

Part 2:
Training Mentors



Keeping the

Relationships Going

Module 4

Time: 2 hours
Limit: 20 participants

Introduction

Session Goals

Participants will prepare to deliver a training workshop, called “Respecting Differences,” to their program’s mentors. By the end of the session, participants should have:

- Identified and talked about some of their own important values
- Examined problems that can arise when they are facilitating a training session on values
- Explored activities that can help their program’s mentors learn to understand and respect their mentee’s culture and values
- Discussed strategies for providing ongoing training and support for their mentors

The Basics

1. Values can be difficult for people to talk about. Even the word “values” is difficult to define.
2. There are often significant differences between a mentor and mentee in socioeconomic status and/or racial and ethnic background. Training mentors in understanding and respecting these and other forms of diversity will benefit the mentor-mentee relationship.
3. When mentors understand the ways that a mentee’s personal values might manifest themselves in their relationship, they will be more able to respond nonjudgmentally to their mentee.
4. It is important for facilitators to examine their own values and biases before leading training sessions on these topics.

Agenda

- 1. What's a Value?** (25 minutes)
Participants meet in groups to facilitate an icebreaker activity.
- 2. Respecting Differences** (15 minutes)
Participants review materials for training mentors to be nonjudgmental.
- 3. Values Voting** (20 minutes)
Participants take a stand based on their values.
- 4. What If “Life Happens”?** (15 minutes)
The group discusses challenges that can arise for facilitators during training workshops.
- 5. Helping the Relationships Grow** (30 minutes)
Small groups explore ways to help their mentors learn to value differences.
- 6. Now What? Providing Ongoing Support and Training** (15 minutes)
Participants discuss strategies for providing support groups for their program's mentors.

Connections to Other Training Sessions

This session is intended as the last of four sessions designed to help programs train their mentors. The information and strategies referred to in this session are related to these JUMP trainings:

- “Preparing to Facilitate”
- “JUMPstarting Your Mentors”
- “Connecting and Communicating”

If members of your training group have already attended any of those sessions, you may want to draw on information they have learned there. If they have not yet attended those sessions, you will want to, where appropriate, encourage them to attend in order to reinforce and add to the information that is covered during “Keeping the Relationships Going.”

Preparation

Note: “Keeping the Relationships Going” is a train-the-trainer module. Thus, one of your roles throughout the session is to model effective facilitation strategies and approaches. (Also note that the words “trainer” and “facilitator” are used interchangeably in this module.)

1. The materials for this module include “Respecting Differences,” a curriculum unit that programs can use to plan and deliver a training workshop for their mentors. It is used heavily during this JUMP training session. If at all possible, you should get a copy of “Respecting Differences” to your participants *before* the training session so they have time to read it in advance. Ideally, you can mail it to participants a week or two before the “Keeping the Relationships Going” training. Include a cover note explaining how it will be used during the session and emphasizing that it is essential they read “Respecting Differences” before the session takes place.
2. Read the mentor training materials, “Respecting Differences.” Be prepared to give a brief (5 to 10 minute) overview of “Respecting Differences” at the beginning of Activity #2.
3. Read the handouts.
4. Visit the Web site listed on Handout #5, “Resources for Keeping the Relationships Going,” so you are prepared to describe to participants the kinds of information they can find there.
5. Review the three curriculum modules, listed on the previous page, that include information and strategies relevant to “Keeping the Relationships Going.”
6. To prepare for the activity, “What If ‘Life Happens’?,” think about your own previous experiences as a facilitator, and be ready to offer a few illustrative anecdotes and helpful tips.
7. Review the trainer resources. Decide which statements you are going to use—or what new statements you want to write—for Activity #3, “Values Voting.” (See Trainer Resource #3, “Value-Laden Statements.”) Prepare the three signs you will need for that activity: STRONGLY AGREE, UNSURE, and STRONGLY DIS-AGREE.

8. Make enough copies of Trainer Resource #1, “Steps for Leading an Activity on 'What I Value,'” so there is one for each group leader to use during the opening activity.
9. Prepare a set of handouts for each training participant. (Copy the handouts onto paper with three-hole punches so participants can keep them in a binder.)
10. Prepare a copy of “Respecting Differences” for each participant, even if you have also mailed them a copy in advance. Many of the pages are printed on both the front and back, so be sure to copy both sides. (Copy “Respecting Differences” onto paper with three-hole punches so participants can keep it in their binder.)
11. Prepare transparencies of the two overheads.
12. Copy the goals of the session onto a flipchart. On a separate sheet of paper, copy the agenda.

An important note: Values are very personal: we all have strong feelings about what we believe in. At the same time, this sensitive subject is one which many of us have not thought explicitly about or verbalized. During this training session, however, participants will be asked to do exactly that. They will be identifying their values, looking at where they came from, and understanding the ways in which they affect their daily lives. This is an important part of helping your participants develop the ability to lead training activities that will, in turn, help their programs’ mentors be non-judgmental about values that mentees or mentees’ families may hold, which seem to conflict with their own values.

There may be a great range in the level of awareness your participants have about their personal values. Some may be attuned to their own values, recognize and understand the diversity of values that exist and the way that can contribute to the potential for conflict, and be able to verbalize all of this. Others may not have previously had the opportunity to reflect on their values and may be unfamiliar and uncomfortable with this approach. Be sensitive to this range and understand your role in gently helping your participants develop an appropriate level of awareness.

As a trainer, you will be presenting information, leading exercises, and modeling behavior. Take time to think about your own values, how they have been shaped, and how they influence your daily life. Work through the exercises in this module. The clearer you are about your own values, the less likely you are to impose them on others.

(Adapted with permission from the “Values Clarification Seminar,” p. 7. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.)



Materials

Trainer Resources

- Trainer Resource #1: Steps for Leading an Activity on “What I Value”
- Trainer Resource #2: Values
- Trainer Resource #3: Value-Laden Statements



Overheads

- Overhead #1: What If... (two pages)
- Overhead #2: Quote on Mentoring Relationships



Handouts

- Session Goals and Basics
- Agenda
- Handout #1: What If “Life Happens”?
- Handout #2: Guidelines for Small-Group Meeting
- Handout #3: Keeping the Relationships Going: Mentor Support Groups
- Handout #4: Three Things I Will Use
- Handout #5: Resources for Keeping the Relationships Going

Mentor Training Materials

- “Respecting Differences”

You Will Need To Supply

Flipcharts, easels, markers, and masking tape
An overhead projector

Activities

1. What's a Value?

Participants meet in groups to facilitate an icebreaker activity.

- Introduce yourself. Tell participants you want them to introduce themselves to each other.

Organize participants into three groups. (If you have fewer than 15 participants, organize them into two groups, because the groups should be fairly large.) Have each group pick a facilitator. If possible, it should be someone who has not yet done any practice facilitation during these JUMP trainings.



Give each group's facilitator a copy of Trainer Resource #1, "Steps for Leading an Activity on 'What I Value,'" and tell them to use it to lead the activity for her/his group. Give them a few minutes to read the trainer resource while the groups move to the spaces where they will be meeting. Make sure each group has a flipchart, easel, and markers.

Allow about 10 minutes for the small groups to meet and complete the "What I Value" activity.

- Bring the whole group back together. Have the small-group facilitators tape their group's brainstormed definitions of "values" to the wall in the front of the room.

Tell participants that, in a few minutes, you will be returning to those definitions.

- Note that this JUMP session helps participants get ready to provide a training workshop to their program's mentors that focuses on understanding their mentees' cultures and values, and on being nonjudgmental.

Using the flipchart you have prepared, describe the goals of this session. Then briefly review the agenda.

Check to be sure each person has the handouts for this session and a copy of "Respecting Differences." Note that "Respecting Differences" contains materials for the mentor training workshop, and you will be focusing on those materials during much of the session.



