



Mentoring in Juvenile Treatment Drug Courts

Strategies and Tips from On-Site
Technical Assistance Visits and a Focus Group Report

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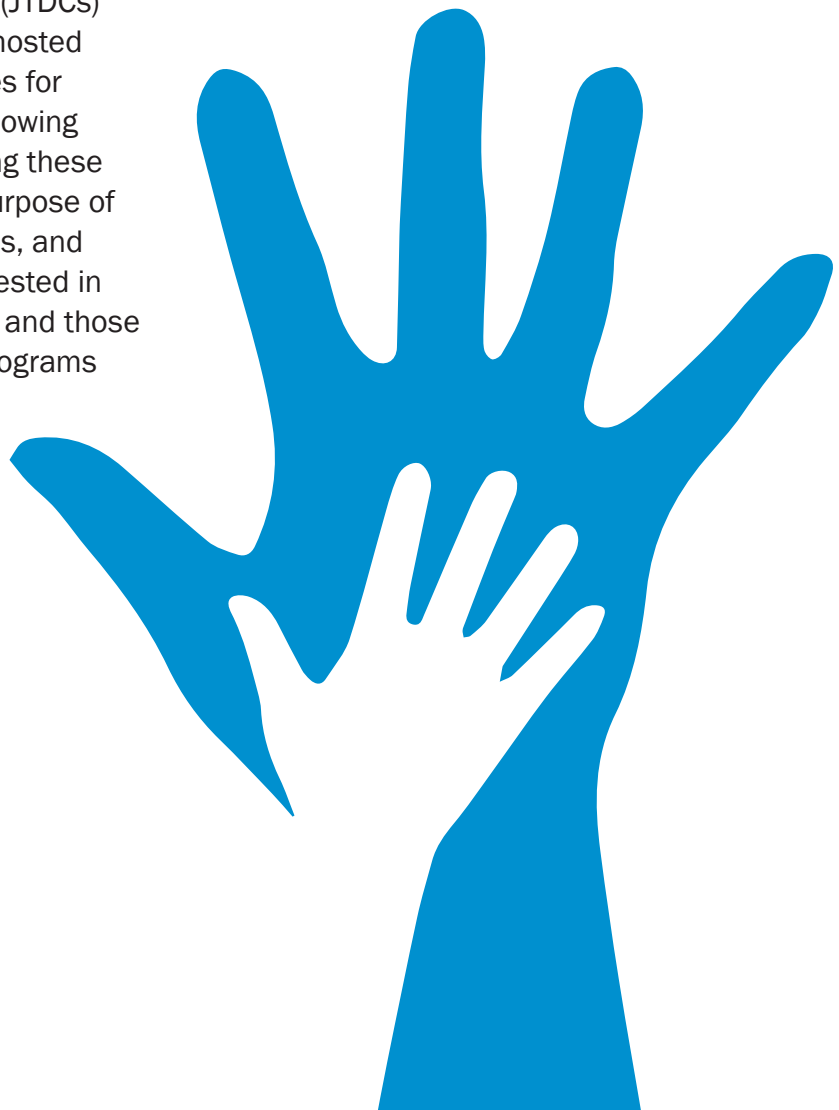
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Note

From December 2013 to January 2014, members of the NCJFCJ staff conducted 10 on-site technical assistance visits to juvenile treatment drug courts (JTDCs) with mentoring programs and hosted team members from these sites for a focus group meeting. The following information was acquired during these visits and focus groups. The purpose of this brief is to provide tools, tips, and strategies to jurisdictions interested in beginning mentoring programs and those that have current mentoring programs within JTDCs.





A Review of Mentoring Programs and Research

Introduction

Adolescents who suffer from concurrent delinquency and substance abuse are in need of effective programs that address negative behaviors and provide opportunities to develop pro-social attitudes and skills. When juveniles have no available alternatives to disorganized and dysfunctional lifestyles, they are at risk for continued destructive behaviors and further justice involvement. Promising programs such as specialized treatment courts, mentoring, and evidence-based interventions have been developed and implemented in order to pursue positive behavioral change in at-risk youth. These programs vary in quality, but when well designed and implemented with integrity, they may positively impact targeted youth.

Research shows that well designed and implemented JTDCs can have an impact in a number of different areas:¹

- Reduce recidivism;
- Reduce substance use/abuse;
- Strengthen the potential for positive outcomes for youth participants in JTDCs; and

- Increase cost-effectiveness, particularly when utilizing a wide range of non-detention based sanctions (e.g., stricter curfews, retracting opportunities for bonuses/rewards, etc.).

JTDC programs that adhere to evidence-based practices (EBP)ⁱ and that actively address parental supervision and peer influence can significantly increase positive outcomes. Further, frequent and high quality training of JTDC personnel is associated with improved outcomes. Finally, JTDCs that have consistent policies and procedures and stability in staffing have greater cost-benefit ratios.² Mentoring programs in JTDCs can potentially enhance the success and effectiveness of these courts, providing another resource to the JTDC team.

However, implementing mentoring programs in JTDCs requires operational stability and significant collaboration among the JTDC team, community, and stakeholders. JTDCs

ⁱ In operational terms, evidence-based practice refers to applying the best available research to policies, practices, and procedures when working with youth, their families, and the communities in which they live. EBP is the progressive, organizational use of direct, current scientific evidence to guide and inform efficient and effective services. EBPs are practices that have scientific evidence to support specific outcomes given specific uses and implementation.

that have these foundations in place are in the best position to benefit their youth by adding a mentoring program.

