



MENTOR HANDBOOK

TRANSFORMING LIVES, ONE CHILD AT A TIME.

4th Edition (Updated April, 2024)
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Welcome to Circle of Friends!

We believe that outstanding people are the key to our success. Through your efforts, Circle of Friends has become a leader in providing services to our community's most vulnerable and challenged children. To ensure continued success, we feel it is important that you understand our vision, mission, values, policies, procedures, and practices. This manual is intended to help introduce you to, and familiarize you with, various aspects of mentoring at Circle of Friends. We encourage you to use it often as a general reference and guide for mentoring related activities.

We want to emphasize that the way we work with youth goes far beyond this document. The intangible spirit that fosters such things as positive attitudes, resourcefulness, and quality results is the essence of Circle of Friends. It is the responsibility of each of us to cultivate this spirit in everything we do. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

1.2. History

Duncan Campbell, founder of Circle of Friends and Friends of the Children, is deeply committed to children, and to the belief that all children deserve the resources and opportunities necessary to become healthy, responsible, and contributing citizens.

Beginning in 1992, extensive research was conducted by The Institute for Children to determine the most effective relationship-based program model to help young children overcome their high-risk status and realize their inherent resilience and potential. The research clearly indicated that the strongest single protective factor a child can have is a close, healthy, and sustained relationship with a caring adult; especially an adult who has positive expectations for the child and involves them in meaningful activities.

Based on this research, Friends of the Children – Portland was founded in Portland, Oregon in 1993, to work with our community's most vulnerable children. In partnership with the schools and community, the children who are most in danger of school failure, drug and alcohol abuse, gang involvement, teenage pregnancy, and involvement in criminal behavior are selected for intensive program services. From kindergarten through high school, the program provides these children with a special person called a Friend to ensure the children are equipped with the education, skills, and attitudes they need to find happiness and become productive citizens.

Circle of Friends was founded in Sisters, OR, in 2011 following the same commitment. The two most critical components of Circle of Friends are the relationships developed and the long-term commitment made to each child. A secure, caring, relationship is the "master key" that opens minds, creates opportunity, and rekindles hope for these children. Through the relationships we build and the long-term commitment we make with the youth, we hope to fulfill three long-term goals for each child: avoid involvement in the criminal justice system, avoid early parenting, and succeed in school with a minimum of a high school diploma or GED.

1.3. Mission & Vision

1.3.1. Mission Statement

To provide mentors (Friends) and resources that promote equal access and opportunity for Sisters' underserved children and youth to develop life skills, social skills, academic success, and individual talents.

(Updated 2021)

1.3.2. Vision Statement

Circle of Friends offers every Sisters' child or youth in need with trained mentors who provide consistent, long-term meaningful relationships. Working collaboratively with Sisters School District, community service providers, and parents, Circle of Friends develops and implements inclusive plans and support systems for mentees. Circle of Friends works to provide children and youth with positive experiences and opportunities that will contribute to their current and future success.

1.4. Key Elements

- A child in need wants a caring, safe relationship.
- The parents or guardian of the child want an additional caring, safe relationship for the child.
- A child is generally enrolled in early elementary school.
- A child becomes the young friend/mentee of one person, couple, or family.
- A person, couple, or family becomes a friend/mentor to one young child in need.
- A mentor is a living example of their beliefs and values, modeling appropriate behavior.
- A mentor commits to connecting with the child 3-4 times a month for a minimum of 1 year.
- A mentor will receive peer support at Circle of Friends mentor meetings.
- Circle of Friends will provide mentors with pre-match training and ongoing support in person and online.

2. WORKING TOGETHER

CONGRATULATIONS! As a mentor, you are now about to begin one of life's most rewarding and fulfilling experiences. Your commitment indicates that you believe in young people. You recognize the magnitude of the responsibility that you accepted in choosing to work with youth.

The children are at the heart of everything we do at Circle of Friends. Our hope is to broaden each child's view of the world and his or place in it and provide a whole "Circle of Friends" for each child we serve.

2.1. The Children

Children in need of additional supportive relationships are the very reason for our efforts. We believe their lives will be forever changed and enriched by a mentoring relationship. The children enrich our lives by giving us their time and attention. We care for, nurture, support and protect them in every way possible.

The children come to us as referrals from teachers, counselors, parents or guardians, and from observations within the classrooms by Circle of Friends staff.

2.2. The Children's Families

Generally, we serve single parent families, a child with an incarcerated family member, families involved with DHS, a child with a family member who is or has been a drug or alcohol abuser, families in a low social-economic household, or a child who lives in a foster or adoptive home.