- Refer participants to page 1 of their handouts, “Session Goals and Basics.”

Review the four “basics” that are listed there. Note that the first “basic” is that values can be difficult for people to talk about, and even the word “values” is hard to define.

Point out that the introductory activity which participants just led themselves through is also the introductory activity in “Respecting Differences.”

Ask them to reflect on the experience of participating in that activity. Did it help them begin, in a non-threatening way, to think about their personal values? Do they have other ideas for an ice-breaker activity that could achieve that goal?

- Then lead the group in a discussion of the brainstormed definitions of “values” that are listed on the flipchart pages, and help them arrive at a few agreed-upon definitions for “values.” As part of the discussion, ask participants for examples of values. Record their examples on the flipchart. (Trainer Resource #2, “Values,” provides background points for this discussion.)



2. Respecting Differences

Participants review materials for training mentors to be nonjudgmental.

- Refer participants to “Respecting Differences,” materials for planning and delivering a training workshop that focuses on helping mentors understand and respect cultural and value differences, and on being nonjudgmental with their mentees when those differences manifest themselves. (You can note that this is the seventh training topic listed in the “Checklist: Mentor Trainings” handout that was included in the session on “JUMPstarting Your Mentors.”)
- Give the 5-to-10 minute overview of “Respecting Differences” that you have prepared. Allow opportunities for participants’ questions and comments during your presentation.

Ideally, your participants should have received and read “Respecting Differences” in advance of this session. If they have, you can move more quickly through the overview.

Your overview should cover:

1. *The way the materials are organized.*

Note that there is introductory material (workshop goals, the agenda, information about what is provided and what facilitators need to provide, preparation tips for this workshop, and general facilitation tips); information for facilitating five activities and an optional “Values Voting” activity; facilitator resources, handouts to use during the session, and an evaluation form.

2. *The content of a mentor training workshop based on these materials.*

Review the four goals on page 1 of “Respecting Differences.” Describe how the materials contain an icebreaker (the “What I Value” activity that participants have just completed), and other activities geared toward meeting these goals. The activities help mentors understand their own and their mentee’s values, and involve them in role-plays where they can practice responding nonjudgmentally and supportively to their mentee.

Tell participants that in a few minutes, they are going to work with some of the activities that are included in “Respecting Differences.” Ask if they have any questions about the materials.

3. Values Voting

Participants take a stand based on their values.

- Note that it is important for facilitators to honestly examine their own values and biases before leading a training workshop about values. Tell participants that to help them prepare to facilitate the “Respecting Differences” workshop, you want to do an exercise designed to explore personal values. Explain that they will be asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with various statements.

Post the three signs you have prepared—STRONGLY AGREE, UNSURE, and STRONGLY DISAGREE—across one side of the room. Tell the participants to imagine there is a line that begins at the sign reading STRONGLY AGREE, extends through the sign reading UNSURE, and ends at the sign reading STRONGLY DISAGREE.

They should listen to each of the statements that is read, decide whether they agree or disagree with it, and then walk to the sign that describes their opinion. If they do not have an opinion, they should stand near UNSURE. If they agree but would not use the word “strongly,” they should stand at an appropriate place along the imaginary line between STRONGLY AGREE and UNSURE. If they disagree but not strongly, they should stand at the appropriate place between STRONGLY DISAGREE and UNSURE.

Tell them not to worry about where other people stand—they should stand in the spot that honestly indicates how they feel. There are no right or wrong answers, only individual values. They should be prepared to share with the group their reasons for standing at a particular point on the imaginary line.



- Read the first statement you have chosen from Trainer Resource #3, “Value-Laden Statements” (or from statements you have created yourself).

Allow participants enough time to think about the statement and move to the place where they want to stand. Once people are still, ask for volunteers to explain why they chose to stand at a particular place and what values underlie that stance. Be sure to have people with differing points of view share their reasons for, and values underlying, their stance.

Repeat the process with one or two additional statements, keeping in mind that what is most important about this learning experience is participants’ sharing and discussion of their values.

- Ask participants to reflect on the experience of doing the “values voting” activity. Was it difficult for them to take a public “stand” for any of the statements? To explain their stand?

(Activity adapted from “Revisiting Values: How Do They Influence You?” *Practical Education for Citizenship and Employment: Personal Development*. 1992. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.)

4. What If “Life Happens”?

The group discusses challenges that can arise for facilitators during training workshops.

- Ask participants to think about what could go wrong while they are facilitating the “values voting” activity for a group of mentors.

Possibilities include: someone becoming disruptive, conversations becoming too heated and off the track, the activity taking longer than they had scheduled for it.

As they give responses, list them on the flipchart. Review the list and ask for suggestions about how, as facilitators, they might deal with those challenges. (Maybe some of them actually occurred during “Values Voting” and you modeled effective ways of dealing with them!)

- Note that training sessions that address sensitive issues such as values can be particularly challenging for facilitators. As the participants have just described, a number of things can happen that could push the session off track. And as they probably know from their own experiences, life does not always go smoothly in trainings on even fairly neutral subjects.

Explain that you want to briefly digress from the topic of values to review a few of the things they should be alert for as they are facilitating training sessions for their mentors.

Refer participants to Handout #1, “What If ‘Life Happens’?” (Overhead #1, “What If...,” reproduces major items on the handout.) Allow a couple of minutes for them to read it.

Lead a discussion about items on the handout that you have not just covered during the discussion of potential “Values Voting” problems. If any of your participants have previous experience facilitating, ask them to provide illustrative anecdotes and helpful tips based on those experiences. Or they may have participated in training sessions where “life happened” and they can talk about the problems from the training participants’ point of view. You can also offer your own anecdotes and tips. (You want this discussion to be fairly brief because there is much more material to cover during this session, so don’t let “life happen” here!)



Ask if there are other things that can go wrong, from a facilitator’s point of view, during a training workshop. If there are additional items—and tips for handling them—have participants add them to their handout.

5. Helping the Relationships Grow

Small groups explore ways to help their mentors learn to value differences.

- Tell participants that now you want them to meet in small groups to explore activities that can help their mentors learn to recognize and understand their mentee’s values. During these small-group meetings, they should think about everything they have been discussing thus far during this session—including values and the potential challenges of facilitating trainings that focus on values.

Organize the participants into small groups of about 5 people. While the groups could be randomly organized, it is worth trying to have as many groups as possible organized around a common characteristic of their mentees or mentors. For example, if there are enough participants whose programs primarily serve gang members, organize them into one group. Or, if there are a number of programs whose mentors are primarily college students, organize them into one group.



Refer participants to Handout #2, “Guidelines for Small-Group Meeting,” and briefly review it. Make sure each group has a flipchart, easel, markers, and masking tape.

Allow about 20 minutes for each group to meet and complete its work. (Give a “5-minute warning” after 15 minutes so the groups know they have to begin to wrap-up.)

- Bring all the participants back together. Ask each small group to give a 3-minute presentation on the ideas and strategies it discussed for training mentors to recognize and respond nonjudgmentally to potential value differences with their mentees. Allow time for questions after each presentation.

6. Now What? Providing Ongoing Support and Training

Participants discuss strategies for providing support groups for their program's mentors.



- As a backdrop for the following discussion, display Overhead #2, with this quote:

“A mentoring relationship is like any other relationship. You have to keep rebuilding trust.”

—Former director of Sponsor-A-Scholar, a mentoring program in Philadelphia

Ask participants what kinds of ongoing support their program currently provides for mentors.

In almost all cases, program staff or the school coordinator will check-in regularly with mentors by phone. But you also want to know if any of the programs have mentor support groups or in-service trainings.

If any of the participants say their programs have mentor support groups, have him/her describe them. Otherwise, raise the subject of mentor support groups yourself.

Refer back to the quote and ask participants to brainstorm possible benefits of these support groups.

