October 2011

Supporting Children and Youth

Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Curriculum

Corporation for NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

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Introduction

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers was developed to provide a standardized and easy-to-use training curriculum for Senior Corps' Foster Grandparent and RSVP project directors who have volunteers delivering mentoring and other support services to children and youth at schools and community organizations. This curriculum is designed to enhance volunteer capacity and improve the quality of service delivered by the volunteers. In addition to providing an overview of services for children and youth, the curriculum meets the need for creative and practical strategies and ideas that volunteers can adapt when serving children and youth.

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers consists of the curriculum (eight workshop modules) and accompanying Facilitator's Guide. The Facilitator's Guide is designed to support the facilitation of the workshop modules in the curriculum. Therefore, you are encouraged to use both documents when preparing for and conducting the workshop modules.

Curriculum

Content and Design

Each of the eight workshop modules is organized as a two-hour session. These workshops can be conducted individually or in combination of two or more. The module topics are presented as follows but do not need to be implemented in this order:

1. *Mentoring and Tutoring Services Provided by Volunteers*
2. *Becoming an Effective Mentor*
3. *Effective and Respectful Communication with Children and Youth (Part I)*
4. *Effective and Respectful Communication with Children and Youth (Part II)*
5. *Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior*
6. *Serving Children with Special Needs*
7. *Serving Preschool Children (Ages 3-5)*
8. *Providing Support to Military Families*

Each module includes a session outline with estimated times, facilitator notes and instructions, optional PowerPoint slides with abbreviated facilitator instructions, worksheets for activities and exercises, informational handouts for participants including a "recommended resources" list, and a feedback survey. The structure of each workshop follows this format:

- Introduction with a brief warm-up activity
- Short lectures (before and/or after the exercise)
- Exercise for skill development
- Short reflection activity that summarizes the topic or helps participants consider an important related issue
- Closing with opportunity for feedback

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers incorporates methods to fit different adult learning styles and varied approaches to presenting material. Included are large group discussions, small group cooperative exercises that stress practical application, brainstorming, and role-playing. The curriculum also provides opportunities for individual or pair reflection, and sharing of experiences. Every module utilizes experiential learning by asking participants to consider hypothetical but realistic situations. Additionally, the workshops appeal to different senses and use a multi-media approach (handouts, easel pads/whiteboard, and slide presentations).

The workshops were designed for group training, but the lecture notes and handouts can also be helpful for training new volunteers individually.

Preparation

All of the material (facilitator notes, handouts, resource sheets, slides) needed to conduct the workshops is provided. However, facilitators will need standard training materials such as access to a copy machine for handouts, equipment for projecting slides (if using the PowerPoint), white/blackboard or easel paper, and chalk/markers.

To prepare for facilitating a workshop module, the following steps are recommended:

Step 1: Review the module at least one week before conducting the workshop.

- Look closely at the exercises and the "large group callout" sections. Understand how the activity works and the key messages to be covered in processing that activity.
- Many handouts are optional. Review and choose the handouts you wish to use. The handouts elaborate on the main points of the lecture, build on lessons from the exercise, offer participants practical tips and suggestions, and provide additional resources to further participants' knowledge.
- It is not essential to use the PowerPoint presentation provided. Facilitators may prefer to copy information from key slides onto easel paper (e.g. exercise instructions) and post them on the wall, make transparencies for an overhead projector, or make handouts of the slides.

Step 2: Modify the workshop as needed.

- Review the time estimates in the session outline and adjust the time and number of activities according to previous experience with the group. For instance, if participants enjoy small group discussions and they are productive, consider increasing the suggested time allotments for the exercise and omit another section of the workshop, such as the reflection piece.
- If necessary, add or omit text in the facilitator's notes. For example, if the notes refer to a situation where volunteers are out in the community with the child/youth (as in a community-based mentoring program) and the volunteers only serve in the school, exclude that reference and provide a substitute. The PowerPoint presentation contains abbreviated facilitator's instructions and can be modified electronically.

- If needed, revise the exercise worksheets, particularly those that ask participants to consider hypothetical situations with children and youth. The facilitator may prefer to substitute actual situations for the descriptions, or develop new hypothetical situations that will encourage discussion on an important topic (e.g., ethical dilemmas around confidentiality that a volunteer may encounter).

Step 3: Practice and know the material; the facilitator should be comfortable with all of the content.

- The facilitator should be able to emphasize key concepts in discussions and answer most questions that come up around the topic. Of course, the facilitator is not expected to know everything but should be committed to help participants find answers.
- The facilitator will need to give clear directions for the activities, keep track of time, and distribute materials at different points in the workshop. For example, if an exercise calls for small group collaboration, the facilitator will need to know how s/he will form the small groups, the questions participants will be asked to consider, how/if answers should be written down, and how much time to give participants. . Ideally, the facilitator has a co-trainer or identified individual who can assist with some of the logistics; especially if the group is large.

Facilitator's Guide

The Facilitator's Guide is designed for facilitators who will be presenting the curriculum, and includes tips and strategies for working with a variety of participants. The Facilitator's Guide is geared toward the needs of new facilitators, but veterans may find it useful for improving group facilitation skills. The Facilitator's Guide consists of five chapters subdivided into sections using a "Frequently Asked Questions" format. The five chapters include:

Chapter 1: **Logistics.** Discusses considerations involved in setting up the training: time and location, program announcements, supplies, budget limitations, and unanticipated conditions that might influence the success of the event.

Chapter 2: Adult Learning, Training Techniques and Application. Discusses training methodologies that address different learning styles, adult learning theory, and tips for managing challenges such as timing.

Chapter 3: Group Management. Discusses how to create a safe learning environment, manage conflicts, and motivate and support a diverse group of participants.

Chapter 4: Distance Learning and Web Conferencing. Discusses distance learning technologies and web conferencing as an alternative or supplement to face-to-face training. Reviews training needs and considerations, including how to keep the training interactive and participants engaged.

Chapter 5: Training Feedback and Self-Assessment. Discusses why and how to evaluate the workshop and use the information to improve of your training event and facilitation skills.

Acknowledgements

The Corporation for National and Community Service and JBS International, Inc., would like to thank the following people for their contribution to *Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers*. All of these people generously shared their insight, experience, and wisdom to make the curriculum and Facilitator's Guide useful resources that can be adapted by volunteer programs serving children and youth.

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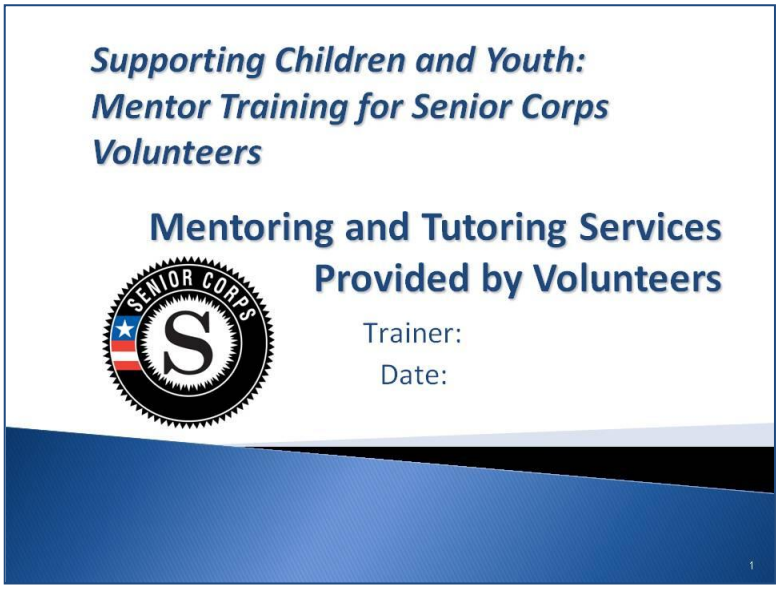
Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Module 1

Mentoring and Tutoring Services Provided by Volunteers



Module 1. Mentoring and Tutoring Services Provided by Volunteers

INTRODUCTION

Foster Grandparents and RSVP volunteers deliver a wide range of services to a diverse group of children and youth, including those with special needs. This workshop provides an overview of some of those important services including mentoring, academic assistance, out-of-school time programs, and preschool, and how the children and youth benefit from volunteers' contributions.

Understanding the different types of services offered to children and youth gives participants a general idea of what to expect if they have not begun volunteering or want to try something new. For example, different services have different requirements (e.g. mentoring requires a long commitment; tutoring programs may involve following a set curriculum). Some volunteers may also want to recommend these services to families they know, or refer friends as volunteers.

This workshop includes a brief lecture, a small group exercise, and a short reflection activity. It is recommended that you do a full 2-hour workshop to allow more time for group discussion. ***However, you do not need to present this workshop "as is".*** Modify the session to fit your participants' needs and interests and the services available to children and youth in your area. For example, if participants will not work with children outside the school setting, you may want to bypass sections and examples that discuss community-based mentoring programs or out-of-school time programs.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will better understand:

- The variety of services that Senior Corps volunteers provide to children and youth;
- The range of different types of tutoring and mentoring services provided; and,
- The skills, qualities, and traits that will help volunteers providing these services be successful.

Visual Aids (Power Point) and Facilitator's Notes

If you are using the PowerPoint slides included with this curriculum, Facilitator's Notes are provided under each slide. These notes provide the same information as the Facilitator's Notes included in this document, however they are not as detailed.

It is recommended that you use easel paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to note responses to some of the "callout" questions and important points that participants make during the exercise "debrief." This validates participants' knowledge and reinforces learning. You may want to write the headings on sheets of easel paper in advance to save time.

This symbol will cue you as to when you might jot down responses:

Handouts

The handouts for this session follow the Facilitator's Notes and Instructions. Handouts 1 and 2 should be distributed during the session; this symbol in the Facilitator's Notes will cue you as to when: 🗎. The remaining handouts can be distributed at the end of the session.

1. Exercise Worksheet: Helpful Volunteer Traits and Abilities
2. Getting to Know the Child/Youth
3. Types of Tutoring and Mentoring Services (optional)
4. Tips for Working with Teachers (optional)
5. Recommended Resources for Tutors and Mentors (optional)
6. Training Feedback Survey

SESSION AGENDA

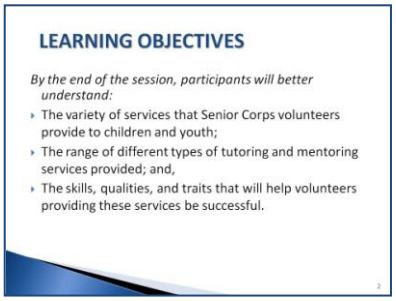
Activity	Estimated Time	Method	Slide Numbers
I. Welcome	**20 min.**		1
A. Learning Objectives	5 min.	Lecture	2
B. Warm-up: Important Adult	15 min.	Large group discussion	3-4
II. Volunteer Services Provided to Children and Youth	**35 min.**		
A. Overview of services, stations, beneficiaries	20 min.	Lecture, large group discussion	5-6
B. Types of mentoring and academic assistance services	15 min.	Lecture	7-10
III. Helpful Volunteer Skills	**40 min.**		
Exercise: Helpful Volunteer Traits and Abilities 🗎 *Exercise Worksheet: Helpful Volunteer Traits and Abilities*	20 min. 20 min.	Small groups of 3-4 Debrief (large group discussion)	11-12
IV. Reflection: **Getting to Know the Child/Youth** 🗎 *Getting to Know the Child/Youth*	**15 min.**	Individuals, pairs	12
V. Closing 🗎 *Types of Tutoring and Mentoring Services (optional)* 🗎 *Tips for Working with Teachers (optional)* 🗎 *Recommended Resources for Tutors and Mentors (optional)* 🗎 *Training Feedback Survey*	**10 min.**	Lecture	13

FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS

If you are using the PowerPoint slides, have slide 1 up on the screen.

I. Welcome

Welcome participants and introduce the workshop. "Foster Grandparents and RSVP volunteers deliver a wide variety of services to children and youth, including those with special needs. This workshop provides an overview of some of those important services including mentoring, academic assistance, out-of-school time programs, and preschool, and how the children/youth benefit from volunteers' contributions."



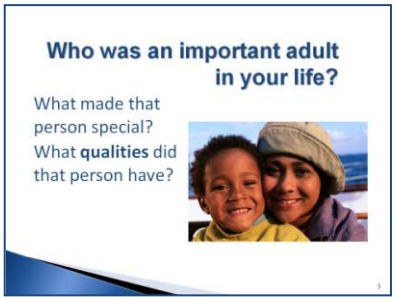
A. Learning objectives

Show slide 2.

Describe the learning objectives. In this workshop, participants will be introduced to and discuss:

- The variety of services that Senior Corps volunteers provide to children and youth;
- The range of different types of tutoring and mentoring services provided; and,
- The skills, qualities, and traits that will help volunteers providing these services be successful.

B. Warm up: Important Adult



Show side 3.

CALLOUT: "Take a minute and think back to when you were a child or teen. Who was an important adult in your life, maybe a favorite teacher, older relative, neighbor, coach? Why was that person special to you? What qualities did they have?" (Jot down qualities on easel paper.)

Participants may say things like: patience, paid attention to me, listened to me, made me feel important, understood how I felt, showed she cared, made me laugh, etc. Point out the common themes in the qualities that participants cite.

TIP: Encourage participants to share their experiences with children. Some people will volunteer inspiring stories about an adult that was important to them when they were a child. Encourage them to share these stories with the children and youth they work with, if appropriate, to help build a bond and teach admirable qualities.

Tell participants: "You already know what it takes to have a good relationship with a child because you can remember from the child's point of view and can reflect on that experience from your perspective as an adult."

Show slide 4.

The group may have mentioned several of these qualities; point out some of the other helpful qualities needed. "If you are working closely with children and youth, you will also want to have…"

- Flexibility
- Kindness and Patience
- Ability to see the individual (uniqueness) of every child/youth
- Sense of humor
- Warm and caring demeanor
- Sensitive to children's feelings and needs
- Good listening skills, sincerely interested
- Nonjudgmental
- Ability to maintain confidentiality

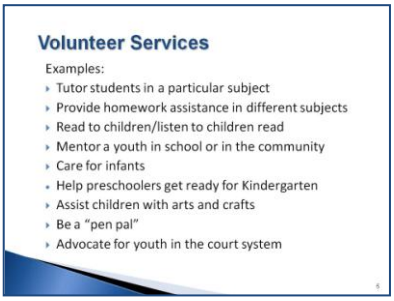
TIP: Customize the list of important qualities. You may want to modify the list so that it more closely matches the assignments that the volunteers serve. For example, some assignments, such as working with troubled youth, may require a "thicker skin" than others and confidentiality might be especially important. Add the qualities you want to encourage in your volunteers. Even if the quality may seem obvious, seeing something in writing highlights and reinforces its importance.

II. Volunteer Services Provided to Children and Youth

TIP: Customize this section. This section (A) is a general overview. If you feel volunteers are familiar enough with services provided to children and youth, you may want to skip this section, or run through it quickly so you can spend more time on the next section, B. Types of Mentoring and Academic Assistance Services.

A. Overview of Services, Stations, and Beneficiaries

CALLOUT: "So what kinds of services do volunteers provide to the children and youth in our community, and where do we serve?" This depends on the needs in the community and the partnering stations that address these needs. (Give participants a few minutes to give examples of services, and then show slide 5 with examples, reminding the group of those they already mentioned.)



Volunteer Services Provided to Children and Youth:

- Tutor students in a particular subject
- Provide homework assistance in different subjects
- Read to children/listen to children read
- Mentor a youth in school or in the community
- Care for infants
- Help preschoolers get ready for Kindergarten
- Assist children with arts and crafts
- Be a "pen pal"
- Advocate for youth in the court system
- Enhance education at museums and parks

CALLOUT: "Where do volunteers serve?" Give participants a few minutes to give examples and then note the stations/programs in your service area that provide the services.

- Elementary, middle school, high schools
- Day care services and preschool programs
- After school programs, organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Developmental Disability Centers, hospitals and other health facilities
- Shelters
- Libraries, museums, community centers,

TIP: Provide a handout of local services. Provide a handout with a list of services or programs that your sponsor or stations provide for children and youth. Add a brief paragraph description of each service and the children and youth served. In this section of the workshop, integrate a discussion about how the volunteers contribute to these local services.

CALLOUT: "Most importantly, who are the children and youth that we serve?" (Give participants a minute to respond and then show slide 6. Point out that many on the list have already been mentioned.)

Children and Youth Served by Senior Corps Volunteers:

- Children and youth in need of a caring adult role model for guidance, supervision, academic help, and other assistance. (RSVP and FGP)
- Children and youth with special needs (FGP in particular), for example:
  - Abused or neglected
  - Living in poverty
  - Adjudicated youth
  - Learning disability
  - Speech of language impairment
  - Autistic
  - Mental health issues
  - Foster children and youth
  - Incarcerated parents
  - Developmental disabilities
  - Learning English
  - Substance abuse problems
  - Teen parents

TIP. You may want to explain how the Foster Grandparent and RSVP programs differ. For example, the Foster Grandparent Program has a mandate to serve children with special needs, although RSVP volunteers may serve these children as well. Foster Grandparents are assigned to individual children and youth; that is, they would not serve as teacher's aides or group leaders because this takes time away from the one-on-one relationship they are building. RSVP volunteers may serve children and youth one-on-one or in groups. They may serve at "drop-in" or other programs where they would be working with different children for short periods of time, and at settings other than schools.

Child/Youth Risk Levels

Risk Level	Mentor needs to be...
"Low"	Caring, committed
"Moderate"	Caring, committed, patient, willing to get involved in youth's life
"High"	Extremely caring, committed and patient, may need to play several roles
"Very high"	Extremely caring, committed, patient, like a family member, always on call

"Classification of Mentoring Relationship Types," The Mentoring Center, 2000.

Show slide 7.

Tell participants that programs that serve children and youth (e.g. mentoring programs), sometimes determine the level of risk for each child so they can provide appropriate services. Children and youth with lower risk levels may just need a caring adult role model. However, children and youth with higher risk levels may need a mentor who can devote more time and has some experience or education in youth development, and knows the community and the difficulties the youth faces.

Child/Youth Risk Levels

- Low Risk: (Mentor needs to be) caring, committed
- Moderate Risk: (Mentor needs to be) Caring, committed, patient, willing to get involved in youth's life
- High Risk: (Mentor needs to be) Extremely caring, committed and patient, may need to play several roles
- Very High Risk: (Mentor needs to be) Extremely caring, committed, patient, like a family member, always on call

In this framework, children and youth are identified by the risk category they fall into ("Classification of Mentoring Relationship Types," The Mentoring Center, 2000).

- A child/youth considered "low risk" is eager for assistance, well behaved, and could benefit from this type of companionship. The mentor should be a caring and committed person who can make the time commitment.
- A child/youth considered "moderate risk" is open to assistance but may be an average or below academic student who hasn't thought much about the future. The mentor should be a caring and committed person who is patient and willing to get involved in the youth's life.
- A child/youth considered "high risk" would need intensive mentoring. This individual is cynical about assistance and does not try at school, hasn't thought about future, may not have good academic examples or encouragement at home, may have had run-ins with the law, and is influenced by negative surroundings. The mentor will need to be extremely caring, committed and patient, and may need to play several roles: teacher, guide, resource.
- A child/youth considered "very high risk" would need very intensive mentoring. This individual is cynical about assistance, very rebellious, has no positive adult role models or influence, and has been institutionalized. The mentor will need to be extremely caring, committed, patient, and like a family member, always on call.

RSVP and Foster Grandparent volunteers serve children and youth that are considered "moderate risk" more often than high and very high risk, but regardless, mentors are never expected to go it alone! Successful mentoring programs provide ongoing training and support to mentors. More comprehensive programs that specialize in serving higher risk youth connect them to other supportive social services; mentoring may be only one service that a program provides.

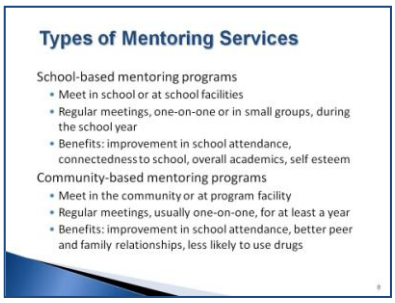
Keep in mind that confidentiality is very important to build rapport and trust. However, anything that may affect health and/or safety of the child or youth would need to be reported to a supervisor immediately. A discussion of confidentiality and what type of information needs to be reported would be an important part of a mentoring program's written policy and mentor training.

B. Types of Mentoring and Academic Assistance Services

Tell participants that there are different types of mentoring and tutoring services depending on the needs of children and youth served and the goals of the programs. Some programs may be more intensive than others; some may require more volunteer training and program support than others.

Both tutoring and mentoring programs want the volunteer and child or youth to develop a good rapport. However, mentoring and academic assistance programs have different goals! Academic assistance like tutoring aims to help students succeed in school. Mentoring is all about the mentor-child/youth relationship; the "intervention" is the relationship.

"Let's talk about the different types of services, beginning with mentoring."



Mentoring

Show slide 8.

Mentoring services are usually based in the schools or at a community organization, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters. The design of the programs – where, when, and how long a mentor and child or youth meet, goals for the child/youth – are a little different.

School-based Mentoring Programs

School-based programs have mentors and students meet at school facilities during the school year.

- Mentors may be matched with one child or a small group.
- Mentors might meet with their child or youth once a week or more frequently.
- Meetings often happen during lunchtime but there might be other school activities.
- The mentored kids tend to show benefits that are related to school, such as better attendance and overall academic performance. It may be that seeing their mentor is an incentive to come to school and do well. They have also shown improved self esteem.
- Research also shows that girls seem to benefit more than boys; they may be more receptive to help offered by a mentor.

The disadvantage to school-based mentoring is that the school-day and school year schedule is limited. Also, research shows that the age of the child/youth makes a difference. Younger children (grades 4-6) tend to be more responsive to a mentor; they enjoy the attention. Older youth (grade 7 and up) may be more self conscious and feel that they have been singled out. In fact, some may have been referred to a mentor by the school because they are considered "at risk". In that case, having a mentor may carry a social stigma.

TIP: Use examples of local programs. As you describe school-based and community-based mentoring programs, give examples from programs in your community to illustrate: "Dixon Elementary matches senior volunteer mentors with second and third grade students. They meet every Wednesday in the school cafeteria to have lunch together and chat about school or whatever is on the child's mind."

Community-based Mentoring Programs

There is more leeway with community based mentoring.

- These programs match mentors with children and youth who may then meet at a program facility or somewhere else.
- Usually the program has a minimum number of hours or meetings that are expected to happen.
- Often, matches are expected to meet for a year or more.

The most important thing in mentoring is to develop a bond, build trust and a good relationship, and this requires a time commitment.

- The types of activities that can help develop a bond include just talking, playing games, enjoying a meal, or getting involved in community activities.
- Most importantly, the activities that mentors and kids do together should be child/youth-driven; that is, they reflect the mentored kid's interests.

Research shows:

- Benefits to mentored children and youth at community-based programs include better school attendance, better relationships with parents and peers, and they are less likely to start using drugs.
- Intergenerational mentoring programs have shown benefits to children and youth that include: improved attitude toward school and the future, improved attitude toward older adults, better school attendance, and decreased suspensions.
- Not all kids benefit the same way; the strength of the mentor-child/youth bond and the duration of the match influences if and how much the child will benefit.
- In addition, different kids have different needs; some may start mentoring at a very difficult time in their lives. Research shows that senior mentors who have experienced hardships and overcome them can draw on this life experience to empathize and build a bond with youth who are in difficult situations.

<u>Matching</u>

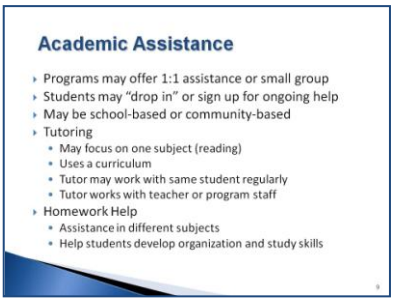
Tell participants that right from the beginning, through an intake process, mentoring programs work to find the right child-mentor match. The right match is crucial because matches that end on a negative note, or end abruptly, can do more harm to the child or youth than if s/he never had a mentor. This is because the mentored child/youth may see the mentor as yet another unreliable adult.

Early on, programs try to identify individual child/youth's needs so they can be matched with a mentor who can help. Some programs do this by determining the level, or intensity, of mentoring that they believe the youth needs so they can be matched with a mentor who can make the commitment. Both mentor and youth should know what to expect from the beginning.

"Let's continue with our overview and look at the academic assistance services that volunteers provide."

TIP: Ask "veteran" mentors to share their experiences. If your participants are new to mentoring, consider inviting a volunteer who has been mentoring for a year or more to talk to your group about the experience. Ideally, this would mostly be a positive experience, but participants considering mentoring will want to hear about some of the challenges as well.

Academic Assistance Programs



Show slide 9.

Tell participants that "academic assistance" is a broad term and programs vary a great deal.

A student could:

- Receive one-on-one assistance from the same tutor in one subject over a period of time
- Drop in to the local public library and get help with a couple of homework assignments from a volunteer
- Go online and get help through any number of free sites developed for that purpose
- Call a hot line and talk to a volunteer teacher

The program could:

- Serve all students, on demand, or it might accept only students who are referred by a teacher.
- Be school-based or provided by a community organization such as a public library or Boys and Girls Club.
- The academic assistance might be only one small part of an afterschool program that provides other youth services and activities.

Generally, the academic assistance that volunteers provide is help with homework, or tutoring in one or more subjects.

Tutoring

In general, tutoring programs:

- Involve ongoing, regularly scheduled, one-on-one assistance in one or more specific subjects.
- Ideally, students meet with the same tutor at the same days, time and place.
- Each session is well-planned and structured.
- Tutoring programs use a curriculum and shape the tutoring sessions to meet individual student's needs.
- Volunteer tutors would most likely be trained on the curriculum and in different learning styles before they begin tutoring.
- Volunteers would continue to receive training and support during their service. They might work closely with the student's teacher or the program staff.

Some tutoring programs, especially those that serve younger students, may be less intensive; volunteers might help children learn to read by reading to/with them. Ideally, these programs would still be structured to help children meet specific learning goals. For example, volunteers would be trained to help children develop phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension; reading materials would be carefully selected; and sessions are ongoing and structured.

TIP: Information on tutor training. Tutors are usually trained for many hours on specific curriculum or subject matter, and teaching techniques aimed at specific age levels. Tutor training is not covered in this curriculum. If you are interested in training volunteers to be tutors, the Corporation for National and Community Service has a wealth of free materials for programs and tutors available online, including the Senior Corps Volunteer Tutoring Toolkit and high quality tutoring resources from LEARNS: http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/learns/tutoring.

Homework Help

A homework help program:

- Could be "drop-in", where students can attend without enrolling, or it might be more structured.
- Students may be referred to the program because they are behind in their assignments, or they may simply want a place to study after school.
- Volunteers might work with students one-on-one or in small groups. They may see the same students regularly and get to know their needs.

An important thing to remember is that volunteers are not expected to be experts in a subject.

- A primary goal of homework help programs is to help students develop good organization and study skills, learn to stay on task and follow through on assignments, and eventually work independently.
- Volunteers might help students break down and prioritize tasks, use a planner to meet due dates, figure out how to find the answers or research a topic (e.g. in the text book or an Internet search), or study for an upcoming test.

TIP: Check for questions in between topics. Although this short lecture is only a general introduction to different types of services, check with participants periodically to see if they have questions. You might also want to ask volunteers serving in these areas to say a little about their experience. If you have provided a handout with a list of stations, you can point out which stations provide homework help services, for example.

Additional Programs

In addition to academic assistance and mentoring, there are related services for children and youth provided by Senior Corps volunteers.

Show slide 10.

Tell participants that two of these services include out-of-school time and preschool programs.

Out-of-School Time Programs

All out-of-school time programs aim to provide children and youth with constructive activities in a safe supervised place. Out-of-school time programs:

- Can take place after school, on the weekends, during the day over school vacation times, and during the summer months.
- Take place at schools, community centers, places of worship, park and recreation centers, libraries, and other community facilities.
- Program participants are school-age children and youth but the program may target a specific age group (e.g. older teenagers).
- Programs might offer one or several types of activities, for example: sports and recreation, arts and crafts, a computer lab and technology-focused activities, homework help, writing workshops, science activities, field trips, camps, performing arts, cooking classes, or community service.

Volunteers who serve at out-of-school-time programs:

- Are likely to spend more time with groups of children/youth than one-on-one.
- Volunteer activities may include: homework help, recreation activities, leading or assisting with arts and crafts, engaging children in games, helping students find resources for school projects, reading aloud to a group of children, or partnering with youth on a community service project.

Preschool

Preschool programs, such as Head Start:

- Serve children ages 3-5
- Help children become ready for kindergarten by helping them with age-appropriate development: for example, pre-literacy skills and language development, math knowledge (e.g. counting), social skills, motor skills, and healthy hygiene practices like hand-washing.

Preschool stations often provide training to volunteers, and volunteers in Head Start classrooms work closely with the teacher.

Volunteer activities typically include:

- Giving children needed one-on-one attention
- Role modeling behavior like politeness and cooperation, paying attention to the teacher, and sharing materials
- Reading to children, reciting poetry and rhymes, helping them build vocabulary
- Encouraging children to express themselves through music and stories
- Encouraging them to use simple tools through arts and crafts
- Helping them learn their numbers, colors, and letters through puzzles and games

TIP: Continue the conversation. Module 7 of this series, *Serving Preschool Children,* is a 2-hour workshop for volunteers serving preschool programs. The workshop covers some basic child development milestones, the purpose of preschool, and how volunteers in the preschool classroom contribute to children's learning and development.

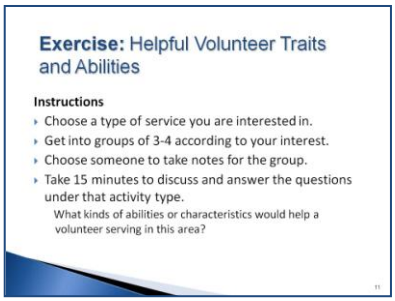
III. Helpful Volunteer Skills

Exercise: Helpful volunteer traits and abilities

The purpose of this activity is to help participants think about the characteristics and skills needed to serve as volunteers in the different activities, and with different age groups. Many participants will also realize that they have unique experiences and special talents they can share with the children and youth they serve.

YOU WILL NEED: Copies of the handout, *Exercise Worksheet: Helpful Volunteer Traits and Abilities*; easel paper and a marker for taking notes during "debrief".

Show slide 11.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute the handout, *Exercise Worksheet: Helpful Volunteer Traits and Abilities,* to each volunteer.
2. Ask participants to get into groups of 3 or 4 according to the type of service area they are interested in: mentoring children, mentoring youth, tutoring and homework help, out-of-school time programs, or preschool. If they are all interested in the same one or two activities (e.g. everyone wants preschool), ask them to break into groups of 3-4 and work on that activity, or ask some participants to take a different activity. Alternatively, you can assign a different service area to each group.
3. Ask each group to identify a recorder to take notes.
4. Ask the small groups to take 15 minutes to discuss and jot down notes to the questions under the service area they chose.
5. After 15 minutes, bring the group back together for discussion.

TIP: Go to the source. Ask an experienced volunteer or a representative from one of your stations to talk to the group about what is expected from a volunteer in that assignment (useful skills and traits) and what the volunteer can expect. For example, a teacher or experienced classroom volunteer might talk about serving in a classroom setting.

DEBRIEF

The worksheet asks participants to identify three things: (1) skills, knowledge, and abilities; (2) personality traits, characteristics; and (3) experience or special talents.

Use this discussion to help participants think about their own talents and skills and how they might be helpful serving children and youth within these different programs. The discussion may also be an opportunity for participants to get to know each other, and for you to dispel myths that come up (e.g. homework help requires expertise in the subject matter; out-of-school-time programs require a lot of physical activity).

For each of the service areas your groups are working on:

1. Ask the small group to share one or two key ideas or words from (1) skills, knowledge abilities; (2) personality traits, characteristics; and (3) experience or special talents.
2. Ask the larger group if they have anything to add, and use the chart to write down the main ideas.
3. Add any important skills or traits that you feel the group missed. If needed, see the "Facilitator's Notes for Exercise Debrief" (pp. 21-22) for examples.

Once everyone has had a chance to report out, note the skills and traits that were mentioned for more than one service area (e.g. listening skills, role modeling, patience) and those that may be especially important to particular service areas (e.g. for mentors working with adolescents, knowledge of youth issues is helpful).

Point out the unique experiences and special talents that participants bring to their service (e.g. someone may speak a second language; someone else may be a great storyteller or play an instrument; another may have coached children's soccer). Past experience and current talents can help them bond with the children and youth they serve.

Last, if time allows, ask participants to tell you how they answered the last question, "What are some specific things you would like to learn…" This information can help you see where volunteers have concerns and interests so you can develop future workshops, or pass this information on to stations where volunteers are assigned.

TIP. Customize this exercise. If your volunteers are not serving in all five of these areas, and you do not believe they will anytime soon, ask participants to choose among the relevant service areas only.

IV. Reflection: Getting to Know the Child/Youth

Show slide 12.

The purpose of this activity is to help new volunteers start to think about how they will build a meaningful relationship with a child.

Distribute the worksheet *Getting to Know the Child/Youth* to each participant. Give participants a few minutes to complete the worksheet.

After 10 minutes, ask participants to: (a) share notes with a partner (volunteers who are already working with children/youth should be paired with new volunteers, if possible); or (b) bring the large group together and ask for their ideas.

(Optional) When you finish this short activity, ask participants to take the worksheet with them to jot down more ideas as they work with children/youth. These notes could be shared at the next meeting.

V. Closing

Show slide 13.

TIP: Substitute the quote on the slide with your own favorite. You may have a favorite quote from a volunteer providing these services, or something a child has told you about a volunteer that moved you, or a note from a grateful parent, teacher, or station manager that has seen volunteers in action. Leave the participants with something that will inspire them.

Remind participants that regardless of the service they provide, children and youth will benefit from their love and attention, and this is the special contribution that senior volunteers make.

(Optional) Distribute one or more of the following handouts, if you think participants would find them helpful:

1. *Types of Tutoring and Mentoring Services* is a brief general description of the types of services provided for children and youth.
2. *Tips for Working with Teachers* is a list of 10 tips to help volunteers serving in the classroom setting.
3. *Recommended Resources for Tutors and Mentors* is a list of resources that participants can investigate on their own.

TIP: Customize the handouts. You may want to adapt the handout *Types of Tutoring and Mentoring Services* to include your local programs and volunteer opportunities, with contact information, instead of the more generic descriptions listed. You may also want to add your own tips and recommendations to the other two handouts, *Tips for Working with Teachers* and *Recommended Resources for Tutors and Mentors.* Alternatively, you may find information from the sources listed on the *Recommended Resources* handout that you want to print and distribute to participants.

Last, ask participants to complete a *Training Feedback Survey* to help you improve the next workshop.

Ask participants if there are any more questions or last words before you close. Make any final announcements and thank participants for coming.

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR EXERCISE DEBRIEF
Helpful Volunteer Traits and Abilities

Facilitator: Below are some examples of skills, abilities, characteristics and special talents or experience that would be helpful to volunteers serving in each of the areas listed in the worksheet. However, you and the participants will come up with a more comprehensive list for the community you serve.

Note that many volunteer traits are relevant to all services with children and youth (e.g. patience, a positive attitude). However, the primary focus of mentoring is on the relationship so certain traits (e.g. reliability and commitment) are especially important for mentors. Also, a few examples of "special talents" are listed here, but volunteers will no doubt have many new ones to add.

Mentoring Children (ages 5-11)

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: Active listening skills; can offer problem-solving strategies; can recognize individual children's talents and help child develop them.

Personality Traits/Characteristics: Caring, committed, consistent and reliable, observant, patient, sensitive, positive, supportive, warm and open, sense of humor.

Experience or Special Talents: A fun, inexpensive hobby that is appropriate to share.

Mentoring Youth (ages 12-18)

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: Active listening skills; can offer problem-solving strategies; understands and is interested in learning about youth culture and issues; can draw out and help youth strengthen his/her own talents

Personality Traits/Characteristics: Caring, committed, consistent and reliable, self-confident, culturally sensitive, open-minded and non-judgmental, sincere, supportive, sympathetic, and respectful.

Experience or Special Talents: Some research has shown that older adults that have experienced hardship and overcome it, including strained family relations, have credibility with youth who are going through difficult times.

Tutoring and Homework Help

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: Able to work with the teacher, organized, focused, task and detail-oriented but able to see "big picture" of a lesson and restate it for student. The tutor/homework helper does not have to be an expert in the subject.

The Tutor ("Now I get it" Spring 2005) recommends: "Model skills such as: organizing and prioritizing the work; using appropriate strategies for different assignments; identifying potential stumbling blocks and how to overcome them; checking the work to make sure the student understands not only what he has done, but how he has done it."

Personality Traits/Characteristics: Patient, enthusiastic, positive.

Experience or Special Talents: Able to explain something in different ways, able to motivate students.

Out-of-School Time Programs

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: Able to see children/youth who are shy or hesitant and make them feel comfortable in a group activity; able to manage disruptive behavior and redirect; some knowledge of youth culture and interests.

Personality Traits/Characteristics: Likes working in groups, outgoing, enthusiastic, flexible, creative, warm and approachable.

Experience or Special Talents: Good mediator (if needed), a fun and inexpensive craft or hobby appropriate to share with the age level served.

Preschool (Ages 3-5)

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: Some knowledge of preschool developmental stages, able to engage hesitant or shy children, ability to work closely with teacher/supervisor to address individual child needs.

Personality Traits/Characteristics: Energetic, does not mind a certain level of noise and messiness, sensitive, observant, nurturing, enthusiastic, fun, patient, kind, creative.

Experience or Special Talents: Good storyteller, silly sense of humor.

MODULE 1 REFERENCES

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Module 1 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

1. Exercise Worksheet: Helpful Volunteer Traits and Abilities
2. Getting to Know the Child/Youth
3. Types of Tutoring and Mentoring Services (optional)
4. Tips for Working with Teachers (optional)
5. Recommended Resources for Tutors and Mentors (optional)
6. Training Feedback Survey

Exercise Worksheet: Helpful Volunteer Traits and Abilities

Instructions: With your small group or partner, choose the type of program you are interested in:

- Mentoring Children
- Mentoring Youth
- Tutoring and Homework Help
- Out-of-School Time Programs
- Preschool

Find the type of program on the next few pages and consider the kinds of abilities or characteristics that would help a volunteer serving in this area. Jot down a few notes and be ready to discuss.

Mentoring Children (ages 5-11): Meet with a child on a regular basis to talk about things that are important to them, enjoy an activity, share a meal, or occasionally help with schoolwork.

What kinds of abilities or characteristics would help a volunteer serving in this area?

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: _____

_____

Personality Traits/Characteristics: _____

_____

Experience or Special Talents: _____

_____

Other: _____

What are some specific things you would like to learn if you were serving in this area? _____

_____

Mentoring Youth (ages 12-18): Meet with a youth one-on-one on a regular basis to talk about things that are important to them, problem-solve, enjoy an activity, or share a meal.

What kinds of abilities or characteristics would help a volunteer serving in this area?

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: _____

_____

Personality Traits/Characteristics: _____

_____

Experience or Special Talents: _____

_____

Other: _____

What are some specific things you like to learn if you were serving in this area? _____

_____

Tutoring and Homework Help: Work with students to help them learn a specific subject (e.g. reading), reinforce school lessons, be better organized, or build confidence in their abilities.

What kinds of abilities or characteristics would help a volunteer serving in this area?

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: _____

_____

Personality Traits/Characteristics: _____

_____

Experience or Special Talents: _____

_____

Other: _____

What are some specific things you would like to learn if you were serving in this area? _____

_____

Out-of-School Time Programs: Supervising children and youth involved in group activities, facilitating an activity for a small group, occasionally assisting one-on-one.

What kinds of abilities or characteristics would help a volunteer serving in this area?

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: _____

_____

Personality Traits/Characteristics: _____

_____

Experience or Special Talents: _____

_____

Other: _____

What are some specific things you like to learn if you were serving in this area? _____

_____

Preschool (ages 3-5): Serving in a classroom or program, working with children one-on-one and in small groups to help them with age-appropriate development (e.g. learning numbers).

What kinds of abilities or characteristics would help a volunteer serving in this area?

Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: _____

_____

Personality Traits/Characteristics: _____

_____

Experience or Special Talents: _____

_____

Other: _____

What are some specific things you would like to learn if you were serving in this area? _____

_____

Getting to Know the Child/Youth

Imagine you are starting your first day as a tutor or a mentor. You will be meeting regularly, one-on-one, with this child/youth. How will you get acquainted? Children are often shy with adults at first, so you may be carrying the conversation! What are some things you can do to build a good relationship? If you are already experienced as a tutor or mentor, think about what you would recommend to a new volunteer.

Thinking about the age group you will be/are working with, take about 5 minutes to jot down some answers to the questions below. (It is okay if you don't finish.) Take this worksheet with you when you go home today; you may think of more ideas later.

1. Your first meeting: What are some things you can do or say to help the child/youth feel more comfortable with you? (For example, ask "ice breaker" questions such as, "Do you have a brother/sister? Pet?" "What did you do this past weekend?" "What do you like to do?")

_____

_____

_____

2. Your second meeting: What are some things you can do or say to help build a good relationship? (For example, end the meeting by talking about what you've accomplished or how much fun you've had)

_____

_____

_____

3. As you continue to meet: What are some things you can do or say to maintain a good relationship? (For example, always be on time, be sincere with compliments)

_____

_____

_____

Tutoring and Mentoring Services

The table below lists common types of tutoring and mentoring services; the next pages provide descriptions and examples. This list is a *general description* and does not include every possibility. The many creative and unique programs provided for children and youth by Senior Corps volunteers are too numerous to list here. In addition, tutoring and mentoring programs vary in scope and focus; some may have multiple goals for the children they serve, while others may zero in on one particular need (e.g. literacy, keeping youth out of gangs).

Type of program	**Children/youth Served**	**Purpose/Goals of the Program**	**Examples of Volunteer Activities**	**Examples of Helpful Volunteer Traits**
Preschool	Children ages 3-5	Help children achieve age-appropriate developmental milestones; prepare for Kindergarten or progress to the next level	Help children learn their letters and numbers through games and activities; read to children; help children stay on task; role model appropriate social behavior.	Patient, kind, energetic and enthusiastic, observant and sensitive, willing to work with teacher.
Homework Help	School age students, grades 1-12	Help students learn good study skills and achieve academic success	May be available at a program ("on call") as students drop in and request help with assignments in different subjects. May be in school or after school.	Ability to break down tasks and help student get organized. Enthusiastic, positive, patient, good role model.
Tutoring	School age students, grades 1-12	Help students achieve academic success (some programs narrow the focus to one goal, such as improved reading ability)	May involve tutoring students one-on-one or in small groups, during school or after school, at the school or another community location. May focus on one subject or more. May need to work from a curriculum or with a teacher.	Ability to explain concepts clearly and patiently, enthusiastic, able to adapt methods to different learning styles (i.e. can see if student isn't getting it and tries another way).
School-based mentoring	School age students, grades 1-12	May have multiple goals: help student improve self esteem, behavior, academic achievement, attitude toward school, peers, adults	Meet regularly at a designated school location to talk. May involve some help with homework.	Willing and able to commit for the school year, caring, observant and sensitive, enthusiastic, good listening skills, willing to work with school/program staff, a good role model.

(Continued from previous page)

Type of program	Children/youth Served	Purpose/Goals of the Program	Examples of Volunteer Activities	Examples of Helpful Volunteer Traits
Community-based mentoring	Children and youth, age may depend on the program's focus	May have multiple goals: help youth improve self esteem, behavior, coping skills, resiliency; develop and achieve goals; improve relationships with adults and peers, etc.	Meet regularly with child/youth at the program's location or activities, or meet youth in the community to talk, share a meal or activity.	Willing and able to commit for a long period of time (usually a year), caring, patient, interest in youth culture and issues, good listening skills, flexible, a good role model.
Out-of-School Time Programs	School-age children and youth; age may depend on the program's focus	Provide students with a safe, supervised place and constructive, fun, or educational activities.	After school programs vary greatly. Volunteers might help students with homework, read to children, help students use a computer program, lead a crafts activity, assist with recreation activities, or help students with a school project.	Energetic, enthusiastic, flexible, interest in youth culture, open and friendly, caring, responsible, good role model.

PRESCHOOL

Head Start and other preschool programs serve children who are ages 3-5. Programs may have a strong research-based curriculum or they may be less formal. Preschool programs help children become ready for kindergarten by building pre-literacy skills and language development, math knowledge (e.g. number recognition), social skills, motor skills, healthy hygiene practices, and helping them achieve other age-appropriate developmental milestones.

Volunteer activities typically include giving children needed one-on-one attention and role modeling behavior like kindness, politeness and cooperation, paying attention to the teacher, and sharing materials. Volunteers may read to children, recite poetry and rhymes; assist children to express themselves through music and stories, or to use tools through crafts; help them learn their numbers, colors, and letters through puzzles and games.

Some children that volunteers serve may have special needs, such as a physical or cognitive disability, or may come from disadvantaged communities or difficult home environments.

Preschool stations often provide training to volunteers. Volunteers in Head Start classrooms work closely with the teacher.

Volunteer Activity Example

Lois serves at a Head Start program three days per week. Lois is assigned to two children with special needs; both have extreme difficulty paying attention and one frequently acts out in anger. The teacher has developed an assignment plan for each of the children and Lois works closely with her to ensure that the children are getting the one-on-one attention they need and building needed skills to prepare them for Kindergarten.

Program Examples:

- Head Start, Glouster, Ohio: http://www.hapcap.org/headstart.htm
- The Born to Read Volunteer Reader Program, Portland, Maine (reading program that serves preschool-age children): http://www.mainehumanities.org/programs/btr-volunteer.html

HOMEWORK HELP

Homework assistance programs are often located at schools, during or after school hours. Services may be offered in a classroom or larger open room such as a school cafeteria or gymnasium. Ideally, quiet work spaces are sectioned off to minimize distractions. Students may be referred to the program because they are behind in their assignments; other students may simply want a place to study after school.

Community organizations that provide youth services may also provide academic assistance that includes homework help. In addition, public libraries in many cities offer drop-in and online homework assistance programs for students. Many community-based homework assistance programs are "drop-in", where students can attend without enrolling in advance.

Volunteers may work with students one-on-one or in small groups. They may see the same students regularly and get to know their needs.

Volunteers do not have to be experts in a subject to help students. A primary goal of homework assistance programs is to help students develop good organization and study skills, learn to stay on task and follow through on assignments, and eventually work independently. Volunteer activities may include helping students break down and prioritize tasks, and use a planner to meet due dates. They may also help students figure out how to find the answers or research a topic (e.g. in the text book or an Internet search), or study for an upcoming test.

Volunteer Activity Example

Carolyn is a volunteer who has a gift for working with teens. She volunteers two evenings a week at a middle school homework help program where students who need help in different subjects can "drop in" and work individually with a volunteer. Many of the students are referred to the program by teachers because they are not turning in required assignments. Sometimes students do not understand their lessons, but often they have not developed good study skills. Carolyn works with students to take concrete steps to get better organized so they do not feel so overwhelmed.

Program Example

The public library in Oakland, California has a free drop-in homework help program for teens at five library locations: http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/links/teens/teen_homework.html.

TUTORING

Like homework assistance programs, tutoring may be school-based or provided by a community organization. Tutoring programs are generally more focused and rigorous, although this is not always the case.

Tutoring often involves ongoing, regularly scheduled, one-on-one tutor-student assistance in a particular subject (e.g. reading). Ideally, students would meet with the same tutor at the same days, time and place, for the duration of the sessions. Each session would be well-planned and structured.

A tutoring program may also use a research-based curriculum and assess students' progress periodically so the assistance can be tailored to better meet individual needs. Volunteer tutors would be trained on the curriculum and in different learning styles before they begin tutoring, and they would continue to receive training and support during their service. Tutors might also work closely with the student's teacher or program specialist/supervisor.

Some tutoring programs, especially those that serve younger students, may be less intensive; for example, volunteers might help children learn to read by reading to/with them. However, it is likely that these programs would still be structured to help children meet specific learning goals. For example, reading tutors would be trained to help children develop phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension; reading materials would be carefully selected; sessions would be ongoing and structured.

Volunteer Activity Example

Gail volunteers at a reading tutoring program at an elementary school library three afternoons a week. She works one-on-one with 2nd grade students referred to the program because they are falling behind in reading. Gail works closely with the program staff supervisor to implement the program's curriculum, and she attends weekly meetings with the supervisor and 2nd grade teacher to discuss individual students' progress and ways to improve their learning.

Program Examples:

- Reading Buddy program, North Central Iowa: http://www.boomersinaction.net/RB-Template.htm
- Friends Learning in Pairs (FLIP) program, Davidson and Williamson Counties, Tennessee: http://volunteerrsvp.com/FLIP.html
- RSVP Reading Tutors (America Reads), Stevens Point, Wisconsin: http://www.co.portage.wi.us/adrc/RSVPReadingTutors.html

SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING

At school-based mentoring programs, students are paired with a volunteer mentor and meet at school facilities throughout the school year. Mentors could be matched with one child or a small group.

Some school-based mentoring programs provide "peer mentoring", where younger students are matched with older student mentors.

School-based mentoring is usually limited to the school-day and school year schedule, although some programs facilitate opportunities for mentors and the students to stay in touch over the summer or school vacations.

Mentors must meet with the child/youth consistently to build a quality relationship. Mentors might meet with them once a week or more frequently; meetings often happen during lunchtime but there might be other school activities. Mentors might also meet regularly with program (school) staff which might include teachers and counselors.

Mentors can help the child/youth work toward achieving a goal - one that is focused and led by the child/youth. They might also talk through problems and help the child/youth think of options so they can make thoughtful decisions.

The mentored children/youth tend to show benefits that are related to school, such as better attendance and behavior, and overall academic performance. Mentoring has also helped kids achieve personal goals and improve self esteem. Longer matches usually show better results, and some research has shown that younger children (grades 4-6) and girls benefit the more from school-based mentoring than older youth and boys.

