

Part 2:
Training Mentors



Connecting and

Communicating

Module 3

Time: 2 hours
Limit: 20 participants

Introduction

Session Goals

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

- Explored the importance of their mentors’ having strong communication skills
- Planned, facilitated, and/or participated in an activity that identifies qualities of “active listening”
- Planned, facilitated, and/or participated in an activity that identifies “good practices” that help mentors develop a successful relationship with their mentee
- Participated in role-plays and understood their usefulness in helping mentors practice skills

The Basics

1. “Listening” is a mentor’s most valuable skill, and it can be practiced and learned.
2. The key to creating effective mentoring relationships lies in the development of trust. That requires time and patience by the mentor.
3. A central task for trainers is to plan approaches that keep all participants actively involved in learning the workshop content.

Agenda

- 1. Introductions** (10 minutes)
Participants identify challenges mentors may face early in the relationship with their mentee.
- 2. Building Trust** (15 minutes)
Participants review materials for training mentors in communication skills.
- 3. Using Handouts** (55 minutes)
Small groups develop strategies for delivering information to mentors in a training workshop, and then give their mini-lesson to the whole group.
- 4. Practicing Skills** (25 minutes)
Participants gain practice in using role-plays to train mentors.
- 5. Now What?** (15 minutes)
Participants reflect on the importance of training their mentors in building trust.

Connections to Other Training Sessions

This session is intended as the third 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”
- “Keeping the Relationships Going”

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 this “Connecting” session.

Preparation

Note: “Connecting and Communicating” 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 “Building Trust,” 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 “Building Trust” 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 “Connecting and Communicating” training. Include a cover note explaining how it will be used during the session and emphasizing that it is essential they read “Building Trust” before the session takes place.
2. Read the mentor training materials, “Building Trust.” Be prepared to give a brief (5 to 10 minute) overview of “Building Trust” at the beginning of Activity #2.
3. Read the handouts.
4. Visit the Web sites listed on Handout #4, “Resources for Connecting and Communicating,” so you are prepared to describe to participants the kinds of information they can find there.
5. Review the trainer resource, “Role-Plays for Developing Listening Skills.” Copy three or four of the scenarios onto separate pages of a flipchart to use during Activity #4.
6. “Connecting and Communicating” is the third of four “Training Mentors” sessions that are intended to be given in sequence. Thus, your participants will probably have already been together in two previous sessions. For this reason, the activities for “Connecting and Communicating” do not include an icebreaker. However, you may want to prepare an icebreaker to use in the event that the four sessions have not been given in sequence and your participants have not previously been together. If you do have to add an icebreaker, keep it very short (a maximum of 5 minutes), because there is much important material to cover during this session.

7. This module includes a brief discussion about co-facilitating. Thus, if possible, you might arrange to have a co-facilitator lead this session in order to model the good practices that are outlined on Handout #1, “If You’re Going to Have a Co-facilitator.”
8. Review the three curriculum modules, listed on the previous page, that include information and strategies relevant to “Connecting and Communicating.”
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 “Building Trust” for each participant. Many of the pages are printed on both the front and back, so be sure to copy both sides. (Copy “Building Trust” onto paper with three-hole punches so participants can keep it in their binder.)
11. Prepare a transparency of the overhead.
12. Copy the goals of the session onto a flipchart. On a separate sheet of paper, copy the agenda.

NOTES



Materials

Trainer Resource

- Trainer Resource #1: Role-Plays for Developing Listening Skills



Overhead

- Overhead #1: Tell Me...



Handouts

- Session Goals and Basics
- Agenda
- Handout #1: If You're Going to Have a Co-facilitator
- Handout #2: Guidelines for Planning a Presentation
- Handout #3: Speaking of Trust
- Handout #4: Resources for Connecting and Communicating

Mentor Training Materials

- "Building Trust"

You Will Need To Supply

Flipcharts, easels, markers, and masking tape

Envelopes and paper that, when folded, fits inside the envelopes

An overhead projector

Activities

1. Introductions

Participants identify challenges mentors may face early in the relationship with their mentee.

- Introduce yourself. Your participants by now will probably have already been together in several “Training Mentors” sessions, so it should not be necessary for them to introduce themselves. Instead, you can move immediately into the content of the training.

Ask, “What are the kinds of challenges that mentors in your program tend to face during the first month of meeting with their mentee?”

As participants identify these challenges, list them on the flipchart.

Likely responses include: the mentee not talking much; the mentor having to make all the decisions about how the two are going to spend their time together; the mentee not seeming to have much interest in the relationship.

Review the list, asking participants to note which of the challenges involve communication issues. (Probably most of them.)

- Note that this JUMP session helps participants get ready to provide a training workshop for their program’s new mentors on communication skills and effective approaches to building a relationship with their mentee.

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 “Building Trust.” Note that “Building Trust” 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 three “basics” that are listed there. This session will be examining those points more fully.

