



COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF CHESTERFIELD

MENTOR HANDBOOK

Created in 2020 by the AmeriCorps VISTA in partnership with MENTOR VA.



Communities
In Schools

Chesterfield



MENTOR
VIRGINIA

**"IT'S RELATIONSHIPS, NOT PROGRAMS,
THAT CHANGE CHILDREN."**

~Bill Milliken
Communities In Schools Founder

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Mentoring In Real Life

"Rocking my 'I'm a Mentor' button from Communities In Schools of Chesterfield in honor of National Mentoring Month! It has been an absolute joy mentoring a student at Bellwood Elementary and I'm currently in withdrawal because I haven't seen my pal in WEEKS! Change your life and the life of a student; MENTOR!" - Bellwood Mentor





About Mentoring with CIS of Chesterfield

Our mission at Communities In Schools of Chesterfield, is to surround students with a community of support, enabling them to stay in school and achieve in life. As part of that mission, we believe every child needs and deserves a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult. As a mentor, you are helping us meet this need for so many of our students. CIS of Chesterfield mentors help play a significant part in our student's...

92%

Improved
Attendance

86%

Improved
Behavior

87%

Improved
Academics

100%

Promotion or
Graduation

Documented metrics, 2019-2020 school year

This handbook is a tool for you to use as you navigate a mentoring relationship. Our hope is that this handbook will increase your confidence and knowledge as a mentor. We want you to get the most out of your mentoring experience, and we want to do that by setting clear expectations, and giving you strategies for interacting with your mentee,

We thank you for your commitment to Chesterfield students, and we hope that your experience as a mentor will be equally rewarding for you and your mentee.

~Communities In Schools of
Chesterfield Team



The Role of a Mentor

A MENTOR...

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>✓ Is a
 <u>Good Listener</u>: offers their mentee a safe place to discuss life events, school, peer relationships, etc.</p> | <p>✗ Is not a
 <u>Therapist</u>: doesn't try to address issues that should be handled by a professional; seeks help from the CIS Site Coordinator</p> |
| <p>✓ Is a
 <u>Friend</u>: listens, sympathizes, and offers solicited advice</p> | <p>✗ Is not a
 <u>Parent</u>: doesn't discipline, take sides, or lecture their mentee</p> |
| <p>✓ Is a
 <u>Guide</u>: helps mentee find strength & answers within themselves</p> | <p>✗ Is not a
 <u>Cure-All</u>: doesn't try to "fix" their mentee</p> |
| <p>✓ Is a
 <u>Motivator</u>: encourages mentee & helps them set realistic goals</p> | <p>✗ Is not a
 <u>Pusher</u>: doesn't belabor personal opinions or force mentee into unwanted situations</p> |
| <p>✓ Is an
 <u>Advocate</u>: helps mentee navigate systems to improve situations, and become their own best advocate</p> | <p>✗ Is not a
 <u>Savior</u>: doesn't assume their mentee needs saving, and doesn't try to "fight their battles" for them</p> |

"Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction."
 — John Crosby



5 CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORING:

01

Consistency

Many of our students live with a lot of inconsistency. Mentors can positively impact their mentees and alleviate anxiety by showing up regularly and on time.



02

Closeness

A key marker of a successful mentoring match is when the mentors and mentees feel close to one another. Mentors can connect to their mentees through common interests and or shared bonds.

03

Youth - Centered

Mentors and mentees should share with one another, but successful mentors focus on the mentee and what they want out of the mentoring relationship.



04

Structure & Support

Especially with older students, successful mentors help their mentees learn how to set reasonable goals and work towards achieving those goals. This format helps to provide structure for match meetings.

05

Duration

Successful mentor matches meet for the entirety of the agreed-upon length of time (usually one full school year).



Mentoring in Real Life

A Structure & Support Success Story:

"You are correct, she is a wonderful person and a conscientious student. I am doing some research for her on starting a business and sharing a book on career planning. I will loan her books at our next meeting and we can expand on our talks from there. I want to be open to hear her family issues, but not dwell on that for our discussions. I want to talk more about her plans for getting ready for college or going to the tech center for certification." - Meadowbrook Mentor

Relationship Building

LEVELS OF A RELATIONSHIP:



Small Talk

(Offering Information that is easy to share with a stranger)

Identifying Shared Interests

(Finding things in common like hobbies, sports, music, etc.)

Thought disclosure

(Discuss our thoughts, beliefs, and values)

Personal disclosure

(Sharing needs, worries, & feelings with someone we trust)

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING TIPS:

- The key to any successful relationship is **trust**. A mentor can develop trust by showing up consistently, listening, and supporting their mentee's goals.
- Treat your mentee with **respect** and withhold judgement.
- Allow the mentee have a say in how you spend your time together; **involve** your mentee in decision making.
- Lead by example and be a **role model** for your mentee. Encourage positive behaviors by modeling things like good listening, respect and kindness.
- Be **patient**! Building a mentoring relationship takes time and effort but the rewards for both mentees and mentors are worth the wait.