Volunteer Activity Example

Estelle is a volunteer mentor at the neighborhood elementary school. She works with two children, a 4th grade girl and a 3rd grade boy. The boy's mother is serving in the military overseas and he is extremely shy. The girl has been referred to the program because she has recently shown behavior problems. Estelle meets with each child two times a week for lunch. Over the school year, she has seen the boy develop confidence and make a new friend, and now he is talking about joining a summer swim team. The girl seemed angry and unresponsive at first, but now she trusts Estelle and is able to talk about her problems at school so Estelle can help her think through solutions.

Program examples:

- Lunch Buddies program, Medford, Oregon: http://www.retirement.org/rvmcs/lunchbuddies.htm
- RSVP Mentoring Project (Collaborative Student Mentoring Program), Kenosha, Wisconsin: http://www.kafasi.org/rsvpmentoring.html

COMMUNITY-BASED MENTORING

Community-based mentoring programs match mentors with a child/youth who may then meet at the program facility or somewhere in the community. Successful programs provide mentor training and ongoing support. There is an effort to match mentors and children/youth with similar interests and backgrounds.

The most important thing in mentoring is to develop a bond, build trust and a good relationship, and this requires a time commitment. Community-based mentoring programs will have requirements for how often and how long, minimally, the mentor and child or youth should meet (e.g. two hours, three times a month, for at least a year). Longer, quality relationships result in better outcomes for the kids.

The types of activities that can help develop a bond include talking and spending time together, playing games, going to a movie or watching/playing sports, enjoying a meal, getting involved in community activities. Activities might also involve helping the child with homework occasionally or getting involved in a service project. Most importantly, the activities that mentors and children/youth do together should be kid-driven and reflect the child or youth's interests.

Research has shown benefits to mentored children and youth, including: better school attendance, resiliency, improved problem-solving skills and confidence, and better relationships with parents. Mentored children/youth were also less likely to start using drugs and alcohol or hit someone.

Volunteer Activity Example

Armando volunteers at a community-based mentoring program that works primarily with boys ages 8-18 who do not have a positive male role model in their lives. He has been meeting with a 13-year old youth, John, for 3-4 hours a week for the last 2 years. Armando discovered that he and John share an interest in baseball and soccer. They have begun volunteering at the local Park and Recreation Center coaching children's soccer. They also go to baseball games together occasionally. Armando received extensive training from the program prior to being matched and still meets twice a month with the program supervisor to discuss any concerns.

Program Examples:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters (www.bbbs.org) is a nationwide mentoring program. They also have a program for mentoring children of active duty parents near/on military bases.
- Across Ages intergenerational mentoring program matches senior volunteers with children: http://www.acrossages.org/

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

Out-of-school time programs can take place after school, on the weekends, during the day over school vacation times, and during the summer months. They take place at schools, community centers, places of worship, park and recreation centers, libraries, and other community facilities. They can vary a great deal in the types of activities provided and age ranges served. Some may be very directed toward one type of activity (e.g. sports or homework help); others may provide many options, or change the main activities over different times of the year.

The goals for children/youth served can also vary a great deal depending on the type of out-of-school time program. The program may want to improve academics and attitude toward school, social skills and self esteem, or build healthy habits. Others may be aimed at a specific age group (e.g. teens) or interest (e.g. writing, music). All out-of-school time programs aim to provide children/youth with constructive activities in a safe supervised place.

Program participants are school-age children and youth, but again, the age range may vary by program.

Volunteers are likely to spend more time with groups of children/youth than one-on-one individualized attention. Volunteer activities may include: homework help, coaching or supervising sports activities, leading or assisting with arts and crafts, engaging children in games, helping students find resources for school projects, reading aloud to a group of children, or partnering with youth on a community service project.

Volunteer Activity Example

Luis volunteers at an after school program at the elementary school in his neighborhood two evenings a week. Children can play outside at the school playground and basketball court, or stay inside and get help with homework. Luis prefers to supervise the kids outside and he found that he was very good at encouraging the younger shy children to join in group activities, and helping children play as a team.

Program examples:

- 826 Valencia is a network of nine none profit organizations that provide after school tutoring, workshops, field trips and other activities that help children and youth ages 6-18 develop writing skills: http://www.826valencia.org/ .
- After School Matters is a Chicago-based non-profit organization that offers after school activities for teenagers in arts, sports, technology, communications, and science: http://www.afterschoolmatters.org/ .

10 Tips for Working with Teachers in the Classroom

Volunteers support classrooms by providing needed individual assistance to students, and allowing more opportunity for small group work. Volunteers also bring a new dynamic to the classroom by sharing their own life experience, compassionate manner, and calming presence. To make the best of your experience as a classroom volunteer, here are some tips to help you serve with teachers.

1. Know the responsibilities of your volunteer position in the classroom – tasks you should and should not be performing. Ideally, you and the teacher have written documentation such as the volunteer description that can be referenced.

2. Teachers have different ways of doing things, and different comfort levels with someone new in their classroom. Some teachers may want you to jump right in; others may want to get to know you better before asking you to work with particular students, or lead a small group activity.

3. Remember that it is not your job to discipline the students! Talk with the teacher prior to service to make sure you understand the discipline plan and what you should do when you see unacceptable behavior. You need to understand the teacher's rules so students get consistent messages.

4. Try to give the teacher the benefit of the doubt even if it seems like his/her methods are inconsistent when dealing with different students. Remember that the teacher knows more about the individual students' abilities and behaviors than you do.

5. Let the teacher know about any special skills or talents you have that might be helpful to students. For example, you may have personal or professional experience with learning disabilities that hinder reading ability, or you may have a special knack for helping very shy children feel more comfortable.

6. Let the teacher know if you are uncomfortable with a task or feel overwhelmed. The teacher does not want you to burn out either, and it may be that all you need is a few minutes of additional instructions, an intervention from her, or a short break.

7. Communicate with the teacher on a regular basis. It may be difficult to talk during a hectic school day, so try to schedule a regular time when you can meet. When you meet with the teacher, ask for comments on your performance, and make it clear that you are open to constructive criticism. No one learns without a little helpful honest feedback.

8. Pay attention to student behavior during transition times. Some students have difficulty between activities, when they need to get organized to leave or settle down again to focus on a task. Individual attention from you can make transitions much smoother; be a calming presence that helps them adjust.

9. Because you are a trusted member of the classroom and an example to students, take care not to say anything that sounds like gossip. You may see behavior or hear sensitive things about individual teachers' or students' private lives; be respectful and keep it to yourself.

10. Keep in mind that the teacher is always the one in charge of the classroom. However, for their part, you can expect teachers to tell you what they expect and provide clear directions. Volunteers should be provided adequate support and supervision.

References

"10 Tips for Classroom Volunteers", Eileen Palma, PTO Today (accessed 1/12/11).
http://www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/30-10-tips-for-classroom-volunteers

"10 Tips for Classroom Volunteers", Greatschools staff, Greatschools.org (accessed on 1/12/11).
http://www.greatschools.org/improvement/volunteering/10-tips-for-classroom-volunteers.gs?content=365

"Teacher Guide for Volunteers in the Classroom", Ohio State University P-12 Project, 9/30/2004.
http://p12.osu.edu/documents/Teachermodule.pdf

Recommended Resources for Tutors and Mentors

This is just a sample of some of the many resources available to tutors and mentors. Your supervisor may have additional recommendations.

The **National Mentoring Center at Education Northwest** provides training for youth mentoring programs. Many of their resources are available online: http://educationnorthwest.org/nmc. One of their most innovative resources is the free online course, "Talking it Through: Communication Skills for Mentors: Real life examples to guide you through your mentoring relationship". This course includes video stories, tips, a journal and quizzes: http://talkingitthrough.educationnorthwest.org/

The **Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota** developed "Tools for Mentoring Adolescents", brief papers on mentoring topics such as "Building Trust and Attachment with Your Mentee" and "Setting Mentoring Boundaries": http://www.mpmn.org/ToolsforMentoringAdolescents.aspx

The Tutor is a series of articles that was published by LEARNS offering practical, research based advice on various tutoring topics. These articles are now housed at the Resource Center, an information clearinghouse for Corporation for National and Community Service programs: http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/learns/tutor. Here is a sample of recommended articles from The Tutor:

- "Connecting with Kids: Communication Strategies for Volunteers" The Tutor (Winter 2007)
- "Now I Get it! Homework Help Strategies for Volunteers" (Spring 2005)
- "Savvy Traveling: Volunteers Engaging with School Culture" The Tutor (Fall 2004)
- "Tutoring our Youngest Readers: Focusing on Five Major Reading Strategies" (Winter 2002)
- "Room for One More? Strategies for Small Group Tutoring" (Summer/Fall 2002)

Books

Stand by me: the risks and rewards of mentoring today's youth by Jean E. Rhodes. Published by Harvard University Press; Cambridge, Massachusetts (2002).

Help America Read: A Handbook for Volunteers by Irene C. Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. Published by Heinemann; Portsmouth, New Hampshire (1997).

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name:_____ Date:_____

Lead Facilitator:_____

Program you serve with: ❒ Foster Grandparent ❒ RSVP ❒ Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. The subject matter was presented effectively.					
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable.					
3. The facilitator responded to questions.					
4. There were enough opportunities for discussion.					
5. The written materials are useful.					
6. The session met my expectations.					
7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment.					
8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session.					

9. What did you like best about this session?

_____

_____

_____

10. What would have improved this session?

_____

_____

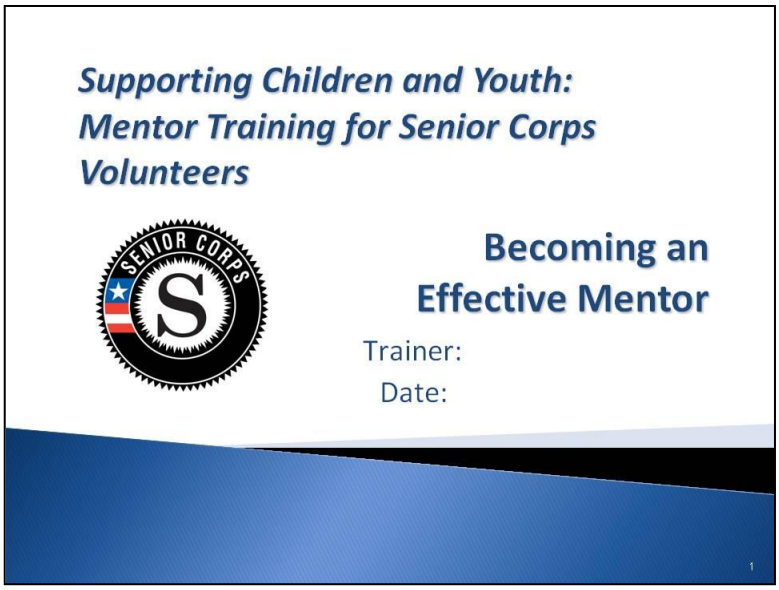
_____

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Module 2

Becoming an Effective Mentor



Module 2: Becoming an Effective Mentor

INTRODUCTION

Children and youth need caring and consistent relationships with adults to thrive during childhood and adolescence, and ultimately develop into creative individuals, good citizens and employees who strengthen our businesses, our community, and our society. Caring adults who work with children and youth ensure that they receive this necessary support. This workshop provides an overview of compelling reasons to be a mentor, the mentor's role, characteristics of an effective mentor, and helpful approaches to mentoring.

This workshop includes a brief lecture, a small group exercise, and a short reflection activity. It is recommended that you do a 2-hour workshop to allow more time for group discussion.

Remember that you do not need to present this workshop "as is". Modify the session to fit your participants' needs, and address the age group and environment in which they will be serving. For example, if your participants do not work with children outside the school setting, skip examples where the mentor is with the child/youth in a setting outside the school. If your participants do not work with teens, omit examples that apply to teenagers and highlight those that refer to younger children.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will better understand:

- The compelling reasons to mentor children and youth
- The role and practices of a effective mentor
- Positive approach to working with children and youth
- The importance of working as part of a team

Visual Aids (Power Point) and Facilitator's Notes

If you are using the PowerPoint slides included with this curriculum, Facilitator's Notes are provided under each slide. These notes provide the same information as the Facilitator's Notes included in this document, however they are not as detailed.

It is recommended that you use easel paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to note responses to some of the "callout" questions and important points that participants make during the exercise "debrief." This validates participants' knowledge and reinforces learning. You may want to write the headings on sheets of easel paper in advance to save time.

This symbol will cue you as to when you might jot down responses:

Handouts

The handouts for this session follow the Facilitator's Notes and Instructions. Handouts 1-5 should be distributed during the session; this symbol in the Facilitator's Notes will cue you as to when: 🗎. The remaining handouts can be distributed at the end of the session.

1. Kids Today
2. 40 Developmental Assets® for Grades K-3 (ages 5-9)*
3. 20 Internal Assets K-3 (larger type version) (optional)
4. Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Assets
5. Reflection: Individual Action Plan: Who is on my team? (optional)
6. Effective Patterns of Interaction (optional)
7. Recommended Resources for Mentors (optional)
8. Training Feedback Survey

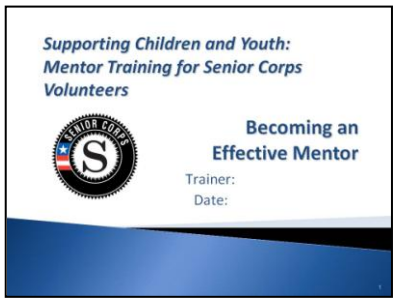
*This handout is a list of developmental assets for ages 5-9 from the Search Institute (www.search-institute.org). The Search Institute has the "40 Developmental Assets" list customized for children and youth of different age groups: 3-5, 5-9, 8-12, and 12-18. Pull the "40 Developmental Assets" sheet most appropriate to the age groups that participants are serving. The lists of assets are also available in different languages: http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists.

SESSION AGENDA

Activity	Estimated Time	Method	Slide Numbers
I. Welcome	**25 min.**		1
A. Learning Objectives	5 min.	Lecture	2
B. Warm-up: Kids Today *Kids Today*	20 min.	Pairs and large group discussion	3
II. Mentoring: Needs and Benefits	**20 min.**		
A. Needs of Children and Youth	5 min.	Lecture	4
B. Mentoring Benefits and Older Adults	10 min.	Lecture and large group discussion	5
C. Characteristics of Older Adults Working with Children and Youth	5 min.	Lecture	
III. Roles and Practices (Interactions) of an Effective Mentor	**60 min.**		
A. Roles of a Mentor	10 min.	Large group discussion	6-7
B. Practices and Effective Interactions of a Mentoring Relationship	10 min.	Lecture	8
C. Positive Child/Youth Development: An Asset Approach Visualization: What does a thriving Child/Youth look like? *40 Developmental Assets® for Grades K-3rd (ages 5-9)* *20 Internal Assets K-3 (larger type version) (optional)*	15 min.	Lecture/Visualization	9
D. Exercise: Supporting Assets *Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Assets*	25 min.	Small group exercise and large group debrief	10
IV. Reflection: Part of a Team	**10 min**		
Reflection: Individual Action Plan: Who is on My Team? (optional)	10 min.	Individual reflection	11
V. Closing *Effective Patterns of Interaction (optional)* *Recommended Resources for Mentors (optional)* *Training Feedback Survey*	**5 min.**	Lecture	12

FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS

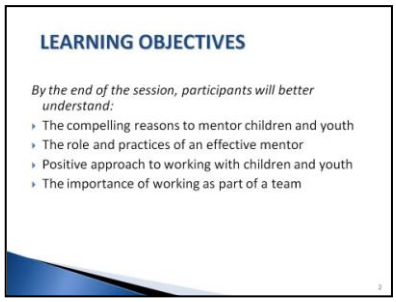
I. Welcome



If you are using the PowerPoint slides, have slide 1 up on the screen.

Welcome participants and introduce the workshop: "Children and youth need caring and consistent relationships with adults to thrive during childhood and adolescence and ultimately develop into creative individuals, good citizens and employees who strengthen our businesses, our community, and our society. Caring adults who work with children and youth ensure that they receive this necessary support."

A. Learning Objectives



Show slide 2.

Describe the learning objectives. In this workshop, participants will be introduced to and discuss:

- The compelling reasons to mentor children and youth
- The role and practices of an effective mentor
- Positive approach to working with children and youth
- The importance of working as part of a team.

B. Warm up: Kids Today

Show slide 3.

Distribute the handout *Kids Today.*

Ask participants to pair up with someone they don't know very well and determine which one will take notes: "You have 2 minutes to brainstorm. Think of how daily life is different for kids today from when you were a child/youth. What has changed? What is good about that change? What is not so good?" Read through the first example on the handout with the group to get them started.

TIP: Modify this "Kids Today" brainstorm. Focus on the ages of the children/youth that your mentors will be working with the most. You may want to revise the example in the handout for the age group you are interested in discussing.

On an easel board, make 4 columns: “Changes”, “Positive Consequences” (or effects), “Negative Consequences”, and “How adults can help.” After a couple of minutes, bring the group together and ask the participants to give you their responses.

CALLOUT: “What has changed?” Take a few of the key changes they give you (3 or 4), and ask: “What is good about that change? What is bad or challenging about that change?”

For each of those key changes, ask the group for some ideas about how adults in their lives can help and add those to the notes.

CALLOUT: “What does that change require of the adults in their lives? How can we help?”

Example

What has changed?	Positive (+)	Negative (-)	How can adults help?
Computers, internet: kids spend a lot of time online.	+ information readily available + social contact with friends/family	- don’t go outside and play as much - may limit face to face time - some inappropriate material	Kids know a lot but don’t have context. They need supervision and/or assistance in using internet. Make sure they get out and away from screen.

Validate participants’ responses and summarize: “As we can see, there is a lot going on for kids in general. And adults are not always available; families may not live close to relatives for support, and some kids are facing other challenges such as poor schools or high crime neighborhoods…”

Note any major changes that you want participants to keep in mind that have not already been mentioned.

II. Mentoring: Needs and Benefits

A. Needs of Children and Youth

Show slide 4.

Tell participants that:

- An increasing number of children in the US are not learning the skills they need to complete their education and eventually earn a living.
- Some have had limited or no experience in a stable family life.
- This growing group of vulnerable children and youth in cities, suburbia and in rural areas can barely read, are disconnected from school, and prone to risky behaviors such as: dropping out of school, taking drugs, early criminal activity, early sexual activity and undesired pregnancy.

While this is not new behavior, what has changed is the intensity, the scale and the dangerous consequences.

- More kids are doing activities that are more dangerous, more often. For instance, we know sexually transmitted diseases are life threatening.
- More than half of high school youth drink, 20% of high school youth carry a weapon and suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among teenagers.
- Half of the children and youth will spend time in a single-parent family, where one parent must take on all the household and child-rearing responsibilities.
- Poverty, lack of healthcare, and disengagement from school all has negative effects on millions of children and adolescents.

Young people heavily involved in behaviors that have potentially damaging consequences share many common characteristics. These include:

- Early acting out
- An absence of nurturing parents
- Evidence of having been a victim of child abuse
- Disengagement from school
- Involvement with negative peer group
- Depression
- Live in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Not every child in these circumstances fails to thrive, and for many youth and children in difficult situations, attachment to a caring and consistent adult such as a mentor can make the difference. That's where you come in!

TIP: Modify this conversation for your service population. You may want to focus on the population you serve in your community instead of the U.S. population overall. Focus on the age, challenges or situations of the children/youth that your mentors will be working with the most.

B. Mentoring Benefits and Older Adults

"Let's take a moment and consider our own childhood and adolescence."

On easel paper, make two columns: "Needs addressed" and "Benefits achieved." Jot down notes as the participants respond to your "callout" questions.

(If you have already trained this group using Module 1 of this curriculum) **CALLOUT:** "Remember when you thought about an adult who was important in your lives [note date you did Module 1] and recalled how that person was important to you? Thinking about that person, what did you need that that adult was able to give you? What did you get out of that relationship?"

(If you did not do Module 1 of this curriculum) **CALLOUT**: "Think back on one of the positive adults, other than your parents, in your own life when you were a child or adolescent. Considering that person, what did you need that that adult was able to give you? What did you get out of that relationship?"

Example:

Need Addressed (what did you need?)	Benefits Achieved (what did you receive?)
Attention by adult, no one listened to me	Listened to by an adult, cared about me
Didn't know how to…make friends, think about future, etc.	Improved…ability to make friends, imagine and follow a dream or learn a new skill…

CALLOUT: "We considered the benefits of the relationship for you, as the child or youth, but let's think about the adult. What does an adult get from the relationship? What benefits do you expect to see as a mentor?"

Participants may say things like:

- Social interactions with child/youth, keep up with youth culture
- Sharing skill or experience to help another, help with their future
- Gives me a sense of purpose and satisfaction to help a child/youth

Point out the common themes that participants cited. Note that mentoring is often a mutually beneficial relationship.

Show slide 5.

"Let's take a look at what the research says are the benefits of mentoring for older mentors."

The research says that:

- Older adult mentors improve in physical health, cognitive activity and mental health including perceived quality of life and fewer depressive symptoms.
- Sometimes moving from the role of a full-time worker to retirement or reduced work leaves people with a lowered sense of self-worth and purpose. Involvement in youth programs reduces feelings of purposelessness and isolation.
- Older mentors often find improved self-confidence, self-esteem and unexpected enjoyment of activities they do with the children/youth.
- Strong connections are made with other mentors and even relationships with family members are improved.

C. Characteristics of Older Adults Working with Children and Youth

"Let's talk about why older adults are uniquely qualified to serve children and youth."

As an older adult mentor, you are in good company and in a good position to "give back." Older adults have important qualities that link directly to being an effective mentor. Research shows that seniors:

- Have more time to volunteer and devote to new pursuits and building relationship with children/youth that are in difficult situations than do volunteers of younger ages.
- Have commodities such as attention, patience, understanding and consistency which may be in short supply among other adults in the child's life due to parents working long hours, caring for several young children, deployment, incarceration, or many other reasons.
- Have a lifetime of experience. Older adults' struggles in life, especially as children or as high-risk youth, can be especially effective in reaching out to kids. Research suggests that effective mentors are those older adults who themselves have; "endured strained family relationships, battled personal problems, and struggled to overcome many major challenges in their lives." (Freedman, 1988).
- Are in a place in their life where they want to leave their legacy with younger generations; pass on the knowledge they have accumulated.

III. Roles and Practices (Interactions) of an Effective Mentor

A. Roles of a Mentor

Show slide 6.

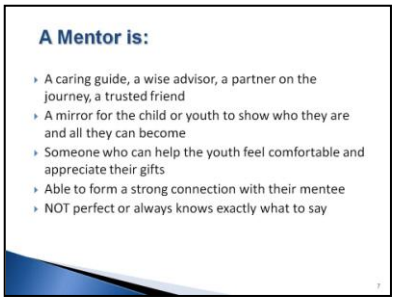
"We've looked at the needs of children and youth, the benefits of working with them, and how older adults come with some particular experiences and traits that make them uniquely effective. Let's look more closely at the role of a mentor."

CALLOUT: "Take one minute and think about what thoughts, images or words come to mind when you consider the role of a mentor? What thoughts, images or words come to mind when you think of what a mentor **is not**?" (You may need to give them an example to get them started.)

On your easel paper, create two columns: "Helpful Mentor Roles" and "Problematic Mentor Roles." Ask a participant to help you capture what the group comes up with for the list.

Example

Helpful Mentor Roles (what a mentor is)	**Problematic Mentor Roles (what a mentor is not)**
Trusted friend	Trying to be perfect
Listener	ATM machine
Coach – support youth/child, nurturer	Project manager
Caring guide	Needs to push child/youth to change
Wise advisor	Parent
Partner on a journey	Social worker
Role model	Reformer of the child/youth
Safety Enforcer	Disciplinarian
Support - Appreciate child/youth gifts and talents – help them see themselves	Party planner
Conveyor of new opportunities, resources or modes of thinking	Savior
Positive, Advocate	Fixer
Honors commitments	Authority figure or "preacher"
Fun	Too much fun (i.e. not responsible)



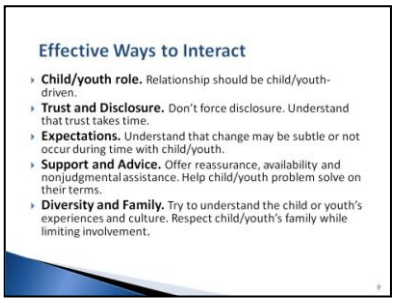
Show slide 7.

Tell participants that whatever the age of the child or youth they are mentoring, the qualities of an effective mentor are the same. The Center for Applied Research Solutions, Inc. (CARS) describes a mentor as:

- A caring guide, a wise advisor, a partner on the journey, a trusted friend.
- Can serve as a mirror for the child or youth and show who they are and all they can become.
- One who can help the youth feel comfortable in their own skin and appreciate their gifts, while at the same time exposing them to new opportunities and modes of thinking.
- Not perfect or always knows exactly what to say, but rather they are able to form a strong connection with the child/youth. This connection can serve as a means for positive change and growth.

TIP: If you have a mentor "job description", this may be a good time to clarify the role. The job description will depend on the type of mentoring program; stations where mentors will be serving should provide a volunteer job description for them. Is there anything that the participants have questions about? Allow time to be clear about expectations and limitations of the mentor role.

B. Practices and Effective Interactions of a Mentoring Relationship



Show slide 8.

"Given the importance of the mentoring relationship, experts have identified effective ways for mentors to work with children and youth to support the relationship." (Review the main points from each section that are relevant to the type of mentoring program that participants will serve.)

Child/Youth Role

Mentors in satisfying relationships allowed the content, timing and shared activities of the relationships to be youth-driven. So, as an effective mentor:

- You understand the child/youth's role in determining the activities as well as the timing. You see your purpose as supporting the child/youth-driven relationship. You take into account his/her age and make sure the process and planning is as child or youth driven as possible.
- You get that children/youth can be uncommunicative at first but are willing to find out what they are interested in and need. Kids in these relationships feel that their mentor cares about what they want and feel. Remember that many children and youth are hesitant to express their interests at first, but careful listening and observing will clue you in.
- You set boundaries and establish mutually agreed-upon ways to meet. If the program dictates when and where to meet, you can still allow the child to choose the activities as much as possible.

Trust and Disclosure

As an effective mentor:

- You see your purpose as being available to give, understanding that, at least initially, the relationship will be one-directional: the mentor as giver and the child/youth as recipient. You don't force disclosure.
- You understand the child/youth's reluctance to trust given possible previous disappointments by relationships with adults in his/her life. You work on trust by honoring commitments. You show up on time and are engaged. You communicate changes in advance and are willing to meet long enough and often enough to show you are committed.
- Especially if you are mentoring a young child, you are sensitive to the devastating effect it can have if you are not reliable.
- You maintain confidentiality by directing any inquiries from family or friends on "how the child is doing" to program staff.

Expectations

As an effective mentor:

- You have realistic expectations of the relationship. You understand that change happens slowly and you do not expect change to occur after six months or a year. You accept that the changes are often subtle and may not even be evident until after the relationship is over.

Support and Advice

As an effective mentor:

- You offer reassurance and remind the child/youth of your availability and on-going interest in them.
- You help the child/youth plan, set goals and find age-appropriate resources. You take care not to project what you think the goals should be; however, for younger children, you may need to offer suggestions to get them started.
- You respond to requests for help in a nonjudgmental manner. You remain neutral when offering support and practical suggestions or alternatives to assist the child/youth to solve problems on his/her own terms. You help him/her think through consequences of different alternatives. For younger children, this process will involve more direct input (questions and suggestions) from you.

Diversity and Family

As an effective mentor:

- You know it is important to be sensitive to and relate to the child/youth's experience, often by drawing on experiences in your own life.
- If the child/youth's cultural background is different from your own, you respect and try to learn about it. You are careful not to make assumptions.
- You attempt to understand and respect the child/youth's family. If you have contact with the family, you limit involvement by maintaining distance from family disputes, selecting interaction with the family carefully, and you do not allow the family to shape the relationship.

TIP: Help participants talk about cultural differences. "Cultural competence" is a set of behaviors and attitudes that allow someone to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. There may be organizations in your area that can provide guest speakers to help your participants talk about cultural differences and diversity; in fact, some community groups have a mission to educate the public and dispel stereotypes.

C. Positive Child/Youth Development – An Asset Approach

Ask the participants to do a short visualization exercise. Have participants close their eyes and, speaking slowly, pausing along the way, say, "Think about the last child or youth you saw or had contact with; maybe someone on the street, on the bus, at the store, or even your grandchild. Keeping that child's face in mind, imagine all the *positive* qualities this child might possess. Imagine what their positive actions look like with their families… Consider what a good day looks like at school as they speak with the teacher…, interact with other students…, work on their school work… What kind of qualities would they have?"

Ask the group for a few responses. They may mention qualities such as kindness, courteous, respectful, passionate, speaks up for herself, looks out for his friends, etc.

Tell the participants that their ideas and the previous discussion of effective interactions are all about helping children and youth develop to their maximum potential. This is called "positive youth development."

- It's not about trying to fix the child or youth, rather, it's about looking for ways to support that person to be the best they can be.
- It is an approach to working with children and youth that believes that they are better able to thrive and be their best when they are supported by a variety of people and organizations in the community such as teachers, schools, youth organizations, faith communities and more.

In trying to answer the question, "What do children and young people need to be able to grow up healthy?", those working with children and youth (The Search Institute (2009)) developed age related lists of developmental assets that children and youth need to grow and thrive, the "building blocks of healthy development".

Give participants the handout, *40 Developmental Assets® for Children Grade K-3 (ages 5-9).* Alternatively, or in addition, you may want to distribute the handout, *20 Internal Assets K-3 (larger type version).* This handout contains only the internal assets that will be discussed and is in slightly larger type for easier reading.

The focus is on the positive assets or strengths children and youth possess and how to encourage further asset development, rather than a focus on what the child or youth does not have. The research indicates that the more assets a child/youth has, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviors (alcohol, violence), and the more likely they are to grow into caring, confident and responsible adults. The focus is on activities and interactions that nurture the child/youth's assets or strengths rather than on trying to stop risky behavior.

Refer participants to the handout.

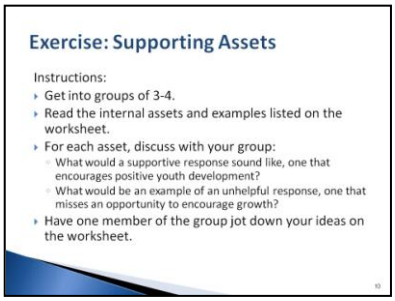
- First, note that the Search Institute identified 40 factors or assets considered the most important to development and growth. They are divided into "external" and "internal" assets.
- The 20 internal assets are those that the child/youth develop within themselves with the help of adults and community members.
- The 20 external assets describe the environment or context that he child/youth lives.

"As we have noted, as volunteers working with kids, you have an opportunity to nurture and support internal assets."

Show slide 9.

Read through one internal asset with the group (e.g. positive identity).

TIP: Developmental Assets for different age groups. The Search Institute (www.search-institute.org) has the 40 Developmental Assets list customized for children and youth of different ages (early childhood (ages 3-5), children grades K-3 (ages 5-9), etc.). You can pull the 40 Developmental Assets sheet most appropriate to the age group(s) that participants are serving.



D. Exercise: Supporting Assets

Show slide 10.

The purpose of this activity is to help participants think about how they can support internal assets.

"Now that we have a way to talk about what we are trying to achieve with children – building their internal assets— let's look at a few examples."

YOU WILL NEED: Copies of the handout, *Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Assets*, easel paper and a marker for taking notes during "debrief".

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute the handout *Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Assets* to each participant.
2. Ask participants to get into groups of 3- 4, depending on the size of your group.
3. Ask each group to identify a recorder to take notes.
4. Ask the small groups to take a minute to read the scenarios. You may want to go over the first example with them.
5. As a group, for each internal asset listed, they should discuss and note: (1) What would a supportive response sound like, one that encourages positive youth development? (2) What would be an example of an unhelpful response, one that misses an opportunity to encourage growth?
6. After 15 minutes, bring the group back together for discussion.

TIP: Customize the exercise. You might want to modify the examples in *Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Assets* to fit the age group and situations your participants most often serve (e.g. in-school only vs. being outside the school setting). You may also want to assign each of the groups to do 1-2 of the examples instead of all four.

DEBRIEF

The worksheet asks participants to think of things a mentor would say to a child to encourage positive development in four different areas (excluding the first example), and for comparison, to give an example of a statement that would not be helpful.

For each of the four areas, ask one of the groups for the ideas they came up with:

- What would a supportive response sound like, one that encourages positive youth development?
- What would be an example of an unhelpful response, one that misses an opportunity to encourage growth?
- Ask the larger group if they have different examples of supportive responses.

If needed, examples of responses for each of the scenarios are provided on page 21 of these facilitator notes.

"Now you have a good idea of how you can support positive youth development. Let's look at the kind of support we can give you."

TIP: Ideas for additional mentor training exercises. Because of the interest and support for mentoring programs in recent years, there is a wealth of free resources for training mentors available online, including exercises to help them prepare and practice. One example is: "Ongoing Training for Mentors: Twelve Interactive Sessions for U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Programs" (2006) published by The Mentoring Resource Center and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools (http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/699).

IV. Reflection: Part of a Team

Tell the participants to take a moment and consider the following:

- The child/youth tells you they don't have enough to eat at home. What do you do?
- The child/youth talks about feeling blue and has joked about getting some vodka to help. What do you do?
- Your usually happy child/youth has seemed angry and uncooperative lately. What do you do?

Gather responses and support the idea that they would want to get help from a supervisor or other member of the program's team, if applicable.

TIP: Note particularly difficult topics that come up during this and other discussions. You may need to follow up with a specific resource or provide support to a participant. This workshop may also be a good time to remind participants of program policy – such as when to report to a supervisor– and where they can get a copy of the program handbook or written policy. At some point, you may also want to invite a representative from your county Child Protective Services to speak with participants about helping to keep children safe.

Tell participants: "As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child. You are not alone but part of a team, and requesting help from program staff is a sign that you care about the child/youth and are finding the best ways to make your relationship successful."

Show slide 11.

Use this time to talk about program resources you want the participants to know about. You may also want to review program policy on confidentiality.

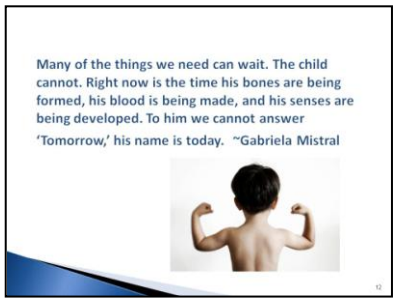
Encourage participants to take advantage of resources and team opportunities:

- Attend ongoing trainings like this one (make sure they know when the next training is) and participate fully by offering your ideas to peers, and taking advantage of their ideas and experience.
- Participate in check-in phone calls/mentor support groups.
- Honestly report how your match is going during calls, meetings or on any written documents you are asked to submit.
- Ask program staff to make contact with the parents or guardians if needed.
- Continue to educate yourself about the issues that your child/youth faces.

🗎 (Optional) Give participants the handout, *Reflection: Individual Action Plan: Who is on My Team?*

Tell participants: "Even if you already have them, take a moment and put down the names and contact information for your team members. Think about the kind of support you might need and who you can go to when you have questions."

TIP: Customize the resource and team opportunities listed here. You may want to adapt this section and the *Recommended Resources for Mentors* handout according to your available resources and other information which has already been presented. You might also find information you would like to print out and distribute from the websites in the handout, *Recommended Resources for Mentors.*



V. Closing

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Remind participants that regardless of the service they provide, children and youth will benefit from their love and attention, and this is the special contribution that senior volunteers make.

(Optional) Distribute the handouts:

- *Effective Patterns of Interaction* reiterates the earlier lecture points on best ways for mentors and youth to form relationships.
- *Recommended Resources for Mentors* is a list of resources, most of which are available online, that participants can investigate on their own.

Last, ask participants to complete a *Training Feedback Survey* to help you improve the next workshop.

Ask participants if there are any more questions or last words before you close. Make any final announcements and thank participants for attending the presentation.

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR EXERCISE DEBRIEF
Supporting Assets: Sample Responses

There is no single "right" or "wrong" answer in this exercise. The important thing for participants to remember is that their conversations with the children/youth are an opportunity to help develop internal assets by building on the child/youth's strengths and interests. The exercise gives examples of how a mentor might provide that kind of encouragement.

Internal Assets	Scenario	Asset supporting response examples	Deficit response examples
Positive Values Integrity	A 10-year old child tells you his friends cheated on a test, and he asks your opinion: is cheating on a test is so bad if everyone else is doing it?	"That can be a real temptation. What do you think? It sounds like you showed real honesty and courage by not joining in on that behavior."	"That's wrong and you would be bad if you did that. "
Commitment to learning Learning engagement	An 8-year old child complains about school work and not getting attention from her teacher.	"Tell me about one subject or thing you do enjoy at school. What makes that enjoyable? That's a challenging subject and it sounds like you work hard in it."	"You need to get on top of your school work or you are going to fail."
Positive values Caring	A 12-year old states that one of her friends is being continually left out of the group and she wonders if she should do something.	"It sounds like you really care for your friend. She's lucky to have you. What ideas do you have?"	"Is there something wrong with your friend? Should you be involved with her?"
Social Competencies Cultural competence	You greet a friend while with a 7-year old child. The man has slurred speech and crutches (cerebral palsy). The child tells you he thinks the man is a drunk.	"John is not drunk but I understand how he might seem different to you. He has CP and that causes him to … People come in all different shapes, sizes, colors and with different challenges."	"How rude! He's fine, you're the one with the problem…"
Positive Identity Positive view of personal future	A 5-year old starts to list all of the things she would like to do in the future – race car driver, deep sea diver, president, etc.	"Wow! You have a lot of different interests. Tell me more about being a deep sea diver."	"Those are all unlikely professions. Don't you think you would like to be a teacher or join the army?"

MODULE 2 REFERENCES

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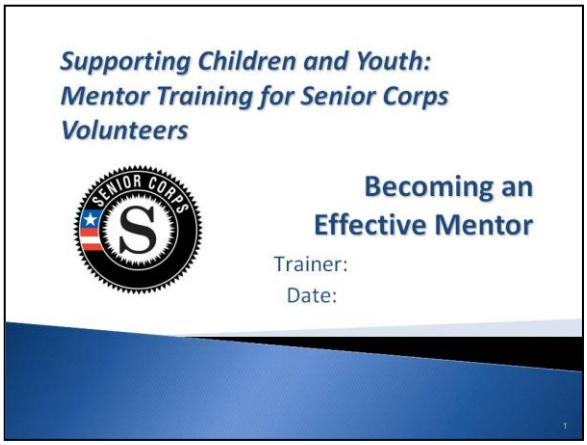
Module 2 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

1. Kids Today
2. 40 Developmental Assets® for Grades K-3 (ages 5-9)
3. 20 Internal Assets K-3 (larger type version) (optional)
4. Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Assets
5. Reflection: Individual Action Plan: Who is on My Team? (optional)
6. Effective Patterns of Interaction (optional)
7. Recommended Resources for Mentors (optional)
8. Training Feedback Survey



Kids Today

With a partner, take a few minutes to consider the following questions and note your responses.

Changes: What has changed in the lives of today's children and youth compared to when you were a child?	**+/- Consequences** How are the changes positive?	How are the changes negative?	**Adult support:** What do the changes require of the adults in the child's life?
Children don't play outside and explore as much	*+ They do have more indoor activities*	- *Obesity is a problem* - *Don't really experience natural environment*	*Take them to park or local stream/forest to explore*

Search INSTITUTE

40 Developmental Assets® for Children Grades K–3 (ages 5-9)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets®**—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES HEALTHY YOUTH®

External Assets

Support

1. **Family Support—**Family continues to be a consistent provider of love and support for the child's unique physical and emotional needs.
2. **Positive Family Communication—**Parent(s) and child communicate openly, respectfully, and frequently, with child receiving praise for her or his efforts and accomplishments.
3. **Other Adult Relationships—**Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s), with the child sometimes experiencing relationships with a nonparent adult.
4. **Caring Neighborhood—**Parent(s) and child experience friendly neighbors who affirm and support the child's growth and sense of belonging.
5. **Caring School Climate—**Child experiences warm, welcoming relationships with teachers, caregivers, and peers at school.
6. **Parent Involvement in Schooling—**Parent(s) talk about the importance of education and are actively involved in the child's school success.

Empowerment

7. **Community Values Children—**Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.
8. **Children as Resources—**Child contributes to family decisions and has opportunities to participate in positive community events.
9. **Service to Others—**Child has opportunities to serve in the community with adult support and approval.
10. **Safety—**Parents and community adults ensure the child's safety while keeping in mind her or his increasing independence.

Boundaries & Expectations

11. **Family Boundaries—**The family maintains supervision of the child, has reasonable guidelines for behavior, and always knows where the child is.
12. **School Boundaries—**Schools have clear, consistent rules and consequences and use a positive approach to discipline.
13. **Neighborhood Boundaries—**Neighbors and friends' parents help monitor the child's behavior and provide feedback to the parent(s).
14. **Adult Role Models—**Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior and encourage the child to follow these examples.
15. **Positive Peer Influence—**Parent(s) monitor the child's friends and encourage spending time with those who set good examples.
16. **High Expectations—**Parent(s), teachers, and other influential adults encourage the child to do her or his best in all tasks and celebrate their successes.

Constructive Use of Time

17. **Creative Activities—**Child participates weekly in music, dance, or other form of artistic expression outside of school.
18. **Child Programs—**Child participates weekly in at least one sport, club, or organization within the school or community.
19. **Religious Community—**Child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture her or his spiritual development.
20. **Time at Home—**Child spends time at home playing and doing positive activities with the family.

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning

21. **Achievement Motivation—**Child is encouraged to remain curious and demonstrates an interest in doing well at school.
22. **Learning Engagement—**Child is enthused about learning and enjoys going to school.
23. **Homework—**With appropriate parental support, child completes assigned homework.
24. **Bonding to School—**Child is encouraged to have and feels a sense of belonging at school.
25. **Reading for Pleasure—**Child listens to and/or reads books outside of school daily.

Positive Values

26. **Caring—**Parent(s) help child grow in empathy, understanding, and helping others.
27. **Equality and Social Justice—**Parent(s) encourage child to be concerned about rules and being fair to everyone.
28. **Integrity—**Parent(s) help child develop her or his own sense of right and wrong behavior.
29. **Honesty—**Parent(s) encourage child's development in recognizing and telling the truth.
30. **Responsibility—**Parent(s) encourage child to accept and take responsibility for her or his actions at school and at home.
31. **Self-Regulation—**Parents encourage child's growth in regulating her or his own emotions and behaviors and in understanding the importance of healthy habits and choices.

Social Competencies

32. **Planning and Decision Making—**Parent(s) help child think through and plan school and play activities.
33. **Interpersonal Competence—**Child seeks to build friendships and is learning about self-control.
34. **Cultural Competence—**Child continues to learn about her or his own cultural identity and is encouraged to interact positively with children of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
35. **Resistance Skills—**Child is learning to recognize risky or dangerous situations and is able to seek help from trusted adults.
36. **Peaceful Conflict Resolution—**Child continues learning to resolve conflicts without hitting, throwing a tantrum, or using hurtful language.

Positive Identity

37. **Personal Power—**Child has a growing sense of having influence over some of the things that happen in her or his life.
38. **Self-Esteem—**Child likes herself or himself and feels valued by others.
39. **Sense of Purpose—**Child welcomes new experiences and imagines what he or she might do or be in the future.
40. **Positive View of Personal Future—**Child has a growing curiosity about the world and finding her or his place in it.

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Search Institute 40 Developmental Assets® for Children Grades K-3 (ages 5-9): Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning

21. Achievement Motivation—Child is encouraged to remain curious and demonstrates an interest in doing well at school.
22. Learning Engagement—Child is enthused about learning and enjoys going to school.
23. Homework—With appropriate parental support, child completes assigned homework.
24. Bonding to School—Child is encouraged to have and feels a sense of belonging at school.
25. Reading for Pleasure—Child listens to and/or reads books outside of school daily.

Positive Values

26. Caring—Parent(s) help child grow in empathy, understanding, and helping others.
27. Equality and Social Justice—Parent(s) encourage child to be concerned about rules and being fair to everyone.
28. Integrity—Parent(s) help child develop her or his own sense of right and wrong behavior.
29. Honesty—Parent(s) encourage child's development in recognizing and telling the truth.
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Positive Identity

37. Personal Power—Child has a growing sense of having influence over some of the things that happen in her or his life.
38. Self-Esteem—Child likes herself or himself and feels valued by others.
39. Sense of Purpose—Child welcomes new experiences and imagines what he or she might do or be in the future.
40. Positive View of Personal Future—Child has a growing curiosity about the world and finding her or his place in it.

Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Assets

For each of the examples below, talk in your small group about ways you might respond in a way to support the child/youth's internal assets (identified in the first column). For comparison, give examples of responses that might not be as supportive ("deficit response").

Internal Assets	**Example**	**Asset supporting response** (What would you say to encourage development of this asset?)	**Deficit response** (What is NOT the best way to encourage this asset?)
Positive Values Integrity	A 10-year old child tells you his friends cheated on a test, and he asks your opinion: is cheating on a test is so bad if everyone else is doing it?	*"That can be a real temptation. What do you think? It sounds like you showed real honesty and courage by not joining in on that behavior."*	*"That's wrong and you would be bad if you did that."*
Commitment to Learning Learning engagement	An 8-year old child complains about school work and not getting attention from her teacher.		
Positive Values Caring	A 12-year old states that one of her friends is being continually left out of the group and she wonders if she should do something.		
Social Competencies Cultural competence	You greet a friend while with a 7-year old child. The man has slurred speech and crutches (cerebral palsy). The child tells you he thinks the man is a drunk.		
Positive Identity Positive view of personal future	A 5-year old starts to list all of the things she would like to do in the future – race car driver, deep sea diver, president…		

Reflection: Individual Action Plan: Who is on My Team?

To ensure your success, take a minute or two and identify the support you can count on as you work with children/youth.

Project Director or Supervisor Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

When I hit some rough patches in my relationship with the child/youth, I can contact (name and phone number):

1. _____
2. _____

When I need to brainstorm activity ideas or ways to work with my child/youth, I can contact (name and phone number):

1. _____
2. _____

When I need to report possible problems in my child/youth's life, I will contact (name and phone number):

1. _____
2. _____

Be sure you understand program policy on confidentiality and when you should report any possible issues and to whom. You may have already received the policy in writing during an orientation.

Effective Patterns of Interaction

In a study conducted by Public/Private Ventures[1] of four mentoring programs, they found that while the particular activities of the youth and adult were not a key to satisfaction, the approach or *patterns of interaction* taken by the mentor was key. Below are effective and ineffective patterns of interaction.

Effective	Ineffective
Youth's Role	
The mentor understood the need for a youth-driven relationship. She understood the youth's role in choosing the activities they did as well as the timing. The youth didn't talk much at first, but while waiting for the youth to express her interests, the mentor learned through trial and error about the youth's interest. Once she identified the youth's interest, she took them seriously.	The mentor was unlikely to follow the youth's suggestions or give the youth a voice in choosing the types of activities they did or the areas where the mentor could help. The mentor did not accept or follow the youth's interests. She thought the youth had few preferences or just did not talk much.
Trust and Disclosure	
The mentor viewed his purpose in the program as being available to give, understanding that, at least initially, the relationship would be one-way: the mentor as giver and the youth as recipient. The mentor did not force disclosure. The mentor understood the youth's reluctance to trust and was sensitive to the fact that youth may have been previously disappointed by relationships with adults in his life.	The mentor tried to force the youth to disclose before trust had developed. He made the big mistake of beginning the relationship with the activity the youth found most emotionally challenging, that is, by asking the youth to talk about difficult subjects (poor school performance, dysfunctional family behaviors, etc.)

[1] Styles, M. & Morrow, K. Understanding How Youth and Elders Form Relationships: A Study of Four Linking Lifetimes Programs. (P/PV 1992)

Effective	Ineffective
Expectations of relationship	
The mentor expectations of the relationship were realistic. She did not expect great change but appreciated the little things and the time together.	The mentor was disappointed the youth did not show great gains nor has she undergone a transformation. She is also sad that the youth has not shown how much she values the mentor.
Support and Advice	
The mentor offered reassurance and reminded the youth of his availability and on-going interest in the youth. The mentor responded to requests for help in a nonjudgmental manner. The mentor remained neutral and offered support and practical suggestions or alternatives to assist as the youth solved problems on his own terms.	The mentor judged and criticized the youth, often asking, “Why did you do that?” The mentor preached to the youth.
Diversity and Family	
The mentor attempted to be sensitive to and relate to the youth’s experience, often by drawing on experiences in her own life. The mentor attempted to understand and respect the youth’s family. The mentor limited her involvement with the youth’s family by maintaining distance from family disputes, selecting interaction with youth’s family carefully, and not allowing the family to shape the relationship.	The mentor did not understand or was unable to accept the youth’s family, social class or culture. The mentor was overly involved with the youth’s family, trying to meet their needs or “fix” them.

Recommended Resources for Mentors

This is just a sample of some of the many free resources available to mentors. Your supervisor may have additional recommendations.

The National Mentoring Center at Education Northwest provides resources for almost any mentoring topic, including a variety of specific resources for cultural topics: http://educationnorthwest.org/nmc. For example, The National Mentoring Center offers ***Talking it Through: Communication Skills for Mentors***, a self-paced training designed for mentors who are working with adolescents. A series of videos, using real life examples, show mentors and children/youth talking through difficult issues: (http://talkingitthrough.educationnorthwest.org/).

The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) has an online course, "Learn to Mentor", for first-time mentors that includes an orientation on mentoring, a chapter on the mentoring cycle, a downloadable toolkit, and quizzes to test your knowledge: http://apps.mentoring.org/training/TMT/index.adp

The Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets describe qualities and positive experiences for children and youth, by age group, including suggested activities that adults can do to help build them: http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets.

The Intergenerational Initiative (http://www.iii.siuc.edu/index.html) works to bring older and younger generations together to address issues. On their website, they offer helpful articles on improving intergenerational communication, such as "Process of Getting Acquainted" at http://www.iii.siuc.edu/Communication/intergencommunication.html.