Possible responses include: mentor-mentee relationships change over time and new challenges and frustrations can arise; more experienced mentors have much to share with newer mentors; group learning can help all participants think more clearly about problems and arrive at creative solutions together.

Acknowledge that there are also challenges involved in having these groups—for example, mentors' time availability and having good attendance at group meetings. Ask for suggestions about dealing with these challenges.



- Refer participants to Handout #3, “Keeping the Relationships Going: Mentor Support Groups.” Allow a few minutes for them to read it.

Then review the handout, encouraging participants to talk about whether this approach would work for their mentors and how they would implement it. (You can also note that the session on “JUMP-

starting *Your Mentors*” has a handout called, “Checklist: Mentor Trainings.” The checklist includes a number of areas in which programs might want to provide in-service trainings for their mentors—for example, skills for setting limits with their mentee; potential issues with mentees’ families; child abuse, including neglect; teen sexual activity and pregnancy; alcohol and other drug issues; and domestic violence.)



- Now refer participants to Handout #4, “Three Things I Will Use.” Ask them to write down three things they learned during this session that they will apply at their programs. These might be facilitation strategies, content for mentor training sessions, or anything else.

Ask for a few volunteers to read one of their items.



Refer them to Handout #5, “Resources for Keeping the Relationships Going,” for information on other mentor training curricula and materials, and a useful Web site.



Steps for Leading an Activity on "What I Value"

1. Introduce yourself, welcome your group members, and tell them you want them to introduce themselves.
2. Ask them to look in their purses/wallets/briefcases/pockets or on themselves and find something that represents or symbolizes some aspect of their values or lifestyle. (Examples include a photograph, a piece of jewelry, an organization membership card, and almost anything else.)
3. When all of your group members have found something, ask each to give her or his name, show the chosen item, and explain why that item is representative or symbolic for her or him. (You can model this exercise by first showing and explaining an item that is important to you.)
4. After everyone has introduced herself or himself in this way, point out that what they have chosen may symbolize a value.
5. Ask group members to brainstorm a definition of "values." As they do, write their responses on the flipchart.

(Adapted with permission from the "Values Clarification Seminar," p. 11. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.)



Values

Values are general principles that are of fundamental importance to people. Examples include equality, tolerance, honesty, privacy, security, education, and service. People generally feel very strongly about their values, although they may find them difficult to discuss or describe. A person's values greatly affect her or his:

- **Opinions:** Views or judgments about a particular matter.
- **Beliefs:** Ideas of what is true that are strongly supported by evidence or feelings.
- **Attitudes:** Feelings or emotions about things.

A person's individual values may develop during childhood as a result of the influence of family, peers, religion, culture, and/or society in general. Values may also change over time.

Values influence a person's most important decisions about education, work, friends, sexual relationships, and parenting.

(Adapted from "Examining Your Values—What's Important to You?," p. 17. *Practical Education for Citizenship and Employment: Personal Development*. 1992. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.)



Value-Laden Statements

Choose two or three of these statements to use during the “values voting” activity, or develop statements of your own.

1. It should be illegal to own a handgun.
2. Homeless people should not be allowed to sleep in public parks.
3. People who knowingly infect others with HIV should be sentenced to jail.
4. Women, not men, should take the primary responsibility for birth control.
5. It should be legal for lesbian and gay couples to get married.
6. Young women who wear revealing clothes are looking for trouble.
7. Young people should not talk back to adults.
8. Prayers should be allowed in public schools.
9. Condoms should be distributed in high schools.
10. There is sometimes a good reason for a man to hit his wife or girlfriend.
11. The government should provide free child care for all working mothers.
12. Women who are addicted to illegal drugs should lose custody of their children.



What if...

- **One of your participants is disruptive?**
- **You notice that participants' eyes are glazing over?**
- **You don't have enough participants for group work you have planned?**
- **There's a heated discussion that is moving the group off track?**



- **Participants want to spend much longer on an activity than you had planned?**
- **You realize you're going to run out of time before you've accomplished your goals?**



“A mentoring relationship is like any other relationship. You have to keep rebuilding trust.”

—Former director of Sponsor-A-Scholar, a mentoring program in Philadelphia



Handouts

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Keeping the

Relationships Going



Session Goals

- To identify and talk about some of your own important values
- To examine problems that can arise when you are facilitating a training session on values
- To explore activities that can help your program's mentors learn to understand and respect their mentee's culture and values
- To discuss strategies for providing ongoing training and support for your mentors

The Basics

1. Values can be difficult for people to talk about. Even the word "values" is difficult to define.
2. There are often significant differences between a mentor and mentee in socioeconomic status and/or racial and ethnic background. Training mentors in understanding and respecting these and other forms of diversity will benefit the mentor-mentee relationship.
3. When mentors understand the ways that a mentee's personal values might manifest themselves in their relationship, they will be more able to respond nonjudgmentally to their mentee.
4. It is important for facilitators to examine their own values and biases before leading training sessions on these topics.



Agenda

1. What's a Value?

Notes: _____

2. Respecting Differences

Notes: _____

3. Values Voting

Notes: _____

4. What If "Life Happens"?

Notes: _____

5. Helping the Relationships Grow

Notes: _____

6. Now What? Providing Ongoing Support and Training

Notes: _____



What If “Life Happens”?

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Nothing in life goes perfectly all the time, and facilitating training workshops is no exception. Despite all your planning and skillful facilitation, things can (and sometimes will) become unexpectedly challenging. Below are suggestions for handling some of those awkward situations.

1. What if one of your participants is disruptive?

Try to figure out the cause of the disruption. Does the person seem to have a need to dominate? Is it someone who seems to enjoy arguing with the facilitator (like a participant who always says, “Yeah, I tried that and it doesn’t work”)? Different strategies will work for different types of disruption. Here are a few ideas:

- Stand next to the person.
- Say, “Can we hear from others who haven’t contributed yet?”
- If the person is beating a dead horse, you can say, “Let’s put this issue up on the flipchart to try to address later. For now, we’ll go back to the agenda and our goals.”
- Switch to a small-group or paired activity so the disruptive person no longer has the stage.
- Take a short break in the training and talk with the person individually to see how his or her needs might be better met.

2. What if you notice that participants’ eyes are glazing over?

- Ask yourself if you’re talking too much without giving the participants a chance to contribute.
- Get the participants engaged in an activity where they have to do the thinking.
- Do a reality check. Are you addressing the needs that participants have come with?

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- Do another reality check. Do you all need a break? Pass out Hershey's Kisses and caffeinated coffee or soda.
- Inject some humor—fast.

3. What if you don't have enough participants for group work you have planned?

- Use pairs instead.
- Change the activity so it is a whole-group activity, and change the layout of the room so that the group is sitting in a circle.

4. What if there's a heated discussion that is moving the group off track and taking up too much time?

- Say, "Let's stay with this discussion for two more minutes." Then, after two minutes, sum up what's been said and move on.
- Refer back to the agenda and goals and say, "We need to move on, so let's have two or three final comments on the topic."
- Say, "We need to move on if we are to accomplish our goals, but those who are interested in continuing the discussion can meet afterwards," and offer to find a meeting room for them. Or suggest that they get together at lunch or dinner to continue their conversation.

5. What if participants want to spend much longer on an activity than you had planned?

- Acknowledge their interest in the topic, and refer to the agenda and goals. Give them the choice of staying with the activity or moving on to the rest of the agenda.
- Let them keep going with the activity and then move quickly through the rest of the agenda (so they don't even notice the difference!).

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6. What if you realize you're going to run out of time before you've accomplished your goals?

- Move quickly through the rest of the agenda. Cover everything, even though the coverage will not be as deep.
- Stop the activities a little earlier than planned and have a longer wrap-up session where you talk about the topics you didn't get to. Relate those topics to the workshop's goals. Give participants the handouts.
- Get through as much as you can. At the end of the workshop, mention to participants what you did not get through and give them the handouts.