2. Building Trust

Participants review materials for training mentors in communication skills.

- Refer participants to “Building Trust,” materials for planning and delivering a workshop that trains new mentors in listening skills and helps them develop an understanding of effective approaches to building a relationship with their mentee. (You can note that “listening skills” is the sixth 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 “Building Trust” that you have prepared. Allow opportunities for participants’ questions and comments during your presentation.

Ideally, your participants should have received and read “Building Trust” 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 six activities; a facilitator resource, 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 “Building Trust.” Describe how the materials contain an icebreaker and activities geared toward meeting these goals. The activities are intended to help new mentors understand and practice listening skills, and explore approaches for building a successful mentor-mentee relationship.

Do not say anything specifically about Activity #5, “Pushing the Envelope,” because you will be using it yourself at the end of this training session and it works best when there is the element of surprise.

Tell participants that in a few minutes, they are going to meet in small groups to work with some of the activities that are included. Ask if they have any questions about the materials.

- Point out that it is probably a good idea to have a co-facilitator for the “Building Trust” training—particularly because the facilitator needs someone with whom to do the role-plays at the beginning of Activity #2, “If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio.”

Lead a brief discussion about the advantages and possible drawbacks of having a co-facilitator in leading a training. In what situations is a co-facilitator useful and/or necessary? What are possible pitfalls? Record participants’ major points on the flipchart.

Refer the group to Handout #1, “If You’re Going to Have a Co-facilitator.” Allow them a minute to read it, and then briefly review the information with them. (In the next activity, they are going to be practicing using a handout to present material, so you will want to model good facilitation strategies as you have this discussion. For example, you can involve them in the discussion by asking about their own experiences with co-facilitation—as either a facilitator/co-facilitator or as a participant in a training that was co-facilitated.)



3. Using Handouts

Small groups develop strategies for delivering information to mentors in a training workshop, and then give their mini-lesson to the whole group.

- Tell participants that now you want them to work in small groups to get ready to deliver one of the activities in “Building Trust.”

Organize them into two groups. One group will be preparing to deliver the information on the handout, “I Hear You,” which is used in Activity #2, “If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio.” The other group will be getting ready to present information from the handout, “Building Relationships,” which is central to Activity #4, “Trust Comes First.”

Refer participants to Handout #2, “Guidelines for Planning a Presentation,” and briefly review it.

Tell the small groups they will have 20 minutes to prepare their presentation. Then each small group will have 15 minutes to make its presentation to the whole group.

Make sure each small group knows which handout it will be working with. Also make sure each group has a flipchart, easel, markers, and masking tape.



Allow about 20 minutes for each small group to meet and plan its presentation. (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. Then allow each small group 15 minutes to make its presentation.

Each group should:

1. Describe the characteristics of the mentoring program it identified for the purpose of planning the activity.
2. Have its facilitator (or co-facilitators) lead the activity. Everyone else in the room will be in the role of new mentors who are taking part in the “Building Trust” training session.

Allow time for feedback from participants after each presentation.

As appropriate, ask questions that help everyone focus on principles of effective learning and facilitating. These might include, for example, questions about what the facilitator did to keep the “new mentors” interested and involved, the use of flipcharts or other visuals, and the atmosphere in the room during the activity. Was it conducive to learning? Why?

Each group’s facilitator should also talk briefly about his/her experience—what went well and what felt uncomfortable.

4. Practicing Skills

Participants gain practice in using role-plays to train mentors.

- Display Overhead #1, “Tell Me...” (This overhead is also used during the JUMP session, “Preparing to Facilitate.”) Note that one important way of involving people and helping them learn is by providing opportunities for them to *apply* skills and approaches after they have discussed them.

Ask for two volunteers to do a role-play. (Since many programs use “same gender” as a mentor-mentee matching requirement, you might want to have both volunteers be of the same gender.)

Present the two volunteers with one of the scenarios from Trainer Resource #1, “Role-Plays for Developing Listening Skills,” that you have written on the flipchart. (The same scenarios are provided in the “Building Trust” materials.) Tell the rest of the participants to





imagine that they are all “new mentors” who are at the “Building Trust” training session.

Have the volunteers do the role-play twice.

1. In the first role-play, the “mentor” should display poor listening skills and construct roadblocks to communication.
2. In the second role-play, the “mentor” should display effective listening skills.

After each role-play, ask for questions and feedback from the group. The person who role-played the “mentee” should also give feedback on the “mentor’s” listening skills during the conversation that just took place.

If there is time, repeat the process by having other participants volunteer to do role-plays. Give each new pair a different scenario to work with. Allow time for feedback after each role-play.

- Ask the role-players how they felt during their performance. As new mentors doing this role-play (and getting feedback), what would the value have been for them? Involve the whole group in a brief discussion about the potential value of role-plays and also the discomfort some people feel about them.