MENTORING AS A DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIP:

Developmental Relationships

are close connections through which young people discover who they are, cultivate abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them.



Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions— that make relationships powerful in young people's lives:



Express Care - "Show me that I matter to you."

Be dependable.....Be someone I can trust.

Listen.....Really pay attention when we are together.

Believe in me.....Make me feel known and valued.

Be warm.....Show me you enjoy being with me.

Encourage.....Praise me for my efforts and achievements.

Challenge Growth - "Push me to keep improving."

Expect my best.....Expect me to live up to my potential.

Stretch.....Push me to go further.

Hold me accountable.....Insist I take responsibility for my actions.

Reflect on failures.....Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.



Elements of a Developmental Relationships



Provide Support - "Help me achieve tasks & set goals."

Navigate.....Guide me through hard situations and systems.

Empower.....Build my confidence to take charge of my life.

Advocate.....Stand up for me when I need it.

Set boundaries.....Put limits in place that keep me on track.

Share Power - "Treat me with respect and give me a say."

Respect me.....Take me seriously and treat me fairly.

Include me.....Involve me in decisions that affect me.

Collaborate.....Work with me to solve problems and reach goals.

Let me lead.....Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.



Expand Possibilities - "Connect me with people and places that broaden my world."

Inspire.....Inspire me to see possibilities for my future.

Broaden horizons.....Expose me to new ideas, experiences, & places.

Connect.....Introduce me to people who can help me grow.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

1. Which of these elements is my strongest?
2. Which of these elements might be challenging for me?

Effective Communication

AVOIDING THE QUESTION-ANSWER TRAP:

It is easy for mentors, especially at the beginning of a relationship, to get caught in the "Question-Answer Trap." In an attempt to get to know their mentee, mentors often ask yes/no or one-word-answer questions like "What's your favorite color?" or "How is school going?" The result is the mentee being bombarded with questions, and the mentor working hard to carry a one-sided conversation.

One great and easy way to avoid the trap is to prepare and ask **open-ended questions**, or questions that require a more thoughtful answer. Following the example below, practice thinking of some open-ended questions before your next match meeting!

EXAMPLE: If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?

****Note that most questions can be made open-ended by adding "why"!****

1.

2.

3.

4.



ACTIVE LISTENING:

Active listening is an important communication skill. It involves listening carefully to the words and feelings expressed by the speaker and then reflecting these facts back to the speaker in a way that lets them know you heard them and you understand them.



Active Listening Requires:

Listening rather than just hearing, which takes concentration.

Wanting to understand, not just wanting to respond.

Reflecting back the feelings he or she has heard.

Active Listening Techniques:

Paying Attention: Listen to what the mentee is saying because you want to understand

Paraphrasing: Repeat information in your own words to make sure you heard it right

Clarifying: Ask the speaker if you have it right or ask them to elaborate on topics

Perception Checking: Pay attention to non-verbal things like facial cues or tone of voice

Open Body Language: Face the speaker, arms uncrossed, and display signs of listening

**** Important Note about Confidentiality ****

What you and your mentee discuss should be kept private out of respect to your mentee. That being said, if you suspect that your mentee is in danger, is a danger to themselves, or is a danger to others, you must tell the

CIS Site Coordinator immediately.

Successful mentors recognize that they don't have all the answers, and we hope that you will feel comfortable talking to any of the staff members about issues you or your mentee might be dealing with.

COMMUNICATING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES:

When working with your mentee, there may be certain topics, questions, language, or actions that make you feel unsure or uncomfortable. Being able to share your boundaries is important in a relationship and will also help your mentee learn how to express their boundaries in a safe and clear way. To do this...



- 1 Know your own personal boundaries
- 2 Clearly express those boundaries
- 3 When appropriate, ask your mentee about their boundaries
- 4 Respect the boundaries they establish

YOU VS. I STATEMENTS:



Mentors have to be careful to avoid using language that blames or shames, especially "You Statements." You Statements put the responsibility for your feelings on the other person: "**You** disappointed me when you weren't here last week."

VS.



Instead of You Statements, mentors can use "I Statements" which communicate how you feel without blame, and open the door for you to state what you want: "**I** felt disappointed when you weren't here last week, because **I** worry about your safety, and **I** enjoy our meetings."

Youth Development

GROWTH VS. FIXED MINDSETS:

Having a Growth Mindset means believing intelligence and abilities are **developed** & **flexible** rather than innate & fixed. A growth mindset praises the process of learning rather than outcomes.