Other:

Other:



Guidelines for Small-Group Meetings

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During this meeting, your group will explore activities that can help your mentors learn to recognize and understand their mentee's values.

Select a group leader/facilitator. That person will guide you through the following steps.

1. Allow a few minutes for everyone to quickly read Activities #2, 3, and 4 (“Understanding Values,” “Put Yourself in Your Mentee’s Shoes,” and “Responding Positively”) in “Respecting Differences.”
2. Tape two sheets from the flipchart to the wall. Title one, “Values and/or cultural characteristics of my program’s mentors,” and the other, “Values and/or cultural characteristics of children/youth my program serves.”

Tell your group members, as they finish reading, to come up and write one or two relevant items about their program’s mentors and children/youth on the appropriate lists.

3. Review the lists that your group has just compiled on the flipchart. Have group members volunteer to talk about the areas where differences in values/culture between their mentors and mentees could lead to challenges that might make it difficult for the relationship to flourish. Write their major points on the flipchart.
4. Note that the three activities they have just read in “Respecting Differences” are intended to: 1) have mentors identify some of their own personal values; 2) have them identify some of their mentee’s personal values; and 3) role-play situations in which their own and their mentee’s values seem to be in conflict. (The situations are included on the facilitator resource, “Skill-Building Scenarios.”)

Given what your group members have just discussed about their mentors and mentees, how would they use or adapt these activities to help their mentors develop an understanding of their mentee’s (and mentee’s families’) culture and values? For example:

- Would the approach in these activities work with their mentors?
- Would they use role-plays to help their mentors develop the ability to respond nonjudgmentally? Why or why not?
- What other approaches could they use instead?
- If they do use role-plays, how might they need to adapt the scenarios in the facilitator resource, “Skill-Building Scenarios”?

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- Are there other materials, beyond the handouts included in “Respecting Differences,” that they would want to give their mentors?
5. Now have your group members think about their own experiences in the “values” activities they did earlier in this training session and about the “What If ‘Life Happens?’” discussion. What particular challenges/problems might arise as they are facilitating a workshop on “Respecting Differences” with their programs’ mentors? How could they prepare for the workshop in order to avoid or alleviate the potential problems?
 6. Each small group will make a brief (about 3 minute) presentation to the whole group about the ideas and strategies it has been discussing. Decide who in your group will make that presentation.



Keeping the Relationships Going: Mentor Support Groups

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Providing opportunities for your mentors to come together for an hour or two once a month (or bimonthly, or quarterly, depending on your mentors' time availability) can be an effective strategy for helping mentor-mentee relationships endure and grow. It allows mentors the opportunity to discuss challenges they are facing and to share their own approaches and successes. It also provides an opportunity for you to provide training in specific areas your mentors have requested.

One suggested format for these monthly meetings follows. You may want to modify the format so that it suits your particular program and mentors.

1. Have the mentors re-introduce themselves.
2. Go around the table, inviting each mentor to share something valuable that she or he has learned during the past month about mentoring children/youth. At the same time, encourage people to raise any questions they may have. Questions you can ask include:

What is going well? What has worked for you?

What personal learning would you be willing to share with the group today?

What hasn't been going so well?

Is there a specific question you would like answered or a specific problem you would like help in addressing?

Record responses on a flipchart: make one list of what has been going well and what they have learned; and make another list of questions and problems.

3. Review the questions/problems list to see which items overlap or fit into similar categories. On another sheet of the flipchart, re-list the questions/problems so they are organized by these categories.
4. Working through the categories, have the group collaborate in answering questions and suggesting solutions to the problems. (You might also want to invite an outside "expert" to attend the meeting to serve as a problem-solving resource.) If the group is large, you can organize participants into two or three smaller groups, with each small group working on part of the list. The small groups should then report out to the whole group.

To help participants (or the small groups of participants) become involved in addressing the questions/problems, you can ask, for example:

Does anyone want to respond to this question?

Has anyone faced this type of situation? How did you respond to it? What was the outcome of the way you dealt with it?

How might you approach this challenge? What would some of you have done in this type of situation?

5. If you are also using this session to provide training on a special topic—such as dealing with the children/youth’s families, understanding child development, or being able to talk to mentees about sexual behavior—you should provide that training after the group discussion of problems. As an alternative, you can schedule those training sessions for a separate time.
6. At the end of each mentor support session or in-service training session, give each participant a short evaluation form to complete. On the form, include a space where they can indicate topics they would like to receive more training in. Have them complete the form before they leave the room.
7. Be sure to provide refreshments during the sessions. If they take place around a mealtime, provide pizza or other food that serves as a meal.

[Meeting format adapted with permission from *Everyday Heroes: A Guidebook For Mentors*. 1998. Jim Kavanaugh. Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, “Los Sabios.” Albuquerque, New Mexico.]



Three Things I Will Use

Briefly describe three things you learned during this session that you will use at your program. These might be facilitation strategies, content for mentor training sessions, or anything else.

1.

2.

3.



Resources for Keeping the Relationships Going

Curriculum

EMPOWER: Child Sexual Abuse Education and Prevention Program. 1989. Catalina Herrerias. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Includes comprehensive materials for providing training on this topic to mentors, parents, and youth. Available through Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 230 North 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 567-7000, national@bbbsa.org.

Mentor Training Curriculum. 1991. National Mentoring Working Group. Washington, D.C. Available through the National Mentoring Partnership, (202) 338-3844; or through the “Volunteer Marketplace Catalog,” (800) 272-8306.

Volunteer Education and Development Manual. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Available through Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, 230 North 13th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 567-7000, national@bbbsa.org.

Other print material

Everyday Heroes: A Guidebook For Mentors. 1998. Jim Kavanaugh. Developed by the founders of the Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, “Los Sabios,” in New Mexico, this guide was written to help adults become caring and supportive mentors, and is a useful training resource. Available through the Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, 1016 Juan Tabo Boulevard NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87112, (505) 271-2066.

How To Be a Great Mentor. 1999. A guide produced by Kaplan, *Newsweek*, and the National Mentoring Partnership. Available through the National Mentoring Partnership, (202) 338-3844.

A useful Web site

www.mentoring.org

The National Mentoring Partnership—includes information to help mentors develop effective approaches and address challenges that may be arising in their relationships with their mentees.

Respecting Differences

*Materials to help you
plan and deliver
a training session
for mentors*

Time: 2 to 2½ hours
Limit: 20 participants

The best time to give this training session: during the first month that mentors have been meeting with their mentees

Introduction

Goals

To help mentors understand the ways that differing values and cultures could affect their relationship with their mentee. By the end of the workshop, they should have:

- Explored their own and their mentee's values
- Developed an understanding of the ways that personal values manifest themselves in daily life
- Identified situations in which a seeming conflict between their own and their mentee's values has led, or could lead, to discomfort in the relationship
- Practiced ways to respond positively and supportively to their mentee when those situations occur

Agenda

1. What I Value (15 minutes)
2. Understanding Values (25 minutes)
3. Put Yourself In Your Mentee's Shoes (25 minutes)
4. Responding Positively (50 minutes)
5. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

(There is also an optional "Values Voting" activity that can be used after "Understanding Values.")