Note: Some people are immediately comfortable role-playing conversations. They feel the practice helps them improve their skills and build self-confidence. They also find it helpful to get feedback from the other member of the role-play because it provides immediate access to the conversational partner’s point of view.

Other people, at least initially, find role-plays to be an uncomfortable experience. Because one-to-one conversations take place in private, they may believe that the public nature of role-plays creates an artificial environment that undercuts their usefulness. And some people just don’t like to perform in public. However, in a comfortable training environment, even the most diehard anti-role-players will find themselves joining in and actually enjoying the experience. And even people who may not see the immediate benefits of role-plays discover later—when they are in “real” conversations with their mentees—that participating in the role-plays has helped to prepare them.

5. Now What?

Participants reflect on the importance of training their mentors in building trust.

- Thank the participants for their hard work during this session, and say there are just one or two more things you want to talk about.

Then give each person a piece of paper and an envelope.

Tell participants that you want each of them to write down on the piece of paper one thing about themselves that they have never told anyone. Then they should fold the paper, put it inside the envelope, seal the envelope, and write their name on the outside.

Allow a few minutes for them to complete this task. Then ask them to pass the envelopes to you.

When you have the envelopes, act as though you are considering opening them—for example, you might look quite interested in them, start to open one, and then stop. (As you are doing this, keep up a casual conversation about something in connection with today's training session.) Your goal is to make the participants feel slightly distrustful and uneasy, or at least to make them wonder what's going on. Do NOT actually open any of the envelopes.

After you have created a little tension and uncertainty, smile and return each of the envelopes to its owner.

- Ask the group how they felt during this exercise. While they will probably talk freely about it—and about issues of trust—be sure the discussion addresses at least these points:
 1. There are actually several aspects of trust involved in this exercise. First, participants have to trust you enough that they are willing to write down something about themselves they have never told anyone. (At least some people are likely to have written something other than a profound personal secret.) Then they have to trust you enough to put their names on the envelopes and pass the envelopes to you.
 2. Participants should also talk about how they felt when you seemed like you were going to open some of the envelopes. (Even if they wrote something other than a personal secret, your open-

ing the envelope would feel like a violation of confidentiality and trust.)

Relate the experience participants have just had during this activity to the process of mentors' building trust with their mentees.

Note that this activity is included at the end of "Building Trust" as Activity #5, Pushing the Envelope. It can be a powerful way to engage new mentors in understanding the concept of trust. At some point during the activity, the new mentors will have the experience of asking themselves whether they can trust their trainer—so they will have first-hand insight into how their mentee might initially feel about them.

- Refer participants to Handout #3, "Speaking of Trust." As a way to draw together the ideas from this training session, you can ask for volunteers to read each of the quotes out loud to the group.

Remind the group that two additional JUMP training sessions provide them with opportunities to get additional experience in developing and modifying activities for training and supporting their mentees, and also to gain practice in facilitating.

Note that Handout #4, "Resources for Connecting and Communicating," includes information on other mentor training curricula, materials, and Web sites.





Role-Plays for Developing Listening Skills

Choose three or four of the following scenarios to use during Activity #4, Practicing Skills. (They are the same scenarios that are included in the “Building Trust” materials.) Write each scenario you select on a separate page of the flipchart.

1. Your mentee is 11 years old. You have been meeting for more than two months, and she has never expressed an opinion about how you and she should spend your time together. You always suggest the activities. When you suggest one, she always says, “That’ll be OK.” When you suggest more than one and ask her to choose, she says, “It doesn’t matter which one.” When you ask her to suggest what she’d like to do, she says, “Anything will be nice.” You know it’s important for her to share in the decision making; and in your meeting today, you’ve decided to try to deal with this situation.
2. Your mentee is 13 years old. This is only your third meeting with him. His family recently moved and, as a result, he started going to this school just last month, after the school year had already started. He hadn’t said much about school during your first two meetings. In fact, he hadn’t said much about anything. But today when you meet, you immediately see that he has a black eye. You ask him what happened. “Nothing,” he says. “I just got into a fight in the cafeteria.”
3. Your mentee is 7 years old. You have been meeting with him for six weeks, and he has always seemed to enjoy your time together. But when you meet with him today, it seems like nothing can make him happy. He doesn’t want to play computer games or read a story together or play catch—activities he usually enjoys. He finally agrees to work on putting together a “Super Monsters” puzzle with you, but when the puzzle is halfway complete, he knocks all the pieces onto the floor and starts kicking them across the room.
4. Your mentee is 12 years old. During the first two months of your relationship, things seemed to be going well between you. But then she didn’t show up for your last two meetings. You phoned again and set up another meeting, this time arranging to pick her up in your car. She is home when you arrive there, and she gives you a big smile when she sees you. But you’re upset about the missed meetings and feel you have to talk about it.