2.3. The Mentors

The mentors who commit to caring, safe relationships with the children are living examples of their values. Each individual, couple, or family enthusiastically, yet patiently, includes a child in activities, building the trust between true friends. We applaud you and thank you for your dedication and believe the lives of each of you (adult and child) will be enriched by this experience. Circle of Friends staff will support your efforts to the best of our ability.

3. RELATIONSHIPS

Reaching out for help demonstrates tremendous strength. It's hard! But time and again the parents of our mentees open themselves up and ask for help for the children. For many of them this is a leap of faith.

3.1. Building Parent/Guardian Relationships

The parents or guardians of your mentee are sharing a precious gift with you – the opportunity to spend time with their child. They requested that their child be matched with a mentor and agreed to participate for the year.

That's a good beginning, but it doesn't make an automatic relationship. There are no hard and fast rules for how you should relate to the parents/guardians of your mentee. Relationships and individual circumstances vary. But there is no substitute for using good judgment and being sensitive. At same time, several principles are essential:

- Keep the parents/guardians informed about your activities with their child. They should always know where you are and when the child is leaving and returning home. If plans change, run it past the parent or guardian first.
- Show the same respect for the parents/guardians of your mentee as you hope to receive. Guard against being judgmental. Help the family understand that you are not trying to be a substitute for them in the eyes of your mentee.

- Balance your relationship with your mentee's parents/guardians and siblings. Be the caring person you are without becoming overly involved in your mentee's family situation.
- When possible, reinforce the rules parents/guardians have for your mentee. Remember that you and the parent/guardian are partners in teaching our mentee about the world.
- Some of our families are steeped in financial and personal problems. Remember your role is to spend time with the mentee away from the chaos that might occur at home.
- Staff members have developed a relationship with the parents and guardians of our mentees. Consult a staff member whenever you have concerns or encounter challenges.

Occasionally, your relationship with your mentee's parents or guardians may become strained. It may be a result of something that happened between the two of you or with your mentee. It also may be completely unrelated to you. If you are feeling uncomfortable about your relationship with the family, please talk with Circle of Friends staff as soon as possible.

Keep in mind that some of our mentee's families have survived many difficult situations, poverty being one possibility. Sometimes a family member may ask for help that is beyond your responsibility to provide. Some may ask for money, a place to stay, or a place for your mentee to stay. Gently, but firmly, explain that you are unable to help. Tell the family member that Circle of Friends staff will be happy to help them with looking for resources within our community. Then be sure to contact staff about the situation.

In most cases, the families from which your children come from are very different from yours. Always assume that your mentee is loved by his or her family and the parents/guardians are doing the very best they can for your mentee. Appreciate all the family has accomplished for themselves and their children with their resources.

Occasionally, a parent or guardian may try to dictate the relationship you have with your mentee. While we believe the parent/guardian oversees their child's time with you, our staff has discussed guidelines for the mentoring relationship with all parents and guardians. If a parent/guardian becomes demanding or controlling, please notify staff immediately. **Together, we can work out a solution.**

Some common things that might concern a mentor:

- Dad treats me like a babysitter
- Mom doesn't return my calls
- Siblings beg to go with us
- No adult is home when we return
- Needy mom needs to talk
- Dad grounds mentee and we can't get together
- Mom has a scary boyfriend

If any of these things are concerns for you or your mentee, please contact staff or talk with other mentors about it at your Circle of Friends mentor meeting.

3.2. Building Mentee Relationships

At the initial stages of the match, your mentee **may** appear to be hesitant, unresponsive, and unappreciative of the mentor relationship. This guarded attitude is simply a manifestation of their insecurity about the relationship. The mentee's attitude will gradually take a positive turn as they realize your sincerity about being a friend. **Be patient!** Don't try to speed up the process by going out of your way to accommodate your mentee, such as seeing your mentee more than the prescribed one hour per week. Remember that the mentor–mentee relationship has an initial phase. During this phase the mentee is more interested in getting to know how “real” you are and how much they can trust you.

Remember, you and your mentee are on the way to building your relationship. You have made the first step already. With some mentees it may be more difficult than with others. Building a relationship is harder if a child comes from a low-income family or has been faced with obstacles of abuse, neglect, alcohol, or drug abuse. Here are suggestions to help you along:

- **Be caring** – Don't make your role too complicated. Show that you care about the child. Be warm, friendly, and understanding.
- **Be patient** – It takes time. It may take your mentee a while to trust you, especially if he or she has had adults come and go in their life or has been disappointed often.
- **Be a good listener** – Good communication is key to being a good friend. How well you listen is more important than where you go and what you do with your mentee.
- **Be Respectful** – Simply treat your mentee as you would like to be treated.
- **Be Dependable** – Dependability and consistency are key to building a relationship with your mentee and their parent/guardian. In other words, do what you say you are going to do. **Be clear and follow through.**