YouthFriends® Volunteer Reading Guide (2006), from the Junior League of Kansas City, Missouri, The Comcast Foundation and the Kansas Health Foundation, Wichita, Kansas, discusses reading and literacy activities for mentors and the children and youth they mentor. The guide talks about strategies for working with kids in grades K-3, grades 4-7 and up: http://www.youthfriends.org/documents/ReadingGuide2006.pdf

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name:_____ Date:_____

Lead Facilitator:_____

Program you serve with: ❒ Foster Grandparent ❒ RSVP ❒ Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. The subject matter was presented effectively.					
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable.					
3. The facilitator responded to questions.					
4. There were enough opportunities for discussion.					
5. The written materials are useful.					
6. The session met my expectations.					
7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment.					
8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session.					

9. What did you like best about this session?

_____

_____

_____

10. What would have improved this session?

_____

_____

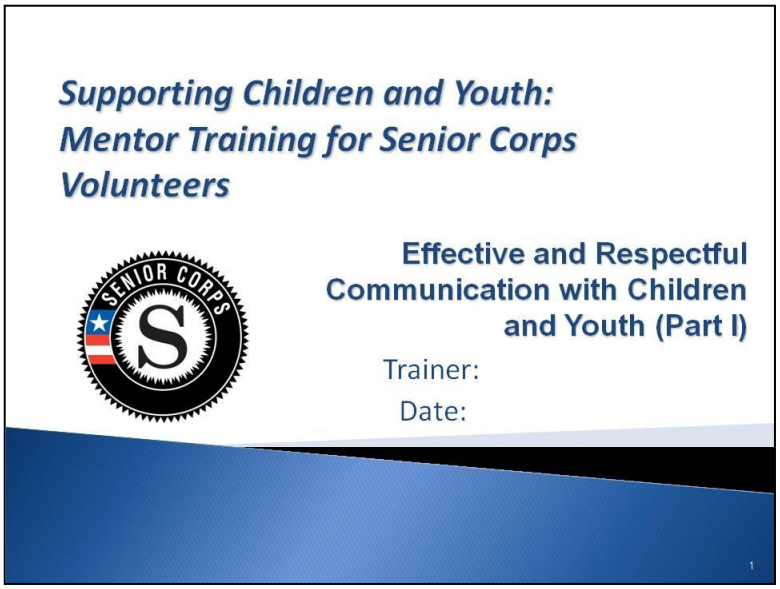
_____

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Module 3

Effective and Respectful Communication with Children and Youth (Part I)



Module 3. Effective and Respectful Communication with Children and Youth (Part I)

INTRODUCTION

Establishing and maintaining effective communication with children and youth is rewarding, and challenging. This workshop provides an overview of some of the key features of effective communication including nonverbal communication and active listening, as well as a few simple strategies to create strong and respectful communication habits in the mentoring relationship.

This workshop includes a brief lecture, opportunities to practice good communication skills (including a small group exercise), and a short reflection activity. It is recommended that you do a full 2-hour workshop to allow more time for group discussion. ***Remember that you do not need to present this workshop "as is".*** Modify the session to fit your participants' needs and to address the age groups they are serving.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will:

- Strengthen their awareness and use of nonverbal communication
- Understand and improve skills in active listening
- Review and practice simple strategies to use to build effective and respectful communication with children and youth

Visual Aids (Power Point) and Facilitator's Notes

If you are using the PowerPoint slides included with this curriculum, Facilitator's Notes are provided under each slide. These notes provide the same information as the Facilitator's Notes included in this document, but they are not as detailed.

It is recommended that you use easel paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to note responses to some of the "callout" questions and important points that participants make during the exercise "debrief." This validates participants' knowledge and reinforces learning. You may want to write the headings on sheets of easel paper in advance to save time.

This symbol will cue you as to when you might jot down responses:

Handouts

The handouts for this session follow the Facilitator's Notes and Instructions. Handouts 1-6 should be distributed during the session; this symbol in the Facilitator's Notes will cue you as to when: 🗎. The remaining handouts can be distributed at the end of the session.

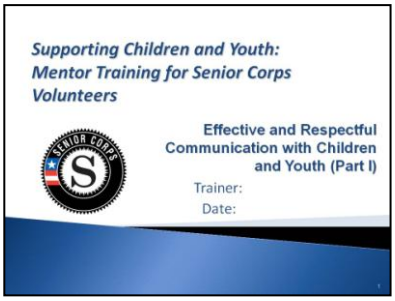
1. Warm-up: Nonverbal Communication
2. Strategies for Successful Nonverbal Communication (optional)
3. Quiz! Paying Attention to Nonverbal Communication
4. Strategies for Active Listening (optional)
5. Active Listening Exercise

6. Reflection: Nonverbal Communication and Active Listening
7. Types of Nonverbal Communication and Body Language (optional)
8. Active Listening Overview (optional)
9. Recommended Resources for Building Effective Communication Skills (optional)
10. Training Feedback Survey

SESSION AGENDA

Activity	Estimated Time	Method	Slide Numbers
I. Welcome	**20 min.**		1
A. Learning Objectives	5 min.	Lecture	2
B. Warm-Up: Communication and Relationships *Warm-up: Nonverbal Communication*	15 min.	Pairs/Large group discussion	
II. Nonverbal Communication	**30 min.**		
A. Nonverbal Communication Overview	10 min.	Lecture/Large group discussion	3
B. Nonverbal Communication Strategies *Strategies for Successful Nonverbal Communication (optional)*	10 min.	Lecture	4-5
C. Quiz: Test your Knowledge *Quiz! Paying Attention to Nonverbal Communication*	10 min.	Pairs/Large group discussion	
III. Active Listening	**50 min.**		
A. Listening Strategies with Children and Youth *Strategies for Active Listening (optional)*	10 min.	Lecture/Large group discussion	6-8
B. Exercise: Active Listening Practice *Active Listening Exercise*	30 min. 10 min.	Trios/Small group discussion Large group discussion "debrief"	9
IV. Reflection: Self Evaluation	**15 min.**		
Reflection: Nonverbal Communication and Active Listening Skills *Reflection: Nonverbal Communication and Active Listening*	15 min.	Individual self reflection	10
V. Closing *Types of Nonverbal Communication and Body Language (optional)* *Active Listening Overview (optional)* *Recommended Resources for Building Effective Communication Skills (optional)* *Training Feedback Survey*	**5 min.**	Lecture	11

FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS

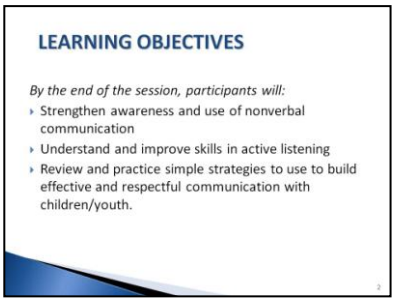


If you are using the PowerPoint slides, have slide 1 up on the screen.

I. Welcome

Welcome participants and introduce the workshop: "Creating and maintaining good, quality communication with children and youth is rewarding, but also challenging. You already have communication skills, and today you will have an opportunity to really think about those good communication habits and practice your skills."

A. Learning Objectives



Show slide 2.

Describe the learning objectives. In this workshop, participants will:

- Strengthen their awareness and use of nonverbal communication
- Understand and improve skills in active listening
- Review and practice simple strategies to use to build effective and respectful communication with children and youth

B. Warm-Up: Relationships and Communication

Tell participants that quality communication is one of the key features of meaningful relationships. In those quality relationships, adults whom children and youth respect model positive behavior, teach social skills, and provide emotional support.

We know that when relationships between children/youth and adults are strong, they can:

- Positively affect youth's psychological health (e.g. lower stress levels and help them improve decision-making such as ones relating to substance use and physical violence)
- Improve academic performance (success in school)
- Support success in relationships as they enter adulthood

Chances are that people who influence others in those kinds of positive ways are powerful listeners.

- Whether instinctively or through practice, they developed the skill of communication and empathy.

- Communication is not just saying words; it is creating an understanding. Interestingly enough, the key to effective communication does not involve talking as much as *nonverbal* communication (body language and active listening).
- By paying closer attention to other people's nonverbal behaviors, you will also improve your own ability to communicate nonverbally.

"Let's try a quick exercise."
Ask everyone to get into pairs, or work with the person on their right.

🗎 Distribute slips of paper cut out from the *Warm-up: Nonverbal Communication* sheet (or put the roles on index cards). One person in each pair will be the "speaker"; the other person will be the "listener." They should not show the slip of paper to their partner.

Tell the participants: "Read your strip of paper and take a moment to consider your role and think about what you are going to say or do. Don't show the paper to your partner. When I say, "Go!", turn to your partner and begin. You will have just two minutes for this exercise."

Start the exercise ("Go!"), and after two minutes, stop the conversations so the group can discuss. You may want to jot down the main ideas from the discussion on easel paper.

CALLOUT: "Speakers: Did you feel listened to? What did your partner do that made you feel that way?"

The "speakers" may mention that they didn't feel the person was really paying attention, and that they felt ignored or disrespected. Ask them to identify why they felt that way and jot down their ideas (no eye contact, looked away, slumped). Let the group know that the listeners were supposed to be inattentive as part of the exercise.

CALLOUT: "Listeners: What emotions did you see in your partner as s/he was speaking? How do you know that?"

The "listeners" may have more trouble getting at the emotion of the speakers since they were busy being inattentive! Some may note that the speaker's energy seemed to decrease as they paid less attention.

If it is not mentioned during the discussion, remind the group that when we don't feel listened to, we feel disrespected and devalued. On the other hand, powerful listeners can make us feel "heard" - supported and appreciated!

TIP: As an alternative to this exercise, ask people to share experiences. Ask participants to think about a time when they felt disrespected and devalued because someone wasn't listening to them. Ask two people to share. Then, before the discussion gets too negative, ask two other people to give examples of the opposite: a conversation that left them feeling supported and appreciated because someone really listened to what they had to say.

II. Nonverbal Communication

A. Nonverbal Communication Overview

Tell participants that research shows that the majority of our daily communication is "nonverbal", but what does that mean?

- It means we are using our body to convey information – our facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, posture, tone of our voice – more than words. In a rapidly flowing back-and-forth, when we interact with others, we continuously give and receive countless wordless signals.
- It also means that sometimes we are sending confusing or negative nonverbal signals without realizing it. Nonverbal communication can be misinterpreted due to cultural, ethnic, gender, or age differences, among other things. With misinterpretation, both connection and trust are lost in our relationships.

CALLOUT: "Take a minute and think about the nonverbal communication or body language you have seen or might see in the children and youth you serve."

List key emotions on easel paper (e.g. happiness, anger, sadness) and ask the group to call out some nonverbal ways we would recognize those emotions in another person. Remind them that nonverbal cues could be vocal like sighs, mumblings, voice tone, etc. (See the example below.)

CALLOUT: "What are some of the body language or nonverbal communication signals you might see for each of these emotions?"

Example

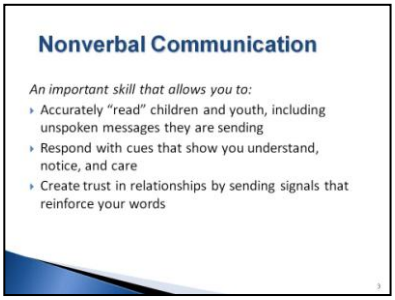
Happiness/Joy	Anger	Sadness/Hurt	Fear/Nervousness	Disgust	Surprise
Smile, eye contact, high voice tone, animated gestures	*Clenched fists, raised voice, crossed arms, slouching*	*Sighs, frowning, welled eyes*	*Looking down or away, mumbling*	*Rolling of the eyes, furrowed brow*	*Raised eyebrows*

The group will probably notice that some nonverbal signals could go under more than one emotion. Ask: "If the same nonverbal signal could be expressing different emotions, how do you know what it means?"

If the group doesn't mention it, note that it depends on the context (the situation, what is being said), but they can also consider the cluster of cues such as the child/youth's tone of voice, body posture, etc. It isn't a single cue or signal but the group of verbal and nonverbal cues that inform us about what the speaker (child/youth) is thinking.

"Let's look first at deepening our understanding of body language or nonverbal signals that children and youth are sending, as well as noting how effective we are at communicating nonverbally with others."

TIP. Walk around alternative. Instead of doing a large group call out, put the different emotions on several easel pads around the room and have the participants move around with markers and note nonverbal signals for each.



Show slide 3.

Nonverbal communication is an important tool and has a huge impact on how successful you are in developing relationships, expressing yourself, connecting with others and finding your way through challenging situations and relationships. Understanding nonverbal communication allows you to:

- **Accurately "read" children and youth**, including the emotions they're feeling and the unspoken messages they're sending. For example, Janel's sad face and slumped shoulders tell her mentor that something is not going well, even before they greet each other.
- **Respond with nonverbal cues** that show others that you understand, notice, and care. So in the case of Janel, her mentor might slow down the pace of the greeting, offer a hug (if appropriate) and lower her voice tone.
- **Create trust** and clarity in relationships by sending nonverbal signals that match up with your words. When your enthusiastic words congratulating a child on success are matched with a smile and energized voice, the message you are sending is clear and strong.

All of our nonverbal behaviors—the gestures we make, the way we sit, how fast or how loud we talk, how close we stand, how much eye contact we make—send strong messages. They can send messages of interest, trust, and desire for connection, or they can generate disinterest, distrust, and confusion.

B. Nonverbal Communication Strategies

Show slide 4.

"What do we need to do with nonverbal communication when we work with children and youth? We need to be aware of the cues we are sending and improve our ability to pick up on their cues. Let's look at a few strategies."

Pay attention

- People can communicate information in numerous ways so pay attention to things like eye contact, gestures, posture, body movements, and tone of voice. All of these signals can express important information that isn't put into words.
- When you pay attention to other people's nonverbal behaviors, you will improve your own ability to communicate nonverbally.

Use good eye contact

- When people fail to look others in the eye, it can seem as if they are trying to hide something.
- On the other hand, too much eye contact can seem confrontational or intimidating. In some cultures it is disrespectful. Be aware that some children/youth will feel eye contact is too intense.
- While eye contact is an important part of communication, it's important to remember that good eye contact does not mean staring fixedly into someone's eyes.
- Some communication experts recommend direct eye contact last four to five seconds at a time.

TIP: Talk more about eye contact. Many people are uncomfortable with direct eye contact. You may want to ask participants to talk about the levels of eye contact that they feel uncomfortable with, and why.

Check for inconsistencies

- Nonverbal communication should reinforce what is being said. If someone's words do not match their nonverbal behaviors— if you get the feeling that someone isn't being honest or that something is "off"—you should pay careful attention. You may be picking up on a mismatch between verbal and nonverbal cues. For example, someone might tell you everything is okay while frowning and staring at the ground.
- When words fail to match up with nonverbal signals, focus on nonverbal expressions of moods, thoughts, and emotions.
- Consider all of the nonverbal signals you are sending and receiving, from eye contact to tone of voice and body language. Are they consistent or inconsistent with what you are trying to communicate?

Concentrate on your tone of voice when speaking

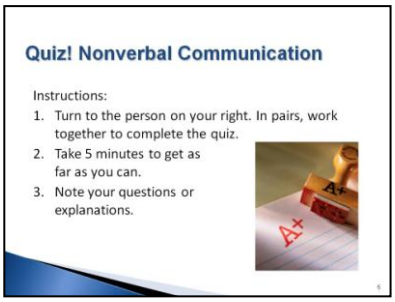
- Your tone of voice can convey a wealth of information, from enthusiasm to disinterest to anger.
- Start noticing how your tone of voice affects how others respond to you, and try using tone of voice to emphasize ideas that you want to communicate. For example, if you want to show genuine interest in something, express your enthusiasm by using an animated (lively) tone of voice.

Look at nonverbal communication signals together, as a group

- The key to accurately reading nonverbal behavior is to look for the cluster of signals that appear to reinforce a message.
- Don't read too much into a single gesture or nonverbal cue. A single cue can mean any number of things, or maybe even nothing at all. If you place too much emphasis on just one signal, you might misunderstand what a person is trying to communicate.

(Optional) Distribute the handout *Strategies for Successful Non-verbal Communication*. This handout is a review of the discussion and includes a few more strategies.

TIP: Highlight strategies that you feel are most important. Go through the discussion points that you feel are most important for your participants to hear. As you describe the strategy, try to model what you are saying. For example, use eye contact, gestures, and a lively voice to express enthusiasm.



C. Quiz: Test Your Knowledge

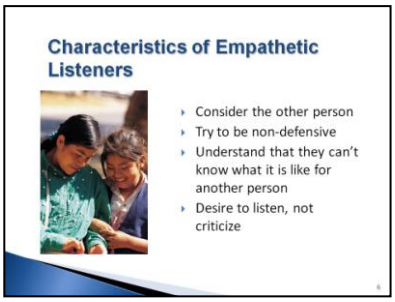
Show slide 5.

"Let's try a short quiz to test your knowledge about nonverbal communication so far. This time, work with the person on your left."

Distribute the handout, *Quiz: Nonverbal Communication*, one for each pair. Tell participants to take 5 minutes to see how far they can get with it. Ask them to jot down notes or questions they have.

After 5 minutes, bring everyone back together to discuss. As you ask the group for the answers, provide an opportunity for the participants to offer their thoughts and discuss alternative answers.

TIP. Customize this brief discussion. Use this discussion to focus on the populations your volunteers serve and help participants think about those populations and situations that they have experienced. You may even want to customize the "quiz" to steer the discussion toward situations you want them to consider.



III. Active Listening

Show slide 6.

"The way you look, move, and react tell the other person whether or not you care and how well you are listening. Now we want to address listening skills, or 'active listening.'"

A. Listening Strategies with Children and Youth

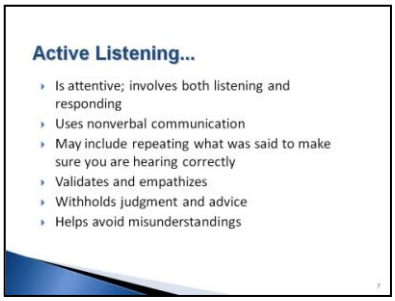
Tell participants: "Some of you may be worried about having a conversation with a child or youth. Well, you may be heartened to know that a primary role will be to *listen* to that individual. This is key to developing strong communication skills, and ultimately what builds relationships."

We hear that words are cheap and listening is rare. According to researchers (and our best friends), the people that we see as kind and compassionate, that are *empathetic* listeners, do the following:

- Consider the other person, rather than having to project their own feelings and ideas onto that person.
- Try to be non-defensive, rather than try to protect themselves. If you are thinking about defending yourself or your points of view, it is difficult to focus on what the other person is saying.
- Understand that they cannot truly know what it like for another person; they can only imagine the roles, viewpoints, or experiences of the other person.
- Desire to listen and not criticize. They want to understand the other person rather than to achieve either agreement from or change in that person.

"They are also active listeners."

CALLOUT: "What is active listening? What do you think of when you hear that term?" Give the group a few minutes to respond and then show slide 7.



Active listening:

- Is a way of listening attentively while someone else speaks, giving that person (the child or youth) your undivided attention. It involves both listening and providing feedback.
- Uses nonverbal communication.
- Can include paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said. It places importance on making sure you are hearing what the child or youth is saying and then validating and empathizing (understanding).
- Helps avoid misunderstandings, because you confirm that you really understand what the child/youth has said.
- Withholds judgment and advice. This helps the child/youth open up and speak their mind.

"Active listening is a structured form of listening and responding that focuses the attention on the child or youth. The goal of active listening is to improve mutual understanding. Let's take a look at some active listening strategies."

Show slide 8.

Give the child/youth your undivided attention; listen fully.

- Often when people talk to each other, they don't listen attentively. They interrupt, give advice or judge. They are often distracted, half listening, and half thinking about something else. They assume that they have heard what is being said many times before, so rather than paying attention, they focus on how they are going to respond.
- Listening fully means: facing the child/youth, using nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, minimizing distractions (phones, multi-tasking), and making eye contact. Focus on what is being said and respond appropriately to show you understand

Restate content.

- The listener (you) fully pays attention and then restates or summarizes, in your own words, what you think the child/youth has said. On average, we can hear four times faster than we can talk, so we have the ability to sort ideas as they come in, and be ready for more.

- You do not have to agree; the goal is simply to state what you think the child/youth has said. This enables the child/youth to find out whether you really understood. If you didn't get it, the child/youth can explain some more.

Ask questions for clarification.

- After waiting until the child/youth has finished speaking, you let him/her know that you are making a good effort to understand by asking relevant questions to clarify.
- Often asking for a specific example is useful. This also helps the child/youth evaluate their own opinions and perspective. ("What does she say that makes you feel disrespected? Can you give me an example?")
- Words such as "Really?," "Interesting," as well as more direct prompts ("how" and "what" questions) help clarify and encourage more conversation: "What did you do then?" or "How do you think that happened?" or "Tell me more about that; what do you think about it?"
- Avoid "why" questions, if possible. Youth typically answer, "I don't know" or respond defensively.

Identify the feeling and empathize.

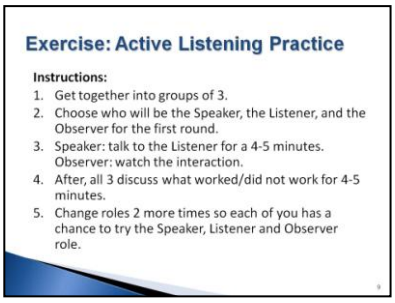
- It can be helpful to understand the child/youth's words in terms of feelings. Instead of just repeating what happened, the active listener might reflect feelings. This confirms that you understood what happened and the child/youth's feeling about it.
- Empathize without telling the child/youth how they should be feeling. For example, "I imagine that you might feel frustrated when you can't figure out how to complete your math homework", or "I wonder if that made you mad to keep getting yelled at for talking during class."

🗎 (Optional) Distribute the handout, *Strategies for Active Listening.* This handout reviews some of the earlier discussion points and includes additional tips.

TIP: Remind participants that they can also help children and youth build communication skills by example. Volunteers can demonstrate good active listening skills through their interactions with other adults, such as station staff. Showing children that communication begins by listening to the other person is a good way to teach them respectful behavior and communication skills.

B. Exercise: Active Listening Practice

The purpose of this activity is to give each person the opportunity to practice communication skills and get constructive feedback from their peers.



Show slide 9.

YOU WILL NEED: Copies of the handout, *Active Listening Exercise*; easel paper and a marker for taking notes during "debrief".

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute the handout *Active Listening Exercise* to each participant. Read over the instructions with them.
2. Ask participants to get into groups of 3 according to the age group of children/youth with whom they serve: 3-5 years old (preschool) 6-8 years old (k-3rd grade), 9-11 years old (4th – 6th grade), 12-14 years old (7th-9th grade), 15-18 years old (10th-12th grade).
3. Ask each group to choose who will be the Listener (mentor role), Speaker (child/youth role), or Observer for the first round. Let them know that they will all have a chance to try the three roles.
4. Tell participants, "Take 1 minute to sink into your role. Then the first Speaker will talk with the Listener for about 4 minutes. The Observer should watch the interaction."
5. Call "time" after 5 minutes, and ask the small groups to discuss the interaction for about 5 minutes. Remind the groups that the purpose of practice is to learn listening skills. Feedback and suggestions from both Speaker and Observer are essential to the learning process. Encourage the groups to give honest but helpful information to the Listener. For example, if the Listener is having difficulty asking questions, reflecting, or summarizing, offer advice on how to do it better. For the small group discussions:
    - The Listener will then discuss the listening experience with the two other members of the subgroup: What was comfortable? Difficult? Did you stay with the speaker? What seemed to work? What would you do differently?
    - Then the Speaker will share his/her feelings about the interaction: Did you feel listened to? Was it helpful? Did the Listener have any habits you found distracting?
    - The Observer will then share observations: What seemed to be working well?

6. After a few minutes, ask everyone trade roles and repeat the process (steps #4 and #5). Go through the 4-5 minutes of talking and listening and 5 minutes of exchanging feedback twice more so that each person gets a chance in each role.

DEBRIEF

Bring the group back together for discussion. Ask the groups to summarize:

- Listeners: What did you notice?
- Speakers: What did you notice?
- How is this related to feeling heard and understood?
- What in particular would be relevant to working with children/youth (the populations they will be serving)?

You may want to use the easel paper to record the main points of the large group discussion.

TIP. Decrease the time spent on the large group "debrief" if you are running out of time. During the small group discussions, you may want to walk around the room and jot down some of the main points you are hearing. After you get the large group together, repeat these points and ask if anyone has anything to add; if they agree or disagree; and ask for clarification on some of the critiques you heard during the small group discussions, if needed.

IV. Reflection: Self Evaluation

Show slide 10.

Tell participants that today they have reviewed and deepened their communication skills and knowledge, shared their experiences and expertise with one another and, hopefully gained some new insight and/or skills. Remind them that communication is a lifelong pursuit and we are always on the journey to improve our awareness and skills.

🗎 Distribute the handout, *Reflection: Nonverbal Communication and Active Listening.*

Invite participants to complete the Reflection handout individually. The goal is to help them review specific strategies to improve active listening skills. Remind them that this self evaluation is for their benefit and the rating is only meant to help them identify one area to where they might want to practice.

Encourage them to identify concrete steps to take to continue their skills such as the putting the name of another participant with whom they could practice, asking their spouse to help them with a particular strategy, etc.

After 5-10 minutes, you may want to ask if anyone would share an example of one way they will try to improve, as inspiration for the group.

TIP: Explore nonverbal communication resources for serving the elderly. Are you also training volunteers who are serving elderly clients, or partnering with agencies that work with the elderly? See *Providing Independent Living Support: Training for Senior Corps Volunteers,* a free CNCS training resource aimed at senior volunteers serving elderly clients. *Module 6, Paying Attention to Body Language,* contains information, tips and exercises to raise volunteers' awareness about nonverbal communication with their elderly clients.
http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/indep-living-training-curriculum

V. Closing

Show slide 11.

Remind participants that not only do children and youth benefit from the one-on-one attention they get from volunteers, but volunteers are also role modeling good listening and communication skills: "You are teaching by example how to be a caring person and a good friend."

(Optional) Distribute the remaining handouts:

- *Types of Nonverbal Communication and Body Language*
- *Active Listening Overview*
- *Recommended Resources for Building Effective Communication Skills*

TIP: Customize the handouts. You may want to adapt the handouts to add your own tips and recommendations, or print some of the information available on the websites listed in the *Recommended Resources* handout.

Last, ask participants to complete a *Training Feedback Survey* to help you improve the next workshop.

Ask participants if there are any more questions or last words before you close. Make any final announcements and thank participants for attending the presentation.

TIP: Leave the "optional" handouts on a table in the back of the room. Rather than distributing handouts at intervals, you may want to give participants the option of taking one or more of the handouts home at the end of the workshop as they leave.

MODULE 3 REFERENCES

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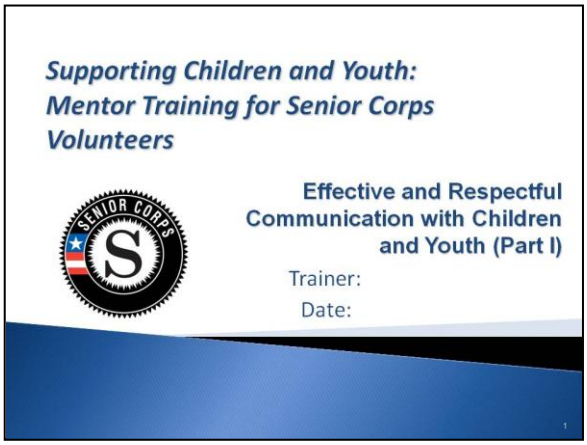
Module 3 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

1. Warm-up: Nonverbal Communication
2. Strategies for Successful Nonverbal Communication (optional)
3. Quiz! Paying Attention to Nonverbal Communication
4. Strategies for Active Listening (optional)
5. Active Listening Exercise
6. Reflection: Nonverbal Communication and Active Listening
7. Types of Nonverbal Communication and Body Language (optional)
8. Active Listening Overview (optional)
9. Recommended Resources for Building Effective Communication Skills (optional)
10. Training Feedback Survey



Warm-up: Nonverbal Communication

Facilitator: For this warm-up, you will be asking people to get into pairs. Copy and cut this sheet of paper so that you can distribute a "Role" (speaker and listener) to each person in the pair. The "speaker" and "listener" should not see what their partner's role says.

Role 1: SPEAKER. Think about an ideal vacation spot you would like to visit. In 2 minutes, tell your partner all about it and why you want to go there. Be enthusiastic!

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Role 2: LISTENER. As your partner begins to talk, use nonverbal cues to show that you aren't fully listening. For instance, occasionally look away or look down, turn your body partly away from him/her, check your watch, touch or glance at papers, fold your arms across your chest, slump, lean into someone else's conversation.

Role 2: LISTENER. As your partner begins to talk, use nonverbal cues to show that you aren't fully listening. For instance, occasionally look away or look down, turn your body partly away from him/her, check your watch, touch or glance at papers, fold your arms across your chest, slump, lean into someone else's conversation.

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Strategies for Successful Nonverbal Communication*

1. Pay Attention to Nonverbal Signals for More Effective and Meaningful Communication

Information is communicated in numerous ways; pay attention to things like eye contact, gestures, posture, body movements, and tone of voice. All of these signals can convey important information that isn't put into words. Improve your spoken communication by using nonverbal signals. Remember that verbal and nonverbal communication work together to convey a message.

2. Concentrate on Your Tone of Voice

Voice tone can convey a wealth of information, ranging from enthusiasm to disinterest to anger. Notice how your tone of voice affects how others respond to you and be intentional about using your voice tone to emphasize ideas that you want to communicate.

3. Use Appropriate Eye Contact

While it may seem that when people fail to look others in the eye, they are trying to hide something, be aware that some children/youth consider eye contact too intense. Too much or direct eye contact can seem confrontational or intimidating, even disrespectful in some cultures. While eye contact is an important part of communication, it's important to remember that good eye contact does not mean staring fixedly into someone's eyes. Some communication experts recommend intervals of eye contact lasting four to five seconds.

4. Check for Inconsistencies

If someone's words do not match their nonverbal behaviors, pay attention. Nonverbal communication should reinforce what is being said. If you get the feeling that something is “off,” you may be picking up on a mismatch between verbal and nonverbal cues. Is the person is saying one thing, and their body language something else? For example, someone might tell you they are happy while frowning and staring at the ground. Furthermore, consider the nonverbal signals you are sending (eye contact, tone of voice, body language). Are your nonverbal cues consistent—or inconsistent—with what you are trying to get across?

5. Be Aware that Nonverbal Signals can be Misread; Get Clarification

Culture, gender and age all influence nonverbal signals. To avoid the possibility of misreading nonverbal signals, always remember to look for groups of behavior. A person's overall demeanor – the words and body language- are far more telling than a single gesture viewed in isolation. If you are confused about another person's nonverbal signals, don't be afraid to ask about it. A good idea is to repeat back your interpretation of what has been said and ask for clarification. An example of this might be, "I noticed that you are slouched over even though you say you are happy about the move. What else is going on?”

*Adapted from Top 10 Nonverbal Communication tips by Kendra Cherry, About.com Guide and Nonverbal Communication Skills: The Power of Body Language by Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith, www.helpguide.org (retrieved July 2011)

6. Look at Nonverbal Communication Signals Together

Don't read too much into a single gesture or nonverbal cue. A single gesture can mean any number of things, or maybe even nothing at all. To accurately read nonverbal behavior, look for the cluster of signals that appear to reinforce a message. If you place too much emphasis on just one signal out of many, you might come to an inaccurate conclusion about what a person is trying to communicate.

7. Consider Context

When you are communicating with others, always consider the situation and the context in which the communication occurs. Some situations require more formal behaviors that might be interpreted very differently in any other setting. For instance, a desired hug after a tutoring session may not be acceptable for that same child in front of his friends. If you are trying to improve your own nonverbal communication, concentrate on ways to make your signals match the level of formality appropriate for the situation.

8. When Overwhelmed by Stress, Take Time Out

Stress compromises your ability to communicate. When you're stressed out, you're more likely to misread other people, send off confusing or off-putting nonverbal signals, and lapse into unhealthy knee-jerk patterns of behavior. Take a moment to calm down before you jump back into the conversation.

9. Practice

Some people have a knack for using nonverbal communication effectively, and correctly interpreting signals from others. In reality, you can build this skill by paying careful attention to nonverbal behavior and practicing different types of nonverbal communication with others. You can dramatically improve your communication abilities.

Quiz! Paying Attention to Nonverbal Communication

Instructions: Work with a partner to test your knowledge on nonverbal communication (body and vocal).

1. When Amanda (age 15) slouches, you can assume she is bored. True or False?

2. It is helpful for you to get your head physically on the same level as Jamal (age 6), when you are talking with him. True or False?

3. Alex (age 13) is clenching his fists. What is going on?
   a. He's angry.
   b. He's anxious.
   c. Can't say for sure, we would need to check other nonverbal signals and what he is saying.

4. Maria (age 9) constantly mumbles when she talks. She is showing disrespect. True or False?

5. You lean forward while the youth or child is talking because you know this generally suggests interest and openness. In what ways might you need to be careful about your physical distance with the child/youth? Name two.

   1.)_____

   2.) _____

6. Lupe (age 11) is avoiding eye contact with you. You can assume:
   a) Eye contact could be too intense for Lupe. Try to alter your approach.
   b) She lacks self-confidence.
   c) She lacks respect.
   d) She is lying.
   e) B, C and D.

7. Smiles are contagious. What are some other helpful facial expressions that let Jill (age 14) know that you are "on the same page" with her? Name two.

   1.)_____

   2.) _____

Strategies for Active Listening

1. Use Nonverbal Signals and Cues

- A simple nod or facial expression (e.g. raised eyebrows) lets the child or youth know you are with them. Murmur ("uh-huh" and "um-hmm") and nod.
- Use body position and face the child/youth. Bend down to their level, sit up straight or lean forward slightly to show your attentiveness through body language. For adolescents, it may be more comfortable sitting side by side**.**
- Maintain eye contact**,** to the degree that you all remain comfortable. Be mindful of cultural differences in which direct eye contact might be uncomfortable or considered disrespectful.

2. Appreciate Silence

Conversations have natural pauses. What should you say next? Learn to settle into the silence and use it to better understand what the child/youth is saying.

3. Minimize External Distractions

Create an environment conducive to conversation. Put down the phone, magazine or other materials that could distract you. Depending on the nature of the conversation, move to a quiet or private place to talk.

4. Ask Questions for Clarification

Wait until the child or youth has finished speaking so you won't interrupt their train of thought. To let them know that you are making a good effort to understand, listen carefully to what they say and formulate a relevant question which asks for more clarification (e.g. "can you give me an example of what you mean?"). This also helps the child/youth evaluate their own opinions and perspective. Words such as "Really?," "Interesting," as well as more direct prompts "how" and "what" help clarify or encourage more conversation: "What did you do then?" or "How do you think that happened?" or "Tell me more about that; what do you think about it?" Avoid "why" questions, if possible. Youth typically answer, "I don't know" or respond defensively.

5. Focus on the Child/Youth; Hold Interruptions, Opinions, Advice and Judgments

Focus solely on what the child/youth is saying and try not to think about what you are going to say next or formulate your opinions. If your own thoughts keep horning in, simply let them go and re-focus your attention on the child or youth. Trust that the conversation will logically flow after the child or youth makes his/her point. Unless they specifically ask for advice or an opinion, assume they just need to talk it out.

6. Paraphrase and/or Summarize What You Heard

Try to capture what the child/youth said by paraphrasing it in your own words, and say it back to him/her (without judging the correctness or merit of what they said). Check to make sure you got it right. For instance, start with: "So you're saying…". Restating or paraphrasing the content will allow the child/youth to decide whether you got the message or if they need to clarify further. It can help prevent troublesome miscommunication. It will also help the child/youth become more aware of how he/she is coming across to another person.

7. Acknowledge Feelings (Reflect) and Empathize

You might think the child or youth wants you to agree with him/her, but in reality, they just want you to understand how they feel. Take in the "whole message" including body language, tone of voice, and intensity as well as the words, and try to determine what emotion they are conveying. In a sentence or two, acknowledge and reflect the feeling as you understand it. For instance, "It sounds like you felt *angry* or *confused* when. . .[a particular event happened]." Empathize with the child/youth without telling the child/youth how they should feel. For example, "I imagine that you might feel frustrated when you can't figure out how to complete your math homework" or "I wonder if that made you mad to keep getting yelled at for what your little brother did."

8. Wait and Keep an Open Mind

Wait until the child or youth is finished speaking before responding. Try not to make assumptions about what the child/youth is thinking. Even if s/he is launching a complaint against you, wait until s/he is finished to respond. The child/youth will feel as though s/he got everything out and won't feel the need to repeat it. You'll know the whole argument before you respond.

9. Practice

Some people have a knack for active listening communication. You can build this skill by practicing active listening behavior with others and dramatically improve your communication abilities.

Active Listening Exercise

Instructions: *Decide who will take which role first in your group. You will do this exercise 3 times so that each of you will have a chance to experience each of these roles. You will have a total of 5 minutes for each round. Take one of those minutes to read and consider your role before you begin.*

Speaker Role: Child/Youth

Think of a conversation that a child/youth may have with his/her mentor (i.e. trouble with school work, problems with a teacher at school, misunderstanding with a friend, or excitement about an event).

- Identify the topic and sink into the role. Be ready to talk for 3-4 minutes.
- The goal is to give the listener a chance to practice, not a hard time. Try to share information that allows the listener to practice the listening skills of questions, paraphrasing, and reflecting feelings.
- Be sure to pause often to encourage the listener to respond, even if this feels a bit unnatural.

Listener Role: Mentor

The "child/youth" will talk with you for 3-4 minutes. Concentrate and try to use active nonverbal communication and active listening skills. As appropriate, try to:

- Encourage the conversation (nods, minimal encouragers- "un-huh") and use eye contact
- Ask clarifying questions
- Paraphrase what is being said
- Reflect feelings, empathize with what the speaker is feeling

Observer Role

Observe the listener's verbal and nonverbal responses.

- Note if and how the listener uses clarifying questions, paraphrasing, and reflecting of feelings.
- Note how s/he uses nonverbal signals (eye contact, minimal encouragers, silence, body posture, voice intensity).
- Be ready to report what worked well.

Notes:

Reflection: Nonverbal Communication and Active Listening

Instructions: Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 indicating that you have "mastered" the strategy. This is just for you and will be most helpful if you can use it to focus on skills you would like to improve.

Pay attention to nonverbal signals. Pay attention to things like eye contact, gestures, body movement and tone of voice. Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

_____

Ask questions for clarification. After the child/youth has finished speaking, ask for clarification using words such as "Really," "Interesting," as well as more direct prompts using "what" and "how" to clarify or encourage more conversation: "What did you do then?" or "How do you think that happened?".
Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

_____

Paraphrase or summarize. After you ask questions, paraphrase and summarize the content to make sure you didn't misunderstand. For instance, start with: "So you're saying…"
Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

_____

Identify feelings and empathize. Note feelings you heard by adding something like, "It sounds like you felt *angry* or *confused* when. . .[a particular event happened]. Empathize with the child/youth without telling the child/youth how s/he should feel. For example, "I imagine that you might feel frustrated when you can't figure out how to complete your math homework" or "I wonder if that made you mad to keep getting yelled at for what your little brother did."
Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

_____

Appreciate silence. Conversations have natural pauses. What should you say next? Learn to settle into the silence and use it to better understand what the child/youth is saying.
Your Rating: _____
Idea that would help you improve this skill: _____

_____

Types of Nonverbal Communication and Body Language

There are many different types of nonverbal communication. Together, the following nonverbal signals and cues communicate your interest and investment in others.

Facial Expressions

The human face is extremely expressive, able to express countless emotions without saying a word. And unlike some forms of nonverbal communication, facial expressions are universal. The facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, fear, and disgust are the same across cultures.

Body Movements and Posture

Consider how your perceptions of people are affected by the way they sit, walk, stand up, or hold their head. The way you move and carry yourself communicates a wealth of information to the world. This type of nonverbal communication includes your posture, bearing, stance, and subtle movements.

Gestures

Gestures are woven into the fabric of our daily lives. We wave, point, beckon, and use our hands when we're arguing or speaking animatedly—expressing ourselves with gestures often without thinking. However, the meaning of gestures can be very different across cultures and regions, so it's important to be careful to avoid misinterpretation.

Eye Contact

Since the visual sense is dominant for most people, eye contact is an especially important type of nonverbal communication. The way you look at someone can communicate many things, including interest, affection, hostility, or attraction. Eye contact is also important in maintaining the flow of conversation and for gauging the other person's response.

Touch

We communicate a great deal through touch. Think about the messages given by the following: a firm handshake, a timid tap on the shoulder, a warm bear hug, a reassuring pat on the back, a patronizing pat on the head, or a controlling grip on your arm.

Space

Have you ever felt uncomfortable during a conversation because the other person was standing too close and invading your space? We all have a need for physical space, although that need differs depending on the culture, the situation, and the closeness of the relationship. You can use physical space to communicate many different nonverbal messages, including signals of intimacy, aggression, dominance, or affection.

Voice

We communicate with our voices, even when we are not using words. Nonverbal speech sounds such as tone, pitch, volume, inflection, rhythm, and rate are important communication elements. When we speak, other people "read" our voices in addition to listening to our words. These nonverbal speech sounds provide subtle but powerful clues into our true feelings and what we really mean. Think about how tone of voice, for example, can indicate sarcasm, anger, affection, or confidence.

It's not what you say, it's how you say it! Consider:

- **Intensity**. A reflection of the amount of energy you project is considered your intensity. Again, this has as much to do with what feels good to the other person as what you personally prefer.
- **Timing and pace**. Your ability to be a good listener and communicate interest and involvement is impacted by timing and pace.
- **Sounds that convey understanding**. Sounds such as "ahhh, ummm, ohhh," uttered with congruent eye and facial gestures, communicate understanding and emotional connection. More than words, these sounds are the language of interest, understanding and compassion.

Source: *The Language of Emotional Intelligence.* Authors: Jeanne Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith

Self Evaluation for Nonverbal Communication Skills*

How well do you use nonverbal communication? How good are you at picking up nonverbal cues from others? Where would you like to improve?

I am working on it	*I have mastered this!*	**Nonverbal Communication**	
❒	❒	**Facial expression**	What does your face show? Is it mask-like and unexpressive, or emotionally present and interested? Are you picking up the facial signals of the child/youth?
❒	❒	**Posture and gesture**	Does your body look still and immobile, or relaxed? Check the tension in your shoulders and jaw. What do you observe about the degree of tension or relaxation in the body of the child/youth you are speaking to?
❒	❒	**Eye contact**	Is this source of connection missing, too intense, or just right?
❒	❒	**Space/Touch**	Are you mindful of respecting the personal space of the child/youth? Do you practice appropriate touch (pat on hand or shoulder)? Are you able to pick up what touch the child/youth finds comfortable? Remember, for some children/youth, touch of any kind may be unwelcome.
❒	❒	**Tone of voice**	Does your voice project warmth, confidence, and delight, or is it strained and blocked? What do you hear as you listen to the child/youth?
❒	❒	**Intensity of voice**	Do you or the child/youth you are communicating with seem flat, cool, and disinterested, or over-the-top and melodramatic? Are you able to control your voice to help you communicate clearly?
❒	❒	**Timing and pace**	What happens when the child/youth makes an important statement? Does a response (not necessarily verbal) come too quickly or too slowly? Is there an easy flow of information back and forth?
❒	❒	**Sounds**	Do you use sounds to indicate that you are attending to the other person? Do you pick up on sounds from the child/youth that indicate emotions?

*Adapted from Jean Segal, Ph.D., Melinda Smith

Active Listening Overview*

Active Listening is:

- ✓ A way of listening attentively while someone else speaks
- ✓ Can include paraphrasing and reflecting back what is said
- ✓ Includes both verbal and non-verbal communication
- ✓ Witholds judgement and advice

Below are some active listening techniques. No doubt you already use many of these techniques in your daily interactions.

Attending

What is it? Providing verbal or nonverbal signals of awareness of the other person, such as:

- Eye contact. If comfortable for the child/youth, maintain eye contact.
- Gesture/Posture. Squarely face the person, Open your posture, Lean towards the child/youth. Don't forget to relax while paying attention.
- Minimal encouragers (uh-huh, I see)
- Use of silence

Purpose: To show that you are listening; you care and you are interested.

Paraphrasing or Restating

What is it? Restating a message, but usually with fewer words. When listening, consider: *What is the speaker's basic **thinking** message? What is the basic **feeling** message?* Where possible, try and get more to the point as you restate.

Purpose:

- To test your understanding of what you heard.
- To communicate that you are trying to understand what is being said. If you are successful, paraphrasing indicates that you are following the speaker's verbal explorations and that you are beginning to understand the basic message.

Example:

Youth: *I just don't understand, one minute she tells me to do this, and the next minute to do something completely different.*

Mentor: *It sounds like she really confuses you.*

Clarifying or Probing

What is it? The process of bringing vague material into sharper focus, or questioning in a supportive way that gets more information from the speaker.

Purpose:

- To untangle unclear or confusing statements
- To get more information
- To help the speaker see other points of view
- To identify what was said

Examples:

- *I'm confused. Let me try to state what I think you are saying.*
- *You've said so much; let me see if I've got it all.*

Perception Checking

What is it? Request for confirmation of what you are hearing – to check your interpretation of what the speaker is saying.

Purpose:

- To give and receive feedback
- To check out your assumptions

Example:

Let me see if I've got it straight. You said that you love your friends at school and that they are very important to you. At the same time you can't stand being with them. Is that what you are saying?

Summarizing

What is it? Putting key ideas and feelings into broad statements without adding any new ideas; pulling together, organizing, and integrating what was said; focusing ideas, themes and emotional overtones.

Purpose:

- To give a sense of movement and accomplishment to the conversation
- To establish a basis for further discussion
- To pull together and recap major ideas, facts, and feelings

Example:

If I understand you correctly, there are three major issues you have with your mom right now…

Reflecting or Empathizing

What is it? The basic formula is: "You feel *(state feeling)* because *(state content)*." This is a reflection of the content and feelings that have been heard or perceived. You may uncover feelings that were not directly expressed.

Purpose:

- To show that you understand the speaker's experience and the feelings.
- To allow the speaker to think about his/her feelings after hearing them expressed by someone else.

Examples:

- Youth: *I just don't know how I am going to deal with my friend's betrayal and handle all the stuff going on at home.*
  Mentor: *You are feeling frustrated and overwhelmed with everything happening right now. Did I get that right?*
- Youth: *I hate my teacher for calling on me when I had told her before class that I wasn't able to do the work.*
  Mentor: *I get the sense that you are really angry about what she did, but I am wondering if you also feel a little hurt because you had told her beforehand.*

*Adapted from: www.taftcollege.edu/lrc/class/assignments/actlisten.html and Interactive Skills Program: Helping Through Listening and Influencing, Hedlund and Freedman, Cornell University Cooperative Extension Service, 1981.

Recommended Resources for Building Effective Communication Skills

Below are some resources to help you build your communication skills with children and youth. Your supervisor may have additional recommendations.

Active Listening: Hear what people are really saying, from Mind Tools™, a website aimed at people interested in skill development to use in their careers, is a helpful article on active listening with simple steps, tips, and key points summarized.
http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm

Active Listening: A Communication Tool (2005) by Daniel F. Perkins and Kate Fogarty. The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension posted an article with information, tips, and examples for active listening when communicating with teenagers.
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/he361

The Child Welfare League of America offers advice, tips, and examples for communicating with very young children. http://www.cwla.org/positiveparenting/tipscomm.htm

Cooperative Extension System offers information and advice regarding intergenerational communication aimed at grandparents who are raising grandchildren.
http://www.extension.org/pages/Issues_in_Intergenerational_Communication:

The Intergenerational Initiative (a Project of the Illinois Board of Higher Education) discusses the process of getting acquainted between non-related older adults and young people involved in intergenerational programs.
http://www.iii.siuc.edu/Communication/intergencommunication.html

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name:_____ Date:_____

Lead Facilitator:_____

Program you serve with: ❒ Foster Grandparent ❒ RSVP ❒ Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. The subject matter was presented effectively.					
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable.					
3. The facilitator responded to questions.					
4. There were enough opportunities for discussion.					
5. The written materials are useful.					
6. The session met my expectations.					
7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment.					
8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session.					

9. What did you like best about this session?

_____

_____

_____

10. What would have improved this session?

_____

_____

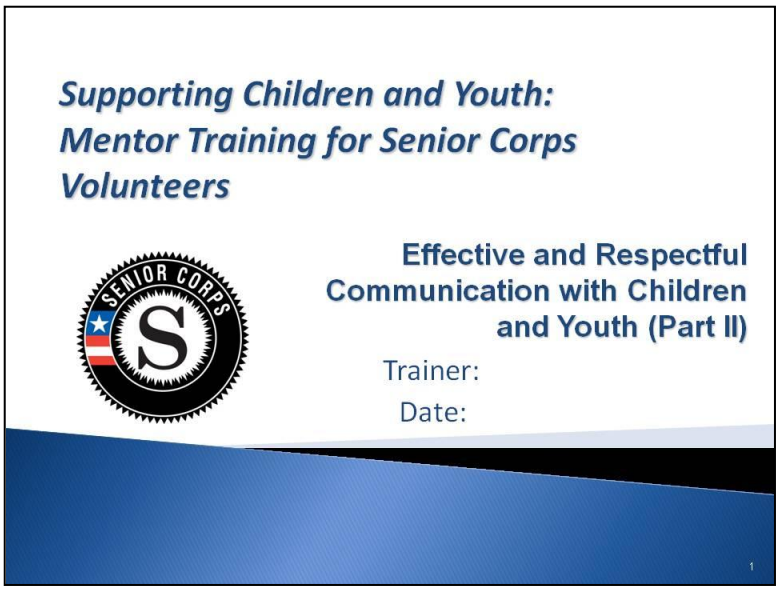
_____

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!

Supporting Children and Youth:
Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Module 4

Effective and Respectful Communication with Children and Youth (Part II)



Module 4. Effective and Respectful Communication with Children and Youth (Part II)

INTRODUCTION

This workshop continues from Module 3 (Part I) with a discussion of effective communication and opportunities to practice.