5. Your mentee is 14 years old, and you have been meeting with her for three months. At your meeting today, she proudly shows you the report card she has just received. “I didn’t fail anything,” she says. You look at the report card: she has just barely passed all of her classes. You know she’s smart and should be doing much better in school.
6. Your mentee is 14 years old, and you have been meeting with him for a month. On a Monday afternoon, you meet him at school, and the two of you are having a great time shooting hoops and talking about what else each of you likes to do to have fun. “I had a great time this weekend,” he says. “I went to a party where this guy brought all this beer.”
7. Your mentee is 15 years old, and you have been meeting with him for three months. When you see him today, he has just gotten his report card, and he is failing two subjects. “I can’t wait until I’m 16,” he says. “The first thing I’m going to do is drop out of school.”
8. Your mentee is 8 years old, and you have been meeting for two months. During the first half-hour of your meeting today, you and she play hopscotch outside in the schoolyard. She seems a bit quieter than usual, but you don’t think much about it because she is very shy and usually doesn’t talk much when you are together. It’s cold out, and after a while the two of you decide to go inside to the school library to read a book. When you sit down together at the table to read and she takes her coat off, you see that she has fresh, large bruises on both her arms.
9. Your mentee is 14 years old, and you have been meeting for two months. The two of you have just gone to a movie together, and you want to go with her to get something to eat and talk about the movie. “What time is it?” she asks. When you tell her, she says she has to go home to babysit for her sister and make dinner. “I’m already late,” she says. “My mother’s going to scream at me. It’s not fair. She’s never home. She makes me do everything.”
10. Your mentee is 14 years old. You’ve been meeting for three months, and you know he has a huge crush on a girl in his class. He talks about her a lot and considers her his girlfriend. Your mentee is small and shy, and you’re pretty sure this is the first girlfriend he’s had. When you meet today, he’s obviously downcast. “What’s the matter?” you ask. He tells you his girlfriend has started seeing a guy who’s 17, and she told your mentee, “Why would I want to go out with a runt like you?”



**Tell me,
and I'll forget.**

**Show me,
and I may not remember.**

**Involve me,
and I'll understand.**

—Native American saying



Handouts

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Connecting and

Communicating



Session Goals

- To explore the importance of your mentors' having strong communication skills
- To plan, facilitate, and/or participate in an activity that identifies qualities of "active listening"
- To plan, facilitate, and/or participate in an activity that identifies "good practices" that help mentors develop a successful relationship with their mentee
- To participate in role-plays and understand their usefulness in helping mentors practice skills

The Basics

1. "Listening" is a mentor's most valuable skill, and it can be practiced and learned.
2. The key to creating effective mentoring relationships lies in the development of trust. That requires time and patience by the mentor.
3. A central task for trainers is to plan approaches that keep all participants actively involved in learning the workshop content.



Agenda

1. Introductions

Notes: _____

2. Building Trust

Notes: _____

3. Using Handouts

Notes: _____

4. Practicing Skills

Notes: _____

5. Now What?

Notes: _____



If You're Going to Have a Co-facilitator

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There may be times when you want to have a co-facilitator working with you during a training session. You may need someone to do role-plays with you. Or the session might include small-group work, and you would like to have an additional person who can circulate among the groups as they are meeting. In other instances, you might feel uncomfortable dealing with a particular subject (such as diversity and cultural awareness), or feel that you don't know enough about a topic and want to draw on someone who has more expertise in that area. Your co-facilitator might be another staff member, someone from another agency, a school employee, or an experienced mentor.

Here are a few guidelines for working effectively with a co-facilitator.

Before the training session:

- Set aside time to plan the workshop together. Review the materials and decide which activities each of you will be responsible for leading.
- For role-plays, decide in advance on what scenarios to use. You might also decide to practice the role-plays before the actual training session.
- Decide whether the co-facilitator who is not leading a particular activity can interrupt the one who is. If so, agree on a method for interruptions.

During the training session:

- Introduce yourselves at the beginning of the workshop and explain your roles as co-facilitators.
- Have one co-facilitator perform helpful tasks while the other is leading an activity. For example, she or he could record participants' ideas on the flipchart and distribute handouts.
- While one co-facilitator is leading an activity, the other should be quietly attentive to the participants. For example, she or he can be alert for misunderstood questions and indications of participants' confusion or discomfort.
- Be sure that both of you circulate through the groups when there are small-group activities.
- Be sure that both of you remain in the training room throughout the entire session.

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After the training session:

- Meet together to reflect on the experience of co-facilitating. What went smoothly? Were there moments when either of you felt uncomfortable? What would you do differently next time?
- During this meeting, also share your thoughts about the successes and challenges of the training workshop. What worked well for the participants? What could be changed in the training content or method of delivery?



Guidelines for Planning a Presentation

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Your group will be working with one of two handouts in “Building Trust.” You will work with either Handout A, “I Hear You,” in Activity #2 (If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio), *or* Handout B, “Building Relationships,” in Activity #4 (Trust Comes First). Your goal is to plan a presentation of the information on that handout.