3.2.1. Getting Together

You have decided to welcome a child into your life. This may simply mean an extra place at the table or buying an extra ticket to the ball game. Sometimes your mentee may play catch with you or join you in your daily errands. You and your mentee may play a board game together. You may sit quietly while he or she talks about their weekend, or you may go to their school program

Start slowly and fit the outings into your schedule making sure to do what works for you and your mentee. In the beginning, we encourage you to keep visits simple, meeting consistently in a familiar and secure environment for the child, remember, your mentee and their parents do not know you yet. This will help establish a trusting relationship. Build up to longer, more complex outings if you like. For example, initially spend time at the clubhouse or close to your mentee's home and school, then a neighborhood park and finally, a state park for a long day hike.

Your time together will be spent doing age and developmentally appropriate activities. Build your mentee's self-confidence and trust in you by selecting activities at which they can succeed. Be aware that your mentee may not be able to complete the tasks that other children of the same age perform with ease. Again, start slowly. Each new step should be incremental, developmental, and sequential. Steps prepare a child for the next level.

Mentors give mentees a broader view of the world and their own unique potential and place in it. If you ever doubt that you are making a difference in your mentee's life, imagine what he or she would be doing if not with you. Watching TV endlessly? Playing continuous video games? Sitting in a cramped apartment? **One-on-one attention from a person makes a big difference.** The smallest activities – a walk around the block, playing a board game, sharing a meal – are meaningful for most of our mentees.

Remember that you do not have to do anything “special” with your mentee. Spending time together is what is important. BEING THERE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING!

3.3. Stages of a Mentoring Relationship

3.3.1. Developing

The most critical part of this stage is building trust. Trust is the product of behavior. If you demonstrate to your mentee that he or she can depend on you, you are well on the way to gaining trust.

Assure your mentee that things you discuss will be kept in confidence. If, however, you feel it is important to talk with someone about what your mentee has told you, discuss it with your mentee first. Reiterate that you must break this confidence if there is threat of harm to your mentee or others.

Your mentee may test the relationship more during this period than at any other time. They may do something to sabotage the relationship such as breaking a rule you have set or act out in some way. They may act as though they don't want to spend time together – maybe “forget” you were scheduled to meet. Hang in there! Don't give up – show up!

Relationships are as unique as the people in them. In some cases, a child may be overly eager to form a relationship with you. Sometimes a mentee's parent will want you to take the child all the time. It will be up to you to draw the line and keep your personal boundaries.

It is important for you to be prepared for whatever the case may be. Be prepared to face some frustrations and disappointments along with joys and victories.

- Start slowly. You are a stranger to this child and her parents/guardians. This is a time to get acquainted.
- Consistency is important in building a relationship.
- Especially with young children, a week is a long time and two weeks can seem like forever. Until you have developed your relationship, meet more frequently.

- A trusting relationship is the product of behavior. Always do what you say you're going to do. In this way you will teach the child and his parent/guardian that you are a person they can depend on.
- If you ever have concerns about your relationship with either your mentee or members of their family, please contact Circle of Friends staff.

3.3.2. Settling In

This is a time when the relationship becomes more relaxed and natural. You may see some exciting signs of progress.

Sometimes during this stage things feel like they are not working, you might ask, "Am I moving too fast? Has my mentee been so disappointed by earlier experiences that it is difficult to accept a relationship now? Are we stuck in a testing stage? Do I feel overwhelmed by the weight of this responsibility? Am I annoyed by my mentee's behavior?" You may need to back away a bit and give your mentee some time and space and then try some things that worked to build the relationship at the start.

When facing the challenges of your relationship with your mentee, reach out at your mentor meetings for support. Share your experience – the ups and downs. We are here to support each other in our efforts.

3.3.3. Continuing

We hope you will wish to commit to another year with the child. If you would like to continue another year, we will ask your mentee and parent or guardian if they would like to continue as well. If so, we will update your agreements indicating the commitment to an additional year. This process is easily done by adding new dates to your current agreement.

3.3.4. Closing

We hope that your relationship will succeed and flourish over the year(s) to which you have committed. However, there may be reasons for ending the relationship prematurely. Your mentee may move away. You may move or something else may prevent you from completing your commitment. Our goal is to help you complete a wonderful year or more of mentoring. If, for any reason, you believe you will not be able to fulfill your one year commitment, please contact us immediately. We will help you to either complete your commitment to your mentee or transition out gracefully.

The most important thing we can do in a premature closure is to assure the child that it did not end because of anything they did.