Establishing and maintaining effective communication with children and youth is rewarding, and challenging. This workshop examines the mentoring relationship cycle in light of communication, examines and discusses the challenges the mentor may experience during each stage, and offers communication strategies for each stage.

This workshop includes a brief lecture, opportunities to practice good communication skills (including a small group exercise), and a short reflection activity. It is recommended that you do a full 2-hour workshop to allow more time for group discussion. ***Remember that you do not need to present this workshop "as is".*** For example, you may wish to review confidentiality policy during the discussion on "tough topics". Modify the session to fit your participants' needs and to address the age groups they are serving.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will:

- Understand the mentoring relationship cycle and what to expect during each stage
- Be prepared to address common challenges for mentors at each stage
- Feel better prepared to talk about tough topics with children and youth

Visual Aids (Power Point) and Facilitator's Notes

If you are using the PowerPoint slides included with this curriculum, Facilitator's Notes are provided under each slide. These notes provide the same information as the Facilitator's Notes included in this document, but they are not as detailed.

It is recommended that you use easel paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to note responses to some of the "callout" questions and important points that participants make during the exercise "debrief." This validates participants' knowledge and reinforces learning. You may want to write the headings on sheets of easel paper in advance to save time.

This symbol will cue you as to when you might jot down responses:

Handouts

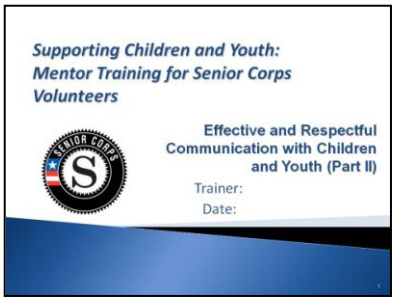
The handouts for this session follow the Facilitator's Notes and Instructions. Handouts 1-4 should be distributed during the session; this symbol in the Facilitator's Notes will cue you as to when: 🗎. The remaining handouts can be distributed at the end of the session.

1. The Mentoring Relationship Cycle
2. Tough Topic Conversation Role Play Cards
3. Tough Topic Conversation Worksheet
4. Reflection: Setting Boundaries with Children and Youth
5. Positive Strategies for Connecting with Youth (optional)
6. Helpful Strategies for Intergenerational Communication (optional)
7. Recommended Resources for Mentors (optional)
8. Training Feedback Survey

SESSION AGENDA

Activity	Estimated Time	Method	Slide Numbers
I. Welcome	**20 min.**		1
A. Learning Objectives	5 min.	Lecture	2
B. Warm-up: Intergenerational Mentoring Relationships	15 min.	Large group discussion	3
II. The Mentoring Relationship Cycle	**30 min.**		4
A. The Beginning and Building Stage	15 min.	Lecture/large group discussion	5-8
B. The Challenging and Testing Stage	10 min.	Lecture/large group discussion	9-11
C. The "Real" Mentoring Stage 🗎 *The Mentoring Relationship Cycle*	5 min.	Lecture	12-13
III. Tough Communication Topics	**45 min.**		
Exercise: Tough Topics Role Play 🗎 *Tough Topic Conversation Role Play Cards* 🗎 *Tough Topic Conversation Worksheet*	30 min. 15 min.	Small group discussion/ Large group discussion "debrief"	14
IV. Reflection: Setting Boundaries	**15 min.**		
Setting Boundaries 🗎 *Reflection: Setting Boundaries with Children and Youth*	15 min.	Individual/Pairs	15
V. Closing 🗎 *Positive Strategies for Connecting with Children and Youth (optional)* 🗎 *Helpful Strategies for Intergenerational Communication (optional)* 🗎 *Recommended Resources for Mentors (optional)* 🗎 *Training Feedback Survey*	**10 min.**	Lecture	16

FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS

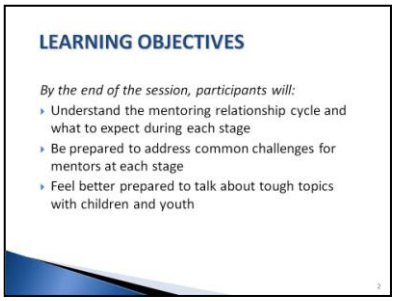


If you are using the PowerPoint slides, have slide 1 up on the screen.

I. Welcome

Welcome participants and introduce the workshop: "Creating and maintaining good, quality communication with children and youth is rewarding, but also challenging. Today we will talk about the mentoring relationship cycle so you know what to expect. We'll talk about effective communication strategies and give you an opportunity to practice."

A. Learning Objectives

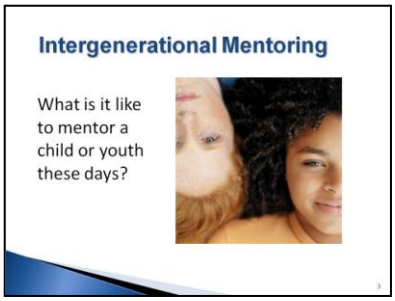


Show slide 2.

Describe the learning objectives. In this workshop, participants will:

- Understand the mentoring relationship cycle and what to expect during each stage
- Be prepared to address common challenges for mentors at each stage
- Feel better prepared to talk about tough topics with children and youth

B. Warm-Up: Intergenerational Mentoring Relationships



Show slide 3.

"Let's start off with a little quiz to review what we know about mentoring." (For all of the "true or false" questions you "call out", give participants a few seconds before they shout out their response and you give them the answer.)

TIP: Have the group move around as part of the warm-up. One way to modify this warm-up activity is to put the statements on easel paper around room. Participants roam and check true or false, and then explain the rationale for their answer during the discussion.

CALLOUT: "True or False: Regardless of how old kids are, they are usually enthusiastic about having a mentor."

Answer: FALSE. Younger children (early elementary school age) are usually quite excited to have a mentor – an adult that pays attention to them—and they will often point out the special relationship they have to other children. However, older children and youth, though still excited, are more likely to minimize or even hide the relationship with their peers, especially if they feel singled out.

CALLOUT: "True or False: The best mentors are usually hip, young adults."

Answer: FALSE. The most important thing is an adult who commits the time and support to build a trusting relationship. An older adult might have some challenges (e.g. becoming aware of the language and issues youth are dealing with), but an older adult can also offer some unique benefits.

CALLOUT: "What do you think some of those benefits would be? What do older adults bring to a mentoring relationship?"

Participants may say things like:

- We have more time to pay attention to that child/youth
- We have a lifetime of experience.
- We have important qualities that link directly to being an effective mentor: attention, patience, understanding and consistency.

CALLOUT: "True or False: Intergenerational communication is improved when we understand attitudes and stereotypes of seniors and youth."

Answer: TRUE. By understanding our own attitudes and beliefs toward children or youth, we can check ourselves before we develop unhelpful patterns of communication. By understanding youth's attitudes toward seniors, we can show them otherwise, if needed, and disprove negative stereotypes.

CALLOUT: "True or False: People generally agree on what respect looks like in a mentoring relationship."

Answer: FALSE. Given differences in culture, generation, age, gender, there may be different ideas of what respect looks like.

CALLOUT: "True or False: The most important thing about being a mentor is being a good listener."

Answer: TRUE. Having an adult really listen to them helps children and youth feel supported and heard. It is an essential element of the relationship.

TIP: Try an alternative warm-up discussion. For example, you can start a lively conversation by asking participants about the slang terms they have heard kids use lately. Ask them about the slang they remember from their youth and what their parents thought (or if they even understood it!). Make the point that every generation of youth can seem a little loopy to the adults, but we can still learn from each other and appreciate our common experiences.

II. The Mentoring Relationship Cycle

Tell participants that building positive intergenerational communication is a process that takes time, practice, and patience.

- We know that communication is the key to developing strong relationships in general and certainly this is true with children and youth.
- Although it is most helpful to focus on the strengths of the child/youth, that does not mean challenges won't arise.
- "Today, we want to remind you of the ebb and flow over the course of the mentoring relationship and what this means for communications with the child/youth you mentor."

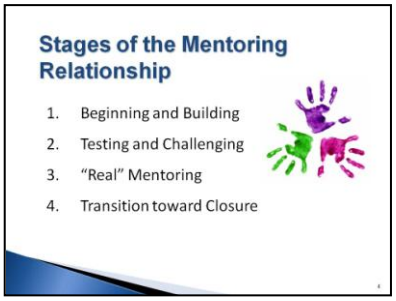
The mentoring relationship is intentionally created and purposeful, but you might not see an impact on the child/youth right away.

- Like any meaningful relationship, it takes time to gain momentum and requires patience, as well as the ability to work through rough patches.
- Those relationships that continue to grow have a good chance of helping the child/youth. On the other hand, those that stall out may do actual harm to the child/youth.

With any relationship, there are stages of development.

- For instance, a couple gets to know each other; they date, marry, and go through a "honeymoon stage" where everything seems perfect about the other person.
- Then they enter into some challenging stages where the real work begins.
- And even though we know this will happen, it is worth reminding ourselves that there is an ebb and flow to the mentoring relationship as well.
- Knowing that there are phases that can be expected, and what the challenges can be, will better prepare mentors to successfully handle the issues and seek assistance, if needed.

The mentoring relationship phases have sometimes been described as a series of stages, and can be described in a variety of ways.



"Let's look at the stages of the mentoring relationship."

Show slide 4.

The four stages of the mentoring relationship are:

1. The Beginning/Building
2. Testing and Challenging
3. "Real" Mentoring
4. Transition (toward closure)

"Today we will talk about the first three stages. We'll first talk about the characteristics of that stage, some of the challenges that mentors often experience, and some communication strategies you can use at each stage."

TIP: If most of your participants are new to mentoring… Ask an experienced volunteer or a representative from one of your stations to talk about their experience communicating with your youth population and what new mentors can expect. For example, a teacher or experienced classroom volunteer might talk about the typical youth conversations or activities popular among this particular population.

A. The Beginning and Building Stage

CALLOUT: "What do you think happens in the very beginning of the relationship when a mentor and child or youth are matched? What are the mentor and the child/youth doing?"

Participants may say things like:

- Getting to know each other, forming first impressions
- Trying to figure out how to spend time together (when and where to meet, if applicable; schedules, activities to do together, setting boundaries and expectations)
- Learning a little about one another through small talk
- Trying to see the positive—the good things that will come from the relationship

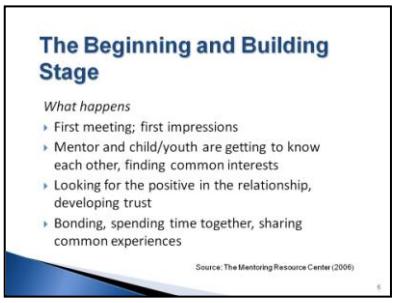
Note that it takes time to go from strangers to acquaintances to friends. It is a time of excitement and anxiety and awkwardness.

We want to know, "Will s/he like me?" During the first phase, we start with small talk ("Hi, how are you?") and eventually build from there.

CALLOUT: "As the mentor and child/youth start to meet and get to know each other and build the relationship, what do you think happens? What does the relationship look like?"

Participants may say things like:

- They have some shared experiences, activities they have done together that they can talk about
- They are starting to bond, deepening the relationship, finding shared interests
- Mentor is starting to understand what makes that child/youth "tick"
- The relationship is developing trust and momentum



Show slide 5 and validate participants responses if they may have mentioned most of these characteristics of the beginning and building stage already.

CALLOUT: "What do you think are some common mistakes or challenges the mentor might have in the early stages of the mentoring relationship?" Give an example to get them started, if needed.

For each of the common mistakes the group lists, **CALLOUT**: **"**What do you do about those? What are some communication strategies to overcome the challenges?" Note their ideas on easel paper. Draw a line down the middle with two headings on either side: "Mistakes/Challenges" and "Strategies for Mentor". (See the example below.)

Example

Mistakes/Challenges	Strategies for Mentor
Mentor makes all the decisions	Take turns choosing activities; follow child's lead as much as possible
Mentor expects too much "sharing" too soon	Be patient. Find common interests, experiences to talk about.

Common Mistakes/Challenges and Strategies

- ***Common Mistake: Mentor makes all the decisions rather than sharing the responsibility***. If you (the mentor) make all the decisions, the child/youth will likely become reluctant to share his/her preferences and opinions right from the beginning.
  Strategy for Mentor: Let the child/youth have much of the control over what the two of you talk about and how you talk about it. Share, take turns choosing (activity, order of

homework, where to sit, etc.). Remember, it is a partnership.

- ***Common Mistake: Missed meetings****.* Children/youth may miss meetings because they are still building organizational skills. Mentors should not be missing meetings unless it is an emergency.
  Strategy for Mentor: Help kids who are missing meetings develop better organizational skills. Mentors should never miss a meeting without notifying the child/youth in advance. Everyone knows that there are emergencies but regular meetings are key to the success of a mentoring relationship.

- ***Common Mistake: Mentor expects the child/youth will "open up" right away.*** It is likely that the child/youth is not comfortable yet; don't assume that they are bored or dislike you. Many children/youth have good reason not to disclose to every new adult in their life. Pushing them before they are ready does not work.
  Strategy for Mentor: Understand that kids vary in their styles of communicating and their habits of disclosure. Use the activities you do together and common experience you have as a source of conversations (reading, board games, art projects, etc.). Use open-ended questions: "I'm wondering what you like about that video game? Tell me about it." Be patient.

- ***Common Mistake: Mentor expects too much change too soon.*** Positive behavior or change does not happen on a schedule nor when pushed. It happens when the child/youth feel supported and are ready.
  Strategy for Mentor: Don't push. Keep interactions light for a while. Focus on who the child/youth is, not who you want them to be.

- ***Common Mistake: Mentor tries to fit into the child or youth's culture (generation, ethnicity).*** The mentor believes s/he needs to be one of the youth's peers to connect.
  Strategy for Mentor: Although it is important to be interested and learn about who the child/youth is, always be yourself. You don't need to "sound" like a youth to connect to the youth. Speak with language that feels comfortable.

- ***Common Mistake*: *Child/youth becomes more dependent on support****.*** As the child/youth feels more comfortable, s/he calls the mentor at home, invites the mentor to

activities outside of mentoring hours or mentoring relationship.
Strategy for Mentor: Reinforce boundaries set out at the beginning and remind the child/youth how you can be a part of his/her life.

- ***Common Mistake*: *Mentor feels the need to "fix" the child/youth's life.*** As the child/youth discloses more, the mentor may learn about difficult issues in that child/youth's life.
  Strategy for Mentor: Remember the mentor's role is to be an advocate and friend, not a social worker! Alert your supervisor if additional assistance seems necessary.
- ***Common Mistake*: *Boundary issues with families.*** You receive invitations to family events, or the family wants to talk to you about their child.
  Strategy for Mentor: Set boundaries with parents. Encourage families to contact the program for additional support.
- **Common Mistake:** ***Mentor may feel underappreciated.*** You may feel you are giving time, energy, and effort, but never receiving any thanks for it.
  Strategy for Mentor: The mentor should not really expect to be thanked. Most kids do not have the maturity to realize people care about these things. You can continue to model courteous behavior and appreciation of others' efforts and set an example.

Examples of Common Mistakes and Challenges in the Beginning Stage	Strategies
Mentor makes all the decisions	Activities should be youth-driven; share ideas, take turns choosing
Missed meetings	Notify in advance. Mentor must be dependable and consistent.
Mentor expects the mentee to "open up"	Be patient. People vary in communication styles.
Mentor expects too much too soon	Focus on who the child is – not who you want him/her to be
Mentor tries to fit into child/youth's culture (age, ethnicity)	Be yourself! You don't need to sound like that person to make a connection.

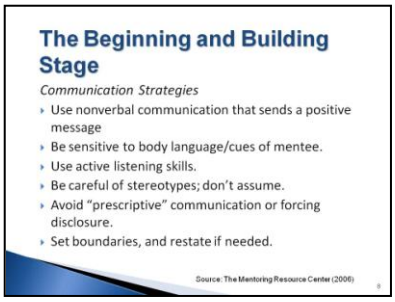
Source: The Mentoring Resource Center (2006)

After the participants have contributed their thoughts, show slides 6 (common mistakes, challenges and strategies for the beginning of the relationship) and 7 (common issues as the relationship builds). Note that they may have mentioned many of the challenges and strategies listed. Point out the common mistakes and strategies that were not already discussed.

Examples of Common Mistakes and Challenges in the Building Stage	Strategies
Child/youth may become more dependent on mentor's support	Reinforce boundaries set at the beginning
Mentor feels like s/he needs to "fix" mentee's life	Remember the mentor's role is to be advocate and friend.
Boundary issues with child/youth's family	Remind parents of boundaries. Encourage family to contact program for additional support.
Mentor may feel unappreciated	Don't expect to be thanked. Role model courteous behavior for them.

When in doubt, ask your supervisor!

Source: The Mentoring Resource Center (2006)



Show Slide 8.

Tell participants that this is a summary of good communications strategies for mentors in the beginning and building stage of the mentoring relationship. Read through the list and elaborate as needed.

Communication Strategies

- ***Use nonverbal communication that sends a positive message***. Use body language that is open and not guarded. *(Note: Module 3 of this series talks more about nonverbal communication, body language, and active listening skills.)*
- ***Be sensitive and responsive to the child/youth's cues through their own body language.*** Do they seem shy or uncomfortable? Use your sense of humor to help them feel more comfortable.
- ***Use active listening skills.*** For example: use prompts ("hmm", "really?"), ask open-ended questions for clarification ("What did you do then?"); demonstrate empathy, and don't be afraid of silence.
- ***Be careful of stereotypes; don't assume***. Try not to prejudge the child/youth according to TV images or even how your own grandchildren think and act.
- ***Avoid "prescriptive" communication or forced disclosure***. Let the child/youth open up to you in his/her own time.
- ***Set boundaries, and restate if needed.*** If you need to restate boundaries, remind the child/youth of the program rules, be honest and use "I" statements to say how you feel. Offer choices if appropriate (e.g. "I won't be able to do __, but I can help you with __ or __. What would you prefer?").
- ***Speak with language that you feel comfortable.*** You don't have to sound like the child/youth to make a connection. Be your natural, charming self!

TIP: If you have time, you might want to try a quick group exercise to demonstrate how finding even small commonalities can foster a sense of connection. Invite participants to pair off with someone. Ask them to find at least three things they have in common (e.g. they both have two grandchildren). Once the pair finds three commonalities, invite the pair to find another pair and find a commonality among the four of them. Continue joining other groups until you have the whole group finding a commonality. For the debrief, as the group: 1) What happened that helped develop relationships? 2) How might you use "commonalities" with your child/youth?

B. The Testing and Challenging Stage

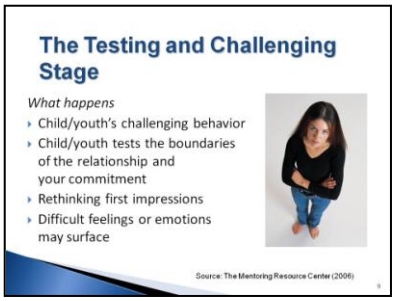
Tell participants that now we are on to the difficult part – the testing and challenging phase. This may happen even after the mentor and child/youth have built a rapport and seemed to be getting along great.

CALLOUT: "What happens during the testing and challenging phase, do you think? What does it look like?"

Participants may say things like:

- ***Child/youth's behavior is challenging.*** S/he may start to act out or try to sabotage the relationship by missing meetings, acting resentful, hostile or sullen; challenging or avoiding the mentor.
- ***Child/youth tests the boundaries of the relationship and the mentor's commitment.*** The child/youth is looking for a reaction: will the mentor stay around even if s/he is difficult?
- ***Rethinking first impressions.*** The mentor may be unsure of the child/youth now that this new behavior has started.
- ***Difficult feelings or emotions may surface.*** The mentor and child/youth may feel frustrated with each other. The situation can lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication.

CALLOUT: "Why do you think a child/youth would act like this?" Participants may note that many children and youth come from situations where the adults in their lives are not reliable and do not stick around when things get difficult. The child wants to know if the mentor is different.



Show slide 9 and note any characteristics of the testing and challenging stage that participants haven't mentioned.

CALLOUT: "So what do you think are some common mistakes or challenges the mentor might have in this testing and challenging stage of the mentoring relationship?"

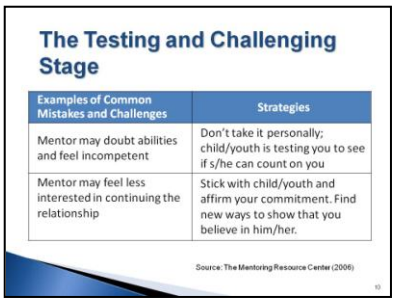
For each of the common mistakes the group lists, **CALLOUT**: **"**What do you do about those? What are some communication strategies to overcome the challenges?" (You may want to write down some of their ideas on an easel pad. See example.)

Example

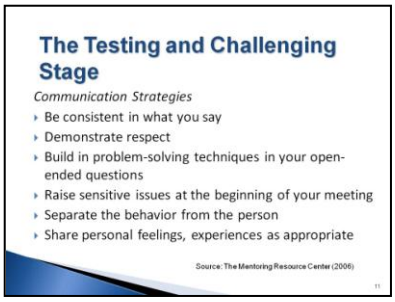
Mistakes/Challenges	Strategies for Mentor
Mentor feels that it isn't working	Stick with it. Reaffirm commitment.
Mentor wants to give up	Be patient. Remind yourself why the child/youth is acting this way. Talk to your supervisor.

Common Mistakes and Strategies

- ***Common Mistake: Mentor may doubt abilities and feel incompetent.*** You may feel like you aren't making a difference or can't connect with the youth.
  Strategy: Don't take it personally; it is not about you. Remember that the child/youth is checking to see if s/he is going to be rejected by another adult. Stick with the child/youth during this tough time and affirm the commitment. Show up on time, every time. Find new way to show that you believe s/he is capable. You may also need to reinforce limits and boundaries.
- ***Common Mistake: Mentor may feel less interested in continuing the relationship*.** You may start to feel like your time and effort is not worth it. This is often when relationships fall apart.
  Strategy: Try to be patient and remember why s/he is challenging you. Think about the good qualities you have seen in this child/youth and try to stick it out. Remember that s/he needs to see that there are adults that meet commitments and don't quit when times get tough. Last, talk to your supervisor about how you feel and ask for advice. You are not the first mentor to feel discouraged.



After the participants have contributed their thoughts, show slide 10. Note that they may have mentioned many of the challenges and strategies listed. Point out the common mistakes and strategies that were not already discussed.



Show Slide 11.

Tell participants that this is a summary of good communications strategies for mentors in the testing and challenging stages of the mentoring relationship. Read through the list and elaborate with examples if you like.

Communication Strategies

- Be consistent in your communication, even if it is difficult.
- Demonstrate respect.
- Build in problem-solving techniques in your open ended questions ("I wonder how you would tackle this…?)
- Raise sensitive issues at the beginning of your meeting.
- Separate the behavior from who the person is.
- Disclose personal feelings and experiences, as appropriate.
- If, on occasion, you feel you have to voice displeasure, do so in a way that also reassures the child/youth.

"The first two stages are critical as they lay the foundation for the relationship. If mentors are to be successful, they need to work through the testing and challenging behavior so that the relationship gets to a place of trust and mutuality where 'real' mentoring can take place."

TIP: Alter according to your program model. Use examples of local programs. As you describe different types of mentor challenges, give examples from programs in your community. For example, "The XYZ Mentoring program requires mentors to sign a one-year commitment, complete 40 hours of training, and meet with the caseworker two times per month. This gives the mentor ongoing support to get through the rough patches and helps the program retain mentors for the full one-year term."

C. The "Real" Mentoring Stage

CALLOUT: "Let's talk about the third stage. What happens during the 'real' mentoring stage? Now that you have survived the testing stage, what do you think real mentoring looks like?"

Participants may say things like:

- The relationship begins feeling right again.
- Mentor and child/youth trust each other.
- Mentor can see growth in the child/youth
- A deeper connection develops between mentor and child/youth

Give participants a chance to respond and then show slide 12, and note any points they haven't mentioned. Tell participants that during the "real" mentoring stage, the relationship intensifies. As your and the child/youth learn more personal information about each other, you will build a stronger bond.

CALLOUT: "What do you think is a common mistake that mentors make as they try to build a strong bond with the child or youth?"

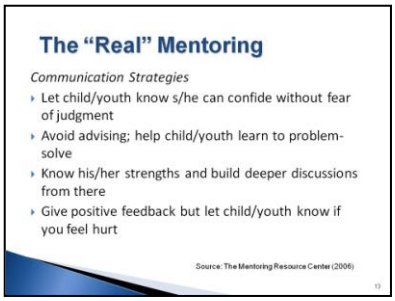
For each of the common mistakes the group lists, **CALLOUT**: **"**What do you do about those? What are some communication strategies to overcome the challenges?" (You may want to write down some of their ideas on an easel pad. See example.)

Example

Mistakes/Challenges	Strategies for Mentor
Inappropriate disclosure	Remember you are still talking to a child/youth

Common Mistake: Mentor may disclose inappropriate information. In an attempt to bond, you may unintentionally disclose information that is too personal in nature, not age-appropriate, or not an appropriate topic.
Strategy: Remember to be conscientious that you are still talking to a child or youth, even though you are building a bond. Disclose information that supports the relationship but is also appropriate. For instance, you may not want to talk about your recent medical test; however, sharing a time when a teacher annoyed you too, goes a long way.

"Let's have a look at some good communication strategies when you get to the real mentoring stage."



Show slide 13. Read through the list and elaborate with examples if you like.

Communication Strategies

- Let child/youth know s/he can confide without fear of judgment.
- Avoid advising, but help the child/youth to actively problem solve. If you give advice, give it sparingly and focus on identifying, not giving, solutions.
- Know the child/youth's strengths and build deeper discussions from there.
- Give positive feedback but let the child/youth know when something has hurt you.

Distribute the handout, *Mentoring Relationship Cycle*, as a reference.

TIP: Provide a list of activity ideas for different stages of the mentoring relationship. If the mentoring program has not done so already, provide a handout with a list (or ask participants to give you ideas for the list) of activities mentors can do with children and youth of different ages. For example, toward the end of the mentoring term, a mentor and child could put together a collage using pictures only – no text—that describes what the relationship means to them.

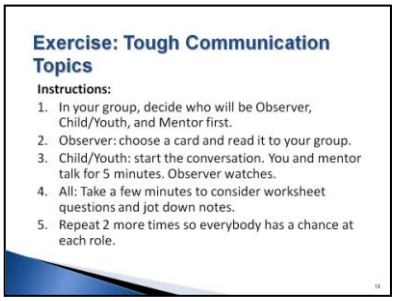
III. Tough Communication Topics

CALLOUT: "Let's say you are just getting to know the child/youth. Take a minute and think about topics or issues that would worry you, or make you nervous if it came up in conversation. What are some of these topics?"

Participants may say things like: violence, criticizing parents, drugs, sex, etc. Remind participants that mentors are not expected to be counselors and they are not on their own. Remind them who they should talk to should they feel "over their heads" with the child/youth (e.g. program supervisor, caseworker).

Tell participants, "It is not surprising that those kinds of topics would make you nervous. The best way to overcome that discomfort is to be prepared. Let's get some practice in!"

TIP: Encourage participants to share their worries about tough topics to talk about with youth. If you create a safe place for people to share their worries, you will be better able to address their concerns and provide appropriate guidance and resources.



Exercise: Tough Topics Role Play

Show slide 14.

The purpose of this activity is to help participants practice connecting with children and youth and feel better prepared for tough topics that might come up.

YOU WILL NEED: Individual *Tough Topic Conversation Role Play Cards* (one role play example on each card; one card per person), copies of the *Tough Topic Conversation Worksheet* (one per person), easel paper and a marker for taking notes during "debrief".

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Invite participants to get into groups of three.
2. Asks participants in each group to select one person to play the "Child/Youth", one to be the "Mentor", and one to be the "Observer".
3. Give the groups three different role play cards based on the age level of the children/youth they are working with. Give each person a *Tough Topic Conversation Worksheet*. (If you have a large group, you may want to invite the "Observer" in the trios to come to the front of the room to get the role play cards and worksheets.)
4. The "Observer" randomly selects one of the cards and reads the scenario out loud to the group. After a minute to sink into the roles, the "Child/Youth" begins to have a conversation with the "Mentor". The "Observer" watches and listens, offering assistance only if the mentor asks for help. The conversation should take about 5 minutes.
5. After 5 minutes, ask the groups to take a few minutes to "debrief" among themselves. They should take just a few minutes to respond to the questions on the worksheet. (It is okay if they don't finish answering the questions; you want them to spend more time doing the actual role play.)
6. After a few minutes, ask the groups to repeat the activity, changing roles and cards.
7. Repeat steps 4-6 so that everyone has had a chance to play each of the three roles.

DEBRIEF

Bring the group back together and ask for a few comments on the experience. Encourage the groups to explain how they experienced the communication as the "child/youth", what the "mentor" did well, and what the "mentor" might do differently.

Take a few of the more challenging role play conversations and ask the small groups to share their responses to the three discussion items on the worksheet (see Facilitator Debrief Notes on pp. 21-25 for ideas):

- What would you need to consider before responding?
- What might be an initial response?
- What would you need to consider after the conversation?

Take note of particularly difficult topics in case you need to follow up with a specific topic or specific person. Be sure to review program policy as needed, including guidelines about conversations with youth and who they can talk to if there is an issue they are unsure about handling.

TIP: Customize the role play situations for your population. Change the role play conversations and situations to fit the children and youth that you serve. Be prepared to review policies and procedures as well as provide additional resources to participants. For example, you may need to remind participants of the program's confidentiality policy.

IV. Reflection: Setting Boundaries

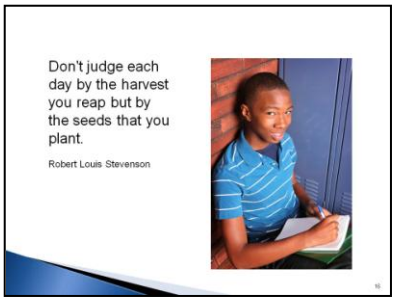
Show slide 15.

Tell participants that sometimes a big communication challenge for mentors, or anyone, is in setting and reinforcing boundaries. For example, a child wants you to stay longer and gets upset when you try to leave, or a youth is disrespectful toward you and you need to draw the line. Note that setting boundaries for many people is uncomfortable, even with kids, because it can feel confrontational. It also requires some determination and composure.

Distribute the handout, *Reflection: Setting Boundaries with Children and Youth.*

Ask participants to take about 5-10 minutes to think about how they firmly but respectfully talk with kids when they need to set boundaries, and answer the questions on the handout. They may want to share their thoughts with a partner.

TIP: Ask seasoned volunteers or mentoring program directors to talk about closure in the mentoring relationship. Have a guest speaker come in and explain how this stage of the mentoring cycle works in practice. How do they leave the relationship on a positive note, with a sense of accomplishment for both mentor and child? How do they look back on the experience together and reflect? For example, programs may offer a group activity (e.g. picnic) for all mentors and kids to attend together on the last day of school.



V. Closing

Show slide 16.

Let participants know that even though you have talked about some of the challenges of being a mentor today, you know they are ready to provide the love and attention that so many kids need to thrive and grow.

Optional: Distribute the remaining handouts:

- *Positive Strategies for Connecting with Children and Youth*
- *Helpful Strategies for Intergenerational Communication*
- *Recommended Resources for Mentors*

TIP: Customize the handouts or add your own. You may want to add your own tips and recommendations to the handouts, or highlight the tips and resources that you feel are most appropriate for your volunteers' assignments. You might also find information you would like to print out and distribute from the websites listed in the *Recommended Resources* handout if participants don't usually have internet access (e.g. information for special populations such as immigrants and refugees, or age-focused materials for mentors working with adolescents).

Last, ask participants to complete a *Training Feedback Survey* to help you improve the next workshop.

Ask participants if there are any more questions or last words before you close. Make any final announcements and thank participants for coming.

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR EXERCISE DEBRIEF

Facilitator: Below are some notes for the small-group discussion questions, including examples of possible "mentor" responses for each of the role play situations. You may want to refer to these notes if participants get stuck during discussions. Alternatively, you can distribute these notes to participants after the exercise and ask for their thoughts. However, review these notes first and adapt them for your specific population and context. For example, if mentors would never have a conversation with parents, omit references to it.

Role Play # 1: The 10 year old walks up to the mentor, stomping his feet and muttering under his breath about his teacher. The mentor can't quite hear what is being said.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the youth, previous conversations about this topic, the setting where the conversation takes place (e.g., in private, in front of peers or in school).

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "Hi. Sounds like you might have had a rough day at school. Want to talk about it?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Whether follow up is needed given the information shared, possible conversation with the teacher, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play #2: The 11 year old child plays on a baseball team. She tells the mentor that she just lost a game and she is upset. She made several bad plays and her teammates made fun of her.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the child, previous conversations about this topic, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers), ability of the child to share her thoughts and feelings, ability of the child to problem-solve, her level of social skills.

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "Wow. That sounds like a rough game. What did you do then?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Whether follow up is needed given the information shared (e.g., bullying), possible conversation with the coach, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play # 3: The 9 year old has Asperger's Syndrome and often misunderstands social cues. She is upset and tells the mentor that she doesn't have any friends at school.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the child, ability of the child to express feelings, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers or in school).

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "Tell me more about that. Can you give me an example of what happened today?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared (e.g., bullying), resources and additional support that might help the child or the mentor, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play # 4: The 6 year old tells the mentor that his 17 year old step-brother has been touching him inappropriately.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the child, limits of confidentiality, previous conversations about this topic, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers).

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "That must have been really hard to share with me. Thank you. I want to make sure that you are safe, so I have to tell someone else what you have told me. They may ask you questions as well. While we are waiting, what would you like to do?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared, resources and additional support that might help the child or the mentor, possible conversation with parents, shame and/or guilt of child for sharing information, reporting requirements and confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play # 5: The 8 year old child is frantic and crying. She is very hard to understand, but does tell the mentor that her family has been evicted and that the family has been living out of their car for the last week.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the child, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers).

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "Okay, take a deep breath. This sounds like a really difficult situation. I am having a hard time hearing you and I want to make sure that I can understand what you are saying. Can you calm down enough to talk about what is going on with you?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared, resources and additional support that might help the child or the mentor, possible conversation with parents, shame and/or guilt of youth for sharing information, reporting requirements and confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play #6: The 11 year old seems troubled. He tells the mentor that his brother is being approached to be a part of a gang, and he is worried for his brother's safety.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the child, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers), if the child is in immediate danger.

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "That sounds scary. How did you find this out? Have you told anyone else about your concerns yet?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared (e.g., youth in danger), resources and additional support that might help the youth or the mentor, possible conversation with parents, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play # 7: The 10 year old child was caught shoplifting. The mentor happened to be at the grocery store and saw this. This is the first meeting after the incident.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the child, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers), your values about the issue, previous conversations about the topic, possible guilt/shame of child.

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "Hey, I know you had a difficult week and something happened at the grocery store and you might have even seen me there. I am really interested in hearing your side of the story. Are you willing to tell me what happened?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared (e.g., additional confessions of shoplifting), resources and additional support that might help the youth or the mentor, possible conversation with parents, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play #8: The 13 year old youth is uncharacteristically quiet. When the mentor asks, "How are you doing today?" The youth responds, "Fine." The mentor knows that her parents are in the process of a nasty divorce.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the youth, whether the youth at this age is willing or not to share information, previous conversations about this topic, the environment (e.g., in front of peers or in a very public place).

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "I know this might be a difficult time for you. Let me know if you want to talk about what is going on at home."

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared (e.g., plans to run away, suicidal thoughts), possible conversation with the parents, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play #9: The 17 year old comes out as gay. He tells the mentor that he has been teased at school and is worried about his parents finding out.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the youth, your values about this subject, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers or in school).

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "Thank you for trusting me enough to share that information. I imagine that it might have been difficult for you to even share. What would be helpful for you right now?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared (e.g., plans to run away, suicidal thoughts, bullying), local resources and additional support that might help the youth or mentor, possible conversation with parents, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play #10: The youth, 14 years old, is a child of immigrants and English is his second language. He often pretends to understand what the mentor is saying, but really doesn't.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the youth, language ability of the youth, sensitivity to youth regarding this subject, previous conversations about this topic, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers).

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "I noticed that sometimes it seems like you are not sure what I am saying. Can we talk about that?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Resources and additional support that might help the youth or mentor, possibility of misunderstanding, possible shame of youth, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play #11: The 15 year old youth just got suspended from school for fighting. She tells the mentor that if she sees that other person, she is going to "take her out".

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the youth, mentor safety, previous conversations about this topic, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers).

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "You sound really mad. What happened?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared (e.g., bullying, plans to retaliate), resources and additional support that might help the youth or the mentor, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play #12: The youth, 16 years old, has been acting strangely for weeks. She finally tells the mentor about her unplanned pregnancy.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the youth, your values about this topic, previous conversations about this topic, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers).

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "That must have been really hard to share with me. Thank you for sharing that information. What would help you right now?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared (e.g., plans to run away, suicidal thoughts, plans to ignore medical needs, pregnancy due to rape, legal ramifications), resources and additional support that might help the youth or the mentor, possible conversation with parents, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play # 13: The youth, 16 years old, is visibly upset. She tells the mentor that she wasn't hired for an afterschool job because of her disability.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the youth, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers), the youth's disability.

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "I can understand why that might have upset you. Tell me what happened."

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared (e.g., possible discrimination), resources and additional support that might help the youth or the mentor, possible conversation with parents, confidentiality of information that is shared.

Role Play # 14: The 15 year old youth's breath smells of alcohol. He initially tells the mentor that he wasn't drinking. Eventually, he admits to trying alcohol, but swears it was the first time and begs the mentor not to tell anyone.

Q: What do you need to consider BEFORE responding?
A: The strength of your relationship with the youth, the environment you are in (e.g., in front of peers), your values about the issue, possible medical attention, previous conversations about the topic, previous agreements about this issue.

Q: What might be an initial possible response?
A: "I imagine that you are really worried about what your parents might say. This is really important and I care about you and your decisions. It is also part of the information we discussed at the beginning that I would need to share with your parents. How do you want to be involved in this discussion?"

Q: What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation?
A: Follow up response given the information shared (e.g., plans to run away, suicidal threats, how the alcohol was obtained), resources and additional support that might help the youth or the mentor, possible conversation with parents, reporting requirements and confidentiality of information that is shared.

MODULE 4 REFERENCES

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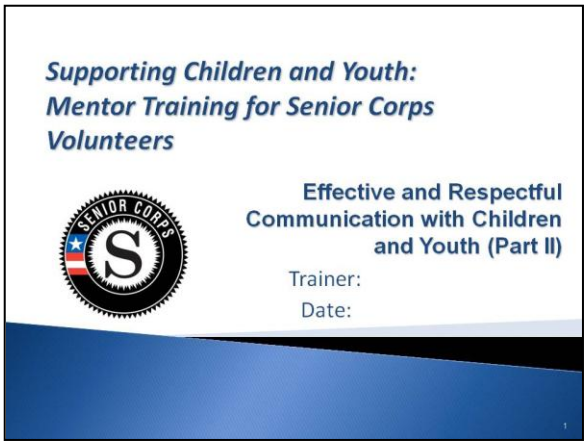
Module 4 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

1. The Mentoring Relationship Cycle
2. Tough Topic Conversation Role Play Cards
3. Tough Topic Conversation Worksheet
4. Reflection: Setting Boundaries with Children and Youth
5. Positive Strategies for Connecting with Children and Youth (optional)
6. Helpful Strategies for Intergenerational Communication (optional)
7. Recommended Resources for Mentors (optional)
8. Training Feedback Survey



The Mentoring Relationship Cycle*

Stage or Phase	Characteristics	Mentor's Challenges	Effective Communication Strategies
STAGE 1 **The Beginning and Building**	• Getting to know each other, finding common interests • First impressions • Trying to see the positive in the relationship • Bonding, building trust	• Mentor makes all the decisions rather than sharing the responsibility • Missed meetings • Expectation that the child/youth will "open up" • Expectation that mentor will see change in child/youth right away • Mentor emphasizes behavior change rather than building mutual trust • Child/youth may start to become too dependent on mentor's support • Mentor may feel s/he has to "fix" child/youth's life • Boundary issues with families may occur	✓ Ask open-ended questions (e.g. "What is your favorite thing to do when you have free time?") ✓ Use body language that is open and not guarded ✓ Use active listening (e.g. eye contact, summarizing) ✓ Demonstrate empathy ✓ Avoid "prescriptive" communication, which can force disclosure before the child/youth is ready ✓ Use prompts (e.g. "yes, I see", "tell me more about...") ✓ Speak with language that you are comfortable with ✓ Don't be afraid of silence ✓ If you need to restate boundaries, remind the child/youth of the program rules, be honest and use "I" statements to say how you feel, and offer choices if appropriate (e.g. "I won't be able to do __, but I can help you with __ or __. What would you prefer?")

*Adapted from *Ongoing Training for Mentors: Twelve Interactive Sessions for U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Programs* (2006); *Overcoming Relationship Pitfalls* (2006), U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Resource Center; and Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors (2007), The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence & The National Mentoring Center at Northwest Regional Education Laboratory.

The Mentoring Relationship Cycle (continued)

Stage or Phase	Characteristics	Mentor's Challenges	Effective Communication Strategies
STAGE 2 **Testing and Challenging**	• Mentored child/youth challenges you • Rethinking first impressions • Child/youth tests the relationship and your commitment • Difficult feelings or emotions may surface	• Some challenges may continue from Stage 1 (e.g. missed meetings) • Mentor may doubt mentoring abilities • Mentor may feel less interested in continuing the relationship	✓ Be consistent in your communication, even if it is difficult ✓ Demonstrate respect ✓ Build in problem-solving techniques in your open ended questions ✓ Raise sensitive issues at the beginning of your meeting (be aware that testing behavior may be a sign of other issues in the child/youth's life) ✓ Make sure to separate behaviors from who the child/youth is, and don't take the challenging behavior personally ✓ Disclose personal feelings and experiences when appropriate
STAGE 3 **"Real" Mentoring**	• The relationship begins feeling right again • Trust is established • Growth in the child/youth can be observed • A "deeper" bond and connection has been formed	• Some challenges may continue from earlier stages (e.g. mentor may feel s/he has to "fix" child/youth's life) • Mentor may disclose personal information that is inappropriate	✓ Continue with disclosures that are age-appropriate and support the mentoring relationship ✓ Reinforce boundaries set at the beginning; clarify how you will be a part of the child/youth's life ✓ Avoid advising, and allow child/youth to actively problem solve ✓ Build off your knowledge of the child/youth's strengths to foster deeper discussions ✓ Give positive feedback and don't be afraid to let the child/youth know when something has hurt you
STAGE 4 **Ending**	• Preparing for closure • Relationship may become deeper or child/youth may start pulling away • Reflection	• Some challenges may continue from earlier stages • Mentor doesn't address the closure issues (e.g. child/youth withdraws)	✓ Find common language to express your feelings ✓ Provide feedback that describes growth that you observed ✓ Be prepared to listen and affirm fears that your child/youth may have ✓ Understand that the child/youth may need to grieve the end of the relationship

Tough Topic Conversation Role Play Cards (for Children Ages 6-12)

1. The 10 year old walks up to the mentor, stomping his feet and muttering under his breath about his teacher. The mentor can't quite hear what is being said.

2. The 11 year old plays on a baseball team. She tells the mentor that she just lost a game and she is upset. She made several bad plays and her teammates made fun of her.

3. The 9 year old has Asperger's Syndrome and often misunderstands social cues. She is upset and tells the mentor that she does not have any friends at school.

4. The 6 year old tells the mentor that his 17 year old step-brother has been touching him inappropriately.

5. The 8 year old is frantic and crying. She is very hard to understand, but does tell the mentor that her family has been evicted and that the family has been living out of their car for the last week.

6. The 11 year old seems troubled. He tells the mentor that his brother is being approached to be part of a gang and he is worried for his brother's safety.

7. The 10 year old child was caught shoplifting. The mentor happened to be at the grocery store and saw this. This is the first meeting after the incident.

Tough Topic Conversation Role Play Cards (for Youth Ages 13-18)

8. The 13 year old youth is uncharacteristically quiet. When the mentor asks, “How are you doing today?” The youth responds, “Fine.” The mentor knows that her parents are in the process of a nasty divorce.

9. The 17 year old comes out as gay. He tells the mentor that he has been teased at school and is worried about his parents finding out.

10. The youth, 14 years old, is a child of immigrants and English is his second language. He often pretends to understand what the mentor is saying, but really doesn’t.

11. The 15 year old youth just got suspended from school for fighting. She tells the mentor that if she sees that other person, she is going to “take her out”.

12. The youth, 16 years old, has been acting strangely for weeks. She finally tells the mentor about her unplanned pregnancy.

13. The youth, 16 years old, is visibly upset. She tells the mentor that she wasn’t hired for an afterschool job because of her disability.

14. The 15 year old youth’s breath smells of alcohol. He initially tells the mentor that he wasn’t drinking. Eventually, he admits to trying alcohol, but swears it was the first time and begs the mentor not to tell anyone.

Tough Topic Conversation Worksheet

Instructions

1. Decide who will be the **Observer**, who will be the **Child/Youth**, and who will be the **Mentor**.
2. Observer: Select one of the role play cards and read it aloud. Take a minute to sink into the role.
3. Youth: Begin the conversation with your mentor. Mentor and Youth should talk for about 5 minutes while the Observer watches.
4. All: Take just a few minutes to discuss the questions below and write down your impressions. It is okay if you don't finish.
5. Switch roles and repeat with the next role play card. Everyone will have an opportunity to play each.

Role Play Questions

Youth: What worked well for you? _____

_____

_____

Mentor: What worked well for you? _____

_____

_____

Observer: What did you notice? Did you have another idea of how to approach the situation? _____

_____

_____

ALL: If you were the mentor in this situation…

What do you need to consider BEFORE responding? _____

_____

_____

_____

What might be an initial possible response? What exactly would you say? _____

_____

_____

_____

What might you need to consider AFTER the conversation? _____

_____

Reflection: Setting Boundaries with Children and Youth

Take a few minutes to think about situations where you needed to set clear boundaries with a child or youth, and write down a few notes. If you like, share your responses with a partner.

1. What do you do when you feel like your personal boundaries have been crossed? How do you tend to react initially (e.g. irritation, withdraw from the person or situation)?

_____

_____

2. Here are a couple of examples. Suppose you were working with these children. Write down what you would say, or skip to #3 and use your own example.

2a. A 12-year old girl uses offensive language in front of you. She may use this language at home, but it really makes you uncomfortable. What do you say?

_____

_____

2b. A 6-year old boy asks you to buy him a toy he wants. You can't afford it and he doesn't need it. What do you say?

_____

_____

3. Your own example: Think of something that happened to you recently and how you responded (or would respond if it happened again).
The situation: _____

_____

How you responded/will respond: _____

_____

Tips for Setting Boundaries

1. Take a deep breath and think positive thoughts: "Another teachable moment!"
2. Remind the child/youth of the program rules (if they apply here) or rules that the two of you have already agreed upon.
3. Be respectful and polite, but (age-appropriately) honest. Use "I" statements to say how you feel.
4. If responding to an inappropriate request, refuse firmly but nicely. If possible, say what you can do instead; give choices and ask for their preference.

Positive Strategies for Connecting with Children and Youth

The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence and The National Mentoring Center at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory published the following strategies in *Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors: Effective Strategies for Providing Quality Youth Mentoring in Schools and Communities.* (For more information, go to http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/173.)

1. Be a friend

- Don't act like a parent.
- Don't try to be an authority figure.
- Don't preach about values.
- Do focus on establishing a bond, a feeling of attachment, a sense of equality, and the mutual enjoyment of shared time.

2. Have realistic goals and expectations

- Focus on the whole person and his or her overall development.
- Especially early on, center your goals on the relationship itself.
- Throughout the relationship, emphasize friendship over performance.

3. Have fun together

- Many children/youth involved in mentoring programs have few opportunities for fun.
- Having fun together shows the child/youth that you are reliable and committed.
- Focusing on "fun" activities early in the relationship can lead to more "serious" activities later.

4. Give the child/youth voice and choice in deciding on activities

- Give a range of choices concerning possible activities.
- Create an "idea file" together.
- Listen carefully to what he/she says.
- Emphasize that his or her enjoyment is important to you.
- Negotiate
- Feel comfortable about setting clear limits on the amount of money you will spend (if applicable).

5. Be positive

- Offer frequent expressions of direct confidence.
- Be encouraging even when talking about potentially troublesome topics, such as grades.
- Offer concrete assistance.

6. Let your child/youth have much of the control over what the two of you talk about and how you talk about it

- Don't push.
- Be sensitive and responsive to his/her cues.
- Understand that children and youth vary in their styles of communicating and their comfort with disclosure.
- Be direct in letting the child/youth know that s/he can confide in you without fear of judgment or exposure.
- Remember that the activities you do together can becomes a source of conversation.

7. Listen

- "Just listening" gives children and youth a chance to open up, and let's them know that they can disclose personal matters to you without worrying about being criticized.
- When you listen, s/he can see that you are a friend, not an authority figure.

8. Respect the trust the child/youth places in you

- Respond in ways that show you see his/her side of things.
- Reassure the child/youth that you will be there for him or her.
- If you give advice, give it sparingly.
- If you give advice, be sure it s focused on identifying solutions.
- If, on occasions, you feel you have to convey concern or displeasure, do so in a way that also conveys reassurance and acceptance.
- Sound like a friend, not a parent.

9. Remember that your relationship is with the child/youth, not the family

- Maintain cordial but distance contact with family members.
- Keep your primary focus on the child/youth.
- Resist any efforts by the family to extract help beyond providing friendship for the youth.
- Be nonjudgmental about the family.
- Know the program's policy about how to respond to the child/youth's family, if applicable.

10. Remember that you are responsible for building the relationship

- Take responsibility for making and maintaining contact.
- Understand that the feedback and reassurance characteristics of adult-to-adult relationships are often beyond the capacity of children and youth.