At the end of this planning period, the person(s) your group selects as facilitator(s) will lead the presentation for everyone at this training session. The presentation should last about 15 minutes.

Follow these steps:

1. Select a group leader. That person will then guide you through the following steps.
2. Allow a few minutes for everyone to read the relevant activity and handout carefully and to understand how it fits into the context of the goals and other activities in “Building Trust.”
3. Have a brief group discussion about what new mentors should know and/or be able to do as a result of learning the material in the handout.
4. All mentor training will, to some extent, be customized so it is specifically geared toward the characteristics of the particular program in which the mentors are volunteering. So that your group can think more specifically about an audience for this activity (the activity consists of presenting information from the handout), you should all agree on the identity of the mentoring program that will be presenting the activity. The easiest approach is to use one of the group member’s programs. Be sure everyone in the group knows that program’s goals, characteristics of the children or youth who participate, characteristics of the people who serve as the mentors, specific issues that are important in that program, and any other information that could influence your training content and approach.
5. As a first step toward deciding how you will present information on the handout to your new mentors, consider these two principles of adult learning:
 - Adults are practical and goal-oriented. They focus on aspects of a training that are most useful to them.
 - Adult teaching should be grounded in learners’ experiences. Adults have accumulated a foundation of knowledge and life experiences that is a valuable resource. They learn best when new information and concepts are built on this foundation.

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Your group might also want to review the facilitation tips that are included near the beginning of “Building Trust.”

6. Select someone in your group to be the facilitator who leads this activity when you present it to the whole group. (That person might or might not be the same as the leader you selected in step 1.) Or select co-facilitators.
7. Decide how the facilitator(s) is going to convey information from the handout during the 15-minute presentation. Is there anything you want to change about the handout—add, delete, or modify? How will you lead into the handout? How will you get participants involved in learning the information—and keep them involved? Will you use any visuals?
8. Help the facilitator(s) prepare for the presentation, including creating any visuals you have decided to use.



Speaking of Trust

Mentors speak:

1. It really has taken a while for her to show, to demonstrate—and she's really not demonstrative in life—but she has really warmed up in the last few months and that's been just really lovely. She talks a lot more than she used to. And she talks spontaneously now, which really thrills me. And she tells me things spontaneously. It used to be I would always have to initiate the conversation and always ask the questions. And now she really initiates a lot of conversations when we're driving in the car, and tells me a lot of things. Like she even told me about a problem at home.
2. Like I said, the main thing at first was just gaining trust and that trust that she would confide to me, that was important first. I had to let her know that no matter what, she could tell me anything and I'd believe her and trust her and I'd support her. I think that's what these kids need...I think it just takes a long time to build up a trust.
3. When he doesn't talk and smile very much, then there's something really bugging him and I just ask him, "Is something bothering you?" And he says, "No." But later, he'll say something. I say, "You know you can blow off steam by talking to me if you want to." And he usually does.

A mentee speaks:

Yeah, it's not like a parent lecture, so I guess it's cool, it's like you sit there and your mom's like bawling you out and you're like yeah, you know, you're sitting there and you're not really listening to her, you're kind of like zoning out, you know. And every time she's like, boom, oh yeah. You just sit there and she's like babbling on, like yeah. But like with your mentor, it's like when you're talking to your friends and they're cranking on you, right, it's like yeah, I know, man, I gotta do this and I gotta get my act together.

[All quotes are from *Building Relationships With Youth in Program Settings: A Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. 1995. Kristine V. Morrow and Melanie B. Styles. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.]



Resources for Connecting and Communicating

Curricula

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

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.

Some useful Web sites

www.mentoring.org

National Mentoring Partnership—includes information about characteristics of an effective mentor.

www.nwrel.org/mentoring

The National Mentoring Center at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory—provides on-line access to the Center’s newsletters and other information.

Building Trust

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

Time: 2 hours
Limit: 20 participants

The best time to give this
training session: before
mentors have the first
meeting with their mentee

Introduction

Goals

To help new mentors develop communication skills and understand personal qualities that are important for developing a successful relationship with their mentee. By the end of the workshop, participants should have:

- Identified qualities of “active listening”
- Practiced applying active listening skills by participating in role-plays of conversations between a mentor and a child/youth
- Examined the importance of taking the time to first build trust with the child or youth they are mentoring
- Explored other key factors in developing a successful mentoring relationship

Agenda

1. Introductions (15 minutes)
2. If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio (30 minutes)
3. Communication Role-Plays (45 minutes)
4. Trust Comes First (15 minutes)
5. Pushing the Envelope (10 minutes)
6. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

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
- A facilitator resource for the “communication role-plays”
- Preparation notes and training tips for facilitators