Mentoring Programs and Outcomes

The U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) website includes three mentoring-based programs in its Model Program Guide: Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS), Across Ages, and the School-Based Mentoring Program for At-Risk Middle School Youth. BBBS is a community-based mentoring (CBM) program that features one-to-one mentoring in a community setting. Across Ages is a mentoring initiative designed to delay or reduce substance use by increasing the resiliency and protective factors of at-risk middle school youths through a comprehensive intergenerational approach. The School-Based Mentoring Program is also a one-to-one mentoring program designed for middle school students who have had high numbers of office disciplinary referrals and unexcused absences. More information about these programs can be found through the OJJDP website. Although most jurisdictions might not have access to these specific mentoring programs, they are good examples of programs that provide structured mentoring relationships for at-risk youth and typically report positive impacts on youth.^{3,4} For courts that do not have access to well-established mentoring programs provided by reputable organizations, this brief serves as an informative guide to help JTDCs develop mentoring programs, based on research and recommended practice.

Past research regarding mentoring programs in the juvenile justice system has

yielded mixed results.⁵ However, a meta-analysis (an analysis of several research studies) provided evidence that at-risk youth benefit from mentoring programs, such as reduced delinquency and increased involvement within communities and schools.⁶ Although there is not a great deal of solid research on mentoring programs specifically related to juvenile justice youth, there is plenty of research on the characteristics of effective and successful mentoring programs. This research suggests several key aspects of mentoring programs that are associated with effective practice including: length of the mentoring relationship, gender matching, cross-generational relationship, relationship styles, communication styles, education focus, and connections with socializing agents in the community.

Length of Mentor-Mentee Relationship

The length of a mentor/mentee relationship influences the outcome of the mentoring relationship, such that longer term mentorships report higher success rates when relationships are established and not abandoned.⁷ This supports the aim of many programs to retain volunteers and mentors for significant lengths of time in hopes of creating and sustaining stable relationships between mentors and mentees. Typically, a mentoring relationship lasting at least a year is the goal. However, anecdotally, shorter mentoring relationships might still be effective if mentors are highly competent and activities are structured and mutually beneficial.

Gender Focus and Matching

Mentor programs benefit mentees when matching the mentors and mentees on various demographic and social characteristics. Matching practices enhance

the bonds and relationships between mentors and mentees.^{8,9} Gender-focused mentor programs (programs that assign same gendered mentors to mentees) also promote an increased likelihood of strong bonds between mentors and mentees.¹⁰ Further, mentor/mentee matching is also important in addressing cultural and social similarities among individuals. It appears there is an advantage when a mentor has experienced similar societal or cultural challenges as the mentee and has successfully coped with them. Being able to relate to a mentee's situation and experiences gives the mentor an enhanced understanding of the mentee's perspective and provides hope to the mentee for positive future outcomes.

Mentor-Mentee Relationship Style

Mentor/mentee relationships rely on trust, structure, and activity.¹¹ Relationship styles between mentors and mentees make a difference in the impact of the relationship, and these relationship styles might vary depending on the mentee. Relationship styles include *active* (high activity, lower communication, and problem solving), *moderate* (moderate activity and structured support), *low-key* (high structure and support but low activity), and *unconditionally supportive* (high support

and structure but moderate activity). Both active and moderate relationship styles are associated with the most positive results and the most value out of all relationships styles according to the mentees. Active relationships involve a high level of participation in mentoring activities. These activities appear to be the central bonding characteristic of the mentoring relationship. However, active relationships were also the most unstructured out of all of the relationship styles. Moderate relationships involve participation in fewer mentoring activities, but include moderate structure and conversations revolving around goals and future plans.¹²

Both active and moderate relationship types produced significant positive behavioral changes in mentees. Moderate relationships were related to increased self-worth and school competence and decreased feelings of alienation, inequality with friends, and conflict with friends, family, and classmates. Active relationships were related to increased emotional support, intimacy with peers, and school competence (see Table 1).¹³

TABLE 1. IMPACT OF RELATIONSHIP STYLES BETWEEN MENTORS AND MENTEES	
Active Relationships	Moderate Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of participation in mentoring activities • Activities are the central bonding characteristic of the mentoring relationship • Most unstructured out of all of the relationship types • Increased emotional support, intimacy with peers, and school competence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower level of participation in mentoring activities • Increased conversation about goals and future plans • Result in moderate structure • Relate to increased self-worth and school competence • Decreased feelings of alienation, inequality with friends, and conflict with friends, family, and classmates

Cross-Generational Relationships

Research on cross-generational mentoring suggests that mentorships benefit from adopting aspects of a secure parenting relationship rather than simply a peer relationship.¹⁴ Cross-generational programs include the usefulness of caring non-familial adults, contributing to the resource of social capital (or social resources), recognizing and addressing issues involving attachment, integrating developmental assets, building youth resilience, and developing generalizable social skills. Non-parent adult mentors might also better provide job and skill training indirectly because they have more experience in a career. They also have overcome more barriers to employment, strong familial bonds, stable finances, and health, compared to younger mentors (e.g., young adults or college students). This allows these types of mentors to provide significant insight into equipping youth with problem-solving strategies, and this can be beneficial for both high risk/high need youth along with well-adjusted youth.

Communication Styles

While relationship styles between mentors and mentees appear important, communication styles could also significantly influence the impact of mentor relationships on mentees. Communication approaches such as Gerard Egan's (2002) SOLER model and Dennis Rivers' (2012) Seven Challenges model might enhance the ability of mentors to communicate positive messages to mentees. Understanding and implementing communication effectiveness might increase the overall attitude and behavioral change of mentees.^{15,16}

Education Focus

Mentor programs often address at-risk youth and delinquency prevention in educational settings. Some programs suggest that intervening through education and employment has the potential to address the root causes of juvenile delinquency and crime.¹⁷ These types of programs can provide numerous benefits to youth but rely on a high level of collaboration among the mentoring program, school, and employers. