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Shining Light on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Toolkit to Build Understanding

Developed by: *Wichita State University Center for Combating Human Trafficking* // In Partnership With: *MANY*

TOPIC - Mentoring: The Basics

Developed by:



In Partnership With: *MANY* 

Wichita State University Center for Combating Human Trafficking (combatinghumantrafficking.org) // MANY (www.manynet.org)

Mentoring: The Basics

This resource is one of several topics addressed in the [Shining Light on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Toolkit to Build Understanding](#). The toolkit is designed to be a resource for multidisciplinary professionals, policy makers, volunteers, faith communities, and others involved in anti-trafficking work. While the information provided on each topic is in no way exhaustive, you will find additional resources to facilitate further study.

Each topic is addressed in three sections. First, the “**what?**” – what we know about the topic which includes a review of what we know from both research and the field. “**So what?**” addresses what this means – the reason this information is important to understand and how it will enhance our response to trafficking. “**Now what?**” considers the implications of this information in practice - how the information can be used to enhance our response to human trafficking. This includes specific implications for mentoring relationships, when applicable.

What?

Mentoring is one of the most widely used approaches for engaging youth who are at-risk or disadvantaged and are in need of positive adult support. Over 5,000 organizations in the United States offer some form of mentoring and serve approximately 3 million youth (*Dubois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011; National Mentoring Partnership, 2006*). Such a substantial number of programs is required because an estimated 8.5 million youth (about 20%) do not have a caring adult in their lives (*Cavell et al., 2009*).

- **Mentoring fosters meaningful personal connections that have lasting implications for the youth who participate** (*Dubois et al, 2011*).
- **Effective mentoring relationships are supportive, structured, and focused on the needs of the mentee** (*Rhodes, 2002; Mentor, 2009*).
- **A mentor must be encouraging and fully invested in helping their mentee reach their fullest potential** (*Rhodes, 2002; Mentor, 2009*).
- **A mentor’s role is multi-faceted. At any given moment, a mentor may serve as an advisor, coach, teacher, or advocate** (*Gotian, 2016*).
- **There are two forms of mentoring:**
 - Informal mentoring occurs when a mentoring relationship forms by chance, without any prearranged schedule or agenda (*Bynum, 2015*).
 - In contrast, formal mentoring programs are managed and endorsed by an organization (*Bynum, 2015*).
- **There are also a number of different types of mentoring** (*Rhodes, 2002; Mentor, 2009*):
 - Traditional mentoring typically involves one adult and one young person.
 - Group mentoring involves one adult and up to four young people.
 - Team mentoring involves several adults working with small groups of young people in which the adult-to-youth ratio is not greater than 1:4.
 - Peer mentoring involves a youth mentoring another youth.
 - E-mentoring involves mentoring via e-mail, social media, or another form of internet communication.

So What?

Not every person is fortunate enough to develop supportive relationships naturally. Mentoring, in its contemporary form, is a planned intervention which aims to address this lack of relationship, particularly for vulnerable youth (*Bennetts, 2003*).

- **Essentially, mentoring ensures that a youth has at least one supportive person in their life that can encourage growth and development and serve as a connection to needed resources** (*National Mentoring Partnership*).

— Youth involved in the same mentoring relationship for a year or more reported improvements in school work, social relationships, and behavioral outcomes (*Meyer & Bouchey, 2010*).

— Mentors can be instrumental in helping youth develop emotionally and behaviorally. They can be both a challenging and comforting agent on a youth's journey toward independence (*Dejong 2004*).

— Youth participating in mentoring relationships show improvement on important educational measures compared to youth with similar circumstances that are not participating in mentoring programs (*Jekielek, Moore & Hair, 2002*).

— Youth participating in mentoring programs have better attitudes and behaviors at school and have better chances of attending college (*Jekielek, Moore & Hair, 2002*).

— Compared with non-participants, youth who participate in programs that include mentoring have less drug and alcohol use (especially among minority youth) and in some cases, fewer delinquent behaviors (*Jekielek, Moore & Hair, 2002*).

- **There is currently a significant mentoring gap in our country.** Approximately 16 million youth are never involved in a mentoring relationship of any kind, either formal or informal (*Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014*).

Now What?

General Practice Implications

Individuals

- **Seek out opportunities for mentoring.**

— Connect with a program you are passionate about. Look for mentoring programs whose goals relate to your educational and occupation background (*DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011*).

— Ask questions about how you will be matched with a mentee. Advocate for a match based on shared interest, as this typically results in a more successful pairing (*Dubois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn & Valentine, 2011*).

— Ensure that you have the time to invest in a mentoring relationship. The most impactful relationships involve consistent contact for at least 1 year (*National Mentor Partnership, 2016*).

Service Providers

- **Ensure that you are providing high quality mentoring by evaluating program effectiveness and adhering to identified best practices for mentoring** (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014). [Also see Critical Elements of Mentoring \(coming soon!\)](#)
- **Utilize practices likely to encourage the development of effective mentoring relationships by** (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Matz, 2014):
 - Selecting mentors who are experienced in working with youth.
 - Setting expectations regarding the frequency and contact between mentors and youth.
 - Providing ongoing training for both staff and mentors.
 - Supporting parental/guardian involvement.
 - Providing structure activities for mentor matches.
 - Utilizing a community-based rather than exclusively school-based or site-based approach.
 - Systematically monitor the program.
 - [Also see Critical Elements of Mentoring & Mentor Readiness. \(Coming soon!\)](#)

Community

- **Raise awareness about the mentoring gap and the need for additional mentors to meet the growing need of youth in our country** (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014).
- **Educate community members on the positive benefits of mentoring and provide them a way to connect to programs in need of mentors.**
- **Advocate for systems of coordination at the federal level which promote common standards of excellence and shared methods of evaluation across all agencies providing mentoring** (Cavell et al., 2009).
- **Seek partnerships and/or design policies that can help address the mentor gap such as offering college credit for mentoring, employee release for mentoring, tax credits, etc.** (Cavell et al., 2009).
- **Advocate for federal, state, and local dollars to be invested in quality mentoring programs** (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014).

"An estimated 8.5 million youth (about 20%) do not have a caring adult in their lives."



- [Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring: 4th Edition](#)
- [National Mentoring Resource Center](#)
- [The Chronicle of Evidence Based Mentoring](#)
- [The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcome and Availability of Mentoring](#)
- [The Center for Evidence Based Mentoring](#)

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