Materials You Will Need To Provide

- Copies of the handouts and other materials you have prepared for participants
- Copies of the evaluation form
- Flipcharts, an easel, marking pens, and masking tape
- The overheads you prepare, and an overhead projector
- Name tags
- Index cards
- Envelopes and paper that, when folded, fits inside the envelopes

Notes For Facilitators

Preparation Tips

1. This training session should be co-facilitated with another staff member or a current mentor. As you prepare for the workshop with your co-facilitator, you will want to decide on the scenario you are going to role-play in Activity #2, “If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio,” and the role each of you is going to take. You might also want to practice the role-plays. (Some facilitators like to practice role-plays before presenting them in a training session; others do not because they feel it detracts from the spontaneity that can be an important component of role-plays.)
2. Review the scenarios in the Facilitator Resource, “Role-Plays for Developing Listening Skills.” Adapt them, as necessary, so they realistically reflect your program; or write new scenarios.
3. Read the handouts.
4. Prepare overheads to use during discussions.
5. If applicable, be prepared to talk about any particular challenges that your mentors may face as they try to develop a trusting relationship with 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 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: Introductions

- Introduce yourself. Welcome the new mentors and explain the goals of this training session.
- Give each person an index card. Tell participants you want them to introduce themselves to the group, but first you want them to consider this:

Think about some one-to-one conversations you have been involved in recently. Would you describe yourself as a good listener? Why? Did you do anything that made you a less effective listener?

Ask them to write on the front of the index card one thing they do or one quality they have that makes them a good listener. On the back of the card, they should write one thing they do or quality they have during conversations that interferes with listening well. They will be sharing both of these qualities with the group when they introduce themselves.

Allow a couple of minutes for participants to write on their index cards.

- Go around the room, having each participant introduce himself or herself and briefly state his or her “good listening” and “bad listening” quality. As they speak, record their responses in two lists (headed “qualities of good listening” and “characteristics of bad listening”) on the flipchart.

Activity #2: If You Want Easy Listening, Turn on the Radio

- Ask participants, “What is a good listener?” During the discussion, they should see that a good listener helps the speaker feel comfortable and clarify thoughts and feelings.

Return to the items on the lists generated during the previous activity, and have participants discuss how each contributes to, or hinders, good listening. Ask if there are any items they want to delete, change, or add to the list.

- With your co-facilitator, do *two* role-plays of a conversation between a mentor and mentee. In the role-plays, the “mentee” should be the same age as the children/ youth in your program and have other conversational characteristics that realistically exemplify those children/youth.

Use the same scenario for both role-plays. You can use or modify the following scenario, or create one of your own that accurately represents situations which

mentors in your program will be dealing with:

Your mentee is 13 years old. You have been meeting for two months. He is always polite but is also always very quiet. Today when you meet, he is even quieter than usual and he seems uninterested in doing anything. Suddenly, he blurts out: "I can't stand it anymore. My teachers are picking on me. My mother ignores me. My brother's beating up on me. I'm going to run away from home."

In the first role-play, the "mentor" should display poor listening skills and construct roadblocks to communication.

After the role-play, ask participants for feedback. (As they speak, add items, as appropriate, to the "good" and "bad listening" lists on the flipchart.)

In the second role-play, the "mentor" should display effective listening skills.

After the role-play, ask participants for feedback. (Again, as appropriate, add items to the "good" and "bad listening" lists.)

- Distribute Handout A, "I Hear You," and allow participants a few minutes to review it. (Before the workshop, make an overhead—perhaps titled "Active listening is the most important quality of a good mentor"—that includes the handout's bulleted items, so you can display it during the following discussion.)

Lead a discussion about items on the handout, asking for examples and encouraging participants to ask questions about anything they don't understand. (Remember, you're modeling good listening skills!)

- Use the following quote (write it on the flipchart or display it on an overhead you have prepared) to summarize this activity:

"Easy listening exists only on the radio."
—David Barkan

Activity #3: Communication Role-Plays

- 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.

Organize participants into pairs. (If your program matches male mentors with boys and female mentors with girls, organize the pairs by gender.) Give each pair one of the scenarios you have written on the flipchart.

Tell the pairs you want them to use their scenario as the basis for *two* role-plays of a conversation between the mentor and child/youth. (If necessary, the pairs should change the gender of the mentee in the scenario, so female pairs will be role-playing a scenario with a female mentee, and male pairs will be role-playing a scenario with a male mentee.) The same person should play the “mentor” and the same person the “mentee” for both role-plays:

1. In the first role-play, the “mentor” should display poor listening skills and construct roadblocks to communication.
2. In the second role-play, the “mentor” should display effective listening skills.
3. As time allows, they should then switch roles and do the role-plays again.

Remind participants that there are many positive (and negative) ways to respond to a situation. Good communication skills should be incorporated into a person’s own style, not be forced.

