

Mentoring for 9-14 Schools: Career Mentor Training

How to Use This Document:

Prior to beginning mentoring at a 9-14 school, prospective career mentors attend a mandatory orientation and training. Volunteers are introduced to the practice of mentoring, best practices for working with high school-aged youth, and participation requirements. Minimum suggested training time is one two-hour session. In addition to the following basic training, mentors could benefit from role play scenarios and ongoing training during the program period. The training can be facilitated by a combination of central staff, school and employer partner representatives. A minimum of two facilitators is recommended.

CAREER MENTOR TRAINING FACILITATOR GUIDE

Supplies:

Projector and laptop

Chart paper

Markers

Name tags or tents

Sign-in sheet

Pens/pencils

Qualities and attitudes of an ideal mentor (to pass out in section IIc.)

Folders with handouts (SEE SAMPLE DOCUMENTS ATTACHED, bold in facilitation outline)

Training agenda

Developmental characteristics

Positive youth development tips

Sample lesson plan template (not attached, will vary by program)

Program goals

Schedule of mentoring sessions

Mentor/mentee agreements

Background check instructions

Training evaluation

Objectives:

- Build relationships among staff and fellow mentors
- Discuss details of program, requirements, logistics, and next steps
- Manage incoming expectations and establish appropriate expectations for mentors
- Provide basic training in mentoring and working with young people
- Introduce mentors to session topics and their role in facilitating sessions
- Answer mentor questions
- Sign mentor agreements

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Agenda:

- I. Welcome and introductions
- II. What makes a good mentor
- III. Working with youth
- IV. Mentoring program details
- V. Logistics and wrap up

Facilitation Outline:

	Topic	Activity and Timing	Facilitation Responsibilities
	I. Welcome and Introduction	A. <i>Introductions</i> [10 minutes]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List items participants will provide the group: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Name, 2) Position, 2) What is one thing you want to learn today either about the program or how to be a successful mentor? • Record answers to “what do you want to learn today” on chart paper as <i>training expectations</i>
		B. <i>Overview of 9-14 model, Introduction to school and partners, Overview of school mentoring program</i> [10 minutes]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present slide deck • Take questions
<p>Transition: Now that we know a little bit about who is in the room and why we’ll begin talking about the role of mentors for youth and construct the profile of an ideal mentor together.</p>			
	II. What Makes a Good Mentor	A. <i>Our own mentors</i> [10 minutes]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show of hands for who has had a mentor, who has been a mentor • Record ideas from group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What’s special about your mentors? ○ What makes your mentors effective?
		B. <i>A Mentor IS...a Mentor IS NOT...</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for ideas from group • Record answers in table with two columns labeled “IS” and “IS NOT”

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		[10 minutes]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize great answers and add anything that’s missing from “ideal mentor profile”
		<p>C. <i>The ideal mentor</i></p> <p>[5 minutes]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualities of an ideal mentor
	<p>Transition: We’ve established what makes a good mentor and how this group is uniquely positioned to work with young people exploring high school, college, and careers in their field of focus. Now we’ll dig into the typical characteristics of teens you’ll be working with, how to deliver that message to teens, and tips for navigating the relationships.</p>		

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III. Working with Youth	<p>A. <i>Developmental characteristics of 14-16 year-olds</i></p> <p>[10 minutes]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turn attention to developmental characteristics of youth handout • Speak to strengths and challenges of specific student population • Take questions
	<p>B. <i>Student perspective</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Mentor perspective</i></p> <p>[20 minutes: 15 min group work, 5 min share]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign groups • Groups discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do you think 10th grade students might be apprehensive about when meeting with a group of adult professionals? ○ What are some of the concerns you have about facilitating a discussion with a group of young people? ○ What are some ways to assuage these concerns for mentor and mentee? • Record notes during group share out
	<p>C. <i>Positive youth development tips</i></p> <p>[5 minutes]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive youth development handout • Take questions
Take 5 minute break		
<p>Transition: We've now completed the more training-heavy portion of the day, and we'll end with discussing the nitty-gritty program details about when and where you'll volunteer, the structure and staffing of sessions, and some ground rules before closing with next steps and questions.</p>		