Traditionally, success in the classroom is based on test scores or grades so that when a student obtains a "successful" outcome (i.e. an A/100%) they are "smart" or "good at x." Using this mindset, if the same student who scored well were to score poorly, then they would not be smart or would be bad at x even though it was a one-time evaluation.

Helping a student develop a growth mindset means to help them understand **effort** as the key to success, *not* as a sign of low ability.

Mindset research has show students with a growth mindset do better in school because of their empowering perspective and how they approach challenges.



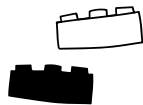
A student's mindset drastically affects how they handle school and life:

A student with a fixed mindset...

avoids challenges



gives up easily



sees effort as fruitless



ignores useful criticism



threatened by others

A student with a growth mindset...

embraces challenges



persists on obstacles

sees effort as necessary



learns from criticism

inspired by others' success

HOW MENTORS CAN FOSTER A GROWTH MINDSET:

Mentors can initiate conversations with their mentees about what it means to have a growth mindset. Explaining and supporting a growth mindset can be particularly helpful in response to a mentee's recent struggle or frustration.

Mentors can also use supportive language like the following:

"I know this is hard, but look how your hard work is paying off!"

"I don't think you understand that just yet, can we try that question again?"

"You can do it! You are working so hard."

Better than phrases like "Good job" or "you are so smart," these statements foster a growth mindset because they praise the **process and the effort rather than a mentee's innate abilities.**



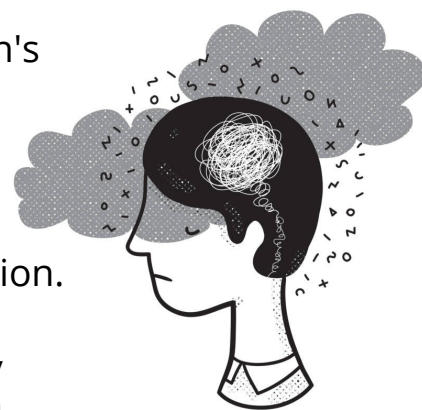
HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:

A traumatic experience is one that **overwhelms** a person's ability to cope with what they are experiencing.

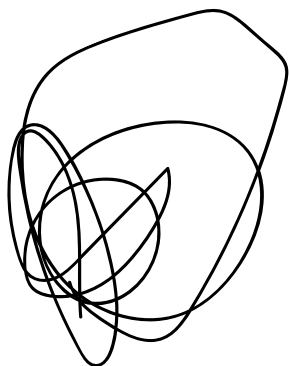
Unfortunately, our students are often exposed to many (oftentimes recurring) traumatic experiences like abuse, violence in and out of the home, and or parental separation.

The stress experienced because of these events not only harms the individual **psychologically**, but also **physically**.

Youth who have experienced trauma can have difficulty concentrating in school, maintaining relationships, remembering events, fighting disease, sleeping, controlling their own behavior, and more.



WHAT DOES TRAUMA LOOK LIKE?



Trauma can manifest itself in many **different** ways. Below are some ways that trauma may appear during your mentor match meetings.

It is important to note that this list is not all-encompassing, and these behaviors are not always trauma-related. The important thing is for mentors to **see beyond the behavior** and ask the "why": "Why is my mentee behaving this way?"

Attachment: The mentee has trouble with relationships and boundaries. They could be physically clingy or they might push away.

Issues with behavior: The mentee may have a lack of impulse control, and or may be defiant, attention-seeking, or even aggressive.

Withdrawal: The mentee shuts down or wants to find social isolation.

Impaired Cognitive Abilities: The mentee has problems focusing, learning or processing, issues of language and abstract thinking.

Hyper-Arousal: The mentee is constantly alert or may have an exaggerated startle response.

HOW MENTORS CAN HELP BUILD RESILIENCE:

- 1 Consistency is key! You can help your mentee **build a healthy attachment** by showing up regularly and effectively communicating boundaries.
- 2 Children who have experienced trauma often seek **safety**. Mentors can create a safe physical and emotional environment in their match meetings by actively listening to their mentee and respecting their mentee's boundaries.
- 3 Mentors can **build resilience** through helping their mentee identify and communicate their feelings.
- 4 Once mentees can identify their feelings, mentors can help students **manage their emotions** through practicing social skills and coping mechanisms like mindfulness.

Site Policies

Once a mentor is matched with a school site, the respective Site Coordinator will go over site-specific policies with the mentor. Below, is space to write down some of the key information.

Site Information

Site Coordinator's Name:

Site Coordinator's Email:

@ccpsnet.net

School's Phone Number:

Site Policies

How will I be notified if my mentee is absent?

How will I notify the coordinator if I will be absent?

Where do I find my mentee when I arrive?

Where do I park/sign-in?

Are mentors permitted to use cellphones?

Is the exchange of phone numbers, contact info, and/or social media permitted?

What is the gift giving policy?

