Contextualizing Mentoring Relationships Within Formal Youth Mentoring Programs
A Bilateral Framework*

	The Mentoring Relationship is the Goal (an END unto itself)	The Mentoring Relationship Leads to the Goal (a MEANS to an end)	
What is the purpose of the relationship?	Safe, stable, nurturing relationships (SSNRs) with adult(s) act as protective factors for the young person's healthy development.	The mentoring relationship is a vehicle by which specific tools are delivered in service of achieving a particular outcome. Success is not dependent on the quality of the relationship.	
CORE FOCUS OF MENTORING			
What is the primary program focus?	**Supportive Mentoring** Supportive mentoring provides safe, supportive nurturing relationships that promote growth and supplement or enhance the relational resources in a young person's life.	**Targeted Mentoring** (aka need-focused or specialized mentoring) Target a specific need or problem or a specific subgroup of young people.	**Transitional Mentoring** Supports young people who are facing a specific challenging transition in their life.
Who are the young people that the program is designed to serve? **What young people would not be well-served by this program?**	Young people living in under-resourced environments and/or youth with gaps in relational resources.	Young people with specific need or problem; young people from specific subgroup.	Young people experiencing challenging life transition.
	Although mentoring is a flexible community prevention and intervention approach that can be tailored to meet young people's various goals, needs, and contexts, to be effective, programs must be realistic about the young people they can serve optimally and those whose needs, goals, and contexts do not align with the program model, resources, and area of expertise. Alignment between a young person's needs and goals, the program model, and the expected outcomes is critical to promote program effectiveness and increase the likelihood that young people and mentors will have a quality experience.		
How is the program collaborating with community stakeholders?	Program model is designed to meet community needs. To ensure community relevance and reach, the program engages with community stakeholders such as young people, parents and caregivers, potential mentors, and community members and organizations.		
What is the role of the mentoring relationship?	• The relationship is in the foreground and is a supplemental, prevention- and promotion-focused form of support for a young person's overall development. • The relationship is not intended as a targeted intervention designed to produce a specific set of outcomes. • This type of mentoring is likely to be primarily developmental.	• The relationship is the context in which prevention or intervention activities can be delivered. • This type of mentoring is likely to be primarily instrumental to address the needs it targets.	• The relationship is the context to address challenges brought about by transition and support successful transition. • This type of mentoring is likely to be primarily instrumental to address the needs it targets.
What is the expected duration/length of the mentoring relationship?	Often several months or more to promote building and sustaining a quality relationship (e.g., school year, full year, etc.).	Determined by the goal(s).	Determined by transition.
How have program practices and structure been designed to achieve program goals?	Program practices and structure are intended to effectively generate the conditions to support mentors' attempts to form and sustain growth-promoting relationships.	Program practices and structure are intended to promote the impact of the mentoring relationship to shift the risk and/or protective factors. Often integrate research-informed practices designed to match the needs of the targeted subgroup.	Program practices and structure are intended to promote the impact of the mentoring relationship to shift the risk and/or protective factors related to the transition.

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What are the relationship's goals or outcomes?	Supportive, growth-promoting relationship. Healthy development and meeting expected developmental outcomes. Beyond the development of a growth-promoting relationship, this type of mentoring relationships will likely have secondary goals or outcomes. However, these secondary goals or outcomes will vary based on the individual needs and context of each mentee and are likely to evolve depending on the duration of the mentoring relationship and the mentee's development.	This type of mentoring relationship has explicit goals such as reduction in specific problems or improved health for specific groups. Varied but specific, often near term.	This type of mentoring relationship has an explicit goal: a successful transition. Varied but specific, often near term.
	Note: Mentees may have individual goals for their mentoring relationship that are aligned with the program goals (goals that all mentees are anticipated to achieve) but that are specific to their own needs and context.		
What roles do mentors play?	• Support: mentors are invested in promoting the psychosocial development of the young person and commit to engaging in a supportive relationship that lasts several months. • Adaptive: mentors adapt to youth's changing needs and will likely encounter a wide array of circumstances (context, environment, needs, goals) in their efforts to support youth over time. • Attuned: mentors are attuned to mentees' evolving needs and create a strong personal connection, and a safe space for their mentees to grow.	• Focused: mentors facilitate delivery or deliver prevention or intervention. • Tactical: mentors rely on specific practices designed to prevent or treat specific problems or improve youth well-being. • Attuned: mentors are attuned and responsive to mentees' unique needs, environment, and preferences in the context of program goals. Mentors join with other attuned adults in program context, as relevant, to provide network of support for youth.	• Focus on transition: mentors should be responsive to support young people as they navigate specific challenges in their lives. • Tactical: mentors are trained to perform a narrow set of tasks over a limited, and at times stressful, period. This is in contrast to supportive mentoring, where mentors will likely encounter a wide array of evolving needs and goals. • Attuned: mentors interact with mentees in ways that make mentees feel safe and supported during an at times stressful transition. Mentors track mentees' responses to the unique circumstances brought about by this transition, and attends to that more directly through the relationship.
	Program expectations and guidelines about what mentors do (attitudes, behaviours, and activities) use a positive youth development (PYD) approach (including equity and youth-centeredness) to achieve program goal(s). Programs have more control over what mentors do than over mentees' outcomes.		
How is change achieved (change mechanism)?	A safe, supportive, and nurturing relationship results in the promotion of the mentee's healthy development and increase in protective factors.	The intervention and relationship result in a shift in risk/protective factors specific to the need or group.	The intervention and relationship result shift in risk/protective factors specific to the transition.
What are the markers of success?	Continued supportive presence of the mentor in the life of the young person to foster healthy development, which is connected to the quality and durability of the relationship defined by program expectations and the mentee's perspective.	Reduction of problem or need is dependent on a shift in risk and/or protective factors.	Successful transition is dependent on a shift in risk and/or protective factors.
		While a mentoring relationship is necessary to deliver the intervention, success is less dependent on the quality of that relationship.	
Does the program have the capacity and resources (human, financial, expertise) to accomplish the intended relationship outcomes?	Organizations and programs have sufficient capacity and resources to effectively implement program activities and support mentoring relationships, considering the context of the young people served, to create the optimal conditions to achieve program outcomes.		

* Adapted from: Cavell, T.A., Spencer, R., McQuillin, S.D. (2021). Back to the Future: Mentoring as a Means and End in Promoting Child Mental Health. Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 0(0), 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2021.1875327

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