As the pairs are doing their role-plays, you and your co-facilitator should listen in on as many pairs as possible. Each time after you listen to a role-play, you can ask the pair a few questions to help them reflect on the experience. For the “bad-listener” role-play, for example, you can ask the “mentee” how the “mentor’s” words or actions made him or her feel. For the “good-listener” role-play, you can ask the “mentee” what the “mentor” said or did that made him or her feel the mentor could be trusted.

Allow about 20 minutes for the pairs to complete their role-plays.

- Bring the whole group back together. Ask for a pair to volunteer to give their two role-plays. After each of the role-plays, have other participants give feedback on what the mentor said and did to block or to foster a conversation that would build trust and help the mentee feel comfortable about talking openly. Also encourage the pair to talk about how the experience felt to them and what they might be more aware of now that they have done the role-plays.

As time allows, have other pairs present their role-plays and receive feedback.

(Adapted with permission from the Volunteer Development Seminar, “Communication Skills,”

pp. 17-18. *Volunteer Education and Development Manual*. 1991. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.)

Activity #4: Trust Comes First

- Emphasize that being an active listener is an essential quality for building a successful mentoring relationship. However, it is not the only one.

Ask participants to think about their own experiences in relationships they had with adults when they were a child or youth.

How long did it take for those relationships to form? How long, as a child, did it take them to trust and feel attached to the adult? How long, as a youth, did it take? Why did they begin to trust that adult? Did the trust remain? Did they ever begin to question it?

If so, why?

- Distribute Handout B, "Building Relationships." Note that the information in the handout is drawn from research conducted about mentoring relationships in Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies from around the country. Allow participants a few minutes to read the handout.

Then lead a discussion about information on the handout. (Before the session, prepare an overhead with key points to display during the discussion.) Be sure to relate the bulleted items to the underlying principle of establishing trust. Allow participants ample opportunity to ask questions and to discuss any confusion about, or possible disagreement with, information on the handout.

Activity #5: Pushing the Envelope

- Thank the participants for their contributions to this workshop and say that there are just one or two more things you want to do during this session.

Then give each person a piece of paper and an envelope.

Tell participants that you want each of them to write down on the piece of paper one thing about themselves that they have never told anyone. Then they should fold the paper, put it inside the envelope, seal the envelope, and write their name on the outside.

Allow a few minutes for them to complete this task. Then ask them to pass the envelopes to you.

When you have the envelopes, act as though you are considering opening them—for example, you might look quite interested in them, start to open one, and then stop. (Don't actually open any of the envelopes.) Your goal is to make the participants feel slightly distrustful and uneasy, or at least to make them wonder what's going on.

After you have created a little tension and uncertainty, smile and return each of the envelopes to its owner.

- Ask the group how they felt during this exercise. While they will probably talk freely about it—and about issues of trust—be sure the discussion addresses at least these points:

There are actually several aspects of trust involved in this exercise. First, participants have to trust you enough that they are willing to write down something about themselves they have never told anyone. (At least some people are likely to have written something other than a profound personal secret.) Then they have to trust you enough to put their names on the envelopes and pass the envelopes to you.

Participants should also talk about how they felt when you seemed like you were going to open some of the envelopes. (Even if they wrote something other than a personal secret, your opening the envelope would be a violation of confidentiality and trust.)

Relate the experience participants have just had during this activity to the process of building trust with their mentee. This is also an opportunity to remind them about your program's confidentiality requirements—but the major point here concerns the internal trust between the mentee and mentor, not external requirements.

Activity #6: Wrap-Up

- Write this (or another quote) on the flipchart, as a backdrop for the workshop's wrap-up:

*"No one ever listened himself out of a job."
—Calvin Coolidge*

- Distribute Handout C, "During This Session," and ask participants to write down two or three things they have learned during this session that they will be able to put to use as they begin their mentoring relationship. (These could be

skills, attitudes, or anything else.) They should also try to describe how they will put that learning to use.

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 forms, and ask everyone to complete one and return it to you before leaving.

Facilitator Resource: **Role-Plays for Developing Listening Skills**

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 which more closely represent your particular program.

On separate pages of a flipchart, copy one scenario for each pair of participants to use during the role-plays in Activity #3. (You might decide to give a particular scenario to more than one pair.)

The scenarios are intended to give participants an opportunity to explore various ways of responding to their mentees, incorporating the communication skills they have been exploring during this workshop.

