

# *BECOMING A BETTER MENTOR*

STRATEGIES TO BE THERE FOR  
YOUNG PEOPLE:

INTRODUCTION

JANUARY 19, 2022



**Circle of Friends**

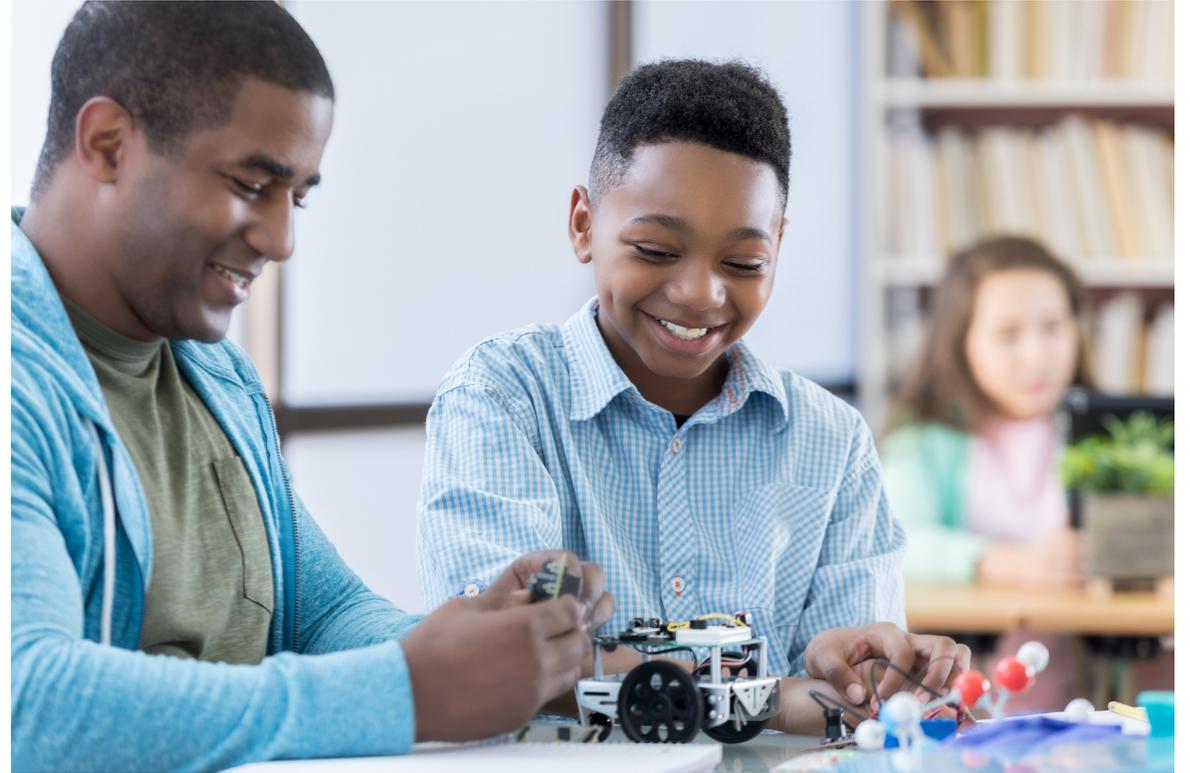
Transforming Lives, One Child at a Time.

# *WHAT YOU WILL LEARN*

Mentoring is like all relationships, it will have its ups and downs with moments of joys and challenges. Mentors are more than just friends or “authority figures”, mentors show up with a purpose and a desire to help the youth they serve.

# *LEARN KEY ASPECTS OF BEING A MENTOR:*

- Mindsets and attitudes that lay the foundation for a strong mentoring relationship.
- Basic information about youth development and the typical relationship cycle.
- Critical skills to grow and refine to help meet the needs of the youth we serve.



# *MENTORING MINDSET*

“mentoring mindset is a way of thinking and interacting that places young people at the center . . . allowing those of us serving as mentors to be a true partner in a young person’s journey.”