If you decide that you will be ending your relationship at the end of the commitment, we will assist you with informing your mentee and their parent/ guardian that your year-long commitment is nearing its end. Once the mentee and family has been notified, we will send out letters of closure to your mentee's parent or guardian and you stating that your mentoring relationship at Circle of Friends has ended. It will state that any further contact between you and your mentee is outside of our program.

The closing of the relationship is important. If done well, it helps your mentee understand that the time you spent together was valued by you. If done poorly, your mentee may feel abandoned. Help prepare your mentee by involving them in the planning of a year-end celebration or activity.

Create small souvenirs that you and your mentee can exchange. Find ways to mark the importance of your year together. Some ideas include:

- Celebrate by giving your mentee pictures of the two of you together.
- Draw a picture of your favorite activity.
- Go out for ice cream and talk about all the wonderful times you have spent together.

Remember that if you continue to see your mentee after leaving our program, you will no longer be protected from liability under Circle of Friends.

4. MENTEE EXPECTATIONS

The most important expectation for every child is that they will reach their inherent potential and grow into a happy and healthy person.

Our children were selected based on their potential and resiliency, as well as the challenges with which they face. It is our intention to build on their strengths with an awareness of their challenges. To have realistic expectations, we must understand what your mentee's experiences are:

- Some children are held and nurtured as infants – others are left in a crib.
- Some children are talked to and sung to – others are neglected or yelled at.
- Some children are played with as toddlers and young children – others are put in front of the TV.
- Some children are fed a balanced diet – others are fed a diet high in fat, sugar, salt, or underfed.
- Some children are read to daily – others have never had a book read to them or who have parents who cannot read themselves.

Consequently, you may need to begin activities at a developmental age far below your mentee's chronological age. Don't panic and think you must help your mentee with school, eat healthy foods or exercise regularly. It is much more important to build your relationship and encourage a positive attitude toward learning.

5. ONGOING SUPPORT

5.1. Mentor Meetings

Although you became a mentor to spend time with a child, Circle of Friends asks that you also attend monthly mentor meetings during the first year of the relationship. We believe that the peer support you receive is invaluable and most love sharing their experiences with their fellow mentors. Mentors will attend these meetings once a month at the Circle of Friends clubhouse. The meetings will begin with updates and a brief training on a subject relevant to mentoring. We will then follow up with discussions of sharing the joys and challenges of mentoring and supporting each other.

Veteran members are always welcome at these meetings. Periodically veterans are invited to attend to share experiences from their longer-term relationships.

Mentors also receive direct, ongoing support from staff members who listen patiently, relaying information and assisting all participating members with their mentoring relationships. Discussions often will indicate a need for more information on a topic that becomes a subsequent training.

5.2. Match Support

During the first year of a match, Circle of Friends staff will contact mentors monthly checking in either by phone, text, email, or at mentor meetings. Mentor meetings provide a tremendous amount of support and perspective for you as a mentor. If you are unable to attend a mentor meeting, Circle of Friends staff will contact you to learn what has been happening with your relationship.

5.3. Website

Our website will be updated regularly. It lists resources related to mentoring and activity ideas. Other items will be added as needed.

5.4. Facebook

Those of you on Facebook can receive regular updates from the Circle of Friends page. All you have to do is go to the Circle of Friends Facebook page and click “like”.

Due to privacy concerns, we ask that you **do not post** any photos of your mentee on your Facebook page. We also **discourage** mentors from becoming Facebook friends with their mentees or their family members.

5.5. Yearly Events

Circle of Friends hosts several events each year for mentors, mentees and families. These social events give us the opportunity to engage with all our mentors, mentees and families. This is a time for all to come together to get to know each other better and have fun!

6. MEASURE OF SUCCESS

6.1. Milestones

Your success is measured by many milestones. Your mentee may realize for the first time that they . . .

- ✓ have potential
- ✓ are confident and self-assured
- ✓ value education and the learning process
- ✓ are a capable young person

6.2. Good Indicators

- ✓ setting goals
- ✓ developing new skills
- ✓ aware of time management
- ✓ increased cooperation with parents, teachers, and peers
- ✓ behavioral changes
- ✓ improved grades
- ✓ a willingness to help others
- ✓ ability to see the future
- ✓ ability to make a post-secondary plan

Your commitment and dedication to your mentee may be the most profound opportunity that you experience. The quality of the relationship you build directly influences the life and future of the child. Please exert every effort to maintain professional standards, improve your mentor skills and exercise good judgment when engaged in any activity involving your mentee and Circle of Friends..

Mentoring is not a cure for all the problems/decisions facing your mentee and their family. The essence of mentoring is the sustained human relationship: a one-on-one relationship that shows a child that they are valued as a person and is important to society.

