define success for your program. Is it the number of mentors you recruit? Positive feedback from parents or your partner organization? The number of mentors who serve out their full commitment?
- List all the elements that make up a successful program according to your organization's standards.
- Set clear, realistic goals for measurement. For example, decide how many mentors you want to recruit in a given time frame, i.e., 12 mentors active by the end of six months.
- Look at less tangible, but equally compelling feedback. Are the mentees doing better in school? Has their behavior improved? Are they more optimistic about their future? Did their experience in a mentoring relationship meet their expectations?
- Solicit feedback from mentors, your partner organizations, mentees and parents. Ask each group to fill out formal surveys or conduct a series of focus groups. For the sake of candor, it's best to conduct separate focus groups—one for mentors, one for mentees, and so on. Use the feedback to help you decide whether the program is going well or needs adjustment. An important consideration about conducting focus groups: participants need to trust that their views are taken seriously and may make a difference.
- Do your results justify the cost? How does your program's success stack up against the amount of time and resources your organization has invested in it? To find out, keep careful records of all expenditures related to the program and make reviewing them a part of your evaluation procedures.

- To increase the effectiveness of programs through a feedback/continuous quality improvement process; and
- To provide direct benefits for case managers, mentors and youth when evaluation of individual relationships is built into the evaluation plan.

With a comprehensive evaluation process in place, you can:

- Provide objective feedback to program staff and participants about whether or not they're meeting their goals;
- Identify achievements and milestones that warrant praise and increase motivation;
- Pinpoint problems early enough to correct them;
- Assure funders and supporters of your program's accountability and leverage resources;
- Build credibility in the community that your program is vital and deserves support; and
- Quantify experiences so that your program can help others.

VI. Summary

Research shows that mentoring is MOST effective in improving outcomes for youth when the factors below are considered in program planning.

- Keeping it fun for the mentee; mentor commitment and follow-through; a positive developmental perspective; longer lasting matches; close and frequent contact between mentors and mentees; thorough and realistic training and recruitment; monitoring and supporting of matches; attention to social context of the match (EMT, 2003, Rhodes, 2005).
- Mentoring should be aimed at enhancing social skills, emotional well-being, improving cognitive skills via dialogue and listening, role modeling, and advocacy (EMT, 2003).
- Positive relationships characterized by mutuality, trust and empathy are seen as the primary way that mentoring leads to improved outcomes for youth who are mentored (Rhodes, 2005).
- Sufficient dosage is important for mentoring programs to achieve results. Relationships that last for a year or longer are most beneficial, while those that are brief may have negative effects on the youth (Grossman and Rhodes, 2002). The amount of time that mentors spend with youth matters. A set number of meetings have not been identified, but regular contact of at least four to eight hours a month is recommended.

Shannon Funded Organizations with Mentoring Programs

Many of the organizations that participated in the survey that self-identified as having active mentoring programs use both formal mentoring and intentional mentoring practices.

***Programs with Intentional Mentoring Practices only*:**

Attleboro Police Department/Taunton Collaborative
Scott W. Killough, 508-223-2233 x 2243, skillouth@attleboropolice.org

Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell
Gail Casey, 978-458-4526 x10, gcasey@lbgc.org

CASA, Inc.
Patricia Milano, 617-733-7073, pmilano@town.winthrop.ma.us

Haverhill Violence Intervention Program (VIP) Team
Carol Ireland, 978-835-9178, cireland@haverhill-ps.org

Teen Empowerment
Stephanie Berkowitz, 617-536-4266 x 304, Stephanie@teenempowerment.org
Mt. Wachusett Community
Tammy Tebo, 508-330-0945, t_tebo@mwcc.mass.edu

***Programs with Both Formal Mentoring and Intentional Mentoring Practices*:**

Boston Center for Youth and Families
Erika Butler, 617-635-4920, Erika.butler@cityofboston.gov

Boys & Girls Club of Worcester
Joanne Memnon, 508-753-3377 x 110, jmemnon@bgcworcester.org

Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee
Clarisa Matlasz, 413-206-4103, cmatlasz@yahoo.com

Boys & Girls Club of Fall River
Dana Hubbard, 508-672-6340, dhubbard@socialcapitalinc.org

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke
Megan Grant, 413-534-7366 x 100, mgrant@hbgc.org

Jordan Boys & Girls Club, Chelsea
Lisa Gillis, 617-884-9435, lgillis@bgcb.org

Community Development, Lawrence
Art McCabe, 978-620-3516, amccabe@me.com

Elm St. Congregational Church
Pastor Stephen Mayo, 978-342-4257, pastorsteve.elmstcc@verizon.net

Haverhill Methuen Partnership
Megan Shea, msheama@verizon.net

NEARI Jump-Start
Steve Leiblum, 413-532-1713 x 15, nearijpst@aol.com

Tri-City Anti-Gang Partnership, Fitchburg
Irene Hernandez/ Wil Renderos, 978-345-9550/617-276-6541, ihernandez@fitchburgma.gov and wil.renderos@gmail.com

United Teen Equality Center (UTEC)
Juan Carlos Rivera, 978-856-3903, jrivera@utec-lowell.org