Included Here Are

- Suggested activities, in a suggested sequence, that you can use or modify to meet the particular needs of your program
- Handouts that you can use or modify, and an evaluation form for participants to complete at the end of the session
- Resources, notes, and training tips for facilitators

Materials You Will Need To Provide

- Copies of handouts and any other materials you have prepared for participants
- Copies of the evaluation form
- If you are doing the optional “Values Voting” activity: three signs—**STRONGLY AGREE, UNSURE, and STRONGLY DISAGREE**
- A flipchart, an easel, marking pens, and masking tape
- The overheads you prepare, and an overhead projector
- Name tags
- Index cards

Notes For Facilitators

Preparation Tips

1. Values are very personal. We all have strong feelings about what we believe in. At the same time, this sensitive subject is one that many of us have not thought explicitly about or verbalized. During this training workshop, however, participants will be asked to do exactly that. They will be identifying their values, looking at where those values came from, and understanding the ways in which values affect their daily lives. This is an important part of helping them, as mentors, develop the ability to be nonjudgmental about values that mentees or mentees' families may hold which seem to conflict with their own values.

There may be a great range in the level of awareness your participants have about their personal values. Some may be attuned to their own values and recognize the diversity of values. They may have a good understanding of how that diversity can contribute to conflict, and be able to verbalize all of this. Others may not have previously had the opportunity to reflect on their values and may be unfamiliar and uncomfortable with this approach. Be sensitive to this range and understand your role in gently helping your participants develop an appropriate level of awareness.

As a facilitator, you will be presenting information, leading exercises, and modeling behavior. Take time to think about your own values, how they have been shaped, and how they influence your daily life. Work through the exercises in this curriculum. The clearer you are about your own values, the less likely you are to impose them on others.

[Adapted with permission from the "Values Clarification Seminar," p. 7. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.]

2. These materials include a number of facilitator resources and handouts for participants. Read them all carefully.
3. Decide if you are going to use the "Values Voting" activity that is described in a facilitator resource. If you do include this activity, you will need to shorten or eliminate other activities, or lengthen the time of the training workshop.
4. Review the scenarios that are provided for Activity #4, "Responding Positively." Adapt them, as necessary, so they realistically reflect your program, or develop new scenarios. Write each scenario you plan to use during Activity #4 on a separate page of the flipchart.

5. Prepare overheads to use during discussions.
6. If applicable, be prepared to talk about the cultural characteristics and values that are most typical among the children and youth your program serves.

Facilitation Tips

“Facilitate” means “to make easier.” Think about yourself as a “facilitator”—someone who helps mentors learn, rather than as someone who attempts to impose learning upon them. “Facilitating” suggests the idea of a collaborative relationship between the trainer and participants. A facilitator is a:

- Coach
- Listener
- Trainer
- Learner
- Manager of group process

What follows are some good practices for facilitating.

1. Before the training session:

- **Take time to plan carefully.** Customize activities and handouts so they best address characteristics of your program. Be prepared to offer real-life examples that illustrate your program’s experiences. Think about how you will facilitate the session, and be prepared to make on-the-spot adjustments if, for example, an activity is not working well or you find you need to spend more time on one activity and thus have to shorten another.
- **Select a space for the training that is physically comfortable and contributes to group interaction.** Avoid a traditional classroom setup. Depending on the size of your group, have a table large enough for all the participants to sit around, or multiple tables (square or round) for smaller groups to sit around. If that is not possible, arrange chairs in a circle—this will facilitate discussion. If small groups are going to be meeting as part of the activities, make sure there are rooms available nearby, or be sure the training room is large enough that small groups can meet within it without distracting each other.

- **Have everything ready.** Copy handouts and prepare overheads. Gather any required materials and equipment: flipcharts, markers, masking tape, name tags, an overhead projector (and extension cord, if necessary), and anything else you might need for the session.
- **Arrive early.** Get to the training room about 30 minutes ahead of time to set up the area: arrange chairs, do any necessary advance writing on the flipchart, and check equipment. Be sure that refreshments (coffee, water, soft drinks, etc.) are available.

2. During the session:

- **Create a comfortable learning environment.** Be sure participants can hear each other as they speak. Create an atmosphere where people are taken seriously and where they can also laugh—people are usually most open to new ideas when they are enjoying themselves and feel comfortable enough to risk making mistakes. Think about ways to inject humor into the training session. Using relevant cartoons as overheads, for example, or telling funny anecdotes about experiences of mentors, can help create an open and friendly atmosphere.
- **Pace the training appropriately.** Encourage the exchange of ideas and information, while also keeping activities on track. Move things quickly enough to keep participants from being bored but slowly enough to make sure they absorb what is being discussed. Allow time throughout the session for participants to ask questions. Where appropriate, involve the whole group in answering questions. But also have a feel for which questions should be answered quickly so the session can proceed.
- **Model good listening, feedback, and problem-solving skills—the skills that mentors need.** Listen carefully and respectfully. Acknowledge what people say even if you don't agree. Maintain eye contact with each person as he or she speaks. Monitor your nonverbal signals as well as your verbal comments. Be nonjudgmental. Respond by guiding, not imposing. Repeat and address key points. Help participants develop collaborative problem-solving skills by involving them in answering other participants' questions and having them work together to arrive at solutions to problems.
- **Keep this point in mind: People remember about 20 percent of what they hear; 40 percent of what they hear and see; and 80 percent of what they discover for themselves.** Use overheads and flipcharts to help people see and remember. Flipcharts are a useful tool for group thinking and problem solving.

Summarize major discussion points on flipcharts, and post the pages on the walls around the room so you and your group can keep referring back to, and expanding upon, earlier ideas and contributions.

- **Build in success.** People learn best when they experience success frequently. Structure activities so participants have a sense of accomplishment at the end of each. Structure the training session so participants' sense of accomplishment grows throughout.
- **Be yourself.** Have a sense of humor. And know your limitations. If you don't know the answer to a question, that's OK. You don't need to know all the answers. Just say you will try to find the information they requested and get back to them.

3. After the session:

- **Use an evaluation form to get feedback from participants.** Distribute it at the end of the session, and ask participants to complete it before they leave.
- **Reflect on what worked well and what did not.** Use the information from participants' evaluations to help you think through what worked well from their point of view, what you need to modify about the content, and what facilitation skills you want to strengthen. Along with participants' feedback, give yourself your own feedback on the training. Think about the situations when participants seemed involved, bored, stimulated, confused, angry, or having fun. Based on your self-observations, make necessary adjustments in session content and your facilitation strategies.
- **Follow up on information you promised participants you would get for them.** During the training session, keep a "to do" list of information (or answers to questions) that you tell participants you will obtain for them. Try to get the information, and then contact the participants who requested it. If you can't find the information (or the answer to a question), contact the participant to let him or her know about the situation.

Activities

Activity #1: What I Value

- Introduce yourself. Welcome the mentors and describe the goals and agenda of this training session.
- Ask the participants to look in their purses/wallets/briefcases/pockets or on themselves and find something that represents or symbolizes some aspect of their values or lifestyle. (Examples include a photograph, a piece of jewelry, an organization membership card, and almost anything else.)
- When all of the participants have found something, go around the room asking each to give her or his name, show the chosen item, and explain why that item is representative or symbolic for her or him. (You can model this exercise by first showing and explaining an item that is important to you.)
- After everyone has introduced herself or himself in this way, point out that what they have chosen may symbolize a value.

[Adapted with permission from the “Values Clarification Seminar,” p. 11. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.]

Activity #2: Understanding Values

- Write the word “values” on the flipchart. Ask participants to define the word, and write their responses on the flipchart. (This is a brainstorming activity, so at this point, just list their responses without any discussion.)

Have the group discuss the responses and arrive at some agreed definitions for “values.” (See the facilitator resource, “Values,” for a possible definition.)

Then ask them for examples of values, and list their responses on the flipchart.

- Ask the participants to think about the values that are particularly important to them personally—values that influence how they lead their daily lives.

Distribute an index card to each participant. Ask them, on the front of the card, to list two or three of their important personal values.

Ask for volunteers to read one of their values and briefly describe how it manifests itself in their daily life.

- Now ask the group to brainstorm answers to this question: “From where do people get their values?” Again, list the responses on the flipchart.