YOU ARE A:
POSITIVE ROLE MODEL
FRIEND
COACH
ADVISOR
SELF-ESTEEM BUILDER
CAREER COUNSELOR
ADVOCATE

7. MENTOR CONDUCT AND GUIDELINES

7.1. Role as a Mentor

- Don't try to be a teacher, parent, disciplinarian, therapist, Santa Claus or babysitter. Experience demonstrates it is counterproductive to assume roles other than a dependable, consistent friend. Listen carefully and offer possible solutions without passing judgment. Think of ways to problem solve together rather than lecturing or telling the mentee what to do.
- Be completely present with your mentee. They deserve undivided attention. Please refrain from cell phone use (ie taking or making calls, texting, social media). Look your mentee in the eye when talking. Make sure they feel seen and valued.
- Respect the uniqueness and honor the integrity of your mentee and influence them through constructive feedback. The mentor empowers the mentee to make right decisions without actually deciding for the mentee. Identify the mentee's interests and take them seriously. Be alert for opportunities and teaching moments.
- Set realistic expectations and goals for your mentee and make achievement for them fun. Encourage your mentee to complete their secondary education and pursue higher learning or vocational goals; provide access to varying points of view. Assist in making the connection between their actions of today and the dreams and goals of tomorrow. Don't get discouraged if the mentee isn't turning their life around or making great improvements. Mentors have a great deal of impact; it's not always immediately evident.
- As a mentor you can share and advise, but know your limitations. Problems that your mentee may share with you regarding substance abuse, molestation and physical abuse are best handled by professionals. If you have any concerns, contact program staff immediately.
- Be supportive of the parent/guardian, even when you may disagree. Don't take sides or make judgments concerning any family conflict or situation. Leave the parenting to the parent.
- Do what you say; many of our children have faced heart-wrenching disappointments and have had many promises broken. Last minute changes and broken promises, even if only inferred, may affect them very deeply.

7.2. Discipline

There may be instances when your mentee's behavior is unacceptable. Again, remember the parent/guardian is responsible for the child's discipline. The following guidelines are to be used if the parent/guardian is not around to assume the responsibility for the child's behavior. Don't forget to inform the parent/guardian about the steps you took and why you took them.

- Never physically discipline.
- Never use abusive language.
- Don't use ultimatums.

- Most children will listen and respond to reason. Explain to your mentee why you find their behavior unacceptable.
- Don't give your mentee the silent treatment to solve the problem. Discuss your concerns.
- On rare occasions, your child may need to be taken back home because of unacceptable behavior. Before taking this action, tell them what you are doing and why you made the decision. Taking your mentee back home because of their behavior doesn't mean the match (relationship) has ended. Before you leave, make sure the child understands they will see you again.

7.3. Boundaries

It is important to know what you can and cannot accomplish with your mentee and their family. Although your relationship will have a tremendous impact on your mentee, it will not happen overnight. In fact, sometimes you may wonder if your mentee appreciates you at all. Never doubt that you are making an impression on your mentee's life! At the same time, be realistic about what you can and cannot accomplish. Find the balance between expecting too much and too little.

Also realize that, for the most part, you cannot change the family or home situation of your mentee. For the most part, the patterns of life for the families of our children have been set for a long time so it may be difficult to understand their lifestyles and choices. Be as tolerant as possible and respect the parents of your mentees the best you can. Focus your time and energy on your mentee and help them thrive in the environment they are in. If, however, you have concerns, please contact Circle of Friends staff. We may be able to help you or may need to address the problem with the parent.

Although you must give your phone number to your mentee's parent, you are not obligated to tell the parent where you live or answer the phone more than you feel is necessary. You will need to define a clear boundary for yourself and communicate clearly to all as needed.

7.4. Program Rules

- No overnight stays.
- No visits in your home.
- Be sure you have parent/guardian approval for activities you plan on doing.
- Always call your mentee's family before your scheduled meeting as a reminder and confirmation of the outing; you may also need to contact the school if pick up will be from Sisters Elementary School. Be on time for both pick-up and drop-off.
- Return your mentee home at the agreed-upon time. If you are unable to or there is a change in plans, always call the parent/guardian to let them know.
- Don't leave your mentee alone with strangers.
- Discussions between you and your mentee are considered confidential. Be careful about sensitive personal issues. The mentee's personal or family life may be difficult to discuss, particularly early in the relationship. Your mentee may be ashamed of poor school

performance, family culture, religion, financial problems and so on. It is important not to measure the success of the relationship by the extent of the mentee's disclosure.

- If you have a concern you feel is beyond your ability to handle, call program staff even if it seems trivial. There is no reason to feel helpless or hopeless.

7.5. Outings

Some children are used to wandering about their neighborhoods unescorted by an adult. They may have been allowed to cross the street by themselves from a very early age. When out with your mentee, make sure they are within your sight at all times. Make sure they look both ways before crossing the street. Have them wear safety gear (i.e.: helmet, life jacket, etc.) when appropriate.

7.6. In Schools

If you wish to visit your mentee in school, you will need to complete Sisters School District volunteer application and training. Once completed you will be given a Sister School District Volunteer Badge.

If you will be picking up your mentee, the parent/guardian must give permission first. Please ask the parent/guardian to call the school or send a note to the school with their child. Make sure to introduce yourself to your mentees teacher and strive to develop a great relationship with them and open a line of communication.

7.7. In Service

Everyone benefits from giving back to the community. Even the youngest child can give to others. Involve your mentee in community service with you - whether serving a meal, volunteering at an animal shelter, helping the elderly, or planting flowers. You will be amazed at the pride they may show.

7.8. Religion and Religious Activities

Many of us are motivated to serve children by the desire to live your beliefs and values which are reflected in the way you live. We respect your beliefs and convictions, and it is important for you to respect those of others.

As a program, we sincerely hope that the way in which you live your life serves as a model of your beliefs. While working with your mentees, you may share your beliefs, if asked. Discussions about religion should be initiated by your mentee or their family.

Keep in mind that you may be the only person of your beliefs and values that your mentee knows. Let your life and how you live it represent your beliefs.

Some of your family customs might be religious and have become a part of who you are. For example, your family may say grace at dinner. It is part of your family custom, and you may continue to do it even with your mentee present. **The child may or may not - and - should not be made to participate.** You must not try to convert your mentee to your beliefs.

8. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION: 4 SAFETY STEPS

Because we care for children and desire to protect them, Circle of Friends requires all mentors, and employees to complete 4 SAFETY STEPS before employment or mentoring work begins.

8.1. STEP ONE: Sexual Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention Training

Circle of Friends policies and procedures require that mentors and employees avoid abusive behavior of any kind. Mentors and employees are required to report any policy violations to a supervisor.

Mentors and employees should have a basic understanding of the characteristics of sexual abusers and their behaviors in 'grooming' a child for sexual abuse. Grooming is the process used by an abuser to select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or 'gatekeeper'), manipulate the child into sexual activity and keep the child from disclosing the abuse.

To equip Circle of Friends mentors and employees with information necessary to protect a child from sexual abuse or maltreatment, Circle of Friends requires all mentors and employees to complete the Sexual Abuse Awareness Training provided live or online through The Kids Center, Child Abuse, Signs, Symptoms & Prevention annually and Darkness to Light: Child Sex Abuse Training every 3 years.

8.2. STEP TWO: Screening Process

Mentors and employees are required to complete the Circle of Friends Screening Process, which requires volunteers and employees to:

- complete an Employment or Mentor Application
- complete a face-to-face interview
- complete a 6 hour training
- provide references to be checked

8.3. STEP THREE: Policies & Procedures

Mentors and employees are required to review and sign all Circle of Friends policies indicating they have read and understand the material and agree to comply with all policy and procedure requirements.

8.4. STEP FOUR: Criminal Background Check

Circle of Friends requires that all mentors and employees undergo a yearly criminal background check. Depending upon position, differing levels or intensity of background check may be required.

9. CHILD SAFETY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Circle of Friends has a zero tolerance for abuse in Circle of Friends programs and activities. It is the responsibility of every mentor and staff member at Circle of Friends to act in the best interest of each child in the program.

9.1. Enforcement of Policies

Circle of Friends employees who supervise other employees or mentors are charged with the diligent enforcement of all Circle of Friends policies. Violations of these policies are grounds for immediate dismissal, disciplinary action, or reassignment from positions for both mentors and employees. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Circle of Friends Executive Director.

9.2. Confidentiality

During your time at Circle of Friends, you will learn things about others that must be kept in confidence. As part of the application process to enroll a child, families are told the information they share with us will be kept confidential.

Within mentor meetings, you may confide sensitive information, knowing that other mentors operate under the same code of confidentiality. Likewise, it is appropriate to share information with Circle of Friends staff. While some of the stories you hear may be worthy of appearing on a reality television show, it is your job not to repeat any of them to your friends and relatives. Save any discussion for your mentor meetings or call someone on the Circle of Friends staff.

No information about mentored children or their families is shared with any person or agency outside Circle of Friends without written permission of the parent or guardian.

Exception: Children and their families have been informed that information will be shared if:

1. A child has been threatened or hurt
2. A child has hurt or threatened to hurt someone
3. A child has threatened to hurt himself or herself

If you ever have any concerns about a child's safety, please call a Circle of Friends staff member. If someone has been hurt or is in imminent danger, call 911.