Helpful Strategies for Intergenerational Communication

Communication is complex and you may need to begin slowly and build to develop a relationship with a child or youth. Research on intergenerational communication provides a variety of helpful strategies to promote positive communication.

1. Use active listening skills.
2. Create an environment favorable to conversation— one that works for both of you. For example, you may need a quiet environment to talk, but the youth prefers music in the background because the conversation seems too intense otherwise. Look for an acceptable solution for both; for example, a simple activity like doodling may help the youth feel more comfortable while the two of you talk.
3. Develop an understanding of the child/youth's perspective. Don't be afraid to let them be your guide to youth culture and their own cultural norms and contexts.
4. Be aware of and try to lessen the power differential between you and the child/youth. Use body language to create a more relaxed atmosphere.
5. Be respectful of differences and opinions. Ask questions; being curious is a helpful approach.
6. Be honest (but not brutal).
7. Use appropriate self disclosure. For example, you need not talk about your recent medical tests; however, sharing a time when a teacher annoyed you, too, goes a long way.
8. Avoid over accommodation (e.g. using a voice or words for a younger child when talking to a 13-year old) or patronizing behavior (e.g. excessive praise for a simple task).
9. Be careful of stereotypes. Try not to judge the child/youth according to media images or even how your own grandchildren think and act.
10. Be yourself. You don't need to "sound" like a youth to connect to the youth.

Recommended Resources for Mentors

Below are some resources to help you build your communication skills with children and youth. Your supervisor may have additional recommendations.

The **National Mentoring Center** (http://educationnorthwest.org/nmc) at Education Northwest has resources for mentors and mentoring programs on almost any topic; for example:

- "Real Life" video examples of taking through tough topics for mentors working with adolescents: http://talkingitthrough.educationnorthwest.org/:
- Information for specialized mentoring models, including mentoring youth in the foster care system, mentoring children of incarcerated parents, rural or tribal settings: http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/652
- Information for school-based mentoring programs: http://educationnorthwest.org/resource/647

The **Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota**, in collaboration with the Search Institute, has put together a variety of resources to support mentors working with adolescents, including information on improving communication and building a bond. http://www.mpmn.org/ToolsforMentoringAdolescents.aspx:

The Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota has also put together resources for people working with military children and families, including helping children deal with stress and grief: http://www.mpmn.org/Resources/ForParentsandGuardians/MilitaryChildrenandFamilies.aspx

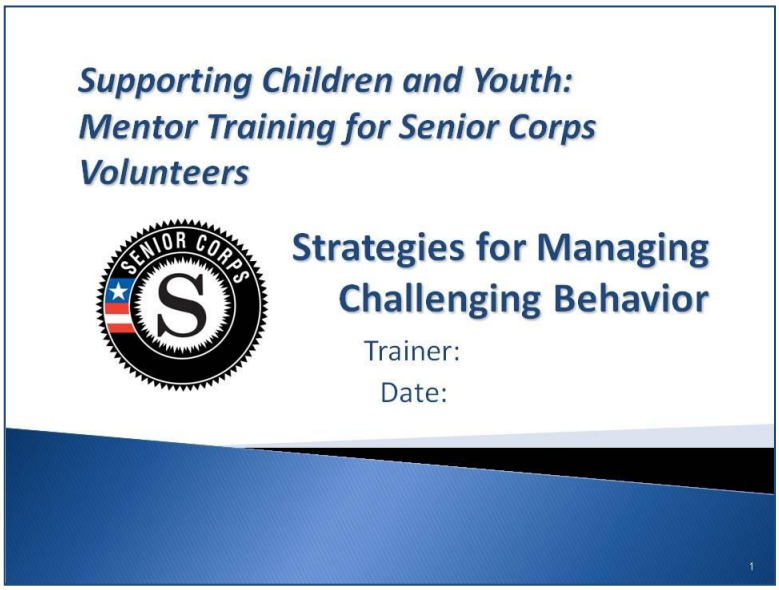
You can view sample pages or order "The Academic Activity Guide" from **Friends for Youth**, a collection of learning activities and projects designed by educational professionals specifically for mentoring programs. http://www.friendsforyouth.org/SampleAAGPages.html

Mentoring for Meaningful Results: **Asset-Building Tips, Tools, and Activities for Youth and Adults** is a book by Kristie Probst, published by the Search Institute (2006). The book is a "start-up kit" with information and activities for mentors, mentees, and parents or caregivers, and uses the Search Institute's Developmental Assets framework.

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Module 5

Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior



Module 5. Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior

INTRODUCTION

A common concern among Senior Corps volunteers is how to effectively and appropriately respond to behavior challenges. This workshop provides an overview of behavior, typical developmental age characteristics and some simple strategies for managing challenging behavior.

This workshop includes a brief lecture, a small group exercise, and a short reflection activity. It is recommended that you do a full 2-hour workshop to allow as much time as possible for group discussion.

Remember that you do not need to present this workshop "as is". Modify the session to fit your participants' needs and to address the age group(s) they are serving. Omit information that does not apply and/or substitute your own examples to direct the discussion toward issues you want the group to address. For example, if your participants do not work with children outside the school setting, adapt examples where the mentor is with the child/youth in a setting outside the school. If your participants do not work with teens, omit examples that apply to teenagers and highlight those that refer to younger children. Alternatively, if your volunteers work with a wide range of ages, you may want to present this workshop more than once, but focus on a different age group each time.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will better understand:

- What influences behavior including the typical age characteristics of children and youth
- Common behavioral challenges that volunteers may encounter
- Preventative approaches and simple strategies to use when responding to common behavioral challenges

Visual Aids (Power Point) and Facilitator's Notes

If you are using the PowerPoint slides included with this curriculum, Facilitator's Notes are provided under each slide. These notes provide the same information as the Facilitator's Notes included in this document, however they are not as detailed.

It is recommended that you use easel paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to note responses to some of the "callout" questions and important points that participants make during the exercise "debrief." This validates participants' knowledge and reinforces learning. You may want to write the headings on sheets of easel paper in advance to save time.

This symbol will cue you as to when you might jot down responses:

Handouts

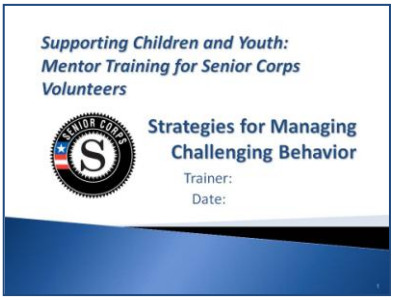
The handouts for this session follow the Facilitator's Notes and Instructions. Handouts 1-3 should be distributed during the session; this symbol in the Facilitator's Notes will cue you as to when: 🗎. The remaining handouts can be distributed at the end of the session.

1. Typical Age Characteristics of Children and Youth
2. Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavioral in Children and Youth
3. Exercise Worksheet: Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior
4. Positive Reinforcement Works! (optional)
5. Recommended Resources on Challenging Behaviors (optional)
6. Training Feedback Survey

SESSION AGENDA

Activity	Estimated Time	Method	Slide Numbers
I. Welcome	**20 min.**		1
A. Learning Objectives	5 min.	Lecture	2
B. Warm-up: Concerns about Behavioral Challenges	10 min.	Large group discussion	3
C. Behavior Basics	5 min.	Lecture	4
II. Age Characteristics of Children and Youth	**25 min.**	Lecture,	
A. Overview of Age Characteristics	5 min.	Lecture	5
B. Pair Exercise: Age Characteristics 🗎 *Typical Age Characteristics of Children and Youth*	20 min.	Pair exercise, large group debrief	
III. Strategies for Behavioral Challenges	**60 min.**		
A. Creating a Solid Foundation	5 min.	Lecture	6
B. Responding to Challenges When They Occur 🗎 *Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavioral in Children and Youth*	20 min.	Lecture, large group discussion	7
C. Exercise: Strategies 🗎 *Exercise Worksheet: Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior* (for Option 2 only)	20 min. 15 min.	Small groups of 3-4 Debrief, large group discussion	***8 or 9***
IV. Reflection: New Ideas	**10 min.**	Large group discussion	10
V. Closing 🗎 *Positive Reinforcement Works! (optional)* 🗎 *Recommended Resources on Challenging Behaviors (optional)* 🗎 *Training Feedback Survey*	**5 min.**	Lecture	11

FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS

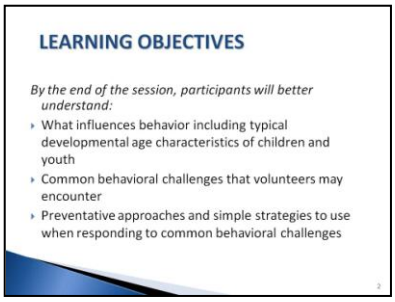


If you are using the PowerPoint slides, have slide 1 up on the screen.

I. Welcome

Welcome participants and introduce the workshop: "You provide ongoing support to children and youth in very important ways. All of us, even experienced volunteers have concerns about how to effectively and appropriately respond to behavior challenges. This workshop provides an overview of behavior, what influences it, like typical developmental age characteristics, and some simple strategies for managing challenging behavior. Sharing your experiences and skills will enrich our learning today."

A. Learning Objectives



Show slide 2.

Describe the learning objectives. By the end of the session, participants will better understand:

- What influences behavior, including the typical age characteristics of children and youth
- Common behavioral challenges that volunteers may encounter
- Preventative approaches and simple strategies to use when responding to common behavioral challenges

Tell participants that there are many things that affect our behavior: our needs, interests, desires, values, strengths, and weaknesses. Behavior is complex and can perplex us. By better understanding children and youth's basic needs and age characteristics, we will be better prepared to understand and work with their behavior.

TIP: Provide realistic information. This module targets volunteers working with children or youth with low and moderate risks. Participants may voice more serious concerns such as evidence of physical or sexual abuse, cutting or other self inflicted injury. Participants working with high-risk youth may mention violent behavior toward others or gang involvement, coming to the sessions with a gun or high on drugs, discussion of sexual encounters or pregnancy or talk of suicide. If your project handles children or youth who my exhibit some of these behaviors, note the concerns raised on a separate sheet and inform the group when they will be discussed. If, however, participants are unlikely to see or need to manage these behaviors, let them know that as well.

B. Warm up: Concerns about Behavioral Challenges

You will need two sheets of easel paper and markers. On one sheet of easel paper, draw a line down the middle and write "Preschool (age 3-5)" on one side and "Elementary School (age 6-11)" on the other. On a second sheet, draw a line down the middle and write "Middle School (age 12-15)" on one side and "High School (age 16-18)" on the other. Only include the age groups you wish to discuss today (e.g. if participants will not be working with ages 16-18, don't write it on the easel paper).

TIP: Tailor this discussion. Spend more time on the age groups that most participants will be/are serving. For example, if most are working with children in elementary schools, keep the discussion focused on children ages 6-12.

Show side 3.

"Let's talk about some concerns you might have when working with children and youth."

CALLOUT: "Take a minute and think about your children, grandchildren or experiences you have had working with children and youth." Ask for a show of hands: "How many people have experienced a child throwing a tantrum? Or a youth flat out refusing to do what he has been asked to do?"

Ask the group for examples from each age category that you will be discussing today: "What were some other behavior challenges you have encountered? What kinds of challenges worry you?"

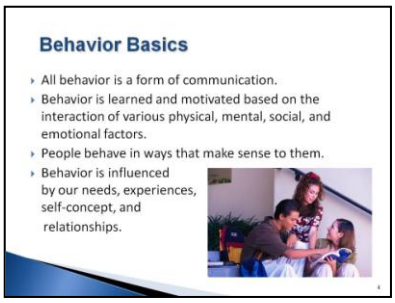
Participants may say things like: talking back or using foul language, getting off task, not listening to directions, tantrums, etc. Write down challenges on the easel paper. Validate responses and point out the common themes in the responses.

"Keep those concerns in mind. We will talk more about some simple strategies for dealing with these challenging behaviors in a bit."

TIP: Note the expressed concerns and turn them into an exercise (see "Option 1 Practice" on page 15). One exercise option for later in this module uses the issues participants identify during the "warm-up" as the basis for practice. This allows the "hot" issues to be addressed directly. You will need to be comfortable prepping the easel paper or pulling a participant out to help prepare the paper while the workshop is going.

C. Behavior Basics

"One way to put these behavioral challenges into context is to think about why we behave the way we do."



Show slide 4.

The following are the basics of behavior.

- All behavior is a form of communication, including problem behavior. For example, a child who doesn't have language skills to express himself may scream when needs aren't being met. A youth who feels unsafe or out of control may act on something she can control, like destroying property.
- Behavior is learned and motivated based on the interaction of various physical, mental, social, and emotional factors. For example, a tired and hungry child may react or over-react to a situation that would not bother him if he were rested and well-fed.
- People behave in ways that make sense to them; that is, ways that worked for them in the past. If a child hits another child to get attention, she does so because this has worked before.
- Behavior is influenced by many things: our needs, experiences, self-concept, and relationship with peers and adults. Behavior is also influenced by our home lives (especially for children) our environment (neighborhood, school) and some disabilities.

"What else influences behavior? The age characteristics—physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development—also help determine behavior. That is, what children and youth are able to do with their bodies, how they get along in the world, how they feel, and what they are thinking also influence behavior."

II. Age Characteristics of Children and Youth

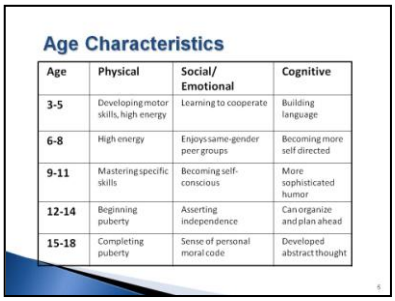
A. Overview of Age Characteristics

Tell participants: "Many of us have worries about working with children and youth, based on our experience or stories we have heard. Understanding more about typical age development will help you prepare for behavioral challenges you may come across, and plan how to best respond to them."

Explain that age characteristics can be thought of in terms of physical, social/emotional, and cognitive characteristics:

- **Physical** characteristics are related to changes in the body as the child/youth grows, such as the amount of energy and rest needed, development of coordination and motor skills, and puberty.
- **Social/emotional** characteristics are related to social skills, self esteem, a sense of belonging, and ability to regulate emotions.
- **Cognitive** characteristics are related to thinking and reasoning, things like verbal expression, conflict resolution, and problem solving.

"All children are unique and develop at their own pace, but let's talk in terms of general age characteristics. Think about the children/youth you know or have worked with."



Age Characteristics

Age	Physical	Social/ Emotional	Cognitive
3-5	Developing motor skills, high energy	Learning to cooperate	Building language
6-8	High energy	Enjoys same-gender peer groups	Becoming more self directed
9-11	Mastering specific skills	Becoming self-conscious	More sophisticated humor
12-14	Beginning puberty	Asserting independence	Can organize and plan ahead
15-18	Completing puberty	Sense of personal moral code	Developed abstract thought

Show slide 5. Review the examples of some of the characteristics associated with different ages.

TIP: Customize the pair exercise in the next section to fit your priorities. Spend more time on the age groups that most participants will be/are serving. For example, if most are working with preteen and adolescent youth, omit the discussion about children under age 9. Alternatively, if participants work with all/several ages, you may want to divide participants by age group they work with, and have them identify characteristics for children within that age group.

B. Pair Exercise: Age Characteristics

Facilitator: For this short exercise, you will need a few sheets of easel paper, one for each age group you would like the group to discuss, and a marker. Write the selected age groups (e.g. “3-5”, “6-8”, “9-11”, “12-14”, “15-18”) at the top of each sheet, one per sheet. Underneath the age group, make three columns and name them “Physical”, “Social/Emotional”, and “Cognitive” (see the example below). Participants will need scratch paper and pens.

Example

Ages 6-8 Characteristics		
Physical	Social/ Emotional	Cognitive

For each age group you would like to discuss (limit it to two age groups if possible), ask participants to work with the person next to them (e.g. “every other person, turn to your left and get a partner to work with”).

CALLOUT: “What would you say are some other characteristics of children/youth in this age group?” Invite them to try to get at least one characteristic for each of the three categories (physical, social/emotional, and cognitive) and to note their responses on a piece of paper.

After 5 minutes, ask some of the pairs to tell you what they wrote down for the age groups identified. Jot down pairs’ responses on the easel paper under the correct category (see example). Ask if there are any new additions the large group wants to add.

Example

Ages 6-8 Characteristics		
Physical	Social/ Emotional	Cognitive
High energy – get them outside!	*Likes to talk – put to use active listening skills*	*Enjoys collecting things-look for interesting things together (rocks, stamps)*

CALLOUT: “If you haven’t already done so, think about how these characteristics will influence how you relate to this group”. Give them another minute to consider the question and comment.

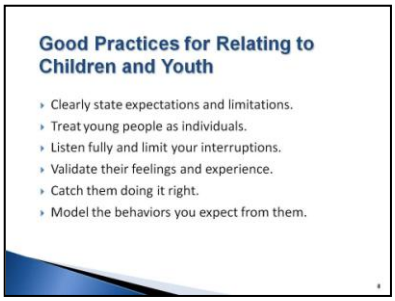
🗎 Distribute the handout *Typical Age Characteristics of Children and Youth* to each participant. You may want to refer to it to fill in any gaps from the discussion

TIP: Use this opportunity to improve understanding of age group(s). Although you will be asking participants to describe "typical" youth age characteristics, many will often respond with extreme responses due to their biggest worries or concerns. Use this discussion to help participants better understand the populations that you serve, and dispel myths that come up (e.g., teenagers don't ever like it when adults ask questions about their lives).

III. Strategies for Behavioral Challenges

A. Creating a Solid Foundation

Tell participants: "Now, let's look at the some of the components of building a relationship. It will be easier to respond to challenging behavioral situations if we can first create a foundation of trust and respect with the child or youth. Ideally, you want to spend less time managing behavior and more time celebrating success."



Show slide 6.

Before we get to specific strategies, let's remind ourselves of some good practices for interacting with children and youth that allow you to build trust and friendship, and show them that they are valued, supported and respected. These practices won't stop all challenging behavior but they can help prevent some of it.

Clearly state expectations and limits

- The first few meetings with the child are the time to set clear and consistent boundaries as a part of creating a strong relationship. It may feel like you are walking a fine line of setting limits while also building trust.
- Like all relationships, developing successful child-adult partnerships takes time. And it may take more time if the child/youth has had adults abandon or hurt them in the past.
- It may seem strange, but clearly identifying boundaries can help children and youth to feel safer.

Treat children and youth as individuals

- Get to know them and don't presume they are all alike.
- Don't make assumptions based on appearance age, economic status or other characteristics.
- Be careful of judgments that are based on stereotypes.

Listen fully and limit your interruptions.

- Use body language (eye contact, facial expressions) to show you are interested and listening.
- Ask clarifying questions but limit input unless it is requested.

Validate their feelings and experience

This does not mean approval or agreement, but it shows you understand. For example, "I understand what you are saying. You feel angry because your friend was gossiping about you…"

Catch them doing it right

- By pointing out what they are 'doing right', you will reinforce the behavior that you want to see.
- Be specific. For example, "That was very kind of you to help Melissa just now. You saw she was upset and you offered her a hug and tissues. That's a great way to show her that you are her friend."

Model the behavior you expect

Children and youth are picking up behavioral cues from you all the time; model the behaviors you expect from them. For example:

- Apologize when you make a mistake.
- Be respectful and ask for respect in return.

TIP: Panel of experienced volunteers or professionals. New volunteers are always anxious to hear real life situations. Consider putting together a panel of 2-4 successful volunteers who are willing to share their mistakes and how they handled difficult behaviors. One suggestion is to have the participants put a question down on an index card and collect those for the volunteers to address. While one volunteer responds, the other volunteers can offer their perspectives. Another volunteer can be considering the next question.

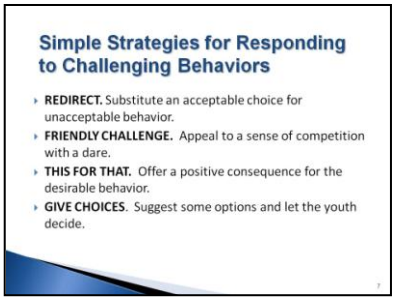
B. Responding to Challenges When They Occur

Tell participants that despite our best efforts, challenging behavioral situations arise.

"No one can provide you with a formula that will work for every child and youth in every situation. However, if you can view acting-out, irresponsible or negative behavior as a *message*–even if it is in an unpleasant form—for what the child/youth really needs, you will be better able to match a strategy, or idea, for the challenging situation." (For example, a youth that throws his books across the room may be frustrated and need access to more resources such as tutoring or counseling.)

So, let's say some challenging behavior happens, what do you do first?

- Take a big calming breathe. If the child/youth is open to it, they may need to do the same.
- Don't be afraid to pause for a moment and think.
- Sometimes stating the obvious in a calm way can help the child see what the behavior looks like. "I see you just cut off your bangs." Then wait.



Show slide 7.

"Let's look at a few examples of common strategies (ideas) for dealing with challenging behavior."

Redirect

- Substitute an acceptable choice for unacceptable behavior. "Redirect" the child/youth to a different activity or environment.
- Example: A 5 year old is banging out a drum solo with his pencil on the desk. You don't want to discourage his budding musical talent but you do need him to quiet down, so you give him a rubber "stress ball" to fidget with or invite him to stand and stretch with you.

Observe and Clarify

- Provide your observation in a nonjudgmental way and ask for clarification or suggestions. Then, stop talking and listen.
- Example: An 11 year old who throws things around when angry. After he cools down, you might say, "I noticed that when you are angry, you throw things. You seem to like throwing things. Is that true? What else could you do? If throwing things helps, what other item might you throw that wouldn't do any damage?" (e.g. sponge ball into a trash can)

This for That

- Offer a positive consequence for a desirable behavior.
- Example: An 8 year old is known to "forget" to bring his math homework for you to look over. You say: "If you remember to bring your homework on Tuesday, then I'll have time to correct it and we'll have time to work on the knitting project you were interested in seeing."

Give Choices

- Suggest some options and let the child/youth decide.
- Example: A 13 year old tells you that she plans a fight with a classmate for disrespecting her in front of a whole group of kids. You suspect she told you because she doesn't really want to fight, but she doesn't know how to back down and save face. You tell her: "Let's think over some alternatives. I can go with you right now to talk to the Peer Mediation Counselor about setting up a meeting between you and (the classmate), or you can go talk to them yourself, or we can talk with my supervisor and see if she has any suggestions. Which one will work for you?"

TIP: Customize the list of common strategies. The four strategies listed above are from a larger list of strategies in the handout, *Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavioral in Children and Youth*. Depending on the age group your volunteers serve or the challenges they are facing, you will want to check out the list and identify the strategies that best fit their assignments.

For each of the strategies, ask participants for another example for the age groups you are discussing today. For example,
CALLOUT: "When might you use the 'redirect' strategy with 6-8 years olds? Can you give me an example of a situation? What would you say to the child? What about 12-14 year olds? "

If participants are stumped, provide your own examples, or use the examples provided below.

Additional Examples (if needed)

Redirect

A 13 year old has discovered a "special website for adults" and shyly tells you about it. You realize she has questions about sex that no one has been answering. Inwardly, you are panicking, but outwardly, you calmly say, "Maya, I bet during your free period, Mrs. Jones, the health teacher, would be happy to talk to you about this. Why don't we go over there this afternoon?"

Observe and Clarify

An 8 year old is not interested in studying for her spelling test. You say, "I notice that you aren't very motivated to study today. Sometimes when I am worried I can't do something, I just don't feel very interested. I'm wondering if that is what is happening for you with the spelling words. What do you think we need to do?"

This for That

A 3 year old stomps away and does not want to join story time at the library because another child's book was chosen this time. You say, "We can stay at the library if we are able to sit in the circle. Would you like to turn the pages? Otherwise, we will be asked to leave. Shall we sit together?" If she chooses not to sit in the circle, be ready to leave!

Give Choices

You are helping a 16 year old study for a test, but he is complaining loudly and nonstop. He will fail this subject if he doesn't bring up his scores. You offer: "We can take a short break and come back to this today, or we can put it aside and finish it on Thursday during your free period and do something else now. Which do you prefer?"

After considering the four strategies, note that *Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavioral in Children and Youth* has over a dozen more and pass out the document. Give participants a minute or two to look at pages 2-3 before introducing one of the two exercise options.

"Let's look at some other examples for practice."

TIP: Modify the "Strategies" handout to include program policy reminders, if needed. Review the handout prior to the workshop. You may want to modify it to include policy reminders (or distribute a separate reminder sheet). Alternatively, you could refer to the policy sections of the program/station handbook when you discuss appropriate and inappropriate responses to behavior challenges.

C. Exercise: Strategies

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants practice strategies that address the challenging situations they may encounter.

Note: There two exercise options to consider which will meet the goal. You will only want to do one.

1. In the first option, you would use the issues/concerns generated by the group during the earlier "warm-up" discussion. One concern/issue would be posted per piece of easel paper; 4-6 would be posted around the room. This would require some quick decision-making about which of the issues generated earlier would be used and transferred to individual easel paper during the workshop. See Option 1 for instructions for this exercise.
2. The second option uses the exercise handout, *Exercise Worksheet: Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior,* and a small group format. Prior to the workshop, you will want to decide if any alterations need to be made to the worksheet. See Option 2 for instructions for this exercise.

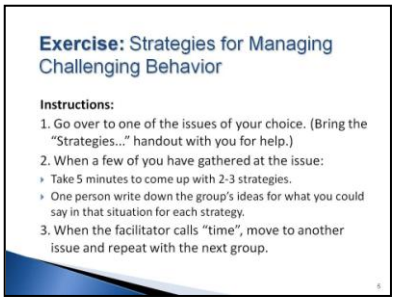
Option 1 (using group generated issues)

FOR OPTION 1, YOU WILL NEED: Post 4-6 sheets of easel paper around the room; each one with a single challenging behavior identified by the group during the "warm-up" discussion (see example below). Ideally the 4-6 issues represent common or "hot" behavior concerns that the volunteers might encounter. Make sure you have at least two markers per easel paper.

Example

Use of foul language

Strategy	I would say…



Show slide 8.

OPTION 1 INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read each of the issues posted around the room to the group.
2. With their *Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavioral in Children and Youth* handout, ask participants to move to a posted behavior issue of their choice.
3. When the group that has gathered by the issue, they should choose a recorder who can bullet out the responses.
4. In 5 minutes, each group should:
    a. Come up with 2-3 strategies they might try.
    b. State specifically what they might say to the child/youth. Come up with as many statements as possible and the age group to which they pertain (see example below).
5. After 5 minutes, have the participants find another issue. Repeat instruction #3 and #4. The recorder will add to the previous group's notes or use a blank sheet of easel paper.
6. Repeat the process a third time, if time allows.
7. After the last round, have the participant return to their seats for the "debrief".

Example

Use of foul language

Strategy	I would say…
State and Detach	*"Remember the rules. Swearing isn't allowed in here because many people find it offensive. If you continue to use that language, we will be asked to leave." (Ages 12-18)*

OPTION 1 DEBRIEF

For each of the posted issues:

1. Ask a participant to read the responses for each of the posted issues; the strategies suggested and the specific statements formulated.
2. Ask the group: "For the groups that worked on this issue, is there anything you want to clarify? For those of you that did not, are there other strategies you might try or ways you might have approached this?" Note new thoughts on easel paper.
3. "Is there anything you might need to consider before using this strategy? What might change depending on the age group?" Validate appropriate suggestions. If any suggestions are inappropriate, clarify and explain why.
4. "Can anyone see another way to handle that?"

Use this discussion to help participants share other strategies that they have used that they found helpful with the children and youth. The discussion can also be an opportunity to discuss specific limits or boundaries for volunteers (e.g., limits of physical contact with youth, such as hugging or holding their hands).

TIP: Alternative to standing. If standing and moving around to do the exercise is too taxing, put the easel pads on different tables and the participants can move to the table of their choice and sit down. If mobility is a problem, you could also move the written challenges on easel paper to different tables.

Option 2 (using exercise handout)

Determine whether you want the participants to work on behavior strategies for children under age 12, or youth age 12 and over, or both age groups.

FOR OPTION 2, YOU WILL NEED: Copies of the handout, *Exercise Worksheet: Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior*. The worksheet handout can is divided into two sections:

- Pages 1-3 include five scenarios involving children under age 12;
- Pages 3-4 describe three situations with youth ages 12 and over.

TIP: Customize the exercise. If there are particular behavior management situations you want to discuss, modify the scenarios in *Exercise Worksheet: Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior* to include those situations. Omit any situations that you feel are not appropriate or necessary to discuss.

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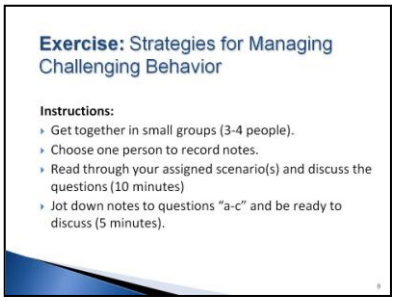


OPTION 2 INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants to get into groups of 3-4. Each group should identify a recorder to take notes.
2. Assign each group one or two situations from the worksheet to work on.
3. Ask the small groups to take 15 minutes to discuss the situations and jot down some notes.
4. After 15 minutes, bring the group back together to report their ideas to the large group.

OPTION 2 DEBRIEF

For each of the situations you assigned from the worksheet:

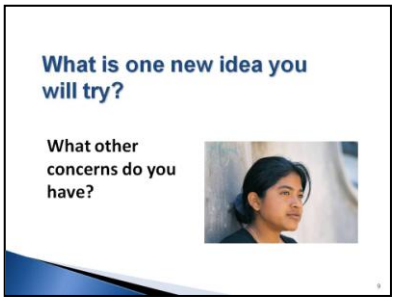
1. Ask the group(s) assigned to share what they wrote down:
   a. "How did you use the suggested strategy to address the behavior, including what specifically you would say to the child/youth?" (If the group is stuck, see suggestions in the Facilitator Notes on page 21-24.)
   b. "What other strategies might you try?"
   c. "Is there anything you might need to consider before using this strategy?"

2. Ask the larger group if they have anything to add and use the easel paper to write down the main ideas.
3. "Is there anything you might need to consider before using this strategy?" Validate appropriate suggestions. If any suggestions are inappropriate, clarify and explain why.
4. "Can anyone see another way to handle that?"

Use this discussion to help participants think about other strategies that they have used that are helpful with the children and youth that you serve. The discussion can also be an opportunity to discuss specific limits or boundaries for volunteers (e.g., limits of physical contact with youth, such as hugging or holding their hands).

TIP: Remind participants to stay positive. As you talk about managing challenging behavior, emphasize the importance of using positive responses and language. See Module 2 of this series, "Becoming an Effective Mentor", for an exercise on how mentors can frame their responses to encourage positive youth development.

IV. Reflection: New Ideas



Show slide 10.

Look at the behavior challenges that participants said had worried them at the beginning of the workshop ("warm-up"). Have they all been addressed? If not, ask participants for ideas about how to respond in the situation(s). If the group is unsure how to respond, offer suggestions. If you are unsure how to respond, let them know that you will ask for advice from station staff and get back to them. Remind participants that they will always have a supervisor they can consult during their assignments.

CALLOUT: "What is one new idea you learned today that you will try?" Validate or clarify suggestions.

TIP: Point out how participants have supported each other during this workshop. The workshop should provide a safe space to discuss difficult situations and get ideas and support from peers. Participants may be surprised that others have experienced the same challenges.

V. Closing

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Tell participants that their patience and support can help children and youth learn positive ways to communicate their needs, and reduce challenging behavior. When children/youth feel heard and respected, and their needs are met, there is no reason to use challenging behavior. Whereas punishment can send the message that anger is the way to solve a problem, an adult who teaches and models positive ways to express needs and feelings is helping that child learn important social and problem-solving skills.

Research shows that for children and youth, having a significant caring adult in their life is a major contributor to their ability to succeed. Remind participants that regardless of the service they provide, children and youth will benefit from their love and attention, and this is the special contribution that senior volunteers make.

(Optional) Distribute the two remaining handouts:

- *Positive Reinforcement Works!*
- *Recommended Resources on Challenging Behaviors*

TIP: Customize the handouts or add your own. You may want to adapt the handouts to add your own tips and recommendations, or focus the tips and resources to address a specific age group that most of your participants are serving. You might also find information you would like to print out and distribute from the websites in the handout, *Recommended Resources on Challenging Behaviors.*

Last, ask participants to complete a *Training Feedback Survey* to help you improve the next workshop.

Ask participants if there are any more questions or last words before you close. Make any final announcements and thank participants for attending the presentation.

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR EXERCISE DEBRIEF (Option 2)

The following are a few sample responses to offer during the exercise debrief if the group gets stuck.

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 12

1. Sam. You are having lunch in the school cafeteria with Sam (6 years old), but he has a hard time sitting still. Now he has gone under the table to "look for gum".

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: REDIRECT. Substitute acceptable choice for unacceptable behavior.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Sam.

"Hey Sam, I need your help up here. Can you take this to the garbage can?"

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Sam?

This for that

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?

"Sam, if you can sit here for two more minutes, we can go to the playground."

2. Kayla. You are helping Kayla (10 years old) with a school project, due tomorrow. She is having a hard time staying "on task" and keeps getting up and walking away even though you keep trying to bring her back.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: FRIENDLY CHALLENGE. Appeal to a sense of competition with a dare.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Kayla.

"Kayla, let's see if you can stay in your seat and focused on those 3 math problems for 5 minutes. I am going to time you. Ready? Go!"

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Kayla?

Observe and Clarify

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?

"Hey, I notice that you are having a hard time focusing on your school project. What do you think is going on? What kind of help do you need?"

3. Demarco. Demarco (8 years old) doesn't want to get off the computer when his time is up. He is totally involved in a game he is playing, but other kids are waiting to use the computer.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: THIS FOR THAT. Offer a positive consequence for the desirable behavior.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Demarco.

"Demarco, if you get off of the computer now I can play a game with you before you go home."

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Demarco?

Natural Consequences

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?

"Demarco, let John use the computer now and you can sign up for time for tomorrow. Remember the rules. If you choose to stay on the computer, you will lose your computer privilege for the rest of the week."

4. Madison. You are supposed to help Madison (9 years old) practice her reading for 20 minutes today. She finds all kinds of reasons to stall until the 20 minutes are nearly up.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: GIVE CHOICES**.** Suggest some acceptable options and let the child decide.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Madison.

"Madison, you have the choice to practice your reading now and then you will have free time or you can choose to work during your free time. Which would you like?

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Madison?

Friendly challenge

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?

"Madison, let's see how many pages you can read in 20 minutes. What do you think? Up for the challenge?"

5. Zak. Zak (4 years old) has a hard time with transitions. He gets involved in an activity and gets very upset when he is told it is time to stop.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: THIS FOR THAT. Offer a positive consequence for the desirable behavior.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Zak.

"Zak, if you put away your toy right now then you can be the first in line."

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Zak?

Using a secret code

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?

Give Zak the secret code (such as blinking the lights) 1 minute before it is time to clean up. Be sure to reinforce this when it is followed up with.

YOUTH AGE 12 AND UP

1. Brandon. Brandon (12 years old) is a youth you mentor and you meet twice week. You are trying to develop a relationship with him but he is constantly "texting" and checking his phone during your time together.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: GIVE CHOICES. Suggest some options and let the youth decide.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Brandon.

"Brandon, you can either leave your phone in the car, I can hold it for you, or you can turn it off and put it in your backpack. What works for you?"

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Brandon?

State the expectations and detach

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?

"Brandon, texting and checking your phone is not allowed during our time. Please put your phone away. If you choose to continue taking out your phone, I will need to ask you to leave it at home next time."

2. Maya. Maya (16 years old) is a youth you mentor and she is supposed to meet with you for at least one hour a week. She often shows up late, cutting into your time together, and sometimes she doesn't show up at all.

Strategy Suggestion: STATE AND DETACH. State your expectations, stay out of any arguments, restate expectations, and then disengage.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Maya.

"Maya, it is important for you to be on time for our meetings. If you show up more than 10 minutes late, I will need to cancel our session."

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Maya?

Observe and clarify

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?

"Maya, I notice that you are often late or missing for our sessions. I know you remember that we both made the commitment to be on time for our meetings. What do you think is interfering with this commitment? What can we do?"

3. LaTonya. LaTonya (14 years old) is usually in a good mood when you meet but today she comes in angry. When you ask what is wrong, she starts swearing at you.

Strategy Suggestion: OBSERVE AND CLARIFY. Provide an observation in a nonjudgmental way and ask for clarification or suggestions.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to LaTonya.

"LaTonya, it is clear to me that you are really upset. Can you help me understand what is happening to you today?" Later, after LaTonya has calmed down, you might remind her about the agreement not to swear and together explore other options for managing anger.

b. Is there another strategy you might try with LaTonya?

Give choices

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?

"LaTonya, I can see that you are clearly upset, however, swearing at me is not appropriate. You can either tell me what you are upset about without swearing or you can go and take two minutes to cool down and then come back. What works better for you?"

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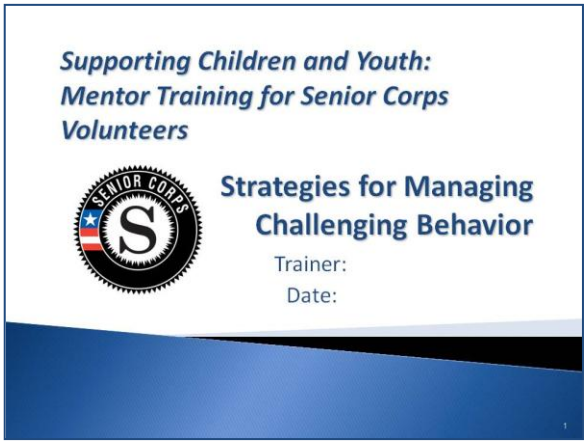
Module 5 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

1. Typical Age Characteristics of Children and Youth
2. Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavioral in Children and Youth
3. Exercise Worksheet: Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior
4. Positive Reinforcement Works! (optional)
5. Recommended Resources on Challenging Behaviors (optional)
6. Training Feedback Survey



Typical Age Characteristics of Children and Youth

Below is a list of some general characteristics typical of children and youth in different age groups. Keep in mind that children are unique and develop at different paces.

Age: 3-5 years

- **Physical**: May require rest after high energy activity, developing coordination, developing gross motor skills (walking, balancing, skipping, jumping, throwing a ball), developing fine motor skills (use a writing tool, using toys that require finger coordination such as beads or puzzles).
- **Social/Emotional:** Eager to receive adult praise, likes to explore new activities, likes to copy older children, may be timid in new environments or with new people, learning to cooperate, likes responsibilities they can handle, can play with others but is still self centered.
- **Cognitive:** Understands language better and learning to speak, beginning to express needs in words, interested in the present, eager to learn, asks "why", defines things by their use, developing a sense of humor, needs adult guidance when starting a new task.

Age: 6-8 years

- **Physical**: high energy levels, practicing lots of new activities, developing more difficult gross and fine motor skills.
- **Social/Emotional:** Beginning to compare self to others, beginning to want self improvement, likes responsibility, likes to be with groups and wants to belong, developing peer group (same gender), typically has a best friend.
- **Cognitive:** Likes to talk, developing a sense of time, enjoys collecting, learning problem solving, learning to plan ahead, becoming more self directed, learning to appreciate differences, strict sense of right and wrong.

Age: 9-11 years

- **Physical:** May be careless about clothes or hygiene, enjoys mastering specific skills, generally high activity, girls have a growth spurt.
- **Social/Emotional:** Competitive with peers, anxious to grow up, loyal to peer group, asserts independence, may be critical of peers and adults, beginning to be self-conscious.
- **Cognitive:** Asks questions expecting thoughtful answers, beginning to understand others' point of view, more complex problem solving, likes rule-based games, beginning to understand more global issues, enjoys daydreaming, more developed humor.

Age: 12-14 years

- **Physical:** Rapid growth may create awkwardness, beginning puberty, tires easily, increased appetite, may participate in fads (e.g., clothing styles).
- **Social/Emotional:** Sensitive to appearance, developing a personal moral code (sense of right and wrong), beginning to develop identity, critical of parents, strong desire to assert independence.
- **Cognitive:** Abstract thought development, thinking about future self, needs freedom for reflection, can organize and plan ahead, understands bigger social issues.

Age: 15-18 years

- **Physical:** Completing puberty, tires easily, increased appetite, participates in fads (e.g., clothing or music), testing with riskier behaviors (e.g., alcohol or sex).
- **Social/Emotional**: Very critical of adults and parents, strong personal moral code (sense of right and wrong), continued desire for independence, desires status in social group, wants to be recognized as unique, developing romantic relationships, still sensitive to criticism and appearance.
- **Cognitive:** Future oriented, self directed, developed abstract thought, well developed community awareness and activism.

Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior in Children and Youth

Handling a child or youth's challenging behavior can be difficult. No one can provide you with a formula that will work in every situation, but here are some ideas that have proven to work in different situations. Keep in mind:

- It is not your job to discipline the child.
- You play an important role in encouraging and reinforcing positive behaviors. Model and teach the child/youth how to communicate needs in a positive, acceptable way.
- You are not alone. Do not hesitate to ask your supervisor for help whenever you are unsure of the appropriate action.

Good practices to support positive interactions

Treat children and youth as individuals. Get to know them and don't presume they are all alike. For example, don't make assumptions based on appearance. Find out what is important to the child or youth you are mentoring so you can better relate.

Clearly state expectations and limits. This will help to prevent misunderstandings later.

Listen fully to the child/youth and limit your interruptions. Show through your body language that you are listening (eye contact, interested facial expression, etc.).

Validate their feelings and experience. This does not mean approval or agreement, but it shows you sympathize and take them seriously. For example, "I understand what you are saying. You feel angry because…"

Empathize. You can imagine how a child or youth feels and encourage them to talk about it. Be sensitive to their needs and be aware of how they react to you.

Model appropriate behavior. Children and youth are picking up cues from you; model the behaviors you expect from them. For example, apologize when you make a mistake or hurt someone accidentally. Be respectful and ask for respect in return.

Reinforce desirable behavior. A smile, gesture, or a brief word is often all that is needed to encourage that behavior.

Allow the child/youth to be "experts" sometimes. For example, ask for advice about something you are genuinely unsure of (e.g. "how does that gadget work?").

Allow the child/youth to "save face." For example, when s/he makes a mistake and feels bad about it already, let it pass without a "hope you learned your lesson" speech.

Help children and youth find ways to make a meaningful contribution to their community. For example, encourage them to get involved in a service learning project with you or with their peers (e.g. community gardening or mural painting, park restoration, etc.).

Help them set personal goals where they can take safe risks and achieve success. This builds self confidence and develops new interests.

Keep your commitments and never break a promise. This is especially important when working with children and youth who do not have reliable adults in their lives.

When a Challenging Behavior Occurs

Strategies for all ages

Use non-verbal cues.

- When: You can see a situation is going to arise. Before responding verbally, it may be possible to eliminate it by making your disapproval clear. Eye contact, complete with a frown, may send the message without embarrassing the child/youth. Often, positioning yourself near the child/youth will discourage the unwelcome behavior.
- Example: The youth begins to respond defensively when you ask him/her to help clean up. Simply raising your eyebrows without a verbal response may be enough to gain compliance.

Give choices *within limits*.

- When: The child/youth is not doing what's expected and the situation has not escalated.
- Example: "You can clean up your snack on your own or I can help you." "You can tell your mom about the fight by yourself, John or I accompany you. What would you like to do?"

Redirect and substitute an acceptable choice for the unacceptable one.

- When: The child/youth is doing something they shouldn't (e.g., running around the room or playing loud music). Sometimes problems result from dissatisfaction or boredom. If possible, consider a change of activity.)
- Example: "Please remember to walk in the classroom. Would you help me to set up chairs?" "You are welcome to listen to music at our agreed upon level. Are you ready to start the game?"

Use cool-off periods.

- When: The child/youth is too silly or angry.
- Example: "Let's take two minutes to listen to some music (or read, run around, etc.)." After two minutes give a clear reason why you had the break. Positively state the desired behavior and have the child/youth restate desired behavior."

Observe and clarify. *Provide your observation in a calm and nonjudgmental way and ask for clarification and/or suggestions.*

- When: The child/youth is having trouble cooperating or challenging behavior continues.
- Example: "You just poked two other students on your way over to my desk. I'm wondering if you are feeling angry. What happened before class? What else could you do besides poke people?" Encourage child/youth to consider ideas to resolve the situation.

Allow for natural consequences**.** *State consequences up-front in nonjudgmental way and then let the child/youth experience them.*

- When: The child/youth is testing limits (not safety related).
- Example: "We won't have time to play an extra game today because you didn't get cleaned up on time, but let's try again next week!" "Wow, since you broke the door knob, you are going to have to learn how to fix it." "By preparing your backpack so well, you found your assignments quickly."

Talk with teacher, *program staff, or parent (if appropriate)***.**

- When: Lower levels of responses have not worked or when the child/youth continue to defy authority. Do not use this as a threat.
- Example: "It seems that we are continuing to have this problem and I am out of ideas. Let's go and talk with your teacher to see if she has some suggestions that might help us."

Strategies that may work better with different age groups

Use a secret signal *or a "code" to prompt child.*

- Age: 3-9 years old
- When: The child has trouble with self-control or needs special reassurance. Use a wink of an eye or thumbs up.
- Example: The youth is picking up the supplies after an activity and you give a thumbs up sign.

Smoothing *helps you to validate the child's feelings while encouraging him/her to complete the task.*

- Age: 3-9 years old, or older youth if they are acting younger than their age
- When: You have only a small amount of time or child is uncooperative.
- Example: "I know you are tired, but let's get through this last 5 minutes and we can rest!"

Use a special activity.

- Age: 3-9
- When: The child is cranky or argumentative.
- Example: Read a favorite book together.

This for that. *Offer a positive consequence for the desirable behavior.*

- Age: 6-11 years
- When: The child/youth is not doing what's expected.
- Example: "If you can help me out, I'll help you with your clean-up."

Friendly challenge

- Age: 6-11 years old.
- When: The child/youth is not cooperating or losing interest in the task. Use light-hearted competition with caution; some children/youth will perceive this as an opportunity to fail.
- Example: "Do you think you can clean up (complete the paragraph, finish the chapter) in five minutes? Ready? Go!"

Give Information *to help child understand what s/he should be doing in a nonjudgmental way*.

- Age: 7-12 years old
- When: The child/youth is not doing what is expected.
- Example: "When you hold a large bowl, you need to use two hands." Or "When we listen to music inside it needs to be at volume level 13 or lower."

State and Detach

- Age: 12-18 years old
- When: The youth is resisting necessary rules. State the expectations, stay out of any arguments, restate expectations, and then disengage. Help the youth understand the consequences of their decisions.
- Example: "Chewing tobacco is not allowed here. Throw it out and then we can discuss what the next steps will be. I will be waiting over here."

Strategies for Children and Youth with Additional Needs

Many of the common strategies for managing challenging behavior also work with children and youth with special needs. However, some children and youth have behavioral disorders that stem from mental illnesses, others from physical or learning challenges, and these may require additional support. Here are a few tips for assisting these children and youth:

- **Identify triggers.** Ask the teacher or supervisor what strategies work with this individual, and what "triggers" challenging behavior. Remember to always focus on the person first, and then the special need, so that the need does not define the person (e.g. rather than referring to a student as "autistic", say a "student with autism"; a child has special needs, not a special needs child).
- **Request background information**. Ask the child/youth what you need to know and how you can be more helpful.
- **State expectations.** Be very clear and consistent with your expectations. For example, telling a child to "pay attention" does not always work; younger children will not know what that means. Instead, give specifics: "Please show you are listening by looking at __."
- **Keep it simple.** Only use 2-3 directions at a time. Consider "chunking" or breaking tasks up into smaller, more manageable pieces.
- **Try something else.** If it seems that you have to keep repeating yourself, be patient, or try another approach. For instance, instead of making a verbal request, jointly put together a written "to do" list or make stick figures engaged in the activities.
- **Use the child/youth's strengths.** Note different learning approaches or the way the child/youth connects. For example, for the physical (kinesthetic) learner have something available to touch (e.g., a stress ball, pipe cleaners to twist).
- **Note positive behaviors.** Give lots of positive reinforcement. For example, "You remembered that we push in our chairs before we leave the room. Thank you."
- **Breathe**. Don't take things too personally.

Exercise Worksheet: Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior CHILDREN UNDER AGE 12

As you work with children, you may find yourself in situations like the ones described below. This exercise is designed to help you mentally prepare for those situations.

Instructions: Read the situations and suggested strategies (ideas) and discuss with your group.

- Jot down some ideas on how you might handle the behavior using the strategy suggested. What specifically would you say to the child/youth? Practice saying it aloud. How does it feel?
- If you have another strategy you feel would work better, note some ideas and be ready to discuss.

1. Sam. You are having lunch in the school cafeteria with Sam (6 years old), but he has a hard time sitting still. Now he has gone under the table to "look for gum".

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: REDIRECT. Substitute acceptable choice for unacceptable behavior.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Sam. _____

_____

_____

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Sam? _____

_____

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?_____

_____

2. Kayla. You are helping Kayla (10 years old) with a school project, due tomorrow. She is having a hard time staying "on task" and keeps getting up and walking away even though you keep trying to bring her back.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: FRIENDLY CHALLENGE. Appeal to a sense of competition with a dare.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Kayla. _____

_____

_____

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Kayla? _____

_____

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?_____

_____

3. Demarco. Demarco (8 years old) doesn't want to get off the computer when his time is up. He is totally involved in a game he is playing, but other kids are waiting to use the computer.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: THIS FOR THAT. Offer a positive consequence for the desirable behavior.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Demarco. _____

_____

_____

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Demarco? _____

_____

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?_____

_____

4. Madison. You are supposed to help Madison (9 years old) practice her reading for 20 minutes today. She finds all kinds of reasons to stall until the 20 minutes are nearly up.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: GIVE CHOICES. Suggest some options and let the child decide.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Madison. _____

_____

_____

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Madison? _____

_____

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?_____

_____

5. Zak. Zak (4 years old) has a hard time with transitions. He gets involved in an activity and gets very upset when he is told it is time to stop.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: THIS FOR THAT. Offer a positive consequence for the desirable behavior.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Zak. _____

_____

_____

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Zak? _____

_____

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?_____

_____

Exercise Worksheet: Strategies for Managing Challenging Behavior YOUTH AGE 12 AND UP

As you work with youth, you may find yourself in situations like the ones described below. This exercise is designed to help you mentally prepare for those situations.