Review the list, asking participants to give examples of how their current values have been shaped by such factors as their family background, gender, race or ethnicity, socioeconomic class, religion, the community where they grew up, or an experience or series of experiences. (You can give an example from your own life to get the conversation started.)

- Try to draw together the discussions in this activity by noting some of the similarities and differences among participants' values, and by observing that values are not right or wrong. We may sometimes feel uncomfortable about another person's values, but it's good to remember that the same people may feel uncomfortable about our values.

[Adapted with permission from the "Values Clarification Seminar," pp. 13-14. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.]

Note: If you are including the optional "Values Voting" activity in this training, this is a good point in the workshop to use it. See the facilitator resource, "Values Voting," for guidelines on how to conduct this activity.

Activity #3: Put Yourself In Your Mentee's Shoes

- Ask participants to think for a minute about some of the values that are important to the child or youth they are mentoring.

Then ask them to write down one or two of those values on the back of their index card.

Remind participants about the confidentiality requirements of your program and that any information they hear during this session about any children or youth (or their families) cannot be repeated.

Then ask for volunteers to read one of their mentee's values and explain how they know it is the child/youth's value—in other words, how has that value shown up during one of their meetings? (As participants speak, you can make a list on the flipchart of the values they mention.)

- Review the list of mentees' values that you have recorded on the flipchart. Lead a discussion in which participants note the extent to which those values are the same as, or different from, the values they identified for themselves in the previous activity.

Refer participants to the list of "where values come from" that they generated during the previous activity when they were discussing their own values. Ask

them to now “put themselves in their mentees’ shoes.” Then lead a discussion that addresses these two topics:

1. *Where do their mentees’ values come from? (In general, they would arise from the same sources as the mentors’ values—family, ethnicity, community, etc.)*
2. *To what extent are the sources of mentees’ values different in specifics—although the broad categories are the same—than the sources of participants’ values? How are they different? For example, what is different about mentees’ ethnic backgrounds and their traditions and beliefs? What is different about mentees’ family life? About the communities that they are growing up in?*

Record participants’ major points on the flipchart.

(Handout A, “Dealing with Diversity” addresses many of the points that you are also addressing in this discussion. You probably do not want to spend much, if any, time specifically reviewing the handout during this workshop. However, refer to it here, and be sure that participants receive a copy at the end of the session.)

- Now ask participants if differences between their own and their mentees’ values have ever led them (the participants) to feel uncomfortable, or if the differences have been a potential source of conflict. Encourage them to give examples and to discuss how they tried to handle the situation. As participants talk about those experiences, ask if other members of the group have had similar experiences and, if so, how they have responded to those situations.
- Copy this quote (or another quote you want to use) onto the flipchart or display an overhead you have made of it:

“Problems are only opportunities with thorns on them.”
—Hugh Miller

Ask the group to think for a minute about the meaning of the quote, and say that you will return to it in a few minutes.

- Distribute Handout B, “Cultural Sensitivity,” and allow participants a minute to read it, noting that you want to focus on the bulleted items.

Review the information on the handout. (It is a good idea to have prepared an overhead of the bulleted items, so you can display them during the discussion.)

Then ask the group to think back to the quote, “Problems are only opportuni-

ties...” Ask them to identify the opportunities that are present in an apparent values conflict with their mentee. (They might say, for example, that it is an opportunity for them to learn about their mentee, and to help their mentee clarify his or her feelings, figure out how to solve a problem, or think more clearly about one of his or her values. They should also see that it is not an opportunity to be judgmental, to give unwanted advice, to impose their own values, or to act like an authority figure.)

Write their responses on the flipchart. At the end of the discussion, review the list and see if there is anything they want to change or add.

Activity #4: Responding Positively

- Tell participants that now you want them to apply some of the ideas they have been talking about during this session by role-playing conversations with their mentees about potentially difficult, value-laden issues. (Your mentors should have participated in a previous training that focused on communication skills—and, in particular, active listening. If you think it is necessary, you may want to briefly review the key elements of being an active listener. A facilitator resource, “I Hear You,” is included for this purpose.)

Organize participants into small groups of three people. (If your program matches male mentors with boys and female mentors with girls, organize each group so all three members are of the same gender.) Give each group one of the scenarios that you have prepared on the flipchart. Tell the groups you want them to (write these instructions on the flipchart):

1. Discuss their scenario, identifying the issues that are involved and the values that seem to be underlying those issues. (Depending on a small group’s gender makeup, that group may need to switch the gender of the hypothetical mentee. For example, if a small group that includes only women is given a scenario about a boy, they should change the boy’s name and identity to a girl’s name and identity. That way, the role-play will involve a same-gender match.)
2. Use the scenario as the basis for two role-plays of a conversation between the mentor and child/youth. The first role-play should exemplify how the mentor should not respond. The second role-play should exemplify a more positive response. One of the group’s members should play the role of the mentee in

both role-plays. The other two group members should play the role of the poorly responding mentor and the effectively responding mentor.

Allow 15 minutes for the small groups to complete their discussion and role-plays.

- Bring the whole group back together. Ask for a small group to volunteer to give its role-plays. The volunteer group should describe the scenario, note what the major issues and underlying values were, and give both its negative and positive role-plays.

After each role-play, have other participants give feedback. They should talk about what the mentor said and did to either block or foster a positive conversation. Did the mentor say or do anything that would build trust or help clarify the situation for the mentee? Did the mentor help the mentee feel more positively about, or more in control of, the situation?

As time allows, have other small groups describe their scenarios, present their role-plays, and receive feedback.

[This activity is adapted with permission from “Communication Skills Seminar,” pp. 17-18. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.]

Activity #5: Wrap-Up

- Write this (or another quote) on the flipchart, or display it on an overhead:

“Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things, I am tempted to think...there are no little things.”

—Bruce Barton

Ask the participants to think for a minute about this quote in connection with their mentoring relationship. What are the “little things” they can do (and what are the “little things” they should avoid doing) to show understanding of, and respect for, their mentee’s culture, values, and concerns? What are the “tremendous consequences” that can result from those “little things”?

- Distribute Handout C, “After This Session I Will...,” and ask participants to write down three things they have learned during this session that they will apply in their mentoring relationship. They should also describe *how* they will apply that learning.

Allow a few minutes for them to complete the handout. Then ask for a few volunteers to share one of their items.

- Thank the participants for their attendance and involvement. Distribute the evaluation form, and ask everyone to complete one and return it to you before leaving. Note that the evaluation form includes space for them to suggest topics for future training sessions.

Facilitator Resource: Values

Values are general principles that are of fundamental importance to people. Examples include equality, tolerance, honesty, privacy, security, education, and service. People generally feel very strongly about their values, although they may find them difficult to discuss or describe. A person's values greatly affect her or his:

- **Opinions:** Views or judgments about a particular matter.
- **Beliefs:** Ideas of what is true that are strongly supported by evidence or feelings.
- **Attitudes:** Feelings or emotions about things.

A person's individual values may develop during childhood as a result of the influence of family, peers, religion, culture, and/or society in general. Values may also change over time.

Values influence a person's most important decisions about education, work, friends, sexual relationships, and parenting.

[Adapted from "Examining Your Values—What's Important to You?," p. 17. *Practical Education for Citizenship and Employment: Personal Development*. 1992. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.]

Facilitator Resource: Values Voting

- Explain to participants that the following exercise is designed to explore personal values. They will be asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with various statements.
- Post the three signs you have prepared—STRONGLY AGREE, UNSURE, and STRONGLY DISAGREE—across one side of the room. Tell the participants to imagine there is a line that begins at the sign reading STRONGLY AGREE, extends through the sign reading UNSURE, and ends at the sign reading STRONGLY DISAGREE.