9.3. Spending/Gifting

Time is more valuable than money. This is certainly the case when it comes to building a caring relationship. It's difficult to place a value on the time and attention you will give to your mentee. It is priceless. Our mentors and staff are asked to follow our gifting procedure of not spending more than \$20 a month on Circle of Friends youth for gifts, meals or other expenses.

Remember the Circle of Friends program is mainly to assist your mentee with learning social and emotional skills, however, there may be activities that you want to attend that cost additional money. Consult with program staff – they will be able to assist with appropriate costs for activities

9.4. Drugs & Alcohol

Alcohol may not be consumed by mentors and employees while engaging in any Circle of Friends activity, unless during a specific event being hosted by Circle of Friends; and, even in such a case, no mentor or staff member will consume alcohol in the presence of program youth. In addition, the following is strictly prohibited, except stated above, while engaging with any Circle of Friends youth, or any Circle of Friends activities.

1. The consumption of alcohol or marijuana while volunteering with Circle of Friends or volunteering while under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or illegal drugs as defined under federal or state law;
2. The possession, use, sale, manufacturing, or distribution of illegal drugs, or other controlled substances as defined under federal or appropriate state law; this prohibition specifically includes medical or recreational marijuana, even if such use is not illegal under state law;
3. Illegal use or abuse of prescription drugs. This includes using prescription medication that has not been lawfully prescribed for you by a physician or abusing a medication prescribed for you in a manner that is inconsistent with your physician's instructions regarding dosage or frequency.

Mentors and employees are subject to immediate dismissal if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their volunteer duties. Specifically, the possession, use, or being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana and/or any illegal substance while volunteering is prohibited.

9.5. Weapons

Mentors and employees may not, at any time possess or use any weapon while on any property owned, leased, or controlled by Circle of Friends; including anywhere that Circle of Friends programming activity is being conducted.

Weapons include, but are not limited to, guns, knives, swords, blades over four inches in length, explosives, and any chemical whose purpose is to cause harm to another person.

Regardless of whether a mentor or staff member possesses a concealed weapons permit or is allowed by law to possess a weapon, weapons are prohibited on any Circle of Friends property. They are also banned in any location in which the volunteer is participating with program youth including the volunteer's vehicle.

If the mentor or staff member is using a weapon in connection to an approved activity (e.g. archery), the Executive Director can authorize the use of that weapon.

9.6. Driving & Transporting

Oregon State Law requires that everyone must wear a seat belt when riding in a car. Program youth should ride in the back seat and may need a booster seat. Potential mentors will be provided with the handout "Safety Belt and Child Seat Laws" to make this determination. **You must escort the child to the door of their house or other destination.**

The roles of mentor and program staff require transporting program children on a regular basis; therefore, a satisfactory driving record, a valid driver's license for the state of residency, a functionally safe automobile, and appropriate automobile insurance and registration are required at all times. A copy of the mentors or program staff Oregon Driver's License and current automobile insurance must be on file with Circle of Friends and updated annually.

Each driver is expected to:

- Be at least 25 years of age or older
- Drive and conduct themselves in a safe manner.
- Maintain a valid driver's license for state of residency.
- Maintain automobile insurance coverage and provide proof of insurance every six months.
- Use child booster seats as required by law.
- Obey all applicable laws and regulations customary to vehicle usage.
- Require all persons riding in any vehicle during organization activities to wear seat belts at all times.
- Use of Alcohol, drugs or other substances, including certain over the counter cold or allergy medication that in any way may impair driving ability is prohibited.
- NO utilization of a phone allowed while in the car. This includes hands free phone calls when in the automobile with a program youth. If there is an emergency when utilization of the phone is required, the driver MUST pull over to initiate the call.
- Texting and driving is NEVER permitted.
- Have his/her vehicle professionally serviced and inspected on a regular basis to ensure that it remains in safe operating condition.
- After age 75 an annual checkup/training will be required.

Annual DMV checks will be performed on all mentors and program staff who transport children; however, program staff are required to report any moving violations received, whether they are received on or off the job, within one week of occurrence. Mentors and program staff must also report immediately, or as soon as s/he becomes aware, if his or her driver's license is suspended or revoked. Mentors and program staff must not do any work-related driving with a suspended or revoked license.

Driving privileges may be prohibited for any health-related reasons either self-reported or observed by program staff or mentors.

If you have concerns about driving with your mentee in the car, please talk to a Circle of Friends staff member.

When dropping a mentee off, **please escort them to the door of their house or other destination.**

9.7. Nudity

Mentors, family members, friends and employees at Circle of Friends should never be nude in the presence of youth in their care.