1. Your mentee is 11 years old. You have been meeting for more than two months, and she has never expressed an opinion about how you and she should spend your time together. You always suggest the activities. When you suggest one, she always says, "That'll be OK." When you suggest more than one and ask her to choose, she says, "It doesn't matter which one." When you ask her to suggest what she'd like to do, she says, "Anything will be nice." You know it's important for her to share in the decision making; and in your meeting today, you've decided to try to deal with this situation.
2. Your mentee is 13 years old. This is only your third meeting with him. His family recently moved and, as a result, he started going to this school just last month, after the school year had already started. He hadn't said much about school during your first two meetings. In fact, he hadn't said much about anything. But today when you meet, you immediately see that he has a black eye. You ask him what happened. "Nothing," he says. "I just got into a fight in the cafeteria."
3. Your mentee is 7 years old. You have been meeting with him for six weeks, and he has always seemed to enjoy your time together. But when you meet with him today, it seems like nothing can make him happy. He doesn't want to play computer games or read a story together or play catch, all things he usually enjoys. He finally agrees to work on putting together a "Super Monsters" puzzle with you, but when the puzzle is halfway complete, he knocks all the pieces onto the floor and starts kicking them across the room.

Handout A: “I Hear You”

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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?”

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

*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

"I Hear You"
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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 page 1 of 3

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.

Handout B: Building Relationships

What Makes a Mentoring Relationship Successful?

I knew that it was going to take her some time to loosen up, and you just can't force someone to trust you...you can't force somebody not to be shy. You just have to wait.

—A mentor

The key to creating effective mentoring relationships lies in the **development of trust** between two strangers of different ages. Volunteers come to mentoring programs because they want to help youth. Without establishing trust, however, mentors can never truly support the youth with whom they interact.

Establishing communication and developing a relationship can often be a difficult process. Learning to trust, especially for youth who have been let down before, requires time—youth cannot be expected to trust their mentor simply because program staff have put the two of them together.

The most critical factor in determining whether matches develop into satisfying and effective relationships characterized by high levels of trust is the approach of the mentor. Mentors who follow a gradual path in trust-building find that the types of support they can offer, and are accepted, broadens considerably once trust has been established.

Effective mentors are more likely to engage in the following practices. They:

- See themselves as “friends” rather than teachers or parents, and define their role as supporting the youth in a variety of ways.
- Are “active listeners.”
- Make a commitment to being consistent and dependable, to maintaining a steady presence in the youth’s life.
- Recognize that the relationship may seem fairly one-sided and take responsibility for keeping the relationship alive. Youth often test adults to determine whether they will actually stick around. Successful mentors regularly initiate contact and ensure that meetings are scheduled, rather than waiting to hear from youth.
- Involve the youth in deciding how the pair will spend their time together. While youth

are often reticent about expressing what they want to do, successful mentors take the time to learn about the youth's interests and provide them with options for how to spend their time, rather than planning everything without input from the youth.

- Pay attention to kids' need for "fun." Having fun together is a key part of building relationships, and it also provides youth with valuable opportunities that are otherwise often unavailable to them.
- Seek and utilize the help and advice of program staff. Successful mentors recognize that they don't have all the answers, and they value the support and guidance that program staff can provide.

What Stands in the Way of a Successful Relationship?

Mentors who focus first on building trust and becoming a friend to their youth tend to be more effective than mentors who immediately try to change or reform the youth.

Adults whose attention is concentrated on reforming youth are often frustrated by the youth's lack of receptivity. These volunteers make the mistake of pushing too hard and too quickly on the youth's problems: pressing the mentee to talk about sensitive issues before he or she is ready, and ignoring the youth's desire to help set the agenda for the pair's activities. These mentors fail precisely because they are too focused on their own agenda.

Less successful mentors tend to do the following. They:

- Approach the relationship with narrow, specific goals aimed at changing the youth's behavior.
- Have difficulty meeting with youth on a regular and consistent basis, often demanding that youth play an equal role in initiating contact. Unsuccessful mentors often complain that their mentee does not call them to arrange meetings or that the mentee fails to show up for scheduled meetings.
- Attempt to instill a set of values that may be different from or inconsistent with those the youth is exposed to at home.
- Attempt to transform or reform the youth by setting tasks (for example, focusing on doing schoolwork during their meetings) and adopting a parental or authoritative role in their interactions with youth. The value of a mentor is often in having a supportive adult who is not a parent or teacher. Adopting the posture of

these authority figures undermines the development of trust between a mentor and youth.

- Emphasize behavior changes over developing mutual trust and respect in the relationship. Mentors cannot force a youth to change; too much focus on what is wrong with a youth is more likely to turn him or her away from the mentor.

Adopting these ineffective strategies most often leads to dissatisfaction with the match and premature termination. In a study of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, researchers found that over 70 percent of the matches that included mentors who took this “reform the youth” approach met only sporadically, and the majority of those matches ended relatively quickly. In contrast, in matches where mentors adopted the gradual trust-building approach, more than 90 percent met on a regular and consistent basis for an extended period of time.

[Information from *Building Relationships With Youth in Program Settings: A Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. 1995. Kristine V. Morrow and Melanie B. Styles. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.]

Handout C: **During This Session**

List three things you learned during this session that will help you when you begin your new role as a mentor. They can be skills, attitudes, or anything else. Then explain how each will help.

1.

2.

3.