Is transportation of my mentee permitted?

What is the photo taking policy?

What displays of physical affection are appropriate?

Mentor Scenarios

Scenario 1: My mentee tends to avoid talking about feelings or deeper issues, and does not want to open up.

Building trust takes time, so be patient. Continue to practice active listening and do not try to force the mentee to talk about certain topics. Discuss any concerns with your Site Coordinator.

Scenario 2: My mentee is failing math. He has Standards of Learning (SOL) tests coming up and is getting increasingly anxious about the tests.

Remember that your role is to support your mentee and sometimes that means being an advocate. Discuss with the Site Coordinator how you can help your mentee by tutoring them, playing math games, and or helping them create a study schedule. This is a great opportunity to also help your mentee cultivate a growth mindset!

Scenario 3: My mentee asks if their friend can join you two for lunch.

All students referred to mentoring through CIS must have a signed parental consent form, so friends are not permitted to meet with volunteers. You can explain this to your mentee and emphasize how you really value your special time together.

Scenario 4: My mentee has difficulty showing appreciation or saying thank you.

Most likely it is not that they don't appreciate you. Kids just have trouble expressing their thoughts and feelings. As with other social skills, this can be role modeled by you!

Scenario 5: My mentee and I have been together for two months and we seem to be doing well, but recently the Site Coordinator reported to me that my mentee is skipping school.

This is not failure on the mentor's part. The next time you meet with your mentee, try to bring up the topic of attendance in a non-confrontational way. You might say, "I missed you last week. I like it when you come to school so I can see you." Listen if the mentee wants to talk; try not to reprimand. Think of ways you can encourage your mentee to come to school every day.

Scenario 6: My 14 year-old mentee casually mentioned to me that some of his friends drink and some of his friends smoke pot.

Listen first, then ask questions. If your mentee seems receptive, talk to them about making good choices. Avoid telling your mentee what to do/not do; instead ask them to think about the possible consequences. It is a sign of trust that your mentee told you this - to avoid breaking the trust, show your mentee you care about them regardless and you want them to make healthy choices.

Scenario 7: My mentee tells me their mother often leaves them alone in the house with her two year-old brother. My mentee is responsible for cooking dinner and other household duties.

Listen for what your mentee may really be telling you about the situation. Ask your mentee how they feel about these responsibilities. This may be a situation where your mentee feels empowered by the responsibilities they have been given. Or they may feel stress. Perhaps you can help your mentee come up with strategies to make their responsibilities easier. Try not to judge the parent; instead focus on the mentee. After learning more, if you feel this is a situation of neglect, please the the Site Coordinator.

Scenario 8: My mentee shows no sign of improvement in school or at home.

It takes time to see improvements in kids. Brainstorm with your Site Coordinator to find activities and strategies to help the mentee with their needs. Remember that having your one-on-one attention is beneficial for their development. Be patient!

Scenario 9: My 5 year-old mentee asks me to take them to the bathroom.

CCPS policy is that under NO circumstances is a volunteer permitted into a student bathroom. If your mentee insist on going, you may walk with them to the nearest restroom and wait OUTSIDE in the hallway for them. Should they need assistance in the bathroom, find a school staff member.

Scenario 10: Things have been going well with my mentee and they recently asked if we could spend time together over the weekend.

Success! It seems that you and your mentee are really bonding! Unfortunately, mentors are NOT permitted to meet with their mentee off-site. Express to your mentee that you are so glad they enjoy spending time with you, but you will not be able to see them out of school. Feel free to make the program the "bad guy". You can also emphasize the specialness of your time spent together at school.

Scenario 11: My mentee and I have been meeting for a few weeks now and we have not made any progress. My mentee does not seem to want to be there, avoids eye contact, and only answers with "yes" or "no".

Sometimes it is just not a good fit. Even the best mentors can be mismatched with a mentee. Mentoring should can be challenging but for the most part should be enjoyable for everyone involved. If after a few meetings, you do not think it is a good fit, please let the Site Coordinator know.

Mentor Resources

****A big thank you to our partner MENTOR VA, whose New Member Training inspired some of the content in this handbook.****



Other Sources Used to Inform this Handbook:

Section 1: The Role of a Mentor

High School Teen Mentoring Handbook, pg.6

Author: Government of Alberta, Advanced Education and Technology

Section 2: Relationship Building

The Developmental Relationships Framework

Author: The Search Institute

Link: <https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/developmental-relationships-framework/>

Section 4: Youth Development

Growth Mindset for Mentors Toolkit

Author: MENTOR National

Link: <https://www.mindsetkit.org/growth-mindset-parents/learn-about-growth-mindset/research-how-mindset-affects-learning>

Surviving and Thriving, a ChildSavers Training

Author: John Richardson-Lauve, ChildSavers Richmond, VA