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IV. Mentoring Program Details	A. <i>Program goals</i> [5 minutes]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program goals handout
	B. <i>Mentoring sessions overview</i> [10 minutes]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor : student : teacher ratio • Alternating between school and workplace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public school environment • Staff support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role of teachers in classroom ○ Review reasons to approach/notify staff ○ School contact ○ Company contact • Session 1 outline
	C. <i>Mentor/mentee agreements</i> [5 minutes]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review time commitment and session structure • Review agreements • Answer any questions • Have volunteers sign forms
<p>Transition: We've discussed a lot today, and we hope you are excited and feel ready to begin serving as mentors. There are a few logistical items to take care of before the first mentoring session.</p>		
V. Logistics and Wrap Up	A. <i>Background check</i> [5 minutes]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review instructions for fingerprinting
	B. <i>Q & A</i> [5 minutes]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer any final questions/concerns about all training material and the overall mentoring program
	C. <i>Thank you and evaluation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request that participants complete and return evaluation before leaving

MENTOR TRAINING AGENDA

Date
Time
Employer

- VI. Welcome and introduction**
- VII. What makes a good mentor**
- VIII. Working with youth**
- IX. Mentoring program details**
- X. Logistics & wrap up**

Key contacts

School: Name
 Email
 Phone

School address

Employer: Name
 Email
 Phone

Following a discussion of the definition of mentoring, and what is and *is not* mentoring, trainers emphasize ideal traits of mentors and explain the importance of maintaining realistic expectations between mentors and mentees.

QUALITIES OF AN IDEAL MENTOR

- Flexible
- Patient
- Good listeners
- Respectful
- Accepting
- Trustworthy
- Caring
- Open
- Non-directive
- Inspirational
- Hopeful
- Non-judgmental
- Good role model
- Encourage belief in the mentee's ability
- Focus on the growth and development of the mentee

Realistic and Unrealistic Expectations of the Mentor

Good mentoring begins with the fostering of a supportive attitude, one that focuses on the growth and development of the mentee(s). At the beginning of the program, it is helpful to look at your preconceptions for the relationship. A mentor's unrealistic expectations can leave both mentor and mentee(s) frustrated and disillusioned. Maintaining a realistic perspective reduces stress, and it helps the mentoring process to proceed smoothly.

Unrealistic: My mentee's professional success is dependent upon the mentoring process.

Realistic: Even though I will go to great lengths to be of assistance, my mentee's professional success is dependent on his/her own choices and behaviors.

* * *

Unrealistic: My mentee will surely make changes in his/her behavior after speaking with me a few times.

Realistic: It will most likely take time for the mentee to make significant changes (if at all). I should not expect someone to transform because I have spent a few hours with him or her.

* * *

Unrealistic: If my mentee's behavior does not change immediately, it's proof that nothing is happening.

Realistic: My mentee may not appear to be benefiting from the relationship, but that does not mean that they are not getting something good out of it. As a mentor, I must consider that the process of mentoring is "planting seeds" that may take hold at a later time.

* * *

Unrealistic: If I do not see an extensive change in my mentee’s functioning, it's a negative reflection on me.

Realistic: Not seeing changes in my mentee does not mean that I have been unsuccessful as a mentor. Again, positive changes take time. And besides, mentoring is not a contest, and it is not about me.

* * *

Unrealistic: I need to be a perfect, “mistake-proof” mentor.

Realistic: It is okay to make mistakes as a mentor. I may take the wrong approach, or say things the wrong way from time to time, but my mentee will be resilient as long as they know I have their best interests at heart.

