



The Technical Assistance and Training Program for Mentoring System Involved Youth welcomes you to our monthly E-Newsletter. We hope the information will be useful to you and we encourage you to share this newsletter with other staff and agencies that are also mentoring system involved youth. If you find a particular Web site, research article, or helpful fact, we encourage you to send them to us and we will disseminate to the listserv.

Quote of the Month:

*It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.
~ Frederick Douglas*

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**Mentoring System
Involved Youth Highlights**

Cultural Competence in Mentoring

As mentoring relationships develop, mentors often discover that they and their mentee have different cultural perspectives. While we frequently find that people from similar gender, ethnic, or racial backgrounds share similar perceptions, socioeconomic status, religious experience, family structure, geographic or regional origins (e.g., rural, northern), or even age, may raise differences that gender or race can't overcome. In fact, cultural differences can occur in any mentoring relationship.

Cultural competency, or the ability to effectively work with and serve diverse populations, is an important skill and perspective for all mentors and mentoring programs to practice. Programs that demonstrate cultural competence are attentive to the structure, policies, and language of

their program and operations. Practicing cultural competency benefits program recruitment, mentor and youth retention, and achieving program outcomes.

Two key aspects of cultural competency for MSIY programs we'll highlight here are supporting cultural competence in mentoring relationships and supporting youth identity development.

Supporting Culturally Competent Mentoring Relationships

Supporting cultural competence in mentoring relationships requires deliberate attention to the messages youth receive from the program and their mentor. Below are several questions to help you explore what messages are being sent.

- Does mentor training include an overview of the experiences of SIY that is applicable to all youth regardless of race/ethnicity or income level?
- Does training encourage mentors to explore their personal values and how these do or not reflect their cultural background?
- Do mentors receive ongoing training about racial/ethnic groups, poverty, or youth culture? Are mentors and staff trained to identify cultural assets/strengths?
- Do case managers check in with mentors specifically on issues of cultural conflict?
- Are mentors encouraged to identify and celebrate youth's assets/strengths and signs of growth in youth's skills?

Supporting Youth Identity Development

According to Erickson, adolescence is an important time for developing one's identity that will continue into adulthood. For adolescents in the foster or juvenile justice systems, a mentor can be a particularly positive influence during this time. SIY often have experienced a lifetime of low expectations and negative images based on their gender, ethnicity/race, or socioeconomic or family status. Some youth define themselves in opposition to these images, denying or downplaying their cultural background. Other youth acquiesce, adopting, and a few exaggerating, these images. Below are a few suggestions to aid in more constructive responses.

- Demonstrate respect and understanding for all cultures at every level of the program. Display strong, positive images of various cultures. Reflect cultural assets and values in program activities ('talking stick', cooperation, etc.).
- Promote a broad and positive exploration of cultural identity. Encourage pairs to visit cultural museums or festivals. Identify books and materials that communicate the achievement and contributions of various cultures.
- Encourage staff and mentors to be aware of stereotypes and unconscious bias. Help staff and mentors become aware of how negative images drive our responses and expectations.

- Provide opportunities for youth to explore their skills and abilities across physical, intellectual, emotional, linguistic, creative, etc. area. Scouting merit badge books can provide structured activities for mentors and youth to explore.
- Encourage mentor pairs to record and celebrate youth's strengths, skills, and assets through photography and writing to serve as affirmations when youth encounter obstacles.

For more information:

- Howard Gardner, *Multiple Intelligences*.
- Janie Victoria Ward, *The Skin We're In*.
- Sample Merit Badge activities (Badge activities, based on age level, are found within badge books.)
 - ◆ Girl Scouts - http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/insignia/list/
 - ◆ Boy Scouts - <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges.aspx>

Be sure to share your ideas, comments, and questions through the MSYI listserv at msiy@mailman.edc.org



Report Offers New Recommendations on Supporting Youth Leaving Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University and the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative have published the report *Supporting Youth in Transition to Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice*. The report offers a concise history of the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, lessons each system has learned that should be adopted by the other, and recommendations for better comanagement of the youth they have in common. To download the report, go to http://www.jimcaseyyouth.org/docs/cjrr_transition_apr09.pdf.

New Fact Sheet Explores Benefits of Ongoing Mentee Training

The Mentoring Resource Center, the training and TA provider for the U.S. Department of Education's Student Mentoring grantees, has just released *Enriching the Mentoring Experience Through Ongoing Mentee Training*. This fact sheet explores how ongoing training for mentees over the course of their mentoring relationships can help build new skills, ease the match through its ups and downs, and provide opportunities for reflection and personal growth. Strategies for developing an ongoing training curriculum are provided, along with a sample agenda of how these trainings might be structured over the course of a school year. The fact sheet can be downloaded at <http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/factsheet29.pdf>.