They should listen to each of the statements that is read, decide whether they agree or disagree with it, and then walk to the sign that describes their opinion. If they do not have an opinion, they should stand near UNSURE. If they agree but would not use the word “strongly,” they should stand at an appropriate place along the imaginary line between STRONGLY AGREE and UNSURE. If they disagree but not strongly, they should stand at the appropriate place between STRONGLY DISAGREE and UNSURE.

Tell them not to worry about where other people stand—they should stand in the spot that honestly indicates how they feel. There are no right or wrong answers, only individual values. They should be prepared to share with the group their reasons for standing at a particular point on the imaginary line.

- Read the first statement you have chosen from the list of “Value-Laden Statements” on the next page (or statements you have created yourself).

Allow participants enough time to think about the statement and move to the place where they want to stand. Once people are still, ask for volunteers to explain why they chose to stand at a particular place and what values underlie that stance. Be sure to have people with differing points of view share their reasons for, and values underlying, their stance.

- Repeat the process with three or four additional statements, keeping in mind that what is most important about this learning experience is participants’ sharing and discussion of their values.

Facilitator Resource: Value-Laden Statements

Choose four or five of these statements to use during the “values voting” activity, or develop statements of your own that may be more relevant for your mentors and your program.

1. It should be illegal to own a handgun.
2. Homeless people should not be allowed to sleep in public parks.
3. People who knowingly infect others with HIV should be sentenced to jail.
4. Women, not men, should take the primary responsibility for birth control.
5. It should be legal for lesbian and gay couples to get married.
6. Young women who wear revealing clothes are looking for trouble.
7. Young people should not talk back to adults.
8. Prayers should be allowed in public schools.
9. Condoms should be distributed in high schools.
10. There is sometimes a good reason for a man to hit his wife or girlfriend.
11. The government should provide free child care for all working mothers.
12. Women who are addicted to illegal drugs should lose custody of their children.

Nicole didn't talk at all when I first met her. The adults in the house where she lived didn't take the time or have the time to talk to the kids. I had to learn not to ask her questions she could answer in a few words. Instead of asking, "How was school today?" I ask, "What did you do in school?" Or when we go to the movies, I don't ask her if she liked it but what her favorite part was. When we're planning a meal, we go shopping together and talk about what we're buying.

—A mentor

[Activity adapted from “Revisiting Values: How Do They Influence You?” *Practical Education for Citizenship and Employment: Personal Development*. 1992. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.]

Facilitator Resource: “I Hear You”

People tend to think of listening as something passive, or they tend not to think about it at all. But listening is actually a skill—a valuable skill that can be practiced and learned.

One writer has compared a listener to a catcher in a baseball game.* Observers who don't know a lot about baseball might believe that a catcher is doing nothing more than waiting for a pitcher to throw the ball. They think that all the responsibility rests with the pitcher, who is, after all, the one who is winding up and delivering the pitch. In the same way, some people believe that all the responsibility in communication rests with the person who is talking.

In reality, though, a good catcher is not a passive target waiting to receive the pitch. He or she concentrates on a pitcher's motions; tracks the path of the ball; and, if necessary, jumps, stretches, or dives to make the catch. Similarly, a good listener actively tries to catch and understand a speaker's words. The next section offers tips for active listening.

Active Listening is the Most Important Skill of a Good Mentor

When you talk with your mentee, try to remember to:

- Clear your mind of unnecessary thoughts and distractions, so you can give her or him your undivided attention.
- If your mentee is a child or much smaller than you, sit when you talk, so you are at about the same level.
- Make eye contact.
- Be aware of your body language.
- Pay attention to your mentee's facial expressions, gestures, and body language.
- Read between the lines for your mentee's feelings. Learn to say, “How did that make you feel?”

*Jim Kavanaugh. *Everyday Heroes: A Guidebook for Mentors*. 1998. Wise Men & Women Mentorship

Program, "Los Sabios," and Injury Prevention and Emergency Medical Services Bureau, Public Health Division, New Mexico Department of Health, p. 27.

- Ask open-ended questions. Don't ask, "How was school today?" Instead ask, "What did you do in school today?" Then, as appropriate, ask non-threatening follow-up questions.
- Paraphrase—restate in your own words—what you think the child/youth has said. When paraphrasing is accurate, your mentee will feel understood. If it is off the mark, it invites her or him to clarify and also reminds you to listen more closely.
- Ask questions when you don't understand.
- Put yourself in your mentee's "shoes" and try to understand the world from her or his perspective.
- Put aside preconceived ideas and refrain from passing judgment.
- Acknowledge that you are listening by occasionally nodding your head and saying things like, "I see."
- Give your mentee the same respect that you desire for yourself when you are talking to someone.

How to Kill a Conversation

"You cannot truly listen to anyone and do anything else at the same time."

—M. Scott Peck

1. Tell the speaker that the way he or she feels is wrong. "It's silly to feel that way."
2. Don't look at the person who is speaking to you.
3. Sit slouched over, look distracted, drum your fingers on the table, or use some other body language to signal to the speaker that you're not really interested.
4. While the person is speaking, think about what you're going to say in reply. It's not possible to be forming your own words and concentrating on the speaker's at the same time—so the response you're planning is unlikely to be very useful.
5. Be judgmental and challenging. Ask questions that put your mentee on the spot. "Your grades should be better." "You shouldn't have said that to her." "How could you possibly think that?"
6. Interrupt the person who is talking. Finish his or her sentences.

Some Additional Ideas for Killing a Conversation on the Telephone

1. Be totally silent for minutes at a time while your mentee is talking. Don't say, "I see," or "OK," or ask any questions. That way, your mentee will wonder if you're even there.
2. Do something else while the conversation is taking place: work at your computer, read your e-mail, do dishes, fold laundry, pay bills.

Facilitator Resource: Skill-Building Scenarios

page 1 of 4

Choose from the following scenarios the ones most relevant to your program. Or you might want to modify these or create entirely new scenarios that describe situations that more closely represent your particular program.

Select or create enough scenarios so that each small group has a different one to use during Activity #4, “Responding Positively.” Write each of the scenarios you are going to use on a separate page of the flipchart.

The scenarios are intended to give participants an opportunity to explore various ways of responding to their mentees, incorporating the communication skills they have gained and the values explorations they have done in this and other training sessions.

1. Your mentee, who is 14 years old, has told you she wants to be a lawyer when she grows up. She is very smart but has never achieved highly in school. You know that, recently, she has not even been going to school regularly. Today, when you go to the school for your scheduled weekly meeting with her, your program’s school coordinator takes you aside and says your mentee’s truancy has become a serious problem. Later, when you bring it up with your mentee, she gets mad and says, “I’m not learning anything worthwhile. School is boring.”
2. Your mentee is 15 years old, and you know he likes to party. Recently, he’s been talking a lot about his new girlfriend, who is 14 years old. During your meeting today, he tells you that he’s pretty sure his girlfriend is pregnant. It sounds to you as if he’s bragging about it.
3. Your mentee is 13 years old and often works after school and on weekends babysitting children in the neighborhood. She is a diligent worker and has told you that she’s working because she wants to start saving money now so she can go to college. You have helped her open a savings account, and she deposits a small amount of money every few weeks. When you meet with her today, she proudly shows you the new pair of Nikes she’s wearing. “Look,” she says. “I bought them with the money I’d saved. They cost \$105 dollars.”
4. Your mentee is 10 years old. When you meet with him today at school, he is extremely sleepy. When you say something about it, he tells you there was a lot of noise in his apartment last night and he couldn’t sleep. Later he tells you that the noise was because his mother had friends over and they were drinking a lot and smoking marijuana. He says he doesn’t like it when his mother has her friends over at night because he’s so tired the next day, it’s hard for him to go to school. When your mentee says this to you, you feel angry at his mother.