Adapted from Mentor Training Manual, Jerry Sherk

It’s critical to ensure that mentors understand the developmental context for the ways in which their mentees may be thinking, feeling, and behaving. Distributing the following list reminds mentors of the unique developmental position of the population they are serving, and provides them with initial suggestions for engaging mentees.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH, 14-16-YEAR-OLDS

General Characteristics

1. Testing limits, “know-it-all” attitude.
2. Facing challenges of developing mentally and physically.
3. Vulnerable, emotionally insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
4. Often project competence while lacking full ability.
5. Identify with an admired adult, or often reject adults in exchange for friends.

Physical Characteristics

1. Very concerned and self-conscious with their appearance and growth.
2. Diet and sleep habits can be uneven, which may result in low energy levels.
3. May experience rapid weight gain at beginning of adolescence. Enormous appetite.
4. Important to learn good personal hygiene and grooming.

Social Characteristics

1. Friends set the general rules of behavior.
2. Feel a real need to conform. They dress and behave alike in order to “belong.”
3. Are very concerned about what others say and think of them.
4. Go to extremes; emotional instability with “know-it-all” attitude.
5. Fear of ridicule and of being unpopular.
6. Often facing the duality in adolescence between childhood and adulthood.
7. Girls are usually more ready for dating and relationships than boys.

Emotional Characteristics

1. Are very sensitive to praise and recognition; feelings are easily hurt.
2. Are caught between being a child and being an adult.
3. Self-confidence is a very important factor in going against peer pressure and concern for success.
4. Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
5. Look at the world more objectively, but look at adults subjectively, and may be critical.

Mental Characteristics

1. Can better understand moral principles.
2. Thought processes are starting to involve more of their own personal voice.
3. Attention span can be lengthy.
4. Argumentative behavior may be part of “trying out” an opinion.

Developmental Tasks

1. Physical maturation.
2. Abstract thinking.
3. Strong sense of responsibility and consequences.
4. Membership in their peer group.
5. Developing more defined relationships among their peers.

Suggested Volunteer Strategies

1. Give choices and don't be afraid to confront inappropriate behavior.
2. Use humor to diffuse testy situations.
3. Give positive feedback, and let mentee know affection is for them and not for accomplishments.
4. Be available and be yourself with strengths, weaknesses and emotions.
5. Be honest and disclose appropriate personal information to build trust.
6. Apologize when appropriate.

Adapted from materials provided by Mentoring Partnership of Long Island, Virginia Mentoring Partnership, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Child Development Seminar, August 1990.

After discussing the developmental context, it's helpful to discuss some strategies for effectively engaging youth in mentoring activities and discussions. The following youth development tips are a brief introduction to key methods.

6 POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT TIPS

1. Use empowering and validating language

Example: “What do *you* think about this idea?”; “What does it mean to *you*?”

Purpose: Encourage students to speak up in the group. Affirm that the opinions, experiences, and questions they share are on-track and positively contributing to the discussion.

2. Speak respectfully

Example: “Thanks, Nadia, that’s an interesting idea. Does anyone have another opinion they want to share?”

Purpose: Acknowledge and accept that students will sometimes express differing views from mentors and their peers. Encourage this diversity, and model for the students how to be open-minded and treat others with respect even when they might disagree.

3. Practice reflective listening

Example: “It sounds like you’re feeling overwhelmed by the college application process. Am I right? This is totally understandable. Can you say more about what feels overwhelming?”

Purpose: Reframe a student’s statement so that he/she hears back what he/she said in a context that moves the conversation forward. Acknowledge the contribution, even if somewhat incomplete, and politely ask for the student to expand on their thoughts.

4. Meet students where they are (don’t be the “preacher in the room”)

Example (of what *not* to say): “When I was growing up, my mother told us there were no excuses—my brothers and I went to college because we worked hard like she told us to.”

Purpose: While it’s a good idea to try relating to the students, comparing your background, successes and challenges to theirs can sometimes be distracting. Try instead to ask students about what they’re experiencing and offer guidance based on their current situations.

5. Ask open-ended questions

Example: “What do you think employers are looking for when they hire new workers?”