# *FOUR MAIN COMPONENTS TO MENTORING MINDSET*

1. **Be Intentional “I see you”**
  - Always prioritize youths needs
  - Have a positive and respectful view of their family
  - Honor their full self
2. **Be Supportive “I got you”**
  - Commit fully to the relationship
  - Be honest and authentic
  - Do no harm
3. **Take a Developmental Approach “I am here to help you”**
  - Goal-orientation
  - Honor and strengthen the youths web of support
  - Take a critical mentoring approach
  - Be willing to learn and grow
4. **Be Communal “We are in this together”**
  - Leverage community resources
  - Care about ALL young people’s circumstances
  - Honor the young persons full self

Take a moment to reflect on the mentoring mindset components; Do these beliefs and principles show up in your mentoring interactions?



# *CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT*

Having knowledge of what the developmental needs are of youth at different ages will help you understand better how to support the young person you are mentoring.



## *EARLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

- Children are just starting to explore the world outside their family.
- They may struggle to manage their emotions and behavior.
- They can not yet see things from others' perspectives.

### **Ways to develop your relationship:**

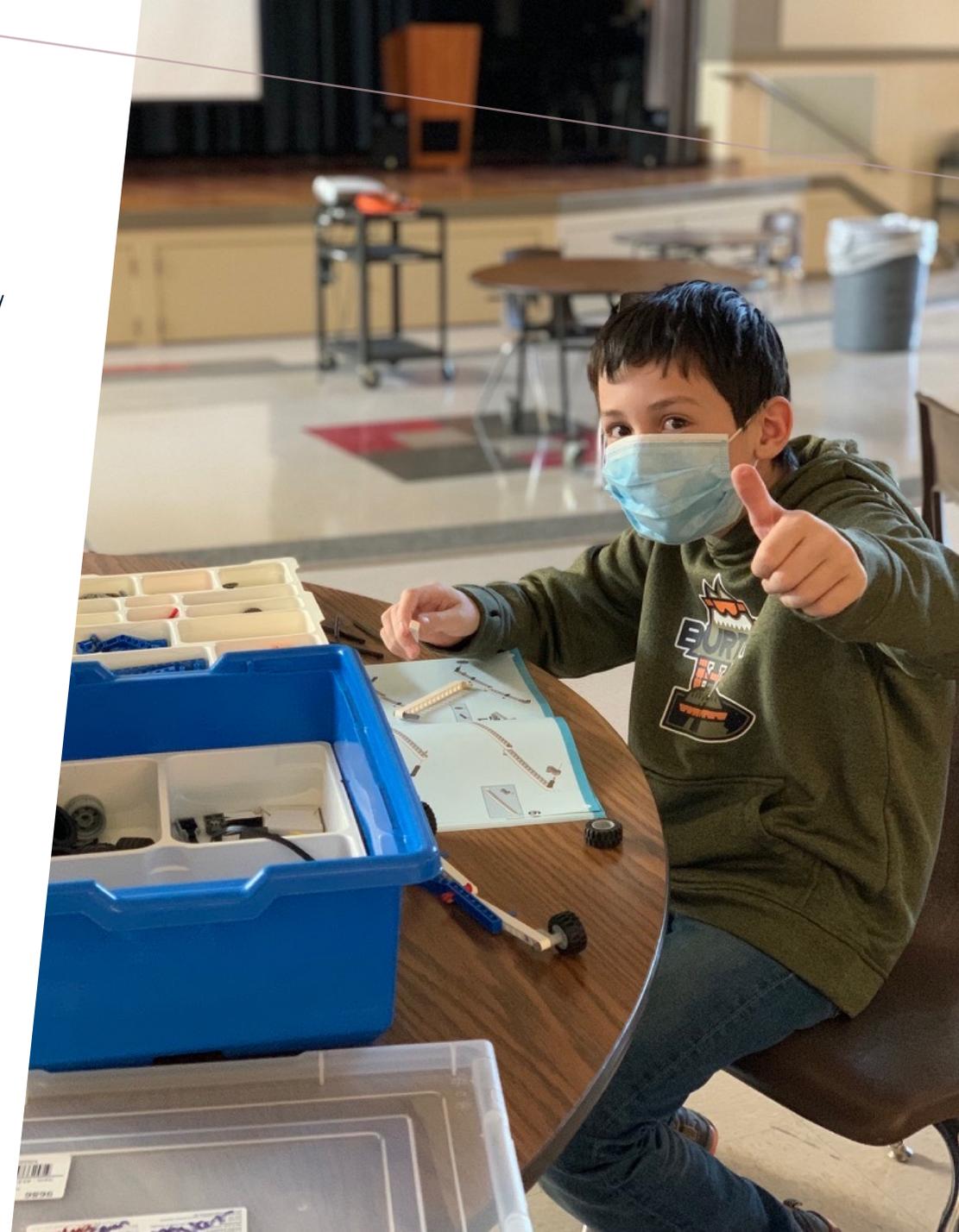
- Engage youth in activities that lets you play along side of them.
- Make activities brief and fun.
- Offer a wide range of new activities.
- Develop a positive and respectful relationship with the youth's family.