5. Your mentee is 15 years old. She has a very close relationship with another girl in her class at school. Your mentee used to mention her constantly, but recently her name has not come up at all. During your meeting today, you ask your mentee how her friend is doing. "OK," she says. She's quiet for a minute, and then she tells you that she's thinking maybe she shouldn't see her friend anymore because they're together so much that other kids at school have started making jokes about them and calling them names. "Do you know what I mean?" she asks.
6. Your mentee is 14 years old. You and he sometimes talk about possible careers. He's interested in learning more about the world of work, so one afternoon after school, you pick him up and take him to your office. Just after you arrive, you introduce your mentee to a co-worker. Your mentee mutters, "Hello," and while the co-worker is still just a few feet away, says loudly, "That guy's the worst dresser I've ever seen!"
7. Your mentee is 12 years old. She is a nice person but is very loud and has almost no sense of what is appropriate socially. You are in the supermarket with her, shopping for ingredients for the dinner you plan to make together. Your mentee is talking at the top of her voice, using obscenities, blocking the aisles with your shopping cart, and making a mess of the displays on the supermarket shelves. What do you say?

Handout A: Dealing with Diversity

One of the most critical training needs for mentors is help in dealing with diversity. Some mentors talk about “culture shock” when they describe their initial apprehension and lack of familiarity with and/or understanding of the world from which their mentees come. It is normal and natural to feel a certain amount of apprehension about meeting someone for the first time, especially if it’s expected that you will become a trusted and trusting friend. Add to that a significant difference in age, socioeconomic status, and/or racial and ethnic background, and it’s easy to see why this is such an important issue for mentors.

Toward a Broad Definition of Cultural Diversity

While many mentor programs prefer to match mentees with mentors who come from similar backgrounds in terms of race, socioeconomic status, etc., often this is not possible. Mentors may be matched with children/youth whose backgrounds and lifestyles are very dissimilar to theirs.

Culture is more than race or ethnicity. It encompasses values, lifestyle, and social norms, including such things as communication styles, mannerisms, ways of dressing, family structure, traditions, orientation to time, and response to authority. These differences may be associated with age, religion, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. When mentors lack understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, they may become judgmental, thus undermining the possibility of developing a trusting relationship.

Knowledge is the key to understanding. There are different types of diversity issues, and each has the potential to cause misunderstanding between a mentor and a mentee. However, you can’t learn cultural understanding just from a textbook. Talk to your mentee about his or her background and ancestry, about what life is like at school or home or with his or her friends. Find out why your mentee does and says the things he or she does. Your program director, other mentors, friends, and co-workers may also have insights into cultural differences.

As you begin to learn and understand more about your mentee, you will be less likely to make negative value judgments. We hope that the following few examples

will encourage you to explore the cultural context from which your mentee comes.

Ethnic Diversity

If your mentee comes from a different ethnic background, learn about the values and traditions of that culture. This could include the role of authority and family, communication styles, perspectives on time, ways of dealing with conflict, and marriage traditions, among other things. It is your task as a mentor to learn about ethnic diversity from your mentee, from your observations, and from discussions with program staff so you can better understand the context of your mentee's attitudes and behavior.

Socioeconomic Diversity

Mentor-mentee pairs might come from very different socioeconomic backgrounds. The mentor may have grown up on a farm, while the mentee has never been outside of the city. The mentor may own a house, while the mentee may not know anyone who owns a new car, let alone a house. A mentee's family may move frequently, perhaps every few months. A mentee may have to share a very small apartment with many people. A mentor must learn that many things he or she takes for granted are not necessarily common to all. These types of cultural differences are commonplace between mentor and mentee and require time and understanding for an appreciation of their significance.

There are psychological effects of chronic poverty, including stress and depression. Some mentees may develop a "culture of survival" frame of mind. One mentor talks about how her mentee, who comes from a very poor family, spends huge sums of money on what the mentor considers frivolous things—like a pair of jeans that costs \$100. Poverty often prevents people from believing their future holds any promise of getting better. Thus, they have no motivation to save money to invest in the future. It becomes realistic to have a belief in "taking what you can get while you can get it."

Youth Culture

Many of the characteristics of adolescence are normal developmental traits and don't vary significantly from one generation to the next. Rebellion, for example, is a common trait of adolescents, although it may be expressed differently from generation to generation. Most of us, as teenagers, dressed very differently—

perhaps even outrageously—by our parents’ and grandparents’ standards. We did things our parents didn’t do; we talked differently than our parents, etc.

Take the time to remember what it was like to be your mentee’s age. Think about the following questions:

When you were in [your mentee’s] grade—

- *What was a typical day like?*
- *What was really important to you at that time?*
- *What was your father/mother like? Did you get along? Were you close?*
- *Think of your friends. Were friendships always easy or were they sometimes hard?*
- *In general, did you feel as though adults typically understood you well?*

At the same time, it is important to remember that some things do change dramatically and result in very different contexts and experiences from one generation to the next. There may be significantly more alcohol and drug abuse today than when you were growing up; sexually transmitted diseases are more common and more dangerous; crime and violence have dramatically increased throughout the country, particularly in urban areas; guns are widely available and everywhere in the population; violence in the media and in “games” is commonplace; single parent families have become more common while greater demands are being placed on all families.

One mentor talks about a conversation he had with his mentee about school dances, which, for the mentor, were filled with fond memories of music, dancing, and fun. For the mentee, though, school dances were dangerous places where gunfire was a common occurrence. It’s important to understand the context of your mentee’s life so you can understand what she or he is coping with.

Suggestions for dealing with diversity:

- **Remember that you are the adult—the experienced one.** Imagine what your mentee must be thinking and feeling. In general, young people of all ages, but particularly teens, believe they are not respected by adults and worry about whether a mentor will like them or think they’re stupid. They are coming to you for help and may already feel insecure and embarrassed about the problems in their lives. It is your responsibility to take the initiative and make the mentee feel more comfortable in the relationship.
- **Remember to be yourself.** Sometimes, with the best of intentions, we try to “relate” to young people and try to use their slang, etc. Mentees can see through this and may find it difficult to trust people who are not true to themselves.
- **You may learn a lot about another culture, lifestyle, or age group—but you will never be *from* that group.** Don’t over-identify with your mentee. Your

mentee realizes you will never know exactly what she or he is feeling or experiencing. Your mentee may actually feel invalidated by your insistence that you “truly know where she or he is coming from.”

[Adapted with permission from material in *Mentor Training Curriculum*. 1991. National Mentoring Working Group, convened and staffed by the National Mentoring Partnership and United Way of America. Originally appeared in *Guidebook for Milestones in Mentoring*. 1990. The PLUS Project on Mentoring, National Media Outreach Center, QED Communications, Inc.]

Handout B: Cultural Sensitivity

“Culture,” defined in its broadest sense, is the underlying fabric that holds together a person’s world—or just about everything that binds one to a particular group and place in time. This includes language, values, beliefs, customs, rituals, oral and written history, art, music, dance, food, and much more.

Cultural sensitivity refers here to an attitude of respect, openness, and acceptance toward people, whatever their culture. All truly supportive relationships are built on a sense of trust and safety, which comes from a feeling of being appreciated for just the way one is. Therefore, our primary job as mentors is to honor the inherent worth that each child brings into the world and to respect their special cultural backgrounds. Below are some reminders:

- Honestly examine your own mind for prejudices and stereotypes. Almost all of us have learned some.
- Think about where our biases come from and try to see them as learned misinformation.
- Make a personal commitment to be culturally sensitive as a mentor.
- See your mentee, first and foremost, as a unique and valuable person.
- Approach cultural differences as an opportunity for learning.

[Adapted with permission from *Everyday Heroes: A Guidebook for Mentors*, p. 23. 1998. Jim Kavanaugh. Wise Men & Women Mentorship Program, “Los Sabios,” and Injury Prevention and Emergency Medical Services Bureau, Public Health Division, New Mexico Department of Health.]