Evaluation of the YouthBuild Youth Offender Grants

This report summarizes findings from an implementation and outcomes evaluation of the YouthBuild Youth Offender grants. The grants were awarded to 34 YouthBuild sites, chosen by YouthBuild USA, to provide services for adjudicated youth with the goal of enhancing their educational and employment opportunities and reducing their recidivism rates. The evaluation consisted of two rounds of site visits in 2007 to each of the 34 grantees to examine their program design and implementation, the characteristics of the participants they served, and the outcomes they obtained. To download the report, go to

http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm?fuseaction=dsp_resultDetails&pub_id=2420&mp=y.

Child, Family, and Neighborhood Factors Influence Youth Non-Participation in Programs

A new Child Trends brief finds that youth who have not participated in out-of-school-time programs are significantly more likely than are their participating peers to live in an unsupportive neighborhood; to spend more than two hours a day watching TV or playing video games; and to have parents who are in poor health, who don't exercise, and who have less than a high school education. The brief, *Non-Participation of Children and Adolescents in Out-of-School Time Programs: Child, Family, and Neighborhood Factors*, identifies individual and background factors that influence nonparticipation. To read the brief, go to

http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_07_22_RB_Nonparticipation.pdf.

Youth Perspective on Why Teens Don't Participate in Programs

Youth who are not involved with out-of-school time programs identify varied barriers to participation, ranging from programs that are located in unsafe or unfamiliar neighborhoods to program participation being perceived in a negative light by parents and/or peers. A new brief, *Why Teens Are Not Involved in Out-of-School Time Programs: The Youth Perspective*, presents findings from a recent Child Trends youth roundtable discussion. Youth participants also suggested program improvement strategies, such as teaching practical skills, using technology for recruitment, offering a variety of activities, and hiring skilled staff members who treat youth with respect. To learn more, go to http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2009_07_22_RB_YouthRoundtable.pdf.

Casey Releases 2009 KIDS COUNT Data Book

The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 20th annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book* provides a national and state-by-state look at the status of children in the United States. This year's companion essay outlines a series of action steps to improve the nation's use of data in creating policies that improve outcomes for children and families. For more information, go to

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2009/Default.aspx>.



Conferences and Events

Date: August 31, 2:00–3:00 (EST)

Title: Helping System-Involved Youth Rewrite Their Stories: Strategies That Motivate

Sponsor: The National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk (NDTAC)

Description: Motivating youth involved with the juvenile justice system is an important factor in reducing recidivism. How can facilities, agencies, and others in the community help these youth develop and sustain the motivation to succeed? In NDTAC's upcoming Webinar, hear the perspectives of youth who were once involved in the deep end of the justice system but now serve as role models for others. They will share their journeys and identify strategies that motivated them and other system involved youth to rewrite their stories.

Web site: <http://events.neglected-delinquent.org/register.php?eid=43>

Date: Wednesday, September 2, 2009, 12:00–1:00 p.m. (EST)

Title: Developing Successful Mentoring Programs

Sponsor: Rehoboth NB, Inc.

Description: A core objective of any viable mentorship program is to ensure that mentoring does not become burdensome for the mentor and "mentee". This Webinar, led by Dr. Danny Allen, will cover elements essential for effective mentoring programs for your private or government agency. Measures taught in this program are based on research of what works and the experiences of Dr. Allen in his work developing and running mentor programs.

Web site: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/220182387>

Date: Thursday, September 10, 2009, 3:00 p.m. (EST)

Title: Webinar on Community Mobilizing and Organizing: Motivating Your Community to Get Involved

Sponsor: Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

Description: The second part of a two-part Webinar series will focus on community mobilizing and organizing for coalitions. The Webinar will help participants understand the process of coalition building within the community mobilizing and organizing framework. This topic benefits coalitions in the process of planning and implementation and also fits into the capacity-building element of SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework.

Web site: http://www.coalitioninstitute.org/Coalition_Resources/WebinarSeriesHome.asp



This grant opportunity may be applicable to you or partner organizations.

Title: Allstate Foundation Grants

Funder: Allstate Foundation

Description: Grants will support programs in three areas: economic empowerment; safe and vital communities; and tolerance, inclusion, and diversity. Additional information is available on the foundation's Web site.

Award: No fixed limit

Eligibility: organizations classified as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Grant money may not support individuals, athletic teams, religious groups, or groups located outside the United States, fund-raising events, or travel expenses.

Deadline: Ongoing

For more information: <http://www.allstate.com/foundation/funding-guidelines.aspx>