Worcester Police Department
Sgt. John Lewis, 774-242-9403, lewisjw@worcesterma.gov

Resources

- Mass Mentoring Partnership, the Massachusetts statewide organization – for guidance on program development, building program capacity, quality-based membership for qualified programs across Massachusetts, training and technical assistance for staff. www.massmentors.org
- Find Mentoring Programs in Massachusetts – use Mass Mentoring online service by using zip codes http://www.massmentors.org/becoming-a-mentor
- MENTOR – National Mentoring Partnership, online resources and downloadable materials on mentoring, including research and *The Elements of Effective Practic,* www.mentoring.org
- United States Department of Education Mentoring Resource Center – fact sheets on mentoring and useful guidebooks and publications. www.edmentoring.org

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Recommended Reading

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- *Strategies to Prevent Youth Violence: Mentoring Strategy* www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/chapter2a-a.pdf

ADDENDUM

Program Assessment for Implementation of Best Practices for a Formal Mentoring Program

The self-assessment follows the national standards for mentoring as established by the *Elements of Effective Practice* and researched by Mass Mentoring Partnership for its Quality-Based Mentoring Initiative. It has been modified to meet minimum standards for the operating of a formal mentoring program for high-risk youth. Mass Mentoring Partnership is available to discuss how to use this self-assessment and how to begin the process of implementing a formal mentoring program or intentional mentoring practices with your organization.

Please check the box for each standard of practice that your program has in place or are prepared to put in place as you plan to create a formal mentoring program for high-risk youth. (Mentor may be a staff person or a volunteer.)

Section One: Program Design and Planning

Your program has a design and plan that includes:

- ☐ Mentoring program/organizational mission statement
- ☐ Mentoring program/organizational budget
- ☐ A planning document that lists program goals, objectives, activities, the high-risk youth served and general implementation timeline
- ☐ A current internally created or externally obtained assessment of need for the target population

Section Two: Program Management

Your program's management practices include:

- ☐ A board of directors or advisory group that is engaged in your program's success.
- ☐ A system for monitoring program information, including contact and demographic information and additional services received for each of the youth in the program
- ☐ A confidentiality policy regarding mentee and mentor information.
- ☐ A policies and procedures manual for staff that documents how your program implements basic best practices and includes a section on risk management
- ☐ A connection to other systems of care used by the youth in the program

Section Three: Program Operations

Your program's recruitment plan includes:

- ☐ Clearly written eligibility criteria for mentees
- ☐ Clearly written eligibility criteria for mentors including the skills and expectations required to work with the high-risk youth in your program
- ☐ Clearly written consent form for caregivers for youth who are under 18 years

Check the box next to each screening component you have in place for volunteer mentors:

- ☐ Written mentor application that details the background and skills of the potential mentor in working with a high-risk youth population
- ☐ Mentor interview that includes a description of the expectations and benefits and challenges of working with high-risk youth
- ☐ Minimum of two reference checks conducted by program staff
- ☐ For mentors who will transport youth, a copy on file of the mentors' driver's license and proof of insurance
- ☐ CORI background check

Your program's orientation process provides mentors with the following:

- ☐ A program overview, including the type of mentoring (one-to-one, group, peer, etc.), the nature of the mentoring sessions for the high-risk youth in your program and the program's goals
- ☐ Guidelines for the mentoring relationship, including where/when mentoring will take place, the level of commitment, match duration and the closure process
- ☐ Training on basic mentoring practices that includes discussion about the program "DO's" and "DON'Ts," how to handle difficult situations, and related liability issues.

Your program provides orientation for mentees and/or their caregivers that includes:

- ☐ A program overview, including the type of mentoring, the nature of the mentoring sessions (academic support, socialization, workforce development, etc.), and the program's goals
- ☐ Guidelines for the mentoring relationship, including where/when mentoring will take place, match duration and the closure process
- ☐ Discussion about the program "Do's" and "Don'ts," handling various situations, how to seek support from program staff when concerns arise

Your program's match support services include:

- ☐ Consistent communication with the mentor and mentee throughout the match
- ☐ A checklist for signs of youth safety concerns and a process for addressing them
- ☐ A process for managing grievances, resolving problems and offering positive feedback
- ☐ A process for dealing with premature closure of the relationship
- ☐ Community resources and connections to systems of care services are available for mentors and mentees to support issues that arise during the match; and the ability to connect the match to these support programs
- ☐ Ongoing support for mentors (training on other relevant topics, support group, web-based resources, group meetings) that are easily accessed.

Your program conducts a formal process to close matches that includes:

- ☐ A clearly stated policy regarding future contacts between the mentor and mentee once the match is no longer monitored by the program

Section Four: Program Evaluation

Your evaluation practices include:

- ☐ A written outline of expected outcomes for youth and how the program will measure progress towards meeting them (e.g., goal attainment, grades, attendance, substance abuse, quality of relationships)
- ☐ A process to review evaluation findings, to refine program design and service delivery in response to what's learned and to deliver findings to board, funders, community partners, and other supporters of the program