Instructions: Read the situations and suggested strategies (ideas) and discuss with your group.

- Jot down some ideas on how you might handle the behavior using the strategy suggested. What specifically would you say to the child/youth? Practice saying it aloud. How does it feel?
- If you have another strategy you feel would work better, note some ideas and be ready to discuss.

1. Brandon. Brandon (12 years old) is a youth you mentor and you meet twice week. You are trying to develop a relationship with him but he is constantly "texting" and checking his phone during your time together.

Strategy (Idea) Suggestion: GIVE CHOICES. Suggest some options and let the youth decide.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Brandon. _____

_____

_____

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Brandon? _____

_____

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?_____

_____

2. Maya. Maya (16 years old) is a youth you mentor and she is supposed to meet with you for at least one hour a week. She often shows up late, cutting into your time together, and sometimes she doesn't show up at all.

Strategy Suggestion: STATE AND DETACH. State your expectations, stay out of any arguments, restate expectations, and then disengage.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to Maya. _____

_____

_____

b. Is there another strategy you might try with Maya? _____

_____

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?_____

_____

3. LaTonya. LaTonya (14 years old) is usually in a good mood when you meet but today she comes in angry. When you ask what is wrong, she starts swearing at you.

Strategy Suggestion: OBSERVE AND CLARIFY. Provide an observation in a nonjudgmental way and ask for clarification or suggestions.

a. Describe how you might handle this situation using the suggested strategy. State specifically what you will say to LaTonya. _____

_____

_____

b. Is there another strategy you might try with LaTonya? _____

_____

c. If yes, what specifically will you say?_____

_____

Positive Reinforcement Works!

We believe every child wants to:

Feel successful
Be included
Be accepted
Be loved
Feel important
Contribute in a meaningful way

Children communicate for different reasons:

Need for peer attention
Need for adult attention
Peer avoidance
Adult avoidance
Academic avoidance
Sensory fulfillment

Catch Them! Remember to catch students when they are displaying appropriate, positive behaviors! Everyone likes to be acknowledged for doing a good job!

LITTLE THINGS THAT CAN HELP INCREASE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR:

- ❒ Greet each student
- ❒ Call each student by name
- ❒ Use eye contact
- ❒ Focus on successes
- ❒ **Use 5 positives to each negative!**
- ❒ Give clear expectations
- ❒ Model what the expectations looks like
- ☺ SMILE!

TO AVOID A CONFLICT CYCLE, USE:

Empathy - Understand feelings and actions

Genuineness - Be consistent, dependable, and real

Positive Regard - Conveying caring and interest

Concreteness - Using specific clear language

Unconditional Acceptance - Approving the person, not the behavior

Provided by Friends Foster Grandparent Program, Concord, New Hampshire (April 2011)

Recommended Resources on Challenging Behaviors

Techniques and Strategies for Managing Challenging Behaviors

If you serve in a classroom, these are some techniques you may see the teacher use to influence behavior, from The Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Center at Old Dominion University:
http://www.ttac.odu.edu/Articles/influence_tech.html

If you serve young children, you may find this article helpful. "What We Say to Children: The First Step to Managing Challenging Behaviors" was written by Tom Udell, Pam Deardorff and Gary Glasenapp for The Teaching Research Institute and The Oregon Inclusion Center's Early Childhood Newsletter (winter 1998): http://www.tr.wou.edu/train/winter98.htm

The Circle of Parents program is aimed at parents but they do have short tip sheets in English and Spanish for different behavior challenges that volunteers may find enlightening. See "The Power of Choice" and "Say What You Mean, Mean What You Say":
http://www.circleofparents.org/parent_resources/index.shtml

General Child/Youth Development

The Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets describe qualities and positive experiences for children and youth, by age group, including suggested activities that adults can do to help build them: http://www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets.

Conflict Resolution

Books:

- Raising a Thinking Child: Help your Young Child to Resolve Everyday Conflicts and Get Along with Others. Myrna B. Shure with Theresa Foy DiGeronimo. New York : H. Holt, 1994.

- Raising a thinking preteen: the "I can problem solve" program for 8- to 12- year-olds. Myrna B. Shure with Roberta Israeloff. New York : Henry Holt, 2000.

Health Issues, Self Esteem and Body Image

KidsHealth provides information and advice on a wide range of physical, emotional, and behavioral issues that affect children and teens, including nutrition and fitness, self-destructive or risky behavior, .anxiety, stress, and cyberbullying. KidsHealth is part of The Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media: http://kidshealth.org/

The Palo Alto Medical Foundation for Health Care, Research and Education is a not-for-profit health care organization based in Northern California. Their website provides health education aimed at parents and teens on a variety of topics; this page has information on self esteem and body image in adolescents, and includes additional recommended websites:
http://www.pamf.org/parents/general/selfesteem.html

Mental Health

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), provides information and resources on child and adolescent mental health for the general public and health professionals: http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml

The mission of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on communities: www.samhsa.gov. SAMHSA provides resources to educate and raise awareness about children's mental health: http://www.samhsa.gov/children/, including resources on challenging behavior in early childhood: http://www.samhsa.gov/children/earlychildhood_challengingbehavior.aspx.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is a mental health advocacy organization that provides easy-to-understand information about mental illnesses, treatments, programs, and support groups: www.nami.org.

Bullying

StopBullying.gov provides information from various government agencies on how children and youth, parents, educators, and others in the community can prevent or stop bullying. Age-appropriate information is presented for these different groups. The website is managed by the Department of Health and Human Services in cooperation with the Department of Education and Department of Justice: www.Bullyinginfo.org.

Programs and Resources

FindYouthInfo.gov was created by the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP), which is composed of representatives from 12 Federal agencies that support programs and services focusing on youth. The website provides information, strategies, tools, and resources: www.findyouthinfo.org

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name:_____ Date:_____

Lead Facilitator:_____

Program you serve with: ❒ Foster Grandparent ❒ RSVP ❒ Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. The subject matter was presented effectively.					
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable.					
3. The facilitator responded to questions.					
4. There were enough opportunities for discussion.					
5. The written materials are useful.					
6. The session met my expectations.					
7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment.					
8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session.					

9. What did you like best about this session?

_____

_____

_____

10. What would have improved this session?

_____

_____

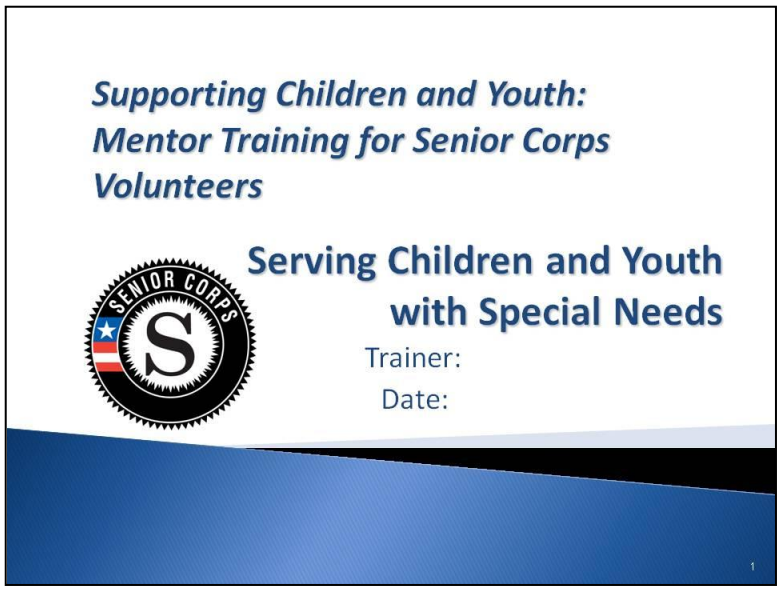
_____

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Module 6

Serving Children and Youth with Special Needs



Module 6. Serving Children and Youth with Special Needs

INTRODUCTION

Foster Grandparents and RSVP volunteers are the caring adults that provide one-on-one attention and encouragement to children and youth with special needs. In this module, the term "special needs" refers to the individual's challenges, such as a learning disability, as well as situational circumstances that put them at a disadvantage, such as poverty. This workshop provides an introduction to some of those needs.

You do not need to use this workshop "as is." It is recommended that you tailor this workshop to focus on the special needs your volunteers will most often see. This module includes a handout with recommended resources for more information on different needs. You may also want to invite a guest speaker with knowledge of a particular special need to talk to your volunteers. Stations/supervisors will likely provide additional on-site child- and disability-specific training to volunteers.

This workshop includes a brief lecture, a small group exercise, and a short reflection activity. It is recommended that you do a full 2-hour workshop to allow more time for group discussion.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will better understand:

- Some key special needs of children/youth that volunteers serve
- Situational or family circumstances that can contribute to challenges that children and youth face
- How volunteers can help children and youth build resilience

Visual Aids (Power Point) and Facilitator's Notes

If you are using the PowerPoint slides included with this curriculum, Facilitator's Notes are provided under each slide These notes provide the same information as the Facilitator's Notes included in this document, however they are not as detailed.

It is recommended that you use easel paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to note responses to some of the "callout" questions and important points that participants make during the exercise "debrief." This validates participants' knowledge and reinforces learning. You may want to write the headings on sheets of easel paper in advance to save time.

This symbol will cue you as to when you might jot down responses:

Handouts

The handouts for this session follow the Facilitator's Notes and Instructions. Handouts 1-5 should be distributed during the session; this symbol in the Facilitator's Notes will cue you as to when: 🗎. The last handout, *Training Feedback Survey*, is recommended for the end of the session.

1. What are Learning Disabilities? (optional)
2. Exercise Role Play Cards
3. Tips for Helping Children and Youth Build Resilience
4. Reflection: Use Your Past Experience for Inspiration
5. Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Children and Youth with Special Needs (optional)
6. Training Feedback Survey

How to Modify the Workshop to Expand or Add a Special Need Topic

This module provides an introduction to several special needs that volunteers may see during their service. You may wish to modify the workshop to expand on a particular special need introduced here, or include a new issue not addressed here. Below are some tips for revising this workshop, if you choose to do so:

1. Review the module's facilitator notes and determine which special needs you would like to expand on, and which needs you do not want to include.
2. You may want to add lecture content for a new special needs topic, or expand on the information already included here. For each need you want to discuss, assume you will need 10-15 minutes for a mini-lecture. The "Recommended Resources" handout included in this module lists websites that you may find helpful.
3. Because a large percentage of the children served by Senior Corps have learning disabilities, this module does go into more detail in that section than the other special needs introduced. You may want to view that section as an example if you plan to add a new mini-lecture.
4. As you develop or expand a mini-lecture, include large group "call outs" or pair sharing to keep the group involved in the discussion. Example: "Has anyone worked with a child or youth with ___? What did you do to assist this child or youth? Share one thing with your partner."
5. As an alternative to putting together a mini-lecture on a topic, consider inviting a guest speaker who has expertise in the special need you want to talk about. Ask the speaker to bring written materials (a simple handout) that can be distributed.
6. If you decide to use the PowerPoint slides, don't forget to modify them to fit your lecture.
7. You may want to modify the resiliency "role play" exercise included here. The role play cards for the exercise offer eight different examples. Determine which role play cards are appropriate for your group and the special need(s) you want them to think about, and modify or add new role play cards as needed.

8. This module has a handout on assisting children/youth with learning disabilities. You may wish to provide additional handouts on other special needs. Talk to stations about using the materials they distribute to the public. If you are developing your own written material, you may find websites that develop information for the general public helpful (e.g. National Association of School Psychologists: http://www.nasponline.org/index.aspx)
9. If your volunteers serve children with many special needs or they serve both children and youth, consider repeating this workshop but focusing on different special needs or age groups each time.

SESSION AGENDA

Activity	Estimated Time	Method	Slide Numbers
I. Welcome	**20 min.**		1
A. Learning Objectives	5 min.	Lecture	2
B. Warm-up: Working with Children and Youth with Special Needs	15 min.	Large group discussion	3
II. Special Needs	**30 min.**		--
A. Individual Needs 🗎 *What are Learning Disabilities?* (optional)	15 min.	Lecture	4-5
B. Challenging Circumstances/Family Situation	15 min.	Lecture	6
III. Resilience	**45 min.**		--
A. What is Resilience?	5 min.	Lecture	7-8
B. Exercise: Role Play 🗎 *Exercise Role Play Cards* 🗎 *Tips for Helping Children and Youth Build Resilience*	20 min. 20 min.	Small groups of 3-4 Debrief, large group discussion	9-11
IV. Reflection: **Use Your Past Experience** 🗎 *Reflection: Use Your Past Experience for Inspiration*	**15 min.**	Individuals, pairs	12
V. Closing 🗎 *Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Children and Youth with Special Needs* (optional) 🗎 *Training Feedback Survey*	**10 min.**	Lecture	13

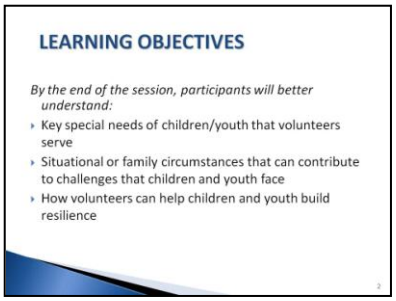
FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS

If you are using the PowerPoint slides, have slide 1 up on the screen.

I. Welcome

Welcome participants and introduce the workshop: "Foster Grandparents and RSVP volunteers are the caring adults that provide one-on-one attention and encouragement to children with special needs or challenging situational circumstances. This workshop provides an overview of some of those needs and how you can help."

A. Learning Objectives



Show slide 2.

Describe the learning objectives. In this workshop, participants will be introduced to and discuss:

- Key special needs of children/youth that volunteers serve
- Situational or family circumstances that can contribute to challenges that children and youth face
- How volunteers can help children and youth build resiliency

B. Warm-up: Working with Children and Youth with Special Needs

Show slide 3.

CALLOUT: "What do you think of when you hear the term 'special needs'? What do we mean by children or youth with special needs?"

Participants may think of "special needs" in terms of limitations. Emphasize the importance of seeing each child/youth as an individual first, rather than the need or label. Participants should get to know their child/youth's unique and individual personality and abilities so they can effectively mentor.

CALLOUT: "When you were in school, how were kids with special needs educated? Were they in your class?" "How is it different now?"

Participants may say that children with special needs were in a different school, not integrated into the school or classroom. This is one important change in public school education in the last 30 years. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that all eligible children and youth with disabilities have access to a free public education. The thinking behind this is that regardless of a child's special needs, they want and deserve opportunities to learn, make friends, to be included and accepted. Many students are mainstreamed into the general population with supplemental instruction to address additional specific needs. This also helps children without disabilities learn about and be comfortable around their peers with different abilities.

CALLOUT: "What concerns or worries do you have about serving these children and youth?"

Participants might be concerned that the child/youth has needs that are beyond their skills to help. Assure them that station staff or supervisors will be there to provide support and advice on individual children/youth.

TIP: Note participants' concerns on a sheet of paper for future reference. You may want to debrief with station supervisors after the workshop and let them know some of the concerns you heard from participants. You may also want to note particular misconceptions repeated by participants so that you can talk directly to them or give stations a "heads up" about the misconceptions they might encounter.

"Let's talk about some of the children and youth with special needs you may be serving..."

II. Special Needs

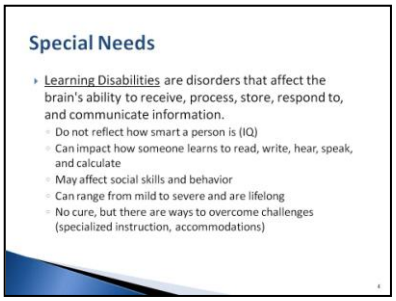
Tell participants that Foster Grandparents and RSVP volunteers serve children and youth with a wide range of special needs, including multiple challenges. Note that we are using the term "special needs" to refer to the individual's challenges, such as a learning disability, and circumstances that are challenging, such as poverty.

"First, let's talk about special needs like disabilities that affect individuals; then we will talk about circumstances that affect children and youth."

A. Individual Needs

Learning Disabilities

Show slide 4.



Tell participants almost half (43%) of students receiving special education services in the public schools have learning disabilities. In fact, of children with special needs served by Foster Grandparents, the most common need is learning disabilities; 25% of children served in 2008 had learning disabilities (*Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) National Overview 2008*).

TIP: Use local information. Talk about the numbers of children and youth with learning disabilities – or any other special need discussed in this module— that volunteers in your community serve. This gives the participants some context as to the extent of the issue in your community and how volunteers are assisting.

(Optional) Distribute the handout *What are Learning Disabilities?*

<u>What are learning disabilities?</u>

People with learning disabilities may struggle to keep up with their peers in basic academic skills and other daily functions.

- Learning disabilities are more than a difference or difficulty with learning; they are actually a group of neurological disorders that affect the brain's ability to receive, process, store, respond to, and communicate information.
- A learning disability may affect listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, math, and social skills.
- Most people with learning disabilities have trouble reading.

- People may have one or more learning disabilities.
- Learning disabilities vary from person to person and they can range from mild to severe.
- Learning disabilities are more common in boys than girls.
- Learning disabilities are not the same as mental retardation or autism. People with learning disabilities are of average or above-average intelligence.
- Many people with learning disabilities (about one-third) are also diagnosed as having Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD).
- A learning disability is not something that can be outgrown; it is a lifelong challenge that, with help, can be managed. Children with learning disabilities become adults with learning disabilities.

What causes it?

Learning disabilities tend to run in families, so some types may be hereditary. Injuries before birth or in the early years may also account for some learning disabilities. However, research still has a long way to go in understanding the causes.

How do people experience learning disabilities?

Learning disabilities tend to affect spoken language (listening and speaking), written language (reading, writing, spelling), arithmetic (doing math, understanding basic concepts), reasoning (organizing and putting together thoughts), and memory, including remembering instructions.

TIP. Provide an exercise so participants can experience disability. For example, have participants put something in their mouth, such as a marshmallow, and try to repeat a statement to experience speaking difficulties. Or give participants a short worksheet of easy math problems; in pairs. Have one person try to complete the math problems while the other person tries to distract them by talking or shouting.

CALLOUT: "How many of you know someone with a learning disability, or may have a learning disability yourself?" "How did it affect that person/you?"

Validate participants' experiences. If not mentioned, note the following examples of how people experience learning disabilities:

- Spoken language/listening: People may need more time to process language, or may not be able to listen and take notes at the same time.
- Written language/reading: Visual perception (the meaning you assign to what you are looking at) might be affected. Decoding letters and other symbols might be difficult, so this adds to the time it takes to read. People may struggle to understand what they are reading because of all the effort they are taking to decode the text.
- Written language/writing: Visual-motor coordination affects writing ability; if the eyes and hands are sending mixed messages to the brain, it is extremely hard to write.

How is it treated now?

Tell participants that learning disabilities cannot be "cured" by medication, therapy, or expert tutoring. However, as awareness and screening improve, assistance with specific skills or accommodations can be improved.

At school, students can get specialized instruction that is tailored to their needs. They can get accommodations (e.g. more time to take a test, readers, note takers, audio recordings) or modifications (e.g. shorter tests or different assignments).

Volunteers can help students with learning disabilities by working with the teacher to find out exactly what type of support the student needs. For example, a student may need to break down an assignment's tasks or directions into steps, or s/he may need reminders and memory aids for certain things.

How does this affect the children and youth we serve?

It is important for mentors serving these children and youth to understand how they may feel.

CALLOUT: "How might a learning disability affect a child/youth? What are some of the challenges and emotions a child/youth with a learning disability might experience?"

Examples:

- Children and youth with learning disabilities learn differently, and it can impact everything they do, not just school. Tasks that look simple to some may become demoralizing hurdles to others.
- Children and youth with learning disabilities can feel very anxious about their academic and social performance, which makes it even harder to do things. They may have low self esteem, feel "different" from peers, and have difficulty making friends and developing social skills.
- Some adults may not understand the situation and believe the child/youth isn't trying hard enough. Adults may feel frustrated and lose patience with them, adding to the child/youth's anxiety and low self esteem.

TIP: If you prefer more show and less tell... Check your local library for Richard Lavoie's "F.A.T. City Workshop" DVD's (PBS Video), created for educators and parents to help them understand how students with learning disabilities experience the classroom. Volunteers serving in schools might find it eye-opening.

Keep in mind...

Remind participants that learning disabilities do not have to stop a person from achieving goals. There are ways to overcome the challenges by learning new or different ways to do things. People who had learning disabilities included: Albert Einstein, Ludwig Von Beethoven, Louis Pasteur, Agatha Christie, and Winston Churchill.

In addition, some researchers believe that healthy social and emotional skills (e.g., coping skills, ability to develop meaningful relationships) are the most likely predictors of success for people with learning disabilities, even more than academic skills. Volunteers and other caring adults can help children and youth develop these skills.

TIP: Remind participants that words matter, especially when you are a role model to children. We are living in a label-obsessed time which can be both hurtful and limiting to those who are the object of the label. Of course, you would always speak of someone by name, not by calling forth their disability. However, when you do need to identify someone with a special need, put the person first. This way, the need does not define that person. For example, a "youth with Asperger's syndrome" is better than saying an "Asperger's youth". This is important for the children without special needs to hear as well, because they are learning how to relate to others.

Show slide 5.

(**NOTE TO FACILITATOR:** The remainder of this section contains a very brief overview of other special needs: Attentions Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders, Intellectual Disability, Emotional Disturbance, and Physical Disabilities. Discuss only those that are most relevant to this group of participants; there will not be time to discuss all of them. For each special need you do discuss, check in with the group and ask: "Has anyone worked with a child or youth with ___? What did you do to assist this child or youth?")

Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADHD)

- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the more common childhood disorders and can continue through adolescence and adulthood.
- Symptoms include: difficulty staying focused and paying attention, difficulty controlling behavior, and hyperactivity (over-activity).
- It may be treated with medication and some type of behavior therapy that involves teaching the child how to monitor his/her behavior, improve organization, or social skills.

<u>How volunteers might help</u>

- Volunteers can assist a child/youth with ADHD by being patient, being clear and consistent with instructions or rules, and positive reinforcement.
- Some children with ADHD have a hard time with transitions (e.g. at school, between activities), so you may want to especially make yourself available at these times to help the child stay on task.

TIP: Expand on sections that interest your participants. The handout included in this module, *Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Children and Youth with Special Needs,* contains a list of websites where you can find a wealth of information written for the general public on different special needs topics. Consider repeating this workshop with different special needs.

Autism Spectrum Disorders

- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) can affect a person's communication skills, social skills, intelligence, and there can also be physical problems.
- Symptoms almost always start before the age of 3 and it is more common in boys than girls.
- There is no "typical" person with autism; the symptoms present differently in different people and can range from mild to severe. For example, people may repeat words, phrases, or behaviors, or they may be very sensitive to lights or sounds, or they might feel overwhelmed in an environment where a lot of things are happening.
- Treatment might include medications and different therapies (speech, behavior, and social skills training).

How volunteers might help

Volunteers can help a child/youth with ASD by trying to understand how that individual experiences the world, including anxieties and stressors. For example, the child/youth may:

- Become overwhelmed when presented with too many choices or when suddenly surrounded by a lot of activity
- Have trouble controlling their emotions
- Be very intelligent but have difficulty demonstrating it
- Be unable to read social cues
- Not want to be touched or held

Volunteers can help calm a child who is experiencing sensory overload or model appropriate social behaviors and provide gentle reminders as needed. However, they should keep in mind that it may take some time to make a connection.

TIP: Autism and vaccines. A belief persists that childhood vaccines cause autism, especially the MMR vaccine for measles-mumps- rubella. To date, studies have **not** shown any link between vaccines and autism ("Journal Retracts 1998 Paper Linking Autism to Vaccines", New York Times, February 3, 2010). **Learn more about autism:** The PBS series, "Autism Now", explains what is known about autism at this time for a general audience. The website also contains resources, personal stories, and project ideas: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/news/autism/.

Intellectual Disability

- Intellectual disability is also known as a cognitive disability, developmental disability, or mental retardation.
- People with intellectual disability score below-average on a test of mental ability and are limited in areas needed for daily functioning, such as communication, self-care, and getting along in social situations and school activities.
- There may also be physical issues, such as speech impairments, vision or hearing problems, or epilepsy.
- The disability can range from mild to profound. Mild can mean a lack of curiosity and quiet behavior; profound is associated with infant-like behavior.
- Many people with intellectual disability lead productive lives and live on their own; others will always need care.
- Special education and training may include social skills to help the person function as normally and independently as possible, and develop to their potential.

TIP: More information on intellectual disabilities. It is expected that volunteers serving people with profound intellectual disabilities will receive extensive support and training from stations where they serve. For more information on intellectual and developmental disabilities, see the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Development: http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/developmental_disabilities.cfm.

How volunteers might help

- Volunteers can help by working with the teacher or supervisor to address the child/youth's individual needs.
- A volunteer might assist the child in group activities and with social skills, for example.
- Breaking down a task into steps can be helpful. Provide encouragement and allow time for the child/youth to learn something new.

TIP: If bullying is an issue at your schools… Bullies often target children and youth who "stand out" or seem different. This can be devastating for anyone, but it can be a real setback for children who are struggling to fit in already. Consider distributing information to participants on warning signs and how to help, or conducting a separate workshop on this serious problem. For more information, see http://www.stopbullying.gov/ .

Emotional Disturbance

Some children and youth suffer from emotional disturbances such as depression and anxiety.

Depression

It is normal to feel down or sad at times, especially for teens. However, when the painful feelings do not go away, and interfere with a person's ability to function, it can be diagnosed as depression. For adolescents, treatment for depression can include medication and therapy.

Volunteers can help by understanding the child/youth's situation and letting him/her know you care and are listening. You can also try to encourage physical activity and healthy eating, which can improve mood.

Anxiety

Everyone feels anxious from time to time and nobody likes it. As children, we learn to prepare for life's challenges by dealing with anxious feelings. However, when someone obsessively worries with no apparent cause, they may have an anxiety disorder.

- Children and youth with an anxiety disorder do not realize that they are overreacting because the threat feels real to them.
- Symptoms might include constant fears about personal safety or the safety of loved ones, worries about school, physical symptoms related to stress such as stomach aches, difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Treatment usually involves therapy to help the child learn skills to manage anxiety, and sometimes medication.

Volunteers may be able to help children and youth develop the skills and confidence to overcome or manage fears.

- Take the fear seriously and ask if the child/youth would like talk about it. Let the child know you believe in him/her.
- Some things that have helped people deal with anxiety are: repeating positive statements ("I will be okay", "I will do well"); visualizing something pleasant (calm blue waters); and deep breathing exercises.

TIP: Mentor versus counselor. Remind your audience that they are not the professionals in charge of the child/youth's treatment plan but they are an important, caring adult. Make sure the volunteers know to whom they might talk if they are concerned about something the child/youth did or said and want to inform a professional.

Physical Disabilities

Children and youth may have physical disabilities that limit coordination, mobility, speech, vision, hearing, or other body functions.

- The physical disability can range from mild to severe.
- Individuals with physical disabilities may use "assistive technology" to help them perform daily tasks. This could be something as simple as a pencil grip or something more complex like a motorized wheelchair or computer.

Volunteers should try not to make assumptions about the child/youth's needs, but rather, find out from the child/youth and the supervisor how best to assist and when.

- It might be helpful to know how the assistive technology works (e.g. how to break down a wheelchair or maneuver it).
- There may be times when you want to assist but the child needs to learn how to do it on his own, or would prefer to do it on his own.
- Get to know the child/youth and you will better understand their needs and how they experience their surroundings.

Communication tips:

- Talk directly to the child/youth, at their level and using eye contact.
- Language changes so fast. Ask the child/youth how they describe themselves/their disability and use those words.
- To communicate with a child or youth *with a hearing disability,* always face the child and keep your mouth uncovered, use facial expressions and body language, and have a paper and pencil ready if needed.
- To communicate with a child or youth *with a visual disability*, speak clearly and be aware that the tone of your voice is also sending a message, face the person when you are speaking, announce your presence and when you are leaving, describe what you are doing and the surroundings to help them adjust, if necessary.

- Children and youth *with speech difficulties* may use pictures, facial expressions or gestures, or assistive technology to speak. Pay attention and be patient.

TIP: Distribute a list of tips for working with children/youth with physical disabilities. If a lot of the participants serve children and youth with physical disabilities, you may want to develop a handout with a list of tips (do's and don'ts) on how to assist. The University of Illinois Extension is a good resource: http://urbanext.illinois.edu/specialneeds/ .

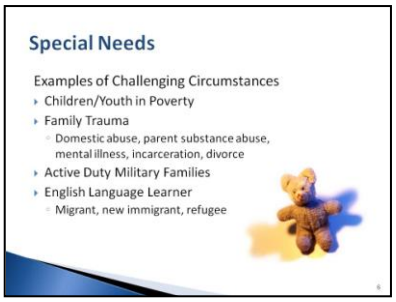
Remind the participants that station staff (supervisor, counselor, classroom teacher) can advise on activities and strategies for supporting individual children and youth while helping them maintain as much independence as possible. For example, volunteers might serve at a school's "resource room" where they work with special education teachers who are following individual educational plans for students identified as having a disability.

"Let's take a few minutes to talk about some of the challenging circumstances that can affect the children and youth we serve. Keep in mind that some of the children and youth we serve have both disabilities and challenging circumstances."

TIP: Bring in the experts. Ask a speaker from one of the stations, or another local organization, to talk about how individuals with special needs are supported in your community. What resources are available to children and families?

B. Challenging Circumstances/Family Situation

(**NOTE TO FACILITATOR:** This section contains a very brief overview of some common challenging circumstances: Children/Youth in Poverty, Family Trauma, Active Duty Military Families, and English Language Learners. Discuss only those that are most relevant to this group of participants. For each area, keep them engaged by asking the group questions to consider: "How do you think this situation affects children and youth? What would a mentor need to keep in mind?")



Show slide 6.

"These are just a few of the challenges that can affect the health and well being of children and youth we serve."

Children/Youth in Poverty

Many of the families that Senior Corps programs serve are struggling financially.

- Nationwide, over 15 million children live in families with incomes below the poverty line, which is very low ($22,050 a year for a family of four).
- Disproportionate percentages of African American, Hispanic, and American Indian children are living in poor families, as are children in immigrant families.
- Most people who experience poverty do not stay poor; only a small minority of people live in poverty that is ongoing and long lasting.
- However, millions of people are one crisis away from poverty (e.g., a divorce, job loss, or health emergency).
- Children and youth who live in poverty experience hunger and family stress due to economic hardship, which might include poor housing or homelessness, and lack of health care.
- These children are more likely to have poor health in adolescence and as adults, drop out of school, and have trouble finding work.
- The children at the greatest risk are those that live in poverty when they are young, and those who experience chronic (ongoing) severe poverty.

How volunteers might help

- Volunteers can help by spending time with a child/youth in poverty through ongoing, one-on-one mentoring.
- Mentors can provide things like: moral support (I believe in you), a sympathetic ear and non-judgmental feedback, encouragement to stay in school, among other positive support.
- Volunteers may be in a position to advocate for the child/youth and help put them in touch with resources or services in the community.

TIP: Talk about your service area. Replace or supplement the U.S. data provided here with information about the community you serve. How many children are living in poverty? How many do your volunteers support? What characteristics are important to know about the families you serve (e.g. a recent plant closure put hundreds out of work; lack of transportation is a major problem for those living in __ County)?

Family Trauma

- Many children and youth experience a traumatic or unstable home life where the adults they need cannot care for them. They may live with domestic violence, abuse, a parent with mental illness, a parent who is incarcerated or abuses alcohol or drugs.
- Children and youth who experience trauma are at risk of mental health problems. Those who have a parent that abuses alcohol have an increased risk of alcohol abuse.
- They are also at higher risk for depression, anxiety disorder, problems with cognitive and verbal skills, and parental abuse or neglect.
- Children of parents who abuse drugs or alcohol are at high risk of trauma, separation from parents, abuse and neglect.
- Children who have a parent in jail often suffer from feelings of fear, anxiety, anger, sadness, depression, and guilt that may cause emotional withdrawal, failure in school, and delinquency.
- Some children and youth may be living with overextended grandparents or another guardian or in foster care because their parents cannot raise them.

How volunteers might help

Children and youth who manage to cope in these situations often rely on support from another caring adult.

- Volunteer mentors can help by being available to listen and support their efforts to make new friends and have positive experiences outside the home.
- Volunteers can also assure them that they are not responsible for the problems of the adults in their lives, and that their lives can be different and better than their parents.

TIP: Mentor time commitments. You may want to remind participants of the importance of honoring their mentoring time commitment. Children and youth who do not have reliable adults in their lives need to know that they can depend on the mentor at least for the time period the program has promised them (e.g. a school year).

Active Duty Military Families

A child/youth who has a parent deployed during wartime is coping with that parent's absence and worry for their safety. This stress can cause depression, anger, acting out and behavior problems, and academic problems.

The deployed parent's absence puts additional stress on the remaining caretaker, especially if they do not have a strong support system. This may include economic stress as well as the responsibilities of a single parent.

How volunteers might help

- A volunteer can help by providing support to the child/youth and respite to the parent at home.
- The child/youth may need a lot of reassurance and want to talk about the deployed parent. Mentors can help younger children write letters to the parent; older children may just want someone they can talk with honestly. They may feel they can't bring up worries about the deployed parent without upsetting the parent at home.
- The most important thing is to let the child/youth know you care and are there for them.

TIP: Continue the conversation. There is another module in this series for volunteers serving military families that goes into more detail (Module 8).You may also want to distribute a list of local support services for military families, if available in your area.

English Language Learner

- Schools are working with more and more children who are beginning school with limited English language proficiency.
- Children and youth who are learning English as a second (or even third) language may be learning to read, write, listen (understand), and speak English all at one time.
- Preschool children are learning to speak, listen, and recognize letters in their family's language and English.

How volunteers might help

- Volunteers can help by first recognizing that it is not easy to learn another language.
- Volunteers should respect the child/youth's culture and show an interest in their home language (e.g. ask them to teach you a few phrases).
- If tutoring the child/youth, talk to the teacher. S/he will know the student's English language ability and be able to provide specific guidance.

The child/youth may be dealing with issues other than learning English. For example:

- New immigrants and refugees are learning how things work in a new place; some may be experiencing culture shock; others may be recovering from trauma.
- Children of migrant workers may have had their education and social ties interrupted multiple times as the family moves around.
- In some cases, the child may be the interpreter for older members of the family and feel the pressure of adult responsibilities.

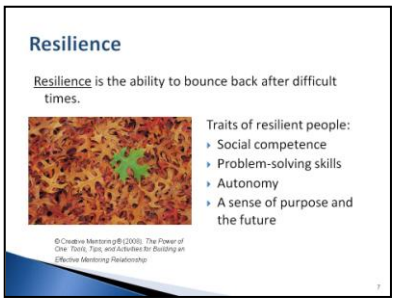
A mentor may be able to provide some respite from this pressure, help the child get involved in positive youth activities, or suggest resources to ease the family's transition.

TIP: Emphasize respect for other cultures. Are there new immigrants in your community? Do some of the participants feel uneasy about changes they are seeing in the community? If yes, you may want to set aside time to have an honest but respectful discussion about their concerns, some of which may be based on lack of knowledge or fear of change. It is important that volunteers, role models to the children and youth they serve, are *not* expressing negative or disrespectful attitudes about other cultures.

III. Resilience

"Research has shown that many children and youth who experience hardships can cope and grow to become happy, productive adults. This is called resiliency." (Participants may point out, correctly, that children and youth who experience severe or ongoing trauma, or trauma at a very young age, will need more than a mentor to help them pull through.)

A. What is Resilience?



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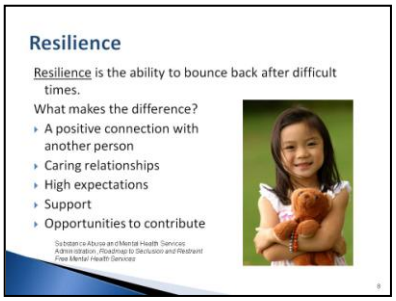
Resilient people tend to have these traits:

- Social competence (able to develop positive relationships)
- Problem-solving skills (the ability to plan, think creatively, and ask for help if needed)
- Autonomy (e.g. a strong sense of personal identity and ability to act independently)
- A sense of purpose and future (e.g. goals, purpose, optimism, hope for the future)



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For people who have come through hard times, these things made the difference:

- Most importantly, a positive connection with another person (someone who listen to them, believed in them)
- Caring relationships
- High expectations
- Adequate support
- Opportunities to contribute

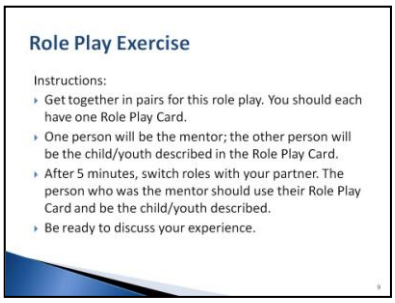
"You, as a caring adult in the child/youth's life, are in a unique position to make a difference."

B. Role Play Exercise

"Let's do a short role play exercise to practice building the traits that will help children and youth build resilience."

YOU WILL NEED: Copies of the *Exercise Role Play Cards,* one *Role Play Card* per person, easel paper and a marker for taking notes during "debrief".

TIP: Revise the Role Play examples if needed. The *Exercise Role Play Cards* contain examples of children and youth with special needs and challenging circumstances. However, you know the real situations these participants will see. Revise the *Role Play Cards* to reflect the conversations you want these mentors to practice.



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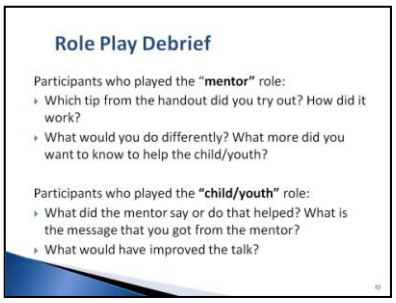
INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants to get into pairs.
2. Distribute one *Role Play Card* to each person and the 1st page to *Tips for Helping Children and Youth Build Resilience*. Explain that each card represents a child or youth that they will be playing. For the first card, the pair should quickly determine who will be the mentor and who will be the child/youth and then both should take a minute to read the role card and the tip handout. The mentor can try out one of the tips. (Each person will have a chance to play both roles.)
3. Assure the participants that when they play the mentor role, there is no "right" or "wrong" answer: "Don't over-think it; be your warm, kind self."
4. Ask the pairs to take 5 minutes for the role play. One person plays the child/youth described in their *Role Play Card*; the other person is the mentor. The mentor should greet the child/youth to start ("Hi Gracie, how are you doing today...").
5. After 5 minutes, ask the pairs to switch roles. The person who was playing the mentor now plays the child/youth, using their own *Role Play Card* this time.
6. After 5 minutes, bring the group back together for discussion.

TIP: Alternative to role play. Role playing is recommended for new mentors especially, so they can prepare for conversations with children and youth and develop confidence. While you may get some eye rolls, impress on the group how valuable it is to practice saying the words. However, if it looks like a role play is not going to work with this group, ask them to get into pairs and talk about things they would say to the child/youth described in the *Role Play Card.*



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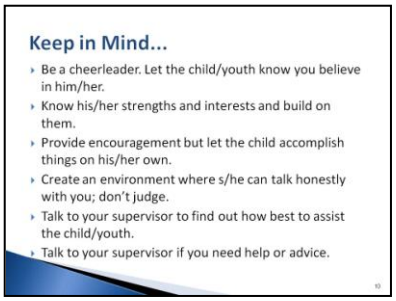
DEBRIEF

For each *Role Play Card* that your group used:

1. Ask the participants who played the mentor: "Which tip from the handout did you try out? How did it work? What would you do differently? What more did you want to know to help the child?"
2. Ask the participants who played the "child/youth" role: "Did you feel heard? What did the mentor say or do that helped? What is the message that you got from the mentor? What would have improved the talk?"
3. Jot down common themes on the easel board.

The role play conversations (what the mentor said and how it was said) should get at some of these themes. The child/youth should get the message that:

- The mentor believes in him/her.
- The mentor won't judge or leave the child/youth if s/he does something wrong.
- The mentor can be trusted; the child/youth can talk through a problem or bad feelings, and be open with the mentor.
- The mentor can help the child/youth put things in perspective or think through the problem.



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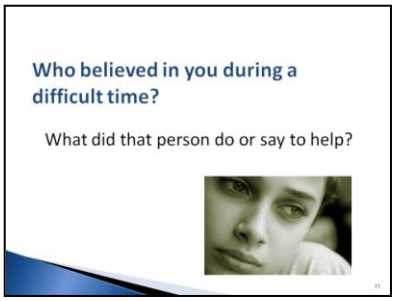
Here are some key points to remember:

- Children/youth will live "up" or "down" to adults' expectations. Mentors can convey high expectations and help children develop self confidence through encouragement and specific positive reinforcement, and by letting them accomplish things for themselves. The mentor should take care not to express low expectations verbally or unconsciously, through body language.
- Build the relationship so the child/youth feels comfortable telling you what is on his/her mind. Try not to judge. Try to give the child/youth the benefit of the doubt.
- Build the relationship so you know their strengths and interests (be careful not to project what you think their strengths and interests should be).
- The mentor should always talk with the supervisor (e.g. the child/youth's teacher, program staff person, caseworker) to find out the best ways to help, and if s/he believes the child/youth needs additional help.

IV. Reflection: Use Your Past Experience



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Tell participants that research has shown that children and youth are responsive to older mentors who have overcome hardships such as strained family relationships or other major challenges (i.e. resilient seniors).

🗎 Distribute the handout *Reflection: Use Your Past Experience for Inspiration*. Ask participants to take a few minutes to think of an obstacle or difficult time in their life, and answer the questions about how someone helped them.

Afterward, encourage them to share age-appropriate stories about their own resilience with the children and youth they serve, if they feel comfortable.

V. Closing

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Remind participants that their individual attention and support is the most important contribution to the children and youth they serve.

Optional: Distribute the remaining handout; *Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Children and Youth with Special Needs* is a list of resources that participants can investigate on their own.

TIP: Offer a few "hard copy" options. Depending on program resources and participant interest, you may want to bring a few copies of some of the information from the websites in the recommended resource handout for people who don't have online access.

Last, ask participants to complete a *Training Feedback Survey* to help you improve the next workshop.

Ask participants if there are any more questions or last words before you close. Make any final announcements and thank participants for coming.

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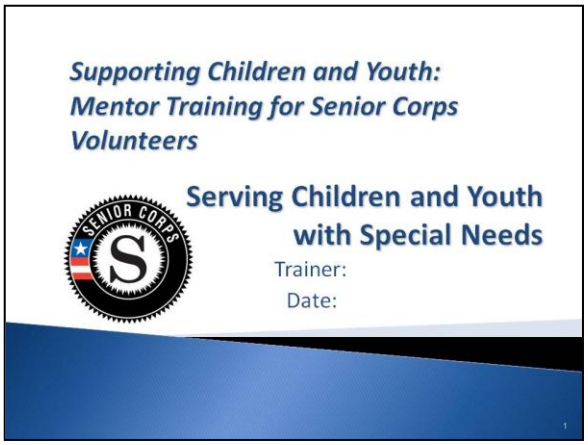
Module 6 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

1. What are Learning Disabilities? (optional)
2. Exercise Role Play Cards
3. Tips for Helping Children and Youth Build Resilience
4. Reflection: Use Your Past Experience for Inspiration
5. Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Children and Youth with Special Needs (optional)
6. Training Feedback Survey



What are Learning Disabilities?

- Learning disabilities are disorders that can affect the ability to understand or use spoken or written language, do math, coordinate movements, or direct attention.
- People may have one or more disorders, and symptoms can vary from mild to severe.
- Learning disabilities are usually not recognized until a child reaches school age.
- 8 to 10 percent of American children under 18 years of age have some type of learning disability.
- Identifying the child's particular strengths and weaknesses is the first step to getting the right kind of help.
- Special education involves teaching learning skills by building on the individual child's abilities and strengths, while correcting and making up for disabilities and weaknesses.
- Other professionals (e.g. speech and language therapists) also may be involved in the child's special education.

Types of Learning Disabilities

Dyslexia is sometimes referred to as a reading disability or reading disorder. A person with dyslexia may have trouble understanding written words and spelling, for example. Listening to recorded text (e.g. books on tape) helps some people compensate.

Dysgraphia is a disorder where a person may have trouble writing letters or writing within a defined space. Using a computer to write helps some people compensate.

Dyspraxia is a disorder where a person may have great difficulty planning out the steps, and following through with tasks that require fine motor skills (e.g. drawing, buttoning, writing, reading, or speaking). They may have trouble with balance, vision, perception, or memory.

Dyscalculia refers to a wide range of learning disabilities involving math. A person may have trouble solving arithmetic problems and understanding math concepts.

Auditory Processing Disorder affects the way the brain processes sounds. A person may have trouble learning to read, remembering things they have heard, following spoken directions, blocking out background noise, and telling the difference between words that sound similar.

Visual Processing Disorder affects the way the brain interprets what is seen. A person may have trouble reading, telling the difference between things that look similar, and hand-eye coordination.

Role Play Card #1

You are 8 years old. You have a learning disability that makes it very hard to read. You go to a special tutor for part of the school day. You believe the other students think you are dumb and so you keep to yourself.

Tell your mentor: “I hate school. Why do I have to learn this junk?”

Role Play Card #2

You are 10 years old. English is not your first language but you are learning. You did really well at your old school, but now you are at a new school. Recently, a group of kids has started calling you names and making trouble for you. You don’t want to go to school anymore.

Tell your mentor: “I don’t belong here. I wish I could go home.”

Role Play Card #3

You are 10 years old. Your father is a Marine. He has finally come back from his deployment but he isn’t the same easy-going person. You also have a hard time controlling your temper and have been getting into trouble at school lately.

Tell your mentor: “My mom is always mad at me. I get blamed for everything! That stupid dog shouldn’t have come in our yard anyway. I was just trying to teach it a lesson.”

Role Play Card #4

You are 15 years old. You have a hard time paying attention in school and have never done well there. You have started to learn to play another instrument and feel good about it.

Tell your mentor: "I am getting really good at the guitar now. I think I have a good chance at making it. Finishing high school would be a waste of time at this point."

Role Play Card #5

You are 14 years old. You live with your grandparents because your mother is in jail. Your father has remarried and his new wife "doesn't like kids." Lately, you have made friends with some older kids who like to stay out late. You love the attention.

Tell your mentor: "Sorry I'm late. I was out with Leah and Jake and they are so fun! Jake took his brother's car and we found a party downtown. It took me a while to get up this morning."

Role Play Card #6

You are 9 years old. People always seem to be getting angry with you. For example, they say you don't listen and you interrupt when someone is talking. Sometimes they say you are trying to make them mad, but you don't know what they are talking about.

Tell your mentor: "Josh's mom said I can't come over anymore. No one wants to be friends."

Role Play Card #7

You are a 13 year old girl. You live with your father who works at two tiring, low-paying jobs, six or seven days a week. Your mother lives in another state. Last month, you met a boy you really like. He is 17 and your father doesn't know about him.

Tell your mentor: "David is so awesome. Our relationship is getting serious now so I won't be able to spend as much time with you."

Role Play Card #8

You are an 11 year old boy. You live in a rough neighborhood with your grandmother and two younger brothers. Recently, some older boys have been pressuring you to join their gang. You don't want to join and are afraid of them.

Tell your mentor: "I don't want to join, but if I do, no one will mess with me or my family. I need to be a man now."

Tips for Helping Children and Youth Build Resilience

In a nutshell, resilience is the ability to recover from hard times or move forward despite difficulties. Resilient people tend to have these traits:

- Social competence (the ability to develop positive relationships)
- Problem-solving skills (the ability to plan, think creatively, and ask for help if needed)
- Autonomy (e.g. strong sense of personal identity and ability to act independently)
- A sense of purpose and future (e.g. goals, purpose, optimism, hope for the future)

As a trusted, caring adult in the child/youth's life, you can help build his/her resilience in many ways. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Support the child/youth's efforts to develop friendships.** Encourage him/her to get involved in positive group activities where s/he can make new friends and develop good social skills. Talk to him or her about friendship – that friends support and respect each other, have fun together, cooperate and make decisions together. If s/he has difficulty with social situations or feels awkward, in a playful way, act out (role play) situations (e.g. meeting new people, getting into a group, or disagreeing in a respectful way).
- **Help the child/youth learn to stand up for him/herself**. Show that it is okay to say "no" or disagree. Encourage his/her efforts to express feelings in a respectful manner.
- **Help the child/youth think through problems and solutions.** Ask: What is the problem? What would you like to happen? What ideas do you have for solutions? What would happen if you did that? What are the steps you need to take to solve the problem? What help do you need?
- **Teach the child/youth to feel comfortable asking for help**. We all need help at times, but no one likes to ask. However, self-advocacy is a necessary skill to learn. Show the child/youth that everyone needs help from time to time, and this is how we support one another and live together. In fact, most people are happy to help.
- **Encourage the child/youth to contribute.** This might be as simple as helping someone with a task, or getting involved in a goal-oriented group project or a service activity.
- **Help the child/youth uncover or develop talents.** There may be groups or activities you can encourage that support his/her talents and interests. Ask questions and show that you support his/her efforts and believe in his/her abilities.
- **Let the child/youth experience accomplishments and learn from mistakes.** This means you must resist temptation to do too much. Trial and error is the way we learn, and when we can get something to work, we have a sense of control and achievement.
- **Be the child/youth's cheerleader**. You can inspire optimism by showing that you believe in him/her. Convince the child/youth that s/he can do it, and offer help if needed.

