

Checklist: Mentoring Youth

Mentoring between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) has been proven effective in supporting youth to succeed.¹ While relationships with adults can support positive youth development, so can close connections with friends, siblings, and other peers. Research from the Search Institute found that young people need people in their lives who express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities. Through their research, the Search Institute identified the 20 actions below that lead to positive youth development.² This checklist is designed to be used by Volunteers seeking to strengthen mentoring relationships with youth. It can also be used in mentoring programs, organized by Volunteers and their counterparts, to work with local adult or peer mentors to assess their mentoring relationships. The checklist should also be used by staff in supporting programming, training and evaluation of Volunteers engaged in mentoring.

Express care

- Pay attention when you are with your mentee.
- Let your mentee know that you like being with her/him.
- Commit time and energy to doing things for and with your mentee.
- Make it a priority to understand who your mentee is and what she/he cares about.
- Ensure your mentee can count on and trust you.

Challenge growth

- Help your mentee see future possibilities.
- Make it clear that you want your mentee to live up to her/his potential.
- Recognize your mentee's ideas and abilities while pushing him/her to strengthen them.
- Hold your mentee accountable for appropriate boundaries and rules.

Provide support

- Praise your mentee's efforts and achievements.
- Provide practical assistance and feedback to help your mentee learn.
- Be an example your mentee can learn from and admire.

1 Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring: <http://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/elements-of-effective-practice-for-mentoring/>

2 Search Institute's Developmental Relationships Framework: <http://www.search-institute.org/downloadable/Dev-Relationships-Framework-Sept2014.pdf>

- Stand up for your mentee when needed.

Share power

- Take your mentee seriously and treat her/him fairly.
- Ask for and listen to your mentee's opinions and consider them when making decisions.
- Understand and adjust to your mentee's needs, interests, and abilities.
- Work with your mentee to accomplish goals and solve problems.

Expand possibilities

- Expose your mentee to new ideas, experiences, and places.
- Introduce your mentee to people who can help him/her grow.
- Help your mentee work through barriers that could prevent your mentee from achieving her/his goals.

The following are actions that are also included as quality standards that Volunteers report on under the GenEq/LGL CSPP in the VRF:

- Work with your mentee to identify specific goals for the mentee's future.*
 - Assist your mentee to address any barriers—including gender-related ones—to helping your mentee achieve her/his goals.*
 - Mentoring occurs during concentrated blocks of time over several months.*
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