Purpose: An open-ended question invites students to generate substantive, original answers and challenges them to be thoughtful in their responses.

6. Silence is OK sometimes

Example: “Where do you see yourself in 10 years?”* pause* for responses before asking a follow up question

Purpose: With this age group, silence is not always a sign of something wrong. Students may require a few moments to gather their thoughts and the courage to speak out. Avoid the temptation to fill silences right away—pause first before asking a follow up question or moving on.

Laura Miller, City University of New York Early College Initiative, October 2014.

Trainees will want to understand the goals of the program, and how their involvement would further the school's mission. The following program goals overview is an example from the engineering field in the 2014-15 school year. Brackets indicate opportunities to customize to school and employer needs.

**PROGRAM GOALS
ENERGY TECH HIGH SCHOOL MENTORING PROGRAM**

There are four main goals of the Energy Tech High School Mentoring Program:

1. Expose students to energy technology professionals
2. Promote soft skills development
3. Strengthen connection between school and employer partners
4. Develop the next generation of employees for Con Ed, National Grid, and the industry as a whole

The program plans to achieve these goals through 9 monthly mentoring sessions that will include the following elements:

- Exposure to adults and professionals other than teachers
- In-depth conversations and opportunities to ask and answer questions with industry professionals
- Support for students to develop their career interests
- Illuminating the career possibilities within the energy technology industry
- Guidance about career pathways
- Relationships with caring adults and role models including professionals that reflect students' diversity
- Sharing technical expertise and lessons from professionals' first-hand experience
- Promoting soft skills development and providing external validation for lessons learned in the classroom
- Linkages to the school's broader sequence of work-based learning experiences, such as future opportunities to participate in more intensive and focused job shadowing based on connections between mentors and mentees

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Prospective mentors will want to fully understand the time commitment and monthly schedule for the entire school year. If possible, provide the dates, times, and topics for the year during the initial training. This way prospective mentors can hold dates on their calendars and make a fully informed decision prior to signing up. The following is an example from the engineering field from the 2014-15 school year. Ask that participating mentors notify program staff of any scheduling conflicts as soon as possible.

ENERGY TECH HIGH SCHOOL FRIDAY MENTORING SESSIONS SCHEDULE

Note that all sessions are held during the class period lasting from 11:54 AM to 12:39 PM.

Session and Date	Mentoring Topic
Session 1: October 24 th	Goal setting and “day in the life” of your mentor
Session 2: November 21 st	Teamwork
Session 3: December 19 th	What are my strengths and skills?
Session 4: January 23 rd	Resumes
Session 5: February 27 th	Conflict resolution
Session 6: March 27 th	Mock interviews
Session 7: April 24 th	Stress and time management
Session 8: May 15 th	Speed networking
Session 9: June 5 th	Closing/celebration/thank you lunch

Signing mentor and mentee agreements establishes common ground rules for participation between both parties. Trainers can provide mentors with a copy of the mentee agreement for reference so that they understand what students expect upon entering the program.

MENTEE AGREEMENT

I, _____ (name) agree to the following:

Expectations

It is expected that the mentor will provide professional and educational development, advice, and guidance, and both parties will work together to identify the mentee's professional goals. The Mentor is not here to answer questions about his/her private life, or to give personal advice to the mentee.

Respect

The mentee will respect his/her classmates and follow all classroom guidelines during mentoring sessions. The mentee will maintain professional respect for all mentor feedback and comments. The mentee agrees to ask appropriate and professional questions.

Participation

All mentees are expected to participate in group discussions. This includes asking questions, active listening, and making eye contact with the mentor and your classmates. All mentees will use classroom discussion guidelines.

Preparation

The mentee agrees to prepare for mentor sessions by familiarizing him/herself with monthly topics and completing all related assigned classwork.

Values

Mentee agrees to uphold the values developed by [school name]: [value 1, value 2, etc]. The mentee will seek guidance from their mentors in regards to these values.