General Tips for Serving Children and Youth with Special Needs

- **Everybody is unique**. Get to know the child/youth as an individual. While some diagnosis may be helpful in understanding a child/youth, labels can limit our ability to see the full range of a person's talents and gifts.
- **Know the child/youth's strengths and build on them.** Focusing activities on strengths rather than deficits shows that you believe in the child and helps him/her experience success.
- **Use your creativity!** This may involve finding new ways to communicate or do something.
- **Take advantage of support and resources available to you**. Talk to your supervisor about how you can best assist this person. Ask questions if you are unsure or uncomfortable. As you gain knowledge and experience, you will feel more confident.
- **Keep in mind you are a role model for all the children**. When others see you engaging someone with special needs in a positive way, they will feel more comfortable.
- **Help them make connections.** Encourage children and youth (with and without special needs) to play/work/study together. Provide assistance if needed.

Reflection: Use your Past Experience for Inspiration

No doubt you have overcome difficult times during your lifetime, maybe even as a child. Take about 5 minutes to think about a problem you overcame in the past.

1. Was there someone who helped you? Who believed in you and stood by you during this time?

_____

2. Write down 3 things that that person did or said that helped you:

1) _____

_____

2) _____

_____

3) _____

_____

3. Is this a story you could share with a child/youth? If not, think about a different problem you overcame in the past and someone who helped you. (Of course, the story should be "age-appropriate" and something that you feel comfortable sharing.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Children and Youth with Special Needs

This is just a sample of some of the many informational resources about children and youth with special needs. Many agencies/organizations have a section on their website "for parents" that contains helpful information in plain, jargon-free language.

Child/Youth Health (general)
KidsHealth provides information and resources for health, behavior and development from before birth through teen years. Pages are designed for children, youth, and parents: www.kidshealth.org

Child Welfare
Childhelp® is a national nonprofit organization that focuses on the prevention and treatment of child abuse: www.childhelp.org.

Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, youth, and families by connecting child welfare, adoption, and related professionals as well as the general public to information, resources, and tools covering topics on child welfare, child abuse and neglect, out-of-home care, adoption, and more: http://www.childwelfare.gov/

The *National Center for Children in Poverty* (NCCP) is a public research interest group that aims to promote the economic security, health, and well-being of low-income families and children. NCCP publishes research on child poverty by state, adolescent health, early care and learning, immigrant families, and other topics: http://www.nccp.org/

Disabilities (general)
The *National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities* (NICHCY) is a clearinghouse on disabilities and related issues. NICHCY provides information on disabilities in children and youth; programs and services; IDEA, the nation's special education law and No Child Left Behind, the nation's general education law; and research-based information on effective practices for children with disabilities. www.nichcy.org. NICHCY also provides information specifically for **military families**:
http://www.nichcy.org/FamiliesAndCommunity/Pages/militaryfamilies.aspx

University of Illinois Extension provides information and resources on different special needs, including causes, characteristics, and suggestions for serving children and youth:
http://urbanext.illinois.edu/specialneeds/

Disabled World lists famous people with different disabilities. Children often like to know famous people who have similar situations: http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article_0060.shtml

Autism

Thinking in Pictures is a book by Temple Grandin, a highly accomplished woman with autism. Published by Doubleday; 1st edition (October 1, 1995)

Autism Now is a PBS NewsHour series and website developed for a general audience. The website contains resources, personal stories, and project ideas: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/news/autism/.

Learning Disabilities

The *National Center for Learning Disabilities* is a nonprofit organization that provides information and resources to assist children, adolescents and adults with learning disabilities: http://www.ncld.org/ .The National Center for Learning Disabilities also provides information specifically for **military families**: http://www.ncld.org/at-school/your-childs-rights/advocacy-self-advocacy/military-families-and-students-with-ld--an-overview

GreatSchools is a national nonprofit organization that provides research and tools for parents and educators of children with disabilities: http://www.greatschools.org/special-education.topic?content=1541

Richard Lavoie: How Difficult Can This Be? Understanding learning disabilities (PBS Video 1996) is a learning disabilities workshop DVD from F.A.T. City Workshop, Eagle Hill Outreach, WETA Washington, DC.

Mental Health

Power of One: Using Adventure and Experiential Activities Within One-On-One Counseling Sessions is a book by D. Lung, G. Stauffer, A. Alvarez. Published by WoodNBarnes: OK (2008).

The *National Institute of Mental Health* (NIMH) provides information on child and adolescent mental health topics, including prevention and treatment, up-to-date research and resources. NIMH is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml

Cope Care Deal is a mental health site for teens that provides books and online materials on topics including depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, schizophrenia, and suicide prevention. The website is administered with the assistance of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania: www.copecaredeal.org.

Mental Health America (formerly known as the National Mental Health Association) is a national nonprofit that promotes mental health and wellness through advocacy and public education: www.nmha.org.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse

The mission of the *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration* (SAMHSA) is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness. SAMHSA provides up-to-date research and information for professionals and the general public, including resources on prevention, treatment, and recovery for children, youth, and adults: http://www.samhsa.gov/. SAMHSA also provides information specifically for **military families**: http://www.samhsa.gov/MilitaryFamilies/ .

Domestic Violence Prevention

The *Family Violence Prevention Fund* (FVPV) works to prevent violence within the home and in the communities. FVPV raises awareness on this issue and offers prevention programs aimed at children and youth, immigrant women, and others: http://www.endabuse.org/

Homelessness

The *National Center on Family Homelessness* is a national nonprofit that offers fact sheets, publications, resources, and toolkits for programs aimed at families, children, and veterans: http://www.familyhomelessness.org/

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name:_____ Date:_____

Lead Facilitator:_____

Program you serve with: ❒ Foster Grandparent ❒ RSVP ❒ Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. The subject matter was presented effectively.					
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable.					
3. The facilitator responded to questions.					
4. There were enough opportunities for discussion.					
5. The written materials are useful.					
6. The session met my expectations.					
7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment.					
8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session.					

9. What did you like best about this session?

_____

_____

_____

10. What would have improved this session?

_____

_____

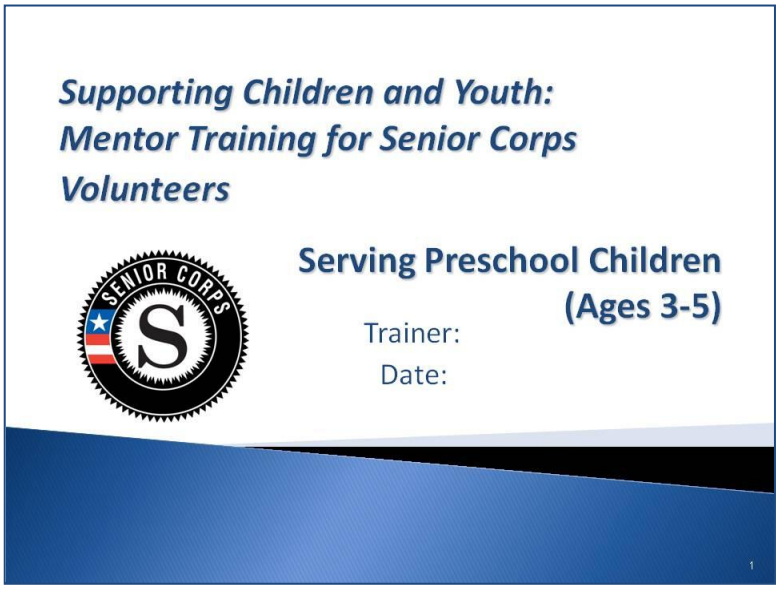
_____

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Module 7

Serving Preschool Children (Ages 3-5)



Module 7. Serving Preschool Children (Ages 3-5)

INTRODUCTION

Foster Grandparents and RSVP volunteers are the caring adults who provide extra attention and encouragement to children in preschool programs. This workshop provides tips and opportunities for discussion on the best ways volunteers can help support these children.

This workshop is an introduction to volunteers serving children ages 3-5 in preschool programs; however, those who have had extensive contact with young children or experienced preschool volunteers will also have something to learn and share. It is assumed that volunteers will attend, or have attended, an orientation at the preschool station where they are introduced to the classroom and learn about program policies.

This workshop includes a brief lecture, a small group exercise, and a short reflection activity. It is recommended that you do a full 2-hour workshop to allow more time for group discussion. ***Remember that you do not need to present this workshop "as is".*** Modify the session to fit your participants' needs and interests, and the services available to children in your area.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will better understand:

- Child development milestones at ages 3-5
- How preschool helps children prepare for school
- How preschool volunteers can contribute to children's social, emotional, and cognitive development

Visual Aids (Power Point) and Facilitator's Notes

If you are using the PowerPoint slides included with this curriculum, Facilitator's Notes are provided under each slide. These notes provide the same information as the Facilitator's Notes included in this document, however they are not as detailed.

It is recommended that you use easel paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to note responses to some of the "callout" questions and important points that participants make during the exercise "debrief." This validates participants' knowledge and reinforces learning. You may want to write the headings on sheets of easel paper in advance to save time.

This symbol will cue you as to when you might jot down responses:

Handouts

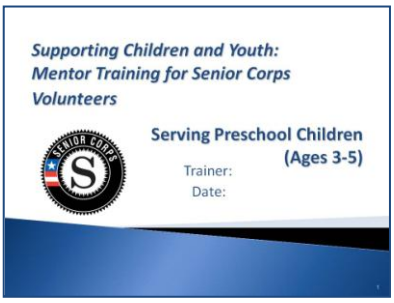
The handouts for this session follow the Facilitator's Notes and Instructions. Handouts 1-3 should be distributed during the session; this symbol in the Facilitator's Notes will cue you as to when: 🗎. Handouts 4-7 are optional and can be distributed after the exercise debrief or at the end of the workshop. The last handout, *Training Feedback Survey*, is recommended for the end of the session.

1. Preschool-Age Development
2. Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Children in Preschool
3. Changes in Child Care
4. Tips: Reading Aloud to Children (optional)
5. Tips: Helping Children Build Language Skills (optional)
6. Tips: Helping Children with Social and Emotional Growth (optional)
7. Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Preschoolers (optional)
8. Training Feedback Survey

SESSION AGENDA

Activity	Estimated Time	Method	Slide Numbers
I. Welcome	**20 min.**		1
A. Learning Objectives	5 min.	Lecture	2
B. Warm-up: Preschoolers (True or False)	15 min.	Large group discussion	3
II. Preschool Children	**30 min.**		--
A. Child Development 🗎 *Preschool-Age Development*	15 min.	Lecture	4-5
B. Preschool's Purpose and Routine	15 min.	Lecture, large group discussion	6-8
III. Supporting Children's Development in Preschool	**45 min.**		--
A. Volunteers at Preschools	10 min.	Lecture	9
B. Exercise: Supporting Children in Preschool 🗎 *Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Children in Preschool* 🗎 *Tips: Reading Aloud to Children (optional)* 🗎 *Tips: Helping Children Build Language Skills (optional)* 🗎 *Tips: Helping Children with Social and Emotional Growth (optional)*	15 min. 20 min.	Small groups of 3-4 Debrief (large group discussion)	10-11
IV. Reflection: **Changes in Child Care** 🗎 *Changes in Child Care*	**20 min.**	Individuals, pairs	12
V. Closing 🗎 *Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Preschoolers (optional)* 🗎 *Training Feedback Survey*	**5 min.**	Lecture	13

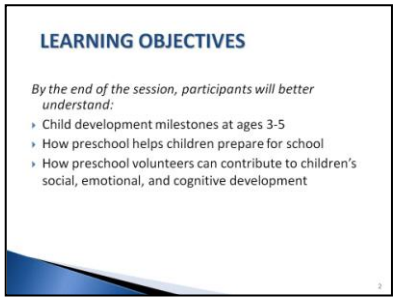
FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS



If you are using the PowerPoint slides, have slide 1 up on the screen.

I. Welcome

Welcome participants and introduce the workshop. "Foster Grandparents and RSVP volunteers are the caring adults who provide extra attention and encouragement to children in preschool programs. This workshop provides tips and on the best ways volunteers can help support these children, and opportunities for you to learn from each other."



A. Learning objectives

Show slide 2.

Describe the learning objectives. In this workshop, participants will be introduced to and discuss:

- Child development milestones at ages 3-5
- How preschool helps children prepare for school
- How preschool volunteers can contribute to children's social, emotional, and cognitive (thinking and learning) development

B. Warm-up: Preschoolers (True or False)

The purpose of this warm-up is to get participants excited about working with this age group (3-5 year olds), if they are not already.

"Keep in mind that every child's development is unique and depends on many factors; individual personality, their home and community, their experiences. Let's talk about some things, in general, that children ages 3-5 can and can't do."

CALLOUT: "True or False: Preschool children can figure out a solution to a conflict – a problem they are having with another child." (Give respondents a moment to answer. If someone says "True", ask them to give you an example.)

Answer: True. Children ages 3-5 have limited language ability and are focused on themselves; however, they are learning how to get along with other children, especially in a setting like preschool where they need to share materials and play together. Children are often able to come up with solutions, on their own or with a little help from an adult, and agree to simple compromises (e.g. take turns with the toy).

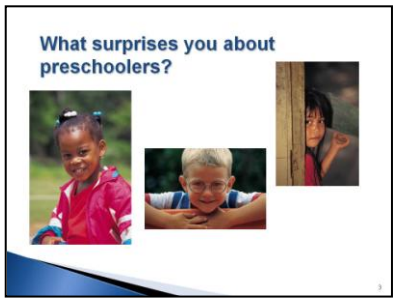
CALLOUT: "True or False: Preschool-age children can control their emotions when they want to (e.g. stop crying when they are told to)."

Answer: False. They are starting to learn how to manage feelings like anger and frustration, but they cannot turn it off at will. In fact, when adults around them get upset, this usually makes it more difficult.

CALLOUT: "A four-year-old child can use a computer. True or False?"

Answer: True, in a limited way. By the time children are four, they can use a computer keyboard and mouse, although they will have limited control because their hand-eye skill is still developing.

TIP: Develop your own True-False questions. What are some things that amaze you about preschool-aged children? What are some common misconceptions that older adults seem to have about this age group? Develop your own "true-false" statements so you can use this section to clarify.



Show slide 3.

Tell participants that preschool-aged children can already do, or learn to do, many things on their own, or with guidance from a caring adult.

CALLOUT: "What things have you seen 3-5 year olds do that surprised you?" (Jot down some of the responses on easel paper.)

Examples:

- Use play-acting as a way to cope with fears (e.g. ties up a "monster")
- Use a simple picture map to find an object in a room.
- Understand that words can rhyme or start with the same sound
- Memorize words to simple books and retell stories they have heard in their own words
- Describe the art they create and what they like about it
- Understand "same" and "different" and describe what makes something the same or different
- Use "trial and error" to make something work (e.g. putting a simple puzzle together).

II. Preschool Children

A. Child development

Show slide 4.

Tell participants that, as they no doubt noticed, children are "active learners".

Active learners:

- Learn through hands-on exploration of the world around them
- Use all of their senses (touch, taste, sound, smell, and sight)
- Learn best when they can discover things for themselves rather than being told
- Learn through hands-on exploration of the materials available to them
- Learn by "dramatic play"; that is, acting out roles like "mom" and "dad" and trying out different ways of being
- Learn through their interactions with adults and other children
- Have limited patience for sitting still but unlimited imaginations

"Preschool programs are designed to engage these active learners."

Show slide 5.

🗎 Distribute the handout *Preschool-Age Development.* Tell participants that all children are individuals and development occurs over time, at different paces. The handout has examples of some typical development patterns that preschoolers show.

"Preschool activities might look like children simply having fun, but they are designed to help children develop these important skill areas." (Give examples from each of the skill areas.)

Language

- Language skills are developing rapidly. Preschoolers are learning new vocabulary, communicating in simple sentences, and improving grammar and pronunciation.
- Older preschoolers can follow multi-step directions. Children will talk about personal experience and things that interest them, and initiate conversation (younger preschoolers will need more prompting from adults).

Literacy

- Younger preschoolers are learning their letters and noticing print in everyday situations (e.g. signs), and realizing that text in books is telling a reader what to say.
- Older preschoolers can say and recognize many letters, read some short words, and are capable of writing some letters legibly.

Logical Reasoning

- Younger preschoolers can do simple puzzles, understand the concepts of “same” and “different”, and sort objects by a characteristic.
- Older preschoolers can describe objects and shapes.

Mathematics

- Younger preschoolers can count to 5, and start to recognize written numbers 0-9.
- Older preschoolers can count to 10, and add and subtract numbers up to 4.

Physical Abilities

- Younger preschoolers are improving finger skills (dexterity), and can ride a tricycle and use a swing. They are getting better at running and climbing.
- Older preschoolers can play for longer periods of time, hold writing/drawing tools and play with toys that have smaller parts. They are improving hopping, skipping, galloping, and kicking, throwing and catching a ball.

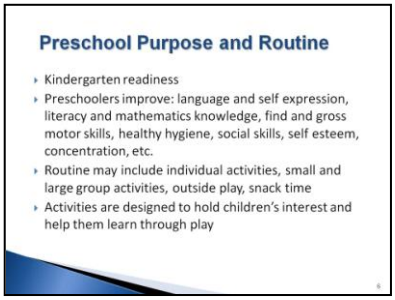
Emotional Development and Social Skills

- Younger preschoolers need adults they know around them, but are developing relationships with other children. They are learning about feelings and will offer comfort (a hug) to someone who feels bad.
- Older preschoolers are learning coping skills for dealing with negative emotions (e.g. talking it out, drawing a picture). They are improving in their social relationships with other children, will join group activities, and can suggest ways to resolve a conflict.

Creative Arts

- Younger preschoolers can play simple rhythm instruments, and their artwork begins to show recognizable forms. They are very involved in dramatic play and prefer to use real objects and costumes.
- Older preschoolers can sing songs they made up and songs they have memorized. Their artwork may involve letters and starts looking more realistic. They like to dance and are better able to move to the music. Dramatic play begins to involve specific play acting scenes such as taking the dog to the vet.

B. Preschool's Purpose and Routine



Show slide 6.

Tell participants that the purpose of preschool programs like Head Start is to support children's development and help them be ready for Kindergarten.

- They learn important social skills such as getting along with other children and adults, polite behavior and what is expected of them.
- They build self esteem and confidence as they learn how to do new things and solve problems.
- They start to learn self-control, how to handle disappointment and how to focus or concentrate.
- They develop language (vocabulary and grammar), learn their letters, numbers, colors, and shapes.
- They learn about the everyday surroundings and how things work.
- They learn healthy hygiene (cleanliness) habits and countless other new things.

CALLOUT: "Has anyone heard of 'learning through play'? What do you think is meant by that?" Give participants a minute to respond, and then validate/expand on their ideas.

Note that learning through play is active learning that involves exploration and creativity. Ask participants for examples of the kinds of activities that might facilitate learning through play at a preschool (e.g. songs about the alphabet, counting blocks together, talking about the pictures in a book, putting together a puzzle, using different writing/drawing tools, etc.).

CALLOUT: "Has anyone had regular experience in a preschool program?" If yes, ask: "What does a typical day look like? Did you notice if there was a routine to the day?" (Participants may mention some or all of the following. As you discuss, point out how everything is designed to help children learn.)

Arrival

- When children arrive, teachers (and volunteers) greet them to make them feel safe and welcome.
- Children might then put their things away in a place that is put aside for them.
- Children learn what is expected of them during this routine.

Large Group Time (class)

- During class time, teachers might start the day by having all the children sit together in a circle and talk about something they want to share.
- Teachers validate what the children have to say.
- Children learn to "share the spotlight" and take turns talking.

Individual Activity Time

- The teacher may have children choose and plan the activities they do; for example, art, books, science activities, toys, puzzles, building something using materials such as blocks, pretend games using clothing or other toy props.
- Children might be asked afterward to recall what they did; this helps build language and memory skills.
- Children learn how to make decisions by planning and making choices.

Small Group Time

- Children may play in small groups or work on projects together.
- They may use dramatic play (pretend) to try out different roles or ways of being (e.g. teacher, father, baby, puppy).
- Younger children often play side by side ("parallel play") rather than playing together directly. Some children also like to observe others playing for a while before they decide to join in.
- Children learn to express feelings, build language, and work out their understanding of the world.
- Children learn social skills, including problem-solving and cooperating with others.

Outside Play

- Preschools usually have a playground or outside area for children to have "recess", let off steam by running around.
- Outside play allows children to engage in the natural environment.
- Children learn to cooperate, invent games and rules, and share equipment.
- Children learn to use their bodies in different ways to develop motor skills.

Meal/Snack Time

- Children receive a nutritious meal or healthy snack and brush their teeth afterward.
- Children learn important cleanliness (hygiene) habits such as washing their hands before eating.

Tell participants that preschool programs such as Head Start have an organized daily routine (although the specific routines may differ by site). Given the importance of routine for younger children, a daily routine, once established, is consistent, but the activities are varied to encourage children to explore, use their imaginations, develop new skills, and build self confidence. Although there is a range of activities and materials available to children, everything is designed to help them learn something.

Show slides 7 and 8. Point out that there is space and opportunities for children to engage in learning through play.

Example of a preschool setting: The preschool environment has spaces for children to play together or alone if they like. There are a variety of materials to explore, build, experiment and create with– e.g. blocks, play dough, sand and water, simple tools, art supplies, and toys for making music. There are materials for dramatic play: e.g. puppets, toy animals and cars, clothing to try on. There are materials for learning – books, puzzles, geometric shapes. Some preschools have computers for children. Outside there is safe climbing equipment, outdoor toys like balls, a sandbox and toys, and grass to run on.

"Let's talk about how volunteers support preschoolers."

TIP: Get a first-hand account. If you have a volunteer who is already serving at a preschool, or has worked at a preschool in the past, ask them to tell the group about what they do during a typical day: what is the classroom routine? What does the volunteer do with the children during these activities? You may also want to ask a representative from the preschool where volunteers serve to speak to your group.

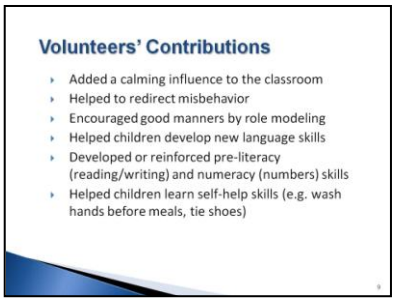
III. Supporting Children's Development in Preschool

A. Volunteers at Preschools

Tell participants that volunteers at preschools provide extra one-on-one attention to children. Volunteers also assist children with special needs.

CALLOUT: "What are some of the things volunteers do in the preschool classroom? What are some of the ways they provide support?" (Jot down some of their responses on easel paper.)

Show slide 9, and point out any contributions that the group missed.



Volunteers provide support by:

- Adding a calming influence to the classroom, including helping to redirect misbehavior
- Encouraging good manners (e.g. cooperating and sharing) by role modeling
- Helping children develop new language skills, including non-English speaking children and children with speech impediments
- Developing or reinforcing pre-literacy (reading) and numeracy (number) skills
- Helping children learn hygiene and self help skills (e.g. washing hands, going to the bathroom by themselves, tying shoes, using utensils at meal time).

Tell participants that research has shown the following benefits to preschool children and classrooms where Senior Corps volunteers have served:

- Children receive more individual attention and undivided attention from a caring adult
- Children who were anxious, tired, or irritable were given emotional support
- Activities were structured so that children could experience success and build self esteem

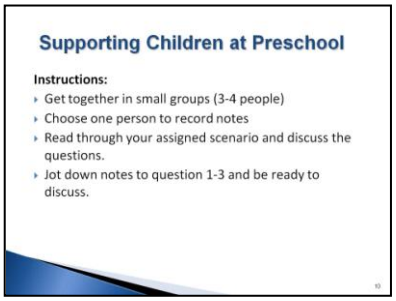
TIP: Try to allow everyone to share, even if you are training a large group. If you don't have time to hear from everyone when you "callout' a question, try this alternative: call out the question, then ask everyone to share their thoughts with a neighbor. After a minute, ask for a few responses from the large group. This ensures that everyone gets to share their ideas with another participant, if not always with the whole group.

B. Exercise: Supporting Children in Preschool

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants think through strategies to assist children at preschool in appropriate, constructive ways.

YOU WILL NEED: Copies of the handout, *Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Children in Preschool,* easel paper and a marker for taking notes during "debrief".

"Let's put ourselves in some typical preschool situations."



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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute the handout, *Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Children in Preschool* to each person.
2. Ask participants to get into small groups of 3 or 4. Ask each group to identify a recorder to take notes.
3. Assign each group one of the examples. Explain that these are situations they might encounter during their preschool assignment. Be sure to emphasize to participants that the preschool teacher/staff will always be there to provide guidance, and they should never be shy about asking for help.
4. Ask the groups to take 10 minutes to discuss. The recorder should jot down notes to the three questions at the bottom of the worksheet.
5. After 10 minutes, bring the group back together for discussion.

TIP. Customize this exercise. Develop scenarios that you think the volunteers will most likely encounter at their preschool assignments, scenarios that you think they should be ready for. This is especially important if the target preschool population has special needs (i.e. learning or physical challenges). If there is a scenario in the worksheet that you feel is inappropriate for this group, delete it prior to copying the worksheet for distribution.

DEBRIEF

Question 1 asks the group to come up with some steps for assisting the child/children in the example. Question 2 asks for two behaviors they would role model in that situation. Question 3 asks what they would like the child to learn from that encounter. (If the group gets stuck, see page 18-20 of these facilitator notes for sample responses.)

For each example that the groups were working on:

1. Ask the recorder to share the steps (question 1) that the group came up with to assist the child/children in the situation. Write down the steps on the easel pad. Validate ideas and clarify as needed.
2. Ask the recorder for two behaviors that the group would role model in the situation (question 2) and what they hope the child will learn from the encounter (question 3).
3. Ask the larger group if they have anything to add, and use the chart to write down main ideas.

Regardless of the situation they were discussing with their group, here are some points that participants should remember:

- The volunteer needs to follow the teacher's lead regarding classroom rules and consequences. Observe the teacher; ask the teacher questions at an appropriate time.
- The teacher may have an individual learning or behavior plan for each child. The teacher would not show volunteers the actual plan, but his/her verbal instructions would be consistent with the goals of the plan.
- Volunteers are trusted members of the classroom and valuable role models. Always be aware that children watch the adults around them to learn how to behave.
- Pay attention to the language the teacher uses with the children and the emphasis placed on certain things (e.g. counting). The teacher will be reinforcing lessons s/he wants the children to learn as they play. S/he will also use positive language (vs. "no" and "don't") to redirect behavior ("use your quiet voice" vs. "stop yelling").
- Sometimes the volunteer will need to resist the urge to help a child. Children need to experience the challenge and work through it to accomplish things on their own; this is how they learn.
- The volunteer is the child's cheerleader, and not there to discipline. The teacher will advise on what to do when children show challenging behavior.

- The volunteer should remember to be patient with children's challenging behavior. Usually children "act out" because they are trying to convey a need and don't have the language and self control to express themselves in other ways yet.
- The volunteer should notice the child doing something good and encourage that behavior by being specific with praise ("You are really good at remembering where all those toys go").

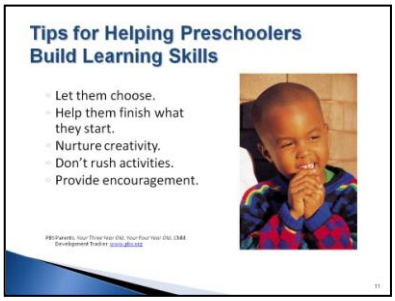
TIP: Reinforce the importance of using positive language with preschoolers. During the exercise discussion, if negative language is suggested ("no", "don't", "you can't"), ask participants if it might be rephrased. If you know the group well, you might also use humor to help them remember by substituting positive language for normally mundane statements during the workshop (e.g. "Let's enjoy our smokes in the fresh air during break!" instead of "You can't smoke in here").

Optional: Distribute these handouts with tips for working with preschoolers.

Tips: Reading Aloud to Children

Tips: Helping Children Build Language Skills

Tips: Helping Children with Social and Emotional Growth



Show slide 11.

"Last, here are some tips to remember when working with preschoolers:"[1]

- Let them choose. Give children a chance to make simple choices. So many aspects of children's lives are controlled by the adults around them; it is good for them to get some practice making choices.
- Help them finish what they start. Give them support when they need it, but let them learn by trying and finishing; this is satisfying to them and builds their confidence.
- Nurture creativity. Encourage children to ask questions, try new experiences, and try different ways of doing something.
- Don't rush activities. Children need extended periods of time to really get engaged.
- Provide encouragement, not generic praise. Be specific about a child's accomplishment ("You caught the ball!") rather than providing the more general, "Great job!" Acknowledge children's progress and achievements.

[1] *PBS Parents (www.pbs.org). *Your Three Year Old. Your Four Year Old.* Child Development Tracker.

IV. Reflection: Changes in Child Care

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Remind participants that, as they no doubt have noticed, some attitudes and practices in child care have changed since they raised children. For example:

- Nowadays, there is more emphasis on encouraging good behavior and redirecting challenging behavior, and no physical discipline is allowed.
- There is also a lot of emphasis on helping children learn to do things on their own through trial and error (safely, of course) so they can develop problem-solving skills and self esteem.

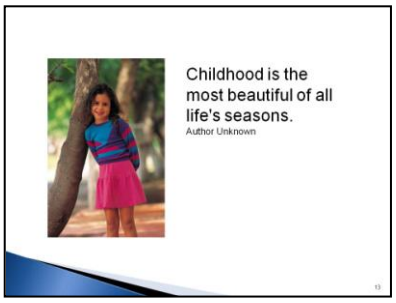
Distribute the handout *Changes in Child Care*. Ask participants to take about 10 minutes to reflect on the discussion today, and how child care has changed since they raised children.

After 10 minutes, invite them to share their thoughts with a partner, or ask a few participants to share with the group.

As an alternative to the worksheet, you may want to discuss real life situations as a group. Are there some important changes that you especially want them to remember?

TIP: Resources for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Are some of your volunteers exhausted from raising their own grandchildren? A group of national organizations working on behalf of children and/or seniors (AARP, Generations United, and others) has been collecting resources available to these families. *State Fact Sheets for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children* provide state-specific data and information: http://www.grandfactsheets.org/state_fact_sheets.cfm. You may want to share this website with the participants or print and distribute a handout from the resource list in your state.

V. Closing



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Let participants know that their love and individual attention is the most important contribution to the preschoolers they serve.

🗎 Optional: Distribute the remaining handout, *Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Preschoolers,* a list of resources that participants can investigate on their own.

TIP: Customize the handouts or add your own. You may want to add your own tips and recommendations to the handouts, or highlight the tips and resources that you feel are most appropriate for your volunteers' assignments. You might also find information you would like to print out and distribute from the websites listed in the *Recommended Resources* handout.

🗎 Last, ask participants to complete a *Training Feedback Survey* to help you improve the next workshop.

Ask participants if there are any more questions or last words before you close. Make any final announcements and thank participants for coming.

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR EXERCISE DEBRIEF

Facilitator: Below are general notes for each scenario and sample responses to the worksheet questions. You may want to offer these suggestions if participants get stuck during the "debrief" discussion.

A. The preschool teacher, **Ms. Miranda**, has asked you to read a storybook to a group of children. She wants them to enjoy the story and see reading as valuable. Do you have some ideas to hold their attention and make the most of this time?

General Notes: The volunteer reader should be enthusiastic (e.g. use different voices for different characters, use facial expressions and gestures), and pronounce words clearly. The reader can point out how the pictures relate to the story and ask children questions: Did that ever happen to you? What would you do if you saw a monkey with all those hats? (See the handout, *Tips: Reading Aloud to Children,* for more ideas.)

1. What are some steps you can take to assist this child/children?
   - *Let the children choose the book.*
   - *Be enthusiastic. Use facial expressions, voice, and gestures while reading. Try to sound like the characters.*
2. What are two behaviors that you can role model as you provide support (e.g. enthusiasm, listening skills)?
   - *Love of books and stories.*
   - *Interest in what the children think about the story (interest in what others have to contribute).*
3. What is one thing you hope the child/children will learn?
   - *That reading is worthwhile, that books are good entertainment, too.*

B. **James** is playing on his own, working on another new creation using different materials. He is trying to figure out how the pieces can go together and starting to get a little frustrated. What should you do?

General Notes: The volunteer should resist the urge to do it for James and let him try to figure it out. Children learn by hands-on exploration, and in this case, trial and error. The volunteer can help by asking James to describe what he is doing; this may help him think through his process and come up with a solution as he is talking. If James gets too frustrated, the volunteer can ask if s/he can offer a suggestion (why don't you try this… and see if that works), but still allow James to do it. Sometimes suggesting a brief stretching break or time away from the task (but with the intent of returning) allows the child to calm down and refocus.

1. What are some steps you can take to assist this child/children?
   - *Ask James to talk about what he is trying to do, talk about the process.*
   - *Ask him if he wants to take a break and come back to it with a fresh start.*

2. What are two behaviors that you can role model as you provide support (e.g. enthusiasm, listening skills)?
   - *Patience*
   - *Perseverance*

3. What is one thing you hope the child/children will learn?
   - *Keep trying; you will figure it out. Don't give up because it seems hard at first.*

C. Luis and Julia usually have fun together, but today they are having a disagreement over whose turn it is to play with a favorite toy. It has now escalated to pushing, pulling, and yelling. What should you do?

General Notes: The volunteer should role model calmness and empathy in these situations, but stop any hurtful behavior in progress (e.g. hitting). The volunteer should know the teacher's plan for helping children learn how to resolve conflicts and how s/he is expected to support that plan. It is likely that the volunteer would only be expected to alert the teacher, and then step back as the teacher handles the situation. (See the handout, *Tips: Helping Children with Social and Emotional Growth* for a description of one way that some preschool programs teach children conflict resolution.)

1. What are some steps you can take to assist this child/children?
   - *Stop the hurtful behavior and ask the teacher to help.*
   - *Help the children calm down by asking them to take deep breaths and count while I hold the toy for them.*

2. What are two behaviors that you can role model as you provide support (e.g. enthusiasm, listening skills)?
   - *Calmness*
   - *Empathy, understanding*

3. What is one thing you hope the child/children will learn?
   - *How to share or that is important to learn to share with your friends.*

D. Tamika seems very shy around you and other children in the classroom. What kinds of things could you do during the day to help her feel more comfortable?

General Notes: The volunteer should find out from the teacher if there are any special circumstances (e.g. language or communication barriers) that contribute to Tamika's apparent shyness and how s/he can help. If Tamika is shy, the volunteer can help her by encouraging friendships with other children. If there is another child that seems to share Tamika's interests, ask him/her to come and play. The volunteer will need to be sensitive to Tamika's comfort level as s/he encourages her to play with other children and join group activities; some children need to observe the activities and group for awhile before choosing to actively participate.

1. What are some steps you can take to assist this child/children?
   - *Watch to see what/who Tamika seems to be interested in so I can encourage her toward that.*
   - *Be a calm supportive presence nearby; let her know I am there for her.*
2. What are two behaviors that you can role model as you provide support (e.g. enthusiasm, listening skills)?
   - *Friendliness with the other children (smiling, greeting, asking questions, etc.).*
   - *Respect for Tamika's feelings and space.*
3. What is one thing you hope the child/children will learn?
   - *That the classroom is a supportive safe environment.*

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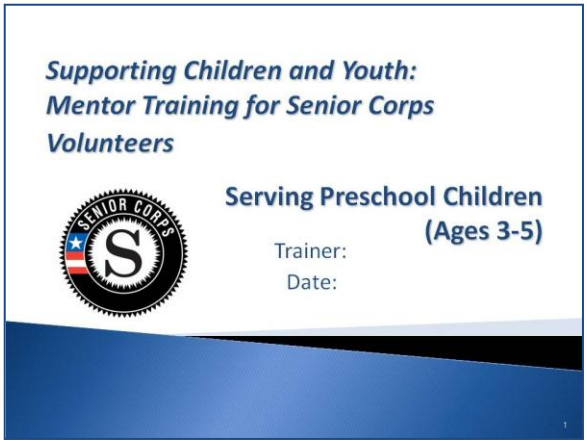
Module 7 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

1. Preschool-Age Development
2. Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Children in Preschool
3. Changes in Child Care
4. Tips: Reading Aloud to Children (optional)
5. Tips: Helping Children Build Language Skills (optional)
6. Tips: Helping Children with Social and Emotional Growth (optional)
7. Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Preschoolers (optional)
8. Training Feedback Survey



Preschool-Age Development

Keep in mind that all children are individuals and development occurs over time, and at different paces. Below are examples of some typical things that children are doing during their 3rd and 4th years.

Language Development:

- Building new vocabulary
- Using simple sentences
- Using grammar
- Improving pronunciation
- Talking about themselves and things that interest them

Literacy (getting ready to read and write):

- Learning their letters
- Noticing print in everyday situations
- Realizing that text in books is telling a reader what to say
- Writing some letters
- Reading some short words

Logical Reasoning:

- Doing simple puzzles
- Understanding "same" and "different"
- Sorting objects by a simple characteristic
- Describing objects and shapes

Mathematics:

- Recognizing numbers
- Counting to 10
- Adding and subtracting numbers up to 4

Physical Abilities:

- Improving finger skills
- Playing with toys that have smaller parts
- Holding writing utensils
- Riding a tricycle
- Using a swing
- Getting better at running and climbing, hopping, skipping, galloping
- Improving kicking, throwing and catching a ball

Emotional Development and Social Skills:

- Developing relationships with other children
- Learning about feelings; will offer comfort (a hug) to those in distress
- Learning how to deal with negative emotions (e.g. talking it out, drawing a picture)
- Joining group activities

Creative Arts:

- Playing simple rhythm instruments
- Singing songs they made up and ones they memorize
- Dancing and getting better at moving to the music
- Making artwork that starts to show recognizable forms
- Getting involved in imaginative dramatic play using real objects, costumes, and specific acts such as taking the baby to the doctor.

Exercise Worksheet: Supporting Children in Preschool

As you work with children in preschool, you may find yourself in the situations described below. This exercise is designed to help you mentally prepare for those situations. However, the preschool teacher/staff will always be there to provide guidance; never be shy about asking for help when you need it!

Instructions: Read through the example the facilitator has suggested for your group (A, B, C, or D). With your group, answer the three questions below and be ready to discuss.

A. The preschool teacher, **Ms. Miranda**, has asked you to read a storybook to a group of children. She wants them to enjoy the story and see reading as valuable. Do you have some ideas to hold their attention and make the most of this time?

B. **James** is playing on his own, working on another new creation using different materials. He is trying to figure out how the pieces can go together and starting to get a little frustrated. What should you do?

C. **Luis and Julia** usually have fun together, but today they are having a disagreement over whose turn it is to play with a favorite toy. It has now escalated to pushing, pulling, and yelling. What should you do?

D. **Tamika** seems very shy around you and other children in the classroom. What kinds of things could you do during the day to help her feel more comfortable?

Questions

Which example are you discussing with your group?

❑ A. Ms. Miranda's class ❑ B. James ❑ C. Luis and Julia ❑ D. Tamika

1. What are some steps you can take to assist this child/children? _____

_____

_____

2. What are two behaviors that you can role model as you provide support (e.g. enthusiasm, listening skills)? _____

_____

3. What is one thing you hope the child/children will learn? _____

_____

Changes in Child Care

Thinking about today's discussion, take about 10 minutes to jot down some answers to the questions below. (It is okay if you don't finish.) You may want to share your ideas with a partner.

1. How is child care (attitudes, practices, or child care settings) different from when you were a child, or when you were raising your children?

Name 1-2 differences: _____

_____

_____

_____

Given the differences, what is one thing you might do differently during your preschool service? What do you plan to try?

_____

_____

2. What are two things you heard today that surprised you?

a. _____

b. _____

3. What do you want to learn more about?

_____

_____

_____

Tips: Reading Aloud to Preschool-age Children

When you read aloud to children, you are modeling how to read, how to use books, and showing children that reading is valued. You are helping children build language skills, learn about new things, broaden their imaginations, and find characters with whom they can relate. Below are some tips to help you make the most of this shared reading experience.

Choosing a book

- Offer suggestions, but let children pick the book. Sometimes they will want to hear the same story over and over, but that's okay; repeating the story helps them remember the words they learned.
- Notice what the children seem to be interested in when they play, and offer books that are related (e.g. if they are playing with toy trains, suggest a story that includes trains).
- Read stories that reflect the children's lives and experiences, but also introduce stories that help them learn about the world.
- Choose different kinds of books:
  Alphabet and counting books can reinforce what the children are learning.
  Storybooks help children learn about other people and places, and build their imagination.
  Nursery rhymes and stories that have a pattern (e.g. a word or phrase is repeated throughout) are fun to read and help children build memory skills.
  Picture books allow children to tell the story with a little prompting from you. "Who is that?" "What happened there?" "Where did the snowman go?"

Get comfortable

- Find a comfortable spot and have the children sit near you. If possible, let a child turn the pages for you or hold the book.
- Some children like to hold a favorite toy or fidget with something while they listen. Others might want to sit in a certain place or on a special cushion.

Before you start reading

- Read the cover, using your finger to follow the words as you read. Show the cover and ask children what they think the story is about. Point out letters they might know.
- If the story takes place in another place and time period, give the children some age-appropriate background information.

As you read

- Be enthusiastic about what you are reading. Your attitude is contagious and you are passing on your love of reading to the children.
- Pronounce words clearly. Children are learning to recognize sound patterns in words and you can reinforce this important new knowledge.
- Be a drama queen! Use gestures and exaggerated facial expressions for emphasis. Switch voices for different characters.
- Show them how the pictures tell the story or give clues. “What happened there?” “What do you think will happen next?”
- Use the characters to help children understand emotions. “Why is the bear frowning?” “Why did the girl laugh?” Talking to children about how characters feel builds vocabulary and understanding of emotions. Younger children will know basic emotions (happy, sad, mad); older preschoolers can understand more subtle emotions like embarrassment, surprise, and confusion.
- Explain words and emotions the children might not know. Give examples using situations they do know.

A Word of Caution: Sometimes children lose interest if the story is interrupted with too many questions. You might want to read a new story through without interruption the first time, and then read it again to ask the children questions about it.

After you finish reading

- Have a conversation about the book after you read it. Ask children to say their favorite parts. Ask children to retell the story in their own words.
- Compare the story to children’s own experiences. “Did anything like that ever happen to you?” Let the children be the storytellers.

Tips: Helping Children Build Language Skills

Did you know that, given the opportunity, the average preschooler can acquire 4-6 new words a day? And children understand more words than they use. The encouragement and example that you and other adults provide helps them build vocabulary, improve pronunciation and grammar, and learn to express themselves. Below are some everyday easy tips to help children build language skills.

- Follow the teacher's lead. For example, s/he will point out different sounds in words to help children develop phonic awareness. Talk to the teacher about specific things you can do to support classroom learning.
- Talk to children one-on-one, face-to-face, at their level. Use eye contact and a calm pleasant voice.
- Use simple language and speak clearly. Listen carefully so you can respond appropriately.
- Ask "why" and "how" questions and give them time to think and respond. Ask about things that you know the child enjoys. Repeat what the child says, substituting correct pronunciation and grammar, as needed.
- Children are focused on the here and now. Ask children to talk about what they are doing and help them build vocabulary through your conversation. For example, you can help them learn the names of things they are playing with, what the toys/materials are made of, look like, feel like, sound like. During meal time, ask about the food's tastes, colors, and shapes.
- Build on words children know by showing them other things that are related and naming them (e.g., words involving fastening clothing: button, zipper, shoe laces, buckle, snap; words about weather: cloudy, rainy, drizzle, sunny, windy, breezy). You can also help them learn opposites: big and small, full and empty, happy and sad, etc.
- As children build a more complex vocabulary, they use words they know to describe things (e.g. "the bones in your body" for skeleton). You can help them identify and remember a new word by repeating it, clearly and in different situations, and talking about it.
- Play with language in ways that children enjoy. Children like tongue twisters, rhymes and repetitive songs; they like to play with words that sound funny to them. They like a string of words that start with the same sound, and simple phrases and poems that have a rhythm (e.g., Dr. Seuss rhymes, "one fish two fish red fish blue fish").

Children who are learning two languages (e.g. English and the language spoken at home) may have difficulty expressing themselves, responding to questions, and following directions at first. They may not participate in activities right away. Instead, they will watch others and figure out how to communicate. Some tips:

- The teacher will likely know where the child is with their home and second language development and have a plan. Ask for specific ideas on how you can help.
- Value the child's home language. Learn a few phrases and ask the child to help you learn words in their home language. It is okay if your pronunciation is off; let the child teach you the right way to say it.
- To help with comprehension, use gestures when you talk, or point to pictures and other cues while you repeat key words and phrases.
- Try to build on what the child already knows in the same way you would for children learning one language. Comment on what the child is doing, repeat what they say and build on it. Talk about what is happening in the here and now, speak clearly and repeat.

Tips: Helping Children with Social and Emotional Growth

As one of the caring and trusted adults in the preschool classroom, you are an important role model for the children. Below are some tips for helping them with social and emotional development.

Self confidence, self esteem

- Show children that you take their ideas and thoughts seriously. Give them your sincere attention and listen to what they have to say. Model good listening skills.
- Show you are interested in their achievements. Ask children "how" and "why" questions about what they are doing and comment in a neutral way (not positive or negative). For example, "Tying your shoes can be difficult".
- Allow children to do things for themselves even if they can't do it perfectly. Resist the urge to do it for them because children learn through trial and error. You can help them think through the process and figure out a solution by asking them to describe what they are trying to do. If a child is getting too frustrated, ask if you can offer suggestions.

Feelings, self awareness

- Help children build a vocabulary to express feelings. Play a game where you make a face and the children guess the feeling. Talk regularly about your own feelings in language children can understand, and use body language: "I am so happy to see you," "I feel a little sleepy today."
- Encourage children to talk about how they feel. Give them a lot of time to think and respond. Validate and name their feelings. Show that you understand and are listening through your facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language.
- Point out examples of different feelings in books or pictures, or when discussing something that is happening.
- Pay attention to emotional moments during the day and comment on them. This helps children develop a vocabulary and increase their ability to correctly identify their own and others' feelings.
- Use songs and books that talk about emotions. Point out facial expressions or body language that show emotions in pictures and ask questions: "What do you think the boy is feeling?"

Respect for others, peer relations, self control

- You are the children's role model for respect and courtesy. Recognize other people's contributions, efforts and abilities. Acknowledge the needs and feelings of others, and take extra care not to make disapproving remarks about others when children can hear you.
- Help the children develop friendships. Ask another child to join an activity, or help a lone child to join a group activity.

- Encourage children to listen when others are talking (not easy for a squirmy preschooler).
- **Remember that it is not your responsibility to discipline the children!** However, you can role model kindness, calmness, and self control. Talk about how you will handle negative feelings and come up with solutions: "I am feeling worried because I forgot my umbrella and it is starting to rain hard. I better take a deep breath and think for a minute... Maybe Ms. Jones has an extra umbrella that I can borrow."
- Point out and praise the positive ways that children handle difficult feelings when they are sad, angry, frustrated, or disappointed. Say that you know that this isn't easy to do.
- Never belittle children's reasons for being upset. Try to understand their point of view. Show concern, because to them, the situation is important.
- Use positive language instead of "no" and "don't", which children tend to tune out. For example, say "use your walking feet" instead of "don't run".

The teacher will have a plan. Ask how you can support the plan, and follow the teacher's lead so children don't get mixed messages.

To help children learn self control: The teacher may want children to learn and practice strategies for calming themselves: "take 3 deep breaths, 1…2…3…"; "relax your shoulders, relax your arms, relax your hands, relax your fingers, relax your toes" etc.; think happy thoughts ("Where is your favorite place? Pretend you are there").

The teacher may ask them to try the "Turtle Technique": Step 1. Recognize that you feel angry. Step 2. Think "stop". Step 3. Go into your "shell" and take three deep breaths. Think calming thoughts ("it was just an accident", "everybody makes mistakes"). Step 4. When you feel calm, come out of your "shell" and think of solutions.

To help children resolve conflicts: Often children can solve disputes on their own, but sometimes adult assistance is needed. You may see the teacher use this technique:

1. The teacher would approach the children calmly so as not to upset them further.
2. Acknowledge everybody's feelings; children can think more clearly when their feelings are acknowledged.
3. Find out from the children what happened, allowing each child to explain, and remaining neutral.
4. Restate the problem, but without hurtful language (e.g. "I don't like you" becomes "I don't want to play with you right now").
5. Ask children how the problem should be solved, giving them time to think, listening to all suggestions and helping them think through consequences of their suggestions until they come to an agreement, and then restating the solution so everyone understands.
6. Finally, the teacher will be ready to provide support if the situation flares up again.

Recommended Resources for Volunteers Assisting Preschoolers

This is just a sample of some of the many resources available to caretakers of preschool-age children. If you like to browse the internet, organizations with an educational mission often have a section on their website "for parents" that contains helpful information in plain, jargon-free language.

Child Development

PBS Parents' Child Development Tracker describes "'widely-held expectations' for what an average child would achieve within a given year", from a panel of experts. The information is provided for the first eight years, by year and by area of development (e.g. mathematics, literacy, language). http://www.pbs.org/parents/childdevelopmenttracker/

Preschool Language and Literacy

Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education that provides resources on research-based instructional practices. Materials include videos (with transcripts) that explain and demonstrate practices in the classroom. The website was developed for education professionals; however, you may find the information useful because you may see teachers use these techniques in the classroom.
http://dww.ed.gov/topic/?T_ID=15

Books:
Title: Reading Magic: why reading aloud to our children will change their lives forever
Author: Mem Fox; illustrations by Judy Horacek.
Publisher: Harcourt (2008)

Title: The Read-Aloud Handbook
Author: Jim Trelease
Publisher: Penguin Books (2006)

Booklists and Activities

Mr. Rogers Neighborhood at www.pbs.org has a section for parents with suggestions for books and activities to do with children, by theme. Themes include: the arts, growing and changing, individual differences and disabilities, school readiness and learning, rules and self control, and others. http://www.pbs.org/parents/rogers/theme/

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) has a Children's Book List for helping children build social-emotional skills. Books are listed by age level under general topic areas: being a friend, angry or mad feelings, problem solving, self confidence, good behavior expectations, family relationships, bullying/teasing, and others.
http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/documents/booklist.pdf

Military Families

Sesame Street has a website for military families that helps explain how young children experience deployments, homecomings, changes due to family members' injuries, and grief. The website includes information and resources on how trusted adults can help children cope and adjust. The resources include videos to watch with children and one-page printouts for children to help them express their feelings.
http://www.sesamestreetfamilyconnections.org/grownups/

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name:_____ Date:_____

Lead Facilitator:_____

Program you serve with: ❒ Foster Grandparent ❒ RSVP ❒ Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. The subject matter was presented effectively.					
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable.					
3. The facilitator responded to questions.					
4. There were enough opportunities for discussion.					
5. The written materials are useful.					
6. The session met my expectations.					
7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment.					
8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session.					

