



Tabletop Session Summary

June 10, 2021

Practices in Youth Mentoring

Presenters: Delia Hagan, [National Mentoring Resource Center](#); Heleya de Barros and Jasmine Brown, [Arts Corps Seattle](#)

This tabletop discussion explored different mentoring models and how they can help students through periods of disruption.

Session Highlights

- » The National Mentoring Resource Center (funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention) is dedicated to improving the quantity and quality of mentoring relationships around the United States. In addition to publishing information on “what works” in mentoring on its website, the National Mentoring Resource Center provides free technical assistance to youth mentoring programs.
- » Mentoring has shown positive impacts on students including on their school attendance, participation and leadership in extracurricular activities, volunteer service, and college enrollment. Mentoring has also increased participants’ interest in becoming mentors themselves.
- » A gap in mentoring exists, however. One in three young people are growing up without someone they can look up to or connect with outside of their family.
- » There are several different models and approaches to mentoring that can be employed with youth including one-to-one, group, or peer-to-peer mentoring. Mentoring can be offered at a program site or offsite. There are also virtual and hybrid mentoring programs that have worked well in this climate.
- » Expressing care, challenging growth, sharing power, providing support, and expanding possibilities are key tenets of developing empowering relationships with young people.
- » For this summer, it is imperative for mentoring programs to meet students where they are socially and emotionally and to normalize their feelings. Building trust with students takes time.
- » Arts Corps is a K-12 arts education program that is firmly rooted in social emotional learning and culturally responsive pedagogy. It includes a teen leadership component, which is offered in cohorts with a small student-teacher ratio and emphasizes career connected arts. This programming has been entirely virtual during the pandemic, which has unexpectedly allowed them to expand their geographical reach. Their focus this past year has been on how to use the arts to process collective trauma.



Shared Resources

- » [Critical Mentoring: A Practical Guide](#)
- » [Learning Immersive Technology \(LIT\)](#)
- » [MENTOR Website](#)
- » [The Mentoring Connector](#)

Questions and Answers on Practices in Youth Mentoring

How do you make sure that mentors have the right training and support to be successful?

It is important to be intentional about training and support on the front end. Before launching a program, staff should have a plan and determine how many touch points program staff will have with mentors to make sure they feel supported. In terms of training, programs should have a plan that is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it reflects what the program wants mentors to know how to do. There are several great tools on the MENTOR website that describe what should be in a pre-match training and what mentors need to know. There are also ongoing training topics (such as trauma) that can help mentors deepen their perspective as they continue to build relationships.

What kind of mentors are best suited for high school students?

For Arts Corps, some of the youth have become classroom assistants or teaching artists after graduating from the program. Because they are familiar with the format of the program, they are well-positioned to give back and share with others what they have learned.

As you expand and get more involved with various school districts, how do you maintain healthy relationships with teachers and administrators?

Persistence is key. Attending school events is very important for connecting and meeting face-to-face with school staff and administrators. Arts Corps has a robust staff and that makes it easier to attend different school events. As a result of COVID, Arts Corps also learned to streamline communications and started a specific education newsletter that is geared for principals, counselors, and teachers in all participating schools and community organization partnerships. It is a biweekly newsletter that includes program updates, applications deadlines, hiring opportunities, and spotlights other organizations in the area. Arts Corps found that this newsletter was more effective than constant emails.

How do you ensure that mentors show up consistently?

It comes down to screening, training, and orienting during the recruitment process. Programs tend to highlight many positive aspects of the mentoring experience during the recruitment process. When the work gets started, it gets harder than mentors may have expected or maybe it is not as rewarding as expected. As a result, they may fall off, and it may go unnoticed. It is important at the front end for mentors to know that not showing up does more harm than good. It is also essential to have processes in place to assess whether a person is the right fit and can commit. Then, programs should track participation to ensure mentors are following through on their commitment.

If there was one thing to focus on over the next twelve months, what is one piece of advice that you would suggest?

One priority is ensuring that students are feeling connected and known to the adults around them. Regardless of the environment (school or community), we need to ask, is that student connecting? If not, how can we change the culture so that students feel more connected. Asking meaningful questions



and having students give real answers can help with making those connections. A benefit of virtual programs is being able to expand your reach in terms of connections and overcome geographic boundaries.