Student Signature _____
Date _____

Parent Signature _____
Date _____

Adapted from Inwood Early College, November 2014.

MENTOR AGREEMENT

As a volunteer mentor in the *[school name] Mentors Program*, I agree to:

1. Commit to volunteering at [school name] one hour per month from October-June 2014;
2. Engage in group mentoring with an open mind;
3. Remember that the mentor-student relationship is professional, not personal;
4. Respect the cultural, religious and economic differences, ideas, and values of the mentees;
5. Refrain from engaging in any inappropriate communication with students. Inappropriate communication includes but is not limited to: verbal abuse, swearing, sexual content, and racist, homophobic, or otherwise prejudiced language;
6. Refrain from exchanging personal information with any student. This includes but is not limited to: your personal email address, telephone numbers, home and work address;
7. Refrain from communicating with any student through any social networking sites;
8. Immediately contact program staff if I receive information from a student that alarms me, or leads me to fear for the safety of the student or others;
9. Promptly inform program staff if I will be unable to attend a given session, and provide as much notice as possible.

Adapted from Energy Tech High School, October 2014.

Fingerprinting needs may vary by program depending on whether mentoring sessions take place at the school or an offsite location. Each program should refer to Department of Education policy for specific instructions. The following is an example of instructions for mentors seeking a background check to participate in a 9-14 school mentoring program.

MENTOR SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

Instructions for Volunteer Mentors Needing Fingerprints

Per NYC Department of Education (DOE) policy, all adults that are not employees of the DOE must undergo a criminal background check prior to engaging in a sustained volunteer program at a school site.

Employees of [Employer Partner] participating in the [School] Mentoring Program will need to meet this requirement prior to the program start date, [Month day, year]. Fingerprinting through the DOE's Human Resources office costs \$115 per person, which will be covered by your company.

After submitting your personal information to program staff, please follow these instructions:

1. DOE will send you an email with instructions to log into the Applicant Gateway. Complete and e-sign all required forms in Applicant Gateway. Print out the Fingerprint Referral Form.
2. Obtain a signed letter ("payment letter") from your company with your name on it stating that the cost of your fingerprinting will be charged to the company credit card on file.
3. Go to the HR Connect Walk-in Center with a government-issued photo identification, the Fingerprint Referral form, and the payment letter. See below for general information from the DOE about the walk-in center hours, location, and payment. Remember to complete this step before [program start date].
4. After you are fingerprinted, DOE HR will contact program staff with the results. Volunteers can begin training under provisional clearance after getting fingerprinted. If there are any concerns, program staff will contact you individually about your participation in the program.

General Information

Hours of Operation: HR Connect Walk-in Center is open Monday through Friday from 9:00am - 5:00pm (except for holidays). Customers are strongly encouraged to come before 4:30pm to ensure that they can be serviced before the closing time.

Location: 65 Court Street, Room 102, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

Nearest subway stops: Borough Hall [2, 3, 4, 5], Court St [R], and Jay St - Metrotech [A, C, F, R].

If you have any questions about this process, call [Program staff at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

At the end of training, leave five minutes for participants to comment on the quality and content of the training using the following form. Their answers will allow program staff to gauge how the mentors are feeling about mentoring and improve training opportunities in the future. It's recommended to also collect feedback during the mentoring program. Simple baseline (pre-program) and final surveys (post-program) can be administered online to accommodate mentor and students' busy schedules.

TRAINING EVALUATION

Please answer the following questions about today's workshop. For scaled questions, please circle your response, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

1. What did you hope to learn from today's training?

2. To what degree were your expectations met? (Circle one)

Low 1 2 3 4 5 High

3. What was MOST useful to you about this workshop?

4. Was there anything that was LEAST useful to you about this workshop?

5. Would you like to share other feedback or comments?

Thank you!

Please also look out for a quick 5-minute survey in your inbox—providing us with baseline data about your mentoring experience will help us evaluate and improve the program in future years.