9. What did you like best about this session?

_____

_____

_____

10. What would have improved this session?

_____

_____

_____

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!

Supporting Children and Youth: Mentor Training for Senior Corps Volunteers

Module 8

Providing Support to Military Families

Module 8. Providing Support to Military Families

INTRODUCTION

A military service member can be deployed to a different country at any time with little notice. When a volunteer mentor is matched with a child/youth in a military family, the parent may have already been deployed, or s/he may receive orders for deployment. Understanding the stages of deployment that military families experience and how this affects children and youth will enhance the volunteer's ability to become a more effective mentor.

This workshop includes a brief lecture, a small group exercise, and a short reflection activity. It is recommended that you do a full 2-hour workshop to allow more time for group discussion; ***however, you do not need to present this workshop "as is".*** Modify the session to fit your participants' needs and interests, and the services available to families in your area.

Note: This workshop introduces the topic of grief but does <u>not</u> cover it sufficiently. Consider doing a separate session on this important topic, ideally with the assistance of a mental health professional as a guest speaker.

Objectives

By the end of the session, participants will better understand:

- How military families experience the stages of deployment
- How volunteers can support children and youth in military families before, during, and after the service member's deployment
- Additional support services in the community

Visual Aids (Power Point) and Facilitator's Notes

If you are using the PowerPoint slides included with this curriculum, Facilitator's Notes are provided under each slide. These notes provide the same information as the Facilitator's Notes included in this document, however they are not as detailed.

It is recommended that you use easel paper, a whiteboard, or a chalkboard to note responses to some of the "callout" questions and important points that participants make during the exercise "debrief." This validates participants' knowledge and reinforces learning. You may want to write the headings on sheets of easel paper in advance to save time.

This symbol will cue you as to when you might jot down responses:

Handouts

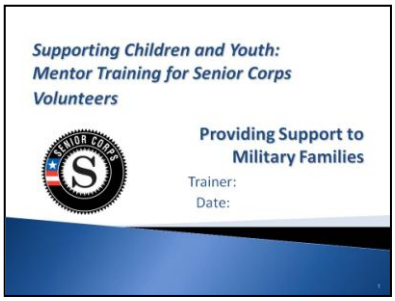
The handouts for this session follow the Facilitator's Notes and Instructions. Handouts 1 -5 should be distributed during the session; this symbol in the Facilitator's Notes will cue you as to when: 🗎. The other two handouts can be distributed at the end of the session.

1. Stages of Deployment
2. Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages
3. Helping Children and Youth Cope with Stress (optional)
4. Helping Children and Youth Cope with Grief (optional)
5. Reflection: How Does Your Community Support Military Families?
6. Recommended Resources for Volunteers Supporting Military Families (optional)
7. Training Feedback Survey

SESSION AGENDA

Activity	Estimated Time	Method	Slide Numbers
I. Welcome	**20 min.**		1
A. Learning Objectives	5 min.	Lecture	2
B. Warm-up: Do You Know a Military Family?	15 min.	Large group discussion	3-4
II. Deployment Cycle and Effects on the Family	**35 min.**		
A. The Stages of Deployment 🗎 *Stages of Deployment*	15 min.	Lecture	5-8
B. Readjustment	10 min.	Lecture	9
C. Resilience	10 min.	Lecture	
III. Supporting Children and Youth Through Deployment Stages	**45 min.**		
A. Exercise 🗎 *Worksheet: Helping Children/Youth During Deployment Stages* 🗎 *Helping Children and Youth Cope with Stress (optional)*	35 min.	Small groups of 3-4 Large group discussion	10-11
B. Grieving Families 🗎 *Helping Children and Youth Cope with Grief (optional)*	10 min.		12
IV. Reflection: **Community Support** 🗎 *How Does Your Community Support Military Families?*	**15 min.**	Individuals, pairs	13
V. Closing 🗎 *Recommended Resources for Volunteers Supporting Military Families (optional)* 🗎 *Training Feedback Survey*	**5 min.**	Lecture	14

FACILITATOR'S NOTES AND INSTRUCTIONS

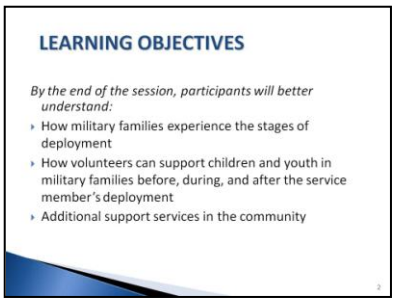


If you are using the PowerPoint slides, have slide 1 up on the screen.

I. Welcome

Welcome participants and introduce the workshop: "Almost half (43%) of active duty service members have children[1]. These children and families must cope with the challenges of long separations and frequent moves. Many service members also return to their families profoundly changed by their war experience. Others don't return at all. Today we will learn a little about how these families experience deployment and what we can do to support the children and youth."

A. Learning objectives



Show slide 2.
Describe the learning objectives. In this workshop, participants will be introduced to and discuss:

- How military families experience the stages of deployment
- How volunteers can support children and youth in military families before, during, and after the service member's deployment
- Additional support services in the community

B. Warm up: Do You Know a Military Family?

Show side 3.

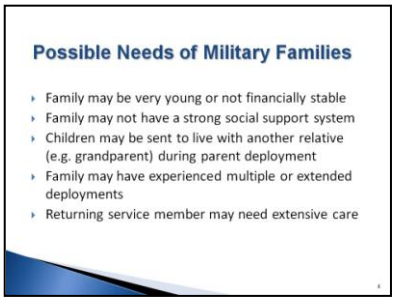
CALLOUT: "Take a minute and think if you know a family member, relative, friend, or acquaintance (e.g., neighbor, colleague at work) who has been deployed overseas due to recent conflicts, or who has talked about someone close to them who has been deployed. What did they say about how this has affected the service member's family?"

Participants may say things like: the family felt pride; had difficulty adjusting; family became closer; service member was/was not able to stay in touch and alleviate worries; the family received/did not receive needed support; the family suffered a trauma and has not recovered...

Validate their responses and reiterate that a service member's deployment affects the whole family– spouse/partner, children, siblings, and parents.

[1] U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (2007 profile)

CALLOUT: "What do you think some of the needs of military families in our community might be?" Give an example from the list below if participants seem unsure. You may want to jot down some of their responses. Give participants a few minutes and then show slide 4.



Examples of potential needs of military families:

- The family may be very young. The remaining parent may be solely responsible for caring for young children and running the household, which can quickly become overwhelming.
- The family may struggle financially. Because military families often must move on short notice, military spouses, 95% of who are women, frequently must seek new employment. As a result, military wives earn 25% less than their civilian counterparts, and have a 26% unemployment rate compared to the national average of 9%.[2]
- Families that do not live on/near a military base may not have a social support system due to frequent moves or living away from extended family. "Social support" can be family, friends, neighbors, agencies and services, community groups and organizations that can offer moral support and be called on for assistance as needed. (Families that live on or near a military base will likely have support.)
- If the family is single-parent, or both parents are deployed service members, children will be sent to live with another relative (e.g. grandparent) or friend. For children and youth, this could be a very difficult adjustment that might include leaving their hometown. This new caregiver may also already be caring for others and feel overwhelmed with the new responsibility.
- The family may have experienced multiple or extended deployments. This extended absence takes an emotional toll on the family as well as the service member, who can't be there for important events and daily family life.
- The returning service member may need extensive care. Rehabilitation may involve physical therapy, psychological counseling, or long term care. In some cases, it may fall to the soldier's aging parent to be the primary caregiver.

[2] "Military Spouses Face Especially Grim Job Prospects", NPR (July 28, 2011).

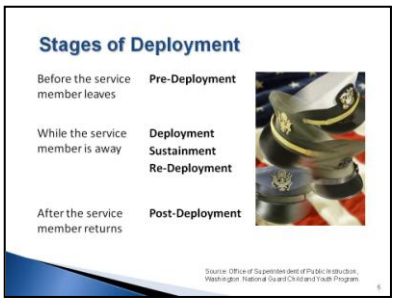
TIP: Talk about your service population. How many are military families are in your community and what do you know about them? Do they tend to be young families or career military people? Is there a base nearby, or do they live throughout the community?

"Let's take a look at the different stages of deployment so we can better understand the families' needs at different times."

II. Deployment Cycle and Effects on the Family

Tell participants: "Understanding the process of deployment and how the family must adjust will help you better assist the children of military families."

A. The Deployment Stages



Show slide 5.

Distribute the handout, *Stages of Deployment,* as a reference for participants as you talk about the stages.

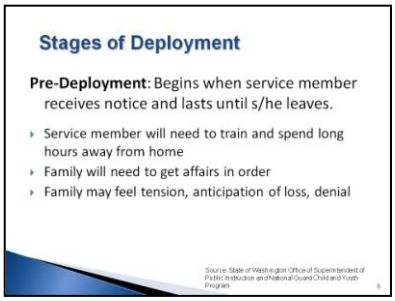
The deployment can be thought of as happening in stages:

1. Pre-deployment: When the service member receives orders to deploy, to the day of departure
2. Deployment: When the service member leaves home through the first month of deployment
3. Sustainment: After the first month of deployment through the end of deployment
4. Re-Deployment: The month before the service member is scheduled to come home
5. Post-deployment: When the service member comes home and during their initial readjustment (at least 3-6 months)

Tell participants that deployment disrupts the family routine of all family members, but children and youth are especially vulnerable.

"Let's look at each stage of deployment, and start thinking about the kind of support needed and what we can offer these kids."

Pre-Deployment



Show slide 6.

Pre-deployment – when the service member receives orders—is the time when the family will need to get any remaining affairs in order. If the service member needs to train and spend long hours away from home, family routines will immediately be disrupted.

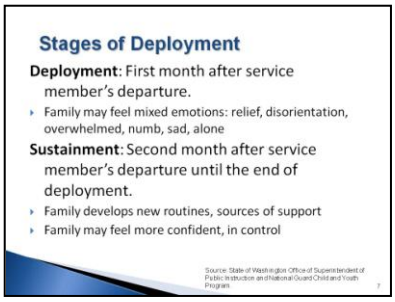
What Happens for Families

- Family members may feel tense and anxious during this time; everyone will be worried about the service member's safety, and some may try to convince themselves that the service member won't have to go.
- The parent who will remain at home may worry about handling new or additional responsibilities.

What Kids Need

- Ideally, parents will have good communication with the kids and be able to share age-appropriate information about the deployment: where the deployed parent is going, why they are going, and when they are expected to return.
- Children need to be reassured that the deployed parent is not leaving because of something they did; young children in particular think that bad things happen because of something they did.
- Kids also need to know that their parent will be as safe as possible—that they are part of a capable, trained group of soldiers who are all looking out for each other.

Deployment and Sustainment



Show slide 7.

When deployment occurs – the service member leaves-- all family members will go through a time of change and adjustment.

What Happens for Families

- For the parent who stays behind, in addition to missing and worrying about the service member, s/he will be handling more (if not all) family and household responsibilities. The parent may feel overwhelmed and alone.
- The parent who is raising a teenager may be having the hardest time dealing with the day-to-day challenges and changes.
- Children and youth will react to their parent's deployment in different ways. Some common reactions include feelings of fear, anger, confusion, helplessness and longing for the deployed parent.
- The kids will want to know when the parent is coming home, especially young children who have no real sense of time.
- For young children, the remaining parent's mental health influences their own stress levels. Young children can develop separation anxiety, regress developmentally (bedwetting, thumb-sucking, tantrums), or change eating and sleeping habits suddenly.
- Children who are old enough to understand will be worried about their parent's safety.

- Older children's academic performance may decrease; they may become moody, or have physical complaints (e.g. stomachache) with no apparent cause. They may feel angry at the deployed parent for not being there for birthdays and important events in their lives. They may act aggressively and get into fights with other youth, or they may react to the stress by withdrawing – losing interest in activities and becoming quiet.

What Kids Need

CALLOUT: "Let's brainstorm: what would you do or suggest to the kids who feel stressed during this early period of a parent's deployment? What ideas did you have as we were talking about what happens in families?" Give participants a few minutes to call out examples. Validate or clarify participants' suggestions as needed.

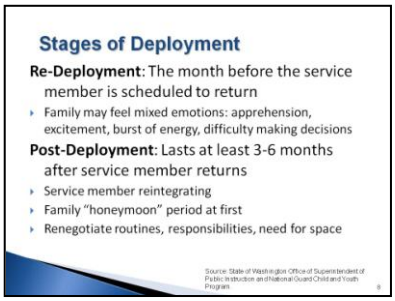
Participants may say things like:

- Help the child write letters and send them to the deployed parent.
- Encourage the child/youth to get involved in after school activities, and stay busy.
- Make sure the youth knows I am here if s/he wants to talk.

TIP: Focus on the age groups your volunteers will be serving. You may want to spend more time talking about how stress affects certain age groups. For example, if your volunteers serve preschoolers only, talk about how development can sometimes be affected by family stress. If your volunteers are serving teens, remind them of the kinds of changes and pressures teens are already experiencing, without the added strain of having a parent overseas.

Tell participants that deployment is a major burden on the whole family; however, military families are resilient. They develop new routines and strategies for handling responsibilities and caring for each other. This adaptation is referred to as the **sustainment** stage. Families develop ways to cope until the service member returns.

"We'll talk more about how to help children and their families in a bit, but let's talk about what happens when the family gets word that the service member is coming home."



Re-Deployment and Post-Deployment

Show slide 8.

Re-Deployment starts about a month before the deployed parent is scheduled to return. During this time, the family may feel a mixture of excitement and nervous anticipation. Excitement because the long wait is over and the family can finally be together again; nervousness because of the long separation – will that person be changed? Will s/he still love me even though I have changed?

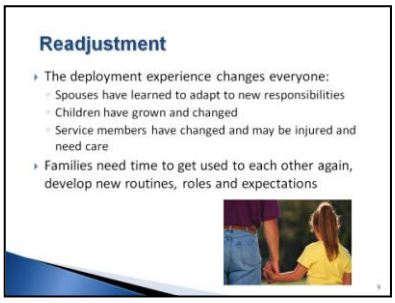
Post-Deployment begins when the service member comes home and during the first few months that s/he is back. At first there is a "honeymoon" period when everyone is just happy to be back together. Afterward, the family will need to pull together as everyone readjusts and learns to settle into a new routine.

What Happens for Families

Children and youth may have trouble readjusting at first:

- Very young children may not remember the service member; they may cling to the other parent until they get used to the returning parent again.
- Younger children may have developed separation anxiety and are now afraid to let their parent out of sight; they may be very clingy and needy.
- Children may have felt abandoned and now they are reluctant to reconnect; they are worried that the parent will leave again.
- Older children and teens may rebel and feel the returning parent is interfering with their lives and set routines. They may resist that person's authority because s/he has been absent for so long.

B. Readjustment



Show slide 9.

During the time the service member was deployed:

- Spouses/partners may have become more independent.
- Children have grown older and changed.
- Service members have changed, and many may be injured and need care.

For these reasons, the family will need time to readjust to each other again, develop new routines, and possibly new roles and expectations.

What Happens for Returning Service Members

"Let's take a minute and look at the situation from the service member's point of view, especially those who are returning from a combat zone, because this transition is the most dramatic."

Of course, all people are different, but there are some common reactions that many combat veterans have when they first get home. For example,

- They may be especially alert and watchful of their environment, always "on guard" and concerned about safety.
- They may be a little on edge, flinching or jumping at sudden loud noises.
- It may take some time before they let go of the normal precautions they took when they were deployed (e.g. they may automatically watch rooftops, drive aggressively or steer toward the middle of the road).
- Many service members, understandably, may want to "cut loose" for the first few weeks. For some, this may lead to risky behavior such as binge drinking and drunk driving.
- For service members who do not live on or near a base, they no longer have the constant camaraderie and support from fellow soldiers with shared experiences. Some veterans may feel alone and alienated, and may be trying to cope with bad memories and the loss of friends alone.

What Happens for Families

How does this affect the service member's relationship with his/her family? Some will adjust well; for others, it may take a while to "let go" of the role and life of an active service member and come back home. For example:

- They may not want to talk about their experiences; they may feel no one would understand, or they don't want to upset anyone, or they don't want to think about it. This means keeping a lot inside rather than unburdening to a spouse, as they would with other important matters.
- They may feel detached from their families, friends, and day-to-day events.
- They may distrust people and not want to confide in anyone.
- They might be over-controlling or overprotective with family members. Service members are used to rigid discipline during deployment and it may take some time to readjust to shared decision-making.

- They may be short tempered and have more conflicts with others, including family members.

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, many Iraq and Afghanistan veterans will need more than just time and patience: "Studies of these returning service members and Veterans have found rates of 4% to 14% for depression, 12% to 25% for PTSD, 11% to 19% for traumatic brain injury, and 18% to 35% for any mental health risk or concern."[3]

What Happens when a Parent Returns with Injuries

CALLOUT: "Let's consider injured service members for a minute. How do you think children experience a parent's injury, especially if it is something they can't see, like a serious brain injury that makes the person tired, dizzy, or forget how to do things they used to do?"

Tell participants that injuries that children can't see (e.g. post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and mental health issues) will be difficult for them to understand, and they will be confused by the change in their parent.

What Kids Need

CALLOUT: "How would you reassure a child in this situation?"

Participants may say things like:

- Remind the child that the injury is what causes the parent's change in behavior or ability, and that the parent cannot help it.
- Remind the child that the parent still loves them.

Tell participants that visible, physical injuries may be easier for children to understand, but they are difficult as well. The service member may be in pain, may have a long rehabilitation and need extensive medical care, and/or be permanently disabled. Children and youth may:

- Be frightened at first to see a parent who looks different.
- Feel sad that the parent can't do the things they used to do
- Feel angry that the parent was hurt ("why my dad?")
- Be worried that the parent won't recover

[3] http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/pro_deployment_stress_children.asp, accessed 8/8/11.

In these situations, children/youth might be given age-appropriate information about the parent's injury and be included in helping the parent when possible, but not pushed. It may be very hard for children to adjust to changes at first so patience is essential.

TIP: If you have the time and capacity to show videos to the group… you may want to show some of the short "for grownups" videos from Sesame Workshop. http://www.sesamestreetfamilyconnections.org/grownups/. In this excellent series, military families share their stories of deployment and how they helped their children to cope.

C. Resilience

"We've talked about some of the challenges that families experience because we want to understand their situations so we can help, but military families also develop *strengths* from this experience."

Resilience is the ability to survive, adapt and recover from difficult times. Military families are often described as resilient because they learn to cope with changes and uncertainty such as frequent moves and deployments on short notice. Family bonds may be strengthened as a result of the experience.

CALLOUT: "What kinds of strengths do you think children or youth in military families might develop through their experiences?" (You may want to jot down their responses on easel paper.)

Tell participants that some strengths military kids develop include: independence, flexibility, ability to adapt to change, emotional growth/insight, and maturity. Some have a greater awareness and appreciation of civic duty.

TIP: Explore the topic of resilience further. Module 6 of this series, *Serving Children and Youth with Special Needs*, has an exercise designed to help mentors work with children and youth to build their resilience. You may want to adapt the exercise to use with your participants serving military kids.

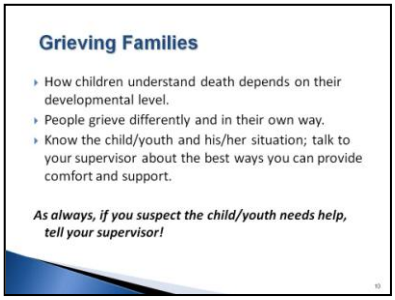
III. Supporting Children and Youth through Deployment Stages

A. Exercise

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants think through strategies to assist children and youth whose families are going through different deployment stages. The worksheet has three sections: page 1 has two pre-deployment examples; page 2 has two deployment examples, and page 3 has two post-deployment examples.

YOU WILL NEED: Copies of the handout, *Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages,* one section/page with two examples for each group. You will also need easel paper or black/whiteboard and markers for jotting down participants' ideas during the "debrief."

"Let's look at some examples of children and youth whose families are in different stages of deployment."



Show slide 10.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants to get into small groups of 3 or 4. Ask each group to identify a recorder to take notes.
2. Distribute one page of the handout, *Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages,* to each group. Divide it out so that some groups get page 1 with the pre-deployment examples, others get page 2 with the deployment examples, and others get page 3 with the post-deployment examples.
3. Ask the groups to take 15 minutes to read and discuss the two examples on their worksheet page. The recorder should jot down notes to the questions under each example.
4. After 15 minutes, bring the whole group back together for discussion.

TIP. Customize this exercise. You know best what the participants need to be thinking about. If needed, revise the examples to reflect what you think they will most likely encounter at their assignments-- issues that you want them to discuss and ages that reflect the children/youth they are serving. If there is a scenario in the worksheet that you feel is inappropriate for this group, delete it prior to copying the worksheet for distribution. If you do revise the examples, don't forget to jot down a few "debrief" notes for yourself – points you want the participants to remember from the discussion.

DEBRIEF

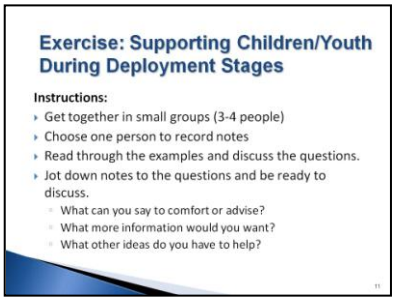
On the worksheet, question 1 asks the group to think about specific things they could say to comfort or advise the child/youth, question 2 asks for ideas they have on how to help, and question 3 asks them to think about what else they would want to know about the child/youth's situation. (See facilitator notes on page 20-22 for examples of responses.)

Ask the groups to report out by deployment stage (e.g. ask the groups that are working on the pre-deployment examples to share their ideas first). For each example:

1. Read it aloud first so everyone hears the scenario.
2. On the easel paper, write the child/youth's name at the top. Put a line down the middle and on one side, write "Things I can say"; on the other side, write "Things I can do/ideas on how to help".
3. Ask the small group(s) that worked on that example to share the two things that they came up with to comfort or advise the child/youth (question 1). Note the two ideas on easel paper under "Things I can say." Validate and clarify as needed.
4. Ask the group for any other ideas they came up with to help the child/youth (question 2). Add these ideas to the notes on the easel paper under "Things I can do/ideas on how to help."
5. Ask the group what other information they would like to have about the child/youth's situation so they can better assist (question 3). Emphasize that volunteers should talk with supervisors whenever they have questions or concerns about a child or youth.
6. Ask the larger group if they have ideas to add, or if they have had experience in a similar situation. Add the group's ideas for this scenario on the easel paper.

Once you have gone through each example assigned, note that participants may have similar experiences that they can share with a child/youth, regardless of whether they have had a family member in the service (e.g. dealing with added family responsibilities like Alex, having to temporarily live with other relatives like Emma, difficulty communicating with a strict parent like Rodrigo).

Show slide 11.



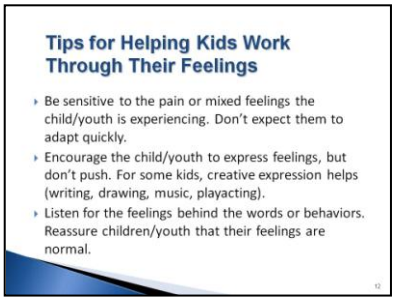
Tell participants that, regardless of the child's situation, here are some general things that they should keep in mind:

- Be sensitive to the pain the child/youth is experiencing. Don't expect them to adapt quickly, but reassure them that things will get better. It takes time to adjust and this is okay.
- Encourage the child/youth to express feelings, but don't push; they may not feel comfortable or be able to articulate their thoughts. For some kids, creative expression helps (e.g. writing, drawing, music, playacting).
- Listen for the feelings behind the words or behaviors. Reassure children/youth that their feelings are normal. You may need to reassure them repeatedly.

Optional: Distribute the handout, *Helping Children and Youth Cope with Stress.* Many of these ideas you will have already discussed during the "debrief".

B. Grieving Families

Show slide 12.



Tell participants that some service members who are parents are not going to come home. This is when children need the most love and support from caring adults.

It helps to understand how children grieve and what they understand about death. All children are unique, but in general:

- Very young children, toddlers and younger, may know that the adults around them are sad, but they won't understand what "death" means.
- Preschool-age children may not understand that death is permanent and that the person will not come back. They might also believe that they caused the person to go away because they were bad.

- Early elementary school-age children may understand that death is permanent, but may not believe it can happen to their family.
- Middle school-age youth know that death is final, and have an understanding of how the body dies and life ends.
- Teenagers better understand death and may try to understand the meaning of life in that context.

Remind participants that it is important to remember that there is no right way to grieve; everyone grieves in their own way and in their own time.

CALLOUT: "Has anyone comforted a child or youth that has lost someone close? What did you do or say to offer comfort and support?"

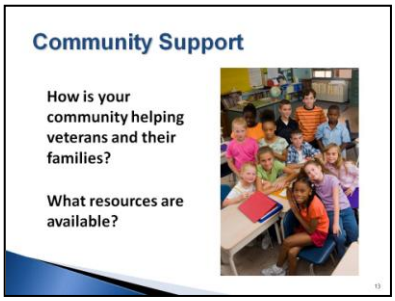
Participants may say they talked to the child about their memories of that person; let the child know they were there if they wanted to talk; visited the person's grave or lit a candle with the child, said a prayer, etc.

Tell participants that the best way they can help a grieving child/youth is to know that person and his/her situation. "Talk to your supervisor about the best ways you can provide comfort and support. As always, talk to your supervisor if you feel child/youth is in trouble."

🗎 Optional: Distribute the handout, *Helping Children and Youth Cope with Grief.*

TIP: Consider doing a separate session on this important topic. This topic cannot be covered in any depth in the time allotted here. Ask a mental health professional to be your guest speaker. Regardless of whether they have lost loved ones in war, your volunteers may serve children and youth who have lost friends and family members to other violence, accidents, and illness. Some of the volunteers may be in mourning themselves and want to talk about it.

IV. Reflection: Community Support



Show slide 13.

Tell participants that there are resources out there from all branches of the military to prepare families before, during, and after deployment. For example, families that are coping with deployment can join Family Readiness Groups.

- These groups are sponsored by the U.S. Army, Army Reserve, and National Guard and include family members, volunteers, and service members or civilian employees associated with a unit.
- The purpose is to build the resiliency of military families by giving them practical information and resources.
- Support includes regular meetings, telephone trees, newsletters, and different group activities.
- Family Readiness Groups help families during each stage of deployment, including help for injured soldiers.

However, this doesn't mean that military families can't use some help from the community now and then. Neighbors and volunteers are often the first ones to step up and offer a helping hand to families in need, whether they are in the military or not.

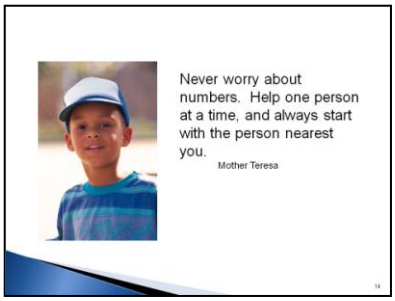
You have already talked about some of the ways volunteers will assist children and military families during their service. Ask participants to think about other ways the community pitches in for these families, or if appropriate, something they might do with their child/youth. It can be very empowering for children and youth to feel they are making a contribution, especially during uncertain times.

Distribute the handout, *Reflection: How Does Your Community Support Military Families?*

Ask participants to take a few minutes to think about some of the other services that military families might need. Give some examples: care packages to service members, respite or childcare, handyman services for the house or yard, transportation, etc. Note some of the organizations in your community that provide services to families in need, including military families.

TIP: Educate your participants on the other support services in your community. If you haven't already, put together a list of resources for military and other families in your area and distribute this to participants. Include contact information and whether the organization needs volunteers. Indicate which organizations/groups support military service members and their families in particular, and a few sentences about what they do specifically.

V. Closing



Show slide 14.

Let participants know that their dedicated service working with military kids is truly supporting the troops.

Optional: Distribute the handout, *Recommended Resources for Volunteers Supporting Military Families.*

TIP: Customize the handouts or add your own. You may want to add your own tips and recommendations to the handouts, or highlight the tips and resources that you feel are most appropriate for your volunteers' assignments. You might also find information you would like to print out and distribute from the websites listed in the *Recommended Resources* handout if participants don't usually have internet access (e.g. the T.A.P.S. Program is a resource for grieving families).

Last, ask participants to complete a *Training Feedback Survey* to help you improve the next workshop.

Ask participants if there are any more questions or last words before you close. Make any final announcements and thank participants for coming.

TIP: Leave them with something uplifting.

- Mention any public shows of support for returning service members in your community (e.g. "welcome home" signs or billboards).
- Show a video clip of military family reunions; go to www.youtube.com and search "surprised by dad returning home from war" or "surprised homecoming from soldiers."

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR EXERCISE DEBRIEF

Facilitator: Below are some examples of responses the group may bring up during the exercise "debrief" discussion.

Pre-Deployment Examples

Terrell (4 years old)

Facilitator Note: Terrell should be reassured that his father is leaving because of his job, not because of anything Terrell could have done. This is a common reaction among young children; they often blame themselves for things beyond their control.

What are two things you could say?

- *"Sometimes dads get frustrated just like everybody, but your dad loves you no matter what."*
- *"Your dad is going away because of his job. I know he would rather be home with you if he could."*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Keep reassuring Terrell that he is loved and everyone is proud of him and his family.*
- *Continue to encourage him to express his feelings in healthy ways (e.g. help him build a vocabulary for emotions, encourage creative expression).*

What more information might you want?

- *What is going on at home? Is Terrell's family feeling a lot of stress? If yes, what support is available?*

Emma (10 years old)

Facilitator Note: Emma is understandably anxious about the upcoming changes in her life – separation from her mother and moving to a new home. Emma will need a lot of love and reassurance. She may also need more help than a mentor can provide if her anxiety is prolonged or worsens.

What are two things you could say?

- *"You have a lot on your mind and it must be a little scary sometimes. How are you feeling?"*
- *"It's not easy to deal with these kinds of changes. Your mother and grandparents must be very proud of you."*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Keep reassuring Emma that I am here for her.*
- *Encourage her to talk to me about what's going on in her life after her mother deploys and she moves in with her grandparents.*

What more information might you want?

- *Is Emma's anxiety worsening?*
- *Is there some other reason for Emma's anxiety?*

Deployment Examples

Jayla (3 years old)

Facilitator Note: Jayla will need continued reassurance that her mother is not leaving (if this is the case – it could be that her mother is an active duty service member as well). Jayla is expressing a common fear among children about separation from parents.

What are two things you could say?

- *"Tell me about your mother. What is your favorite thing to do together?*
- *"Your mother loves you and will take care of you."*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Keep reassuring Jayla that she is loved and everyone is proud of her and her family.*
- *Continue to encourage her to express her feelings (e.g. help her build a vocabulary for emotions; encourage creative expression).*

What more information might you want?

- *Is Jayla's mother also a service member? If yes, is there a chance that she will be deployed as well?*

Alex (14 years old)

Facilitator Note: Alex is at the age where he wants to be out with his friends and resents the added responsibility. A mentor could remind Alex of the important role he is playing to keep the family going while his dad is away. A mentor could also tell Alex that accepting these kinds of responsibilities will help him become more independent.

What are two things you could say?

- *"Your family is very lucky to have you to depend on while your dad is away. Your parents must be very proud of you. Still, I can see why you are frustrated. You miss out on being with your friends. Have you talked to your mom about it?"*
- *"I know this is hard at times, but you are already more independent than most kids your age. The fact that you are able to handle these kinds of responsibilities says a lot about you. Hang in there."*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Find out what kind of support is available for teens in military families (e.g. peer support groups).*
- *Encourage Alex to talk to me when he is frustrated, or if he doesn't want to talk to anyone, let his feelings out in healthy ways (e.g. exercise, listen to music, journaling or art).*

What more information might you want?

- *What support is available in our community to ease the burden on military families?*

Post-Deployment Examples

Allie (8 years old)

Facilitator Note: Allie, in a sense, is grieving for her father and mother. Her father has changed and her mother can't give her as much attention as she used to. A mentor could remind Allie of how important she is to her parents, especially at a time like this, even though they may seem preoccupied. Hopefully Allie's mother will figure out ways for Allie to help with her father's care. Many veterans say their families gave them the strength to get through hard times.

What are two things you could say?

- *"It sounds like you have a lot on your mind. I am here for you anytime you want to talk."*
- *"You are a brave girl and I know your parents are very proud of you."*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Reassure Allie that her feelings are normal. Let her know that I am here for her and she can confide in me.*
- *Encourage her to express her feelings in healthy ways.*
- *Encourage Allie to get involved in activities that will keep her busy and build her self esteem. Suggest school activities, if appropriate.*

What more information might you want?

- *What is the situation? How is Allie's mother coping? Does she have help? Is her father going to get better, or are there permanent adjustments the family will need to make?*
- *What support is available in the community for military families in this situation?*

Rodrigo (16 years old)

Facilitator Note: Rodrigo is readjusting to having his father home at a time when he is becoming more independent. His father may also be having difficulties adjusting from a rigid, highly disciplined military atmosphere to a more cooperative family life where people need to listen to each other and discuss disagreements. A mentor can help by validating Rodrigo's feelings and suggesting (or role-playing) constructive ways he can communicate with his father. A mentor could also remind Rodrigo that it will take time for everyone to readjust and this is normal.

What are two things you could say?

- *"It sounds like you miss the good times you had with your dad before he deployed. Maybe it is strange for him to see how much you've grown as well..."*
- *"Can you tell me about the kinds of things you argue about? Maybe we can think up a compromise that you can suggest to him."*

Ideas about what you can do to help?

- *Practice (role play) conversations with Rodrigo to help him prepare to talk to his dad without getting angry or upset.*
- *Remind him that I am here for him; I don't judge him; and he can talk with me confidentially when he needs to.*

What more information might you want?

- *What is the family situation? Are others having difficulty?*
- *How long has Rodrigo's dad been home? Does it seem like he is having a lot of trouble adjusting? Is he suffering from injuries?*
- *Is there support in the community for military families/teens in this situation?*

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- *Helping Kids Cope with Stress* (Issue 2)
- *Impact of Grief and Loss* (Issue 3)
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Module 8 Handouts

The following handouts are included in this module:

1. Stages of Deployment
2. Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages
3. Helping Children and Youth Cope with Stress (optional)
4. Helping Children and Youth Cope with Grief (optional)
5. Reflection: How Does Your Community Support Military Families?
6. Recommended Resources for Volunteers Supporting Military Families (optional)
7. Training Feedback Survey

Stages of Deployment

Deployment can be thought of as a series of stages that the military family experiences as they anticipate the soldier's departure, adapt to the separation, and readjust afterward. Below is a short description of each stage and how the family may experience it.

Stage of Deployment		What the family may experience
Before the service member leaves	**Pre-deployment** begins when the service member receives the deployment order, and lasts until s/he leaves home.	• Service member will need to train and spend long hours away from home • Family will need to get affairs in order • Family may feel tension, anxiety, or even denial • There might be more arguments as family members push each other away, anticipating the loss
While the service member is away	**Deployment** is the first month after the service member leaves	• Family may have mixed feelings: relief, disorientation, numbness, sadness, and loneliness • Family members may feel suddenly overwhelmed or unsafe
	Sustainment begins after the first month until the end of deployment.	• Family develops new routines and sources of support • As they readjust, family members may feel more confident, in control, and independent
	Re-deployment is the month before the service member is scheduled to return	• Family may feel both thrilled, excited, and a little worried after the long separation
After the service member comes home	**Post-deployment** lasts *at least* 3-6 months after service member returns	• Family "honeymoon" period at first • Service member is readjusting and will need some time and space • Family is working out new routines, roles and responsibilities for each member

Source: State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Operation Military Kids.

Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages

PRE-DEPLOYMENT EXAMPLES: Parent is getting ready to deploy and the family is preparing.

As you work with children and youth in military families, you may find yourself in the situations described below. This exercise is designed to help you mentally prepare for those situations. Of course, you are not on your own; always talk with your supervisor if you have questions or concerns!

INSTRUCTIONS: Read through each example. With your group, answer the questions and be ready to discuss.

A. Terrell. You are talking with Terrell, 4 years old, at the preschool where you serve. You know Terrell's father is getting ready to deploy. During your conversation, you realize that Terrell believes his dad is leaving because he is angry at him.

1. What are two things you could say to comfort Terrell?

_____

_____

2. Do you have ideas about what you can do to help? _____

_____

3. What more information would you want about this child's situation to better assist? _____

_____

B. Emma. Emma is 10 years old and you are her mentor at the elementary school. You know that her mother is getting ready to deploy next week, and Emma will be moving in with her grandparents. Emma has been unusually anxious lately. She gets very upset over little things and wants to be sent home because she has a stomachache again.

1. What are two things you could say to comfort Emma?

_____

_____

2. Do you have ideas about what you can do to help? _____

_____

3. What more information would you want about this child's situation to better assist? _____

_____

Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages

DEPLOYMENT EXAMPLES: Parent is deployed and the family is adjusting.

As you work with children and youth in military families, you may find yourself in the situations described below. This exercise is designed to help you mentally prepare for those situations. Of course, you are not on your own; always talk with your supervisor if you have questions or concerns!

INSTRUCTIONS: Read through each example. With your group, answer the questions and be ready to discuss.

A. Jayla. You are helping 3-year old Jayla to develop her language skills by asking her questions about her family. You know her father has recently been deployed. As you talk with her, you realize that Jayla is afraid that her mother will leave, too.

1. What are two things you could say to comfort Jayla?

_____

_____

2. Do you have ideas about what you can do to help? _____

_____

3. What more information would you want about this child's situation to better assist? _____

_____

B. Alex. You have been 14-year old Alex's mentor for about six months and you know him pretty well. He is usually a very easygoing boy, but his father has been deployed (again) and Alex is not taking it so well this time. He resents that he must look after his two younger brothers most weeknights while his mother is at her new job, including making sure they do their homework and eat dinner. He wants to go out and have fun with his friends.

1. What are two things you could say to comfort or advise Alex?

_____

_____

2. Do you have ideas about what you can do to help? _____

_____

3. What more information would you want about this youth's situation to better assist? _____

_____

Worksheet: Helping Children and Youth During Deployment Stages

POST-DEPLOYMENT EXAMPLES: Parent has returned and the family is readjusting.

As you work with children and youth in military families, you may find yourself in the situations described below. This exercise is designed to help you mentally prepare for those situations. Of course, you are not on your own; always talk with your supervisor if you have questions or concerns!

INSTRUCTIONS: Read through each example. With your group, answer the questions and be ready to discuss.

A. Allie. Allie is an 8-year old girl that you have assisting with homework. You know her father recently came home with serious injuries. Allie's dad needs a lot of care right now and her mom does almost all of it. Allie tells you she feels sad. She is a little scared of her dad because he seems so different, and she misses the time she used to spend with her mom.

1. What are two things you could say to comfort Allie?

_____

_____

2. Do you have ideas about what you can do to help? _____

_____

3. What more information would you want about this child's situation to better assist? _____

_____

B. Rodrigo. You are starting to develop a good relationship with your mentee, 16-year old Rodrigo. He confides in you that his father, who has recently returned from a long deployment, is not the same. He is much stricter, he wants to "take over and tell everyone what to do," and the two of them argue a lot. Rodrigo is clearly hurt and disappointed because he idolizes his dad.

1. What are two things you could say to comfort or advise Rodrigo?

_____

_____

2. Do you have ideas about what you can do to help? _____

_____

3. What more information would you want about this youth's situation to better assist? _____

_____

Helping Children and Youth Cope with Stress

Children and youth who are coping with the stress of a deployed parent (or any stressful situation!) can benefit from the support and understanding of a caring adult like you. As you get to know the child/youth, you will know how best to help that individual. Here are some typical reactions to stress, by age level, and suggestions for how you might help.

BABIES (AGE 0-2)

Babies are sensitive and often react to their caregiver's mood, or changes in their schedule and environment. This stress can cause feeding or sleeping problems, irritability and fussiness.

How you can help:

- Speak calmly, quietly, and warmly.
- As much as possible, provide a soothing environment and activities.
- Give names to feelings; help them start to develop a vocabulary for their feelings.

TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS (AGE 2-5)

Toddlers and preschoolers may become overly clingy, cry more often, act aggressively, or change eating or sleeping habits. Preschool children may believe the deployed parent had to leave because "I was bad", and they may worry about the safety of the parent at home, or that the parent at home will leave, too.

How you can help:

- Encourage children to express themselves, including sad or worried feelings, in their own way. For younger children, this might be drawing, making faces, or playacting.
- Never belittle children's fears, but help them work through it. Allow them to retell the same story over and over if they want to. Help them name strong feelings and find the words to talk about their feelings. If they want to cry, make sure they know it is okay and you are there for them.
- Help them write letters to the deployed parent. Ask them questions about the parent and say how proud they must be.
- When the child is nearby, don't talk about war news with others or have it on the TV or radio; children may be listening before you even realize it. Younger children especially are not able to put things in perspective and may become frightened.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN (AGE 6-11)

Children may believe their world has suddenly become unsafe and unpredictable. They may worry that the deployed parent will get hurt or die, and they will also worry about the safety of the parent at home. Children may complain of stomachaches or headaches, become moody, have problems in school, or change eating or sleeping habits.

How you can help:

- As always, respect children's feelings, including negative ones, and reassure them that their feelings are normal. Help children express their feelings in a healthy way.
- Remind the child that the parent is well-prepared and working with others who are also prepared; they are all looking out for each other and know what they're doing.
- Help the child focus on positive things and stay busy. For example, you might suggest the child keep a journal or scrapbook of things happening in his/her life that can be sent to the parent periodically.
- Encourage the child to participate in activities that will help to build self esteem, master a talent or skill (e.g. sports, art, music, or other interests).

ADOLESCENTS/TEENS (AGE 12-18)

Adolescents and teens may deal with stress by engaging in risky behaviors. They might also be angry or moody more often, or lose interest in activities they used to enjoy, or act like they don't care what happens.

How you can help:

- Reassure the youth that strong feelings are normal, including "bad" ones (anger, guilt). Encourage them to share their feelings, but don't push if they are not ready.
- Youth may resent the fact that they have to take on additional responsibilities to help out. Remind them that they are a vital part of their family "team", and that accepting new responsibilities will ultimately help them to become more independent.
- Physical activity helps to relieve stress and anxiety. Encourage youth to exercise and eat healthy foods to help feel physically alert and well.
- Encourage youth to take up new hobbies and stay busy. Suggest constructive activities that can help them to regain a sense of mastery and control. Find information about youth groups that share their interests.
- Encourage the youth to spend time with supportive people who understand their situation. There may be a peer support group for military teens, in the community or online, where they can talk to other kids who are in the same boat.
- Encourage youth to express their feelings in creative ways such as music, drawings, journals, scrapbooks, photographs, drama, storytelling, and videos.
- Remind them that it is okay to tell an adult when you are feeling bad. Asking for help when you need it is the smart thing to do, not a sign of weakness.

FOR ALL AGES:

- Be sensitive to the painful separation the child/youth is experiencing. Don't expect the child/youth to adapt quickly.
- Encourage the child/youth to express feelings, but be patient. Don't push if they are not ready.
- Listen to the feelings behind the words. Validate feelings of loss, anger, worry, and grief, which are normal reactions.
- Tell kids their feelings are normal. Be prepared to tell them many times.

SIGNS THAT THERE MAY BE A MORE SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE:

- Difficulty or inability to concentrate in school, complete assignments, and participate in school activities
- Frequent intense emotional responses (crying, outbursts)
- Complaining of nightmares or sleeplessness
- Regression, loss of developmental milestones (young children)
- Withdrawn and not communicating
- Gaining or losing a lot of weight in a short period of time
- Not taking care of personal appearance
- Frequent physical complaints (e.g. stomachaches)
- Hurting oneself or others, expressing violent feelings, fighting with others
- Sudden change in behavior or personality
- Signs of possible drug or alcohol abuse

As always, if you feel the child/youth is in trouble, tell your supervisor!

Helping Children and Youth Cope with Grief

All children and youth are individuals, and they cope with loss in their own way. Keep in mind that the grief may be due to the loss of a parent (deployment, death), or the loss of what the parent used to be like (physical or mental changes due to service). As a caring adult in that person's life, you can offer emotional support.

HOW CHILDREN AND YOUTH REACT TO GRIEF

How children/youth grieve depends on their developmental stage. In general, you may see:

- Distancing or detachment: The child/youth may seem as if they are not affected but this could be a sign of shock or a way to ward off intense and painful feelings.
- Difficulty accepting it: Children and youth may have a hard time believing the loss and talk about the person as if they were still alive.
- Acting out/misbehaving: Children and youth may act out as an expression of anger, a way to gain control.
- Physical reactions: Children and youth may complain of aches and pains, have low energy, or increased illness, accidents, and injuries.
- Regression: Young children may be clingy or regress in their development (seem to lose what they have learned or behave younger than their age).
- Guilt: Young children may believe they are at fault for doing something "bad".

HOW YOU CAN HELP

First, know the child/youth and their situation. Talk to your supervisor about the best ways you can be supportive as s/he goes through the grieving process. In addition:

- Children and youth grieve in different ways and in their own time. Follow the child/youth's lead about when/if they want to talk about it. Don't push but let them know you are there for them.
- When the child/youth does want to talk, ask them to share stories and happy memories. Remembering the person who died is an important part of the grieving process.
- Children and youth need to know that their feelings are normal. Help them work out strong feelings in healthy ways (e.g. talking it out, writing, drawing, or playacting).
- Be patient with challenging behavior and mood swings. Look for the feelings behind the words and behaviors so you can respond appropriately.
- Watch for extreme behavior and signs that the child/youth may need professional help.

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS

As always, if you feel the child/youth is in trouble, tell your supervisor! If these behaviors persist, professional help may be needed:

- Sleeping or eating problems
- Avoiding school, not wanting to go to school, loss of interest in activities and friends
- Wants to be alone all the time, or is afraid of being alone
- Talking about joining the dead person, imitating or identifying with the dead person in unhealthy ways
- Ongoing physical symptoms without apparent cause
- Anger, hostility

Source: Real Warriors Campaign. Helping Children Through the Grieving Process. (www.realwarriors.net).

Reflection: How Does Your Community Support Military Families?

How does your community offer a helping hand to military families? For example, there may be opportunities to send care packages to soldiers overseas, or put together back-to-school backpacks with school supplies for other children. Take a few minutes to think about how your community supports these families and jot down a few notes. (It's okay if you don't finish.)

1. What are 3 areas of assistance that you think military families in your community could use?

1.) _____

2.) _____

3.)_____

2. What are one or two organizations that might provide these services (e.g. agency, church, community group)? Give the names if you know them.

_____

_____

_____

3. Where would you go to find more information, or even start something yourself?

_____

_____

_____

Recommended Resources for Volunteers Supporting Military Families

Below is just a sample of some of the many resources available and organizations dedicated to supporting veterans and military families.

Sesame Street Family Connections
Sesame Workshop has a website for military families that helps explain how young children experience deployments, homecomings, changes due to family members' injuries, and grief. The website includes information and resources on how trusted adults can help children cope and adjust. The resources include videos to watch with children and one-page printouts for children to help them express their feelings.
http://www.sesamestreetfamilyconnections.org/grownups/

Separations Happen: A Booklet for 13, 14, and 15 Year Olds Whose Families are in the Military
"Separations Happen" (1993) is a booklet for teens about military separations that includes advice from other teens who have been there. This is one of a series of four booklets developed under Operation R.E.A.D.Y. It talks about what to expect during the deployment phases and offers advice on how to cope.
http://www.k12.wa.us/operationmilitarykids/pubdocs/SeparationsHappen13-16.pdf

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Military Youth Deployment Support
The AAP Military Youth Deployment Support Website contains information, videos, worksheets, and other resources to help military youth and their families cope with deployment.
http://www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment/index.html

Operation Homefront
Operation Homefront is a national nonprofit that provides emergency support to veterans and military families. They provide financial assistance, emergency food, home repairs and household, moving assistance and baby supplies, and sponsor community events supporting military families. www.operationhomefront.net

Afterdeployment.org
This website, developed by the National Center for Telehealth & Technology and the Defense Centers of Excellence, is designed to be a wellness resource for the military community. Topics include common post-deployment issues from traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress, and anxiety to work adjustment, resilience, and family concerns. Each topic contains self-assessments, short videos, workshops, and resources.
www.afterdeployment.org

Coalition for Iraq + Afghanistan Veterans
The Coalition for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans (CIAV) is a partnership of organizations provides services and support to veterans, families, and survivors of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. www.coalitionforveterans.org

National Center for PTSD
Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Center for PTSD conducts and publishes research on traumatic stress. The website also includes fact sheets and videos for the general public and information on where to find help. www.ptsd.va.gov

TAPS – Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
TAPS mission is to provide comfort and care to people who have lost loved ones in the military. TAPS offers services and programs including peer based emotional support, case work assistance, crisis intervention, and grief and trauma resources. TAPS also provides regional military survivor seminars for adults and national Good Grief Camps to children and teens. www.taps.org

Training Feedback Survey

Please help us improve our training sessions by providing feedback on the training you attended. Thank you!

Training/Session Name:_____ Date:_____

Lead Facilitator:_____

Program you serve with: ❒ Foster Grandparent ❒ RSVP ❒ Other: _____

Please rate this session using the following scale:	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. The subject matter was presented effectively.					
2. The facilitator was knowledgeable.					
3. The facilitator responded to questions.					
4. There were enough opportunities for discussion.					
5. The written materials are useful.					
6. The session met my expectations.					
7. As a result of this training, I gained new knowledge applicable to my volunteer assignment.					
8. I plan to apply what I learned at this session.					

9. What did you like best about this session?

_____

_____

_____

10. What would have improved this session?

_____

_____

_____

Thank You! Your feedback will help us to improve our training!