# *LATE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL*

- Conversations are more “two-sided” and the youth is gaining a sense of humor.
- Youth can focus attention for a longer period of time, but they can also be more emotional and argumentative.
- Many youth struggle socially and academically.

## **Ways to support the relationship:**

- Provide a consistent presence and fun activities.
- Finding and encourage your mentees “spark” (interests, talents and passions)





# *LATE MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL*

- Youth are becoming more comfortable being on their own in the community.
- Their peers take on an even bigger role in their lives.
- Chances are, your mentee may not think you are “cool” anymore.
- You may see your mentee less often.

## **Ways to support your mentee:**

- Communication may begin to shift to online.
- Youth may have very specific ideas about activities they want your support in.
- Follow your mentees lead and let them direct the course of the relationship – let them guide when and how you can support them.
- Think about ways to connect your mentee with other adults who could provide support in areas of interest to them.

# *MENTORING RELATIONSHIP, STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT*

Your mentoring relationship is like other relationships in your life, it will have a beginning, middle and an end. Your role will shift over time and have various stages.

# *RELATIONSHIP FORMATION*

## “Getting to know each other”

- Make sure you follow your mentee lead, avoid wanting to change or “improve” your mentee as a person.
- Try to find what interest your mentee, you can also discuss this with parents of others in their network.
- Most important thing you can do is BE CONSISTANT! Even if your mentee tests the relationship.

# *RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE*

## **“Middle” phase of the relationship**

- The more time spent together the more you will understand your mentee, their likes/dislikes and how to interact with each other.
- Being attuned to your mentee’s needs is critical in developing and sustaining a positive relationship.

## **Keep the following principles in mind during this time:**

- Let the youth lead
- Set boundaries as needed
- Be consistent
- Expect ups and downs in the relationship
- Assume the relationship will develop and change over time
- Know the limitation of your role and temper expectations
- Practice self-care

# *RELATIONSHIP ENDING*

- There are many reasons mentoring relationships end
  - Time limited component.
  - Mentee has gained what was intended from the relationship.
  - Something may have changed in the mentor or mentee's life.

Make sure to have closure no matter how the relationship ends. It is crucial to have a thoughtful end to the relationship to provide closure to the youth and family. Without this, youth may blame themselves for the relationships end and wonder what they did to cause you to leave.

# *IMPORTANCE OF MENTOR CONFIDENCE*

- Research suggests that many mentors do not listen as well as they could. They may miss signs that their mentee may be unhappy with some aspect of the relationship.
- Mentors can be stubborn in their approach and expect immediate success and can feel disappointed when mentoring doesn't go smoothly.
- Mentors can lack confidence and tend to doubt their ability to help or feel overwhelmed, they may interpret lack of enthusiasm from youth as a failure on their part.

Unfortunately, this can lead mentors to quit their mentoring relationship. Remember...like any relationship, a mentoring relationship takes patience, humility and a healthy belief in yourself.

# *HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE*

- Becoming a Mentor, Strategies to Be There for Young People uses 12 chapters which will discuss practice and core skill mentors can bring to their mentoring relationship.
- Each chapter will bring a brief overview of the mentoring skill and will describe how mentors can apply this skill and give examples of what it feels and looks like when applied well.
- Chapters 1-6 will focus on Relationship Building.
- Chapters 7-12 will focus on Supporting Youth.