9.8. Physical Contact

Circle of Friends is committed to protecting the children in our care. Circle of Friends has implemented a physical contact procedure that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting children. Physical contact in any form should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of Circle of Friends mentors and employees must foster trust at all times – personal conduct must be above reproach. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working at Circle of Friends:

1. Hugging, pats on the back and other forms of appropriate physical affection between mentors or employees and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in the program setting.
2. Physical affection should be appropriate to the child's age. Inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection should be immediately reported to the Circle of Friends Program Director.
3. Physical contact and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children or Circle of Friends mentors or employees. It is much less likely that touches will be inappropriate or misinterpreted as such when more than two individuals are present, and the touch is open to observation.
4. Do not force any physical contact, touch or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.

9.9. Sexually Oriented Conversation

Mentors and employees are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with children. Mentors and employees are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any child in the program. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging and online chat rooms. If your mentee shares any sexual content through any text, email or messaging system, you must not delete, or distribute this material and report it immediately to Circle of Friends staff.

9.10. Possession of Sexually Oriented Materials

Circle of Friends mentors and employees are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) on Program property or in the presence of children. If any such materials are purportedly necessary for classroom instruction, they must be approved in advance by the Executive Director.

9.11. Internet/Electronic Media

No computer at or related to Circle of Friends is to be used by mentors, employees, or children to engage in computer chat room discussions or visit pornographic or sexually inappropriate websites. Violation of this policy will lead to discipline from the Executive Director. Any questions about inappropriate use of computers or the suitability of a particular website should be discussed with the Executive Director.

10. REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE

In the event that mentors or employees observe any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) it is their responsibility to immediately report the observations to a Circle of Friends staff member or immediate supervisor.

10.1. Reporting Violation of Policy

In order to maintain a safe environment for our children, Circle of Friends mentors and employees must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to abuse of a child should be directed to an immediate supervisor, or the Program Director.

10.2. Consequences of Committing a Prohibited or Harmful Act

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all child interaction and Circle of Friends activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or a child protective agency.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act should be prohibited from future participation as a mentor or staff member in all activities and programming that involves children or vulnerable populations at Circle of Friends. If the person is a staff member or employee, such conduct may also result in termination of employment from Circle of Friends.

Failure to report a prohibited act to the designated person is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of employment of a staff member or employee. Mentors who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any activities involving children or vulnerable populations at Circle of Friends.

10.3. Reporting Suspicions of Abuse to Law Enforcement

Circle of Friends mentors, volunteers, and employees are mandatory reporters and are required by The Child Abuse Reporting Law (ORS 419B.005 to 419B.0450) to disclose any information indicating a youth may be abused, neglected, in danger, or intends to harm him/herself or others.

The term child abuse and neglect mean the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person who is responsible for that child's welfare. Abuse in Oregon is "actual" as well as "threatened harm".

If you believe you should make a report of suspected child abuse, contact Circle of Friends staff within 24 hours of the suspected abuse. They will assist you in making a report. If anyone is in imminent danger, call 911.

Any report made to Child Protective Services (CPS) is of suspected abuse, based on the information they receive. CPS will determine whether a check on the child's safety is deemed necessary. If it is determined that the situation or condition is unsafe, CPS will determine and follow through on the next steps.

10.4. Response to Report of Abuse

Circle of Friends Executive Director will take appropriate action on behalf of the Program when a report of abuse occurs.

10.5. When a Child has been Victimized

If a mentor or staff member has knowledge or a suspicion that a child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the information will be reported to supervisory staff and the appropriate authorities as outlined above.

In addition to notifying the appropriate authorities (if required), Circle of Friends will provide the child or the child's parent/caregiver/guardian with information to allow the child (or parent, on the child's behalf) to obtain assistance and intervention, as well as available counseling options.

11. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF MENTOR HANDBOOK

Name of Mentor: _____

I hereby acknowledge that I have been made aware that *Circle of Friends* has a Mentor Handbook and that a copy of the Handbook, in electronic and/or paper form, has been made available to me. I hereby acknowledge that I understand that it is my responsibility to read the Handbook and familiarize myself with the information and policies contained therein. I agree to comply with all the policies and procedures applicable to my volunteer position. Questions about the Handbook may be directed to the Circle of Friends Program Director and/or Executive Director as appropriate.

I agree to comply with the policies contained in the Handbook as well as any updates or changes to the policies and procedures contained in the Handbook.

Date

Signature of Mentor

Date

Signature of Program Director

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED AT THE TIME OF THE ISSUANCE/ACCESSIBILITY OF THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK.

12. MAKING MIRACLES

Our mentors make miracles happen, usually without even knowing it! You help children see new possibilities for themselves. You give their parents hope for a brighter future for their children. You teach new skills and model positive behaviors. We, Circle of Friends, are honored and privileged to support you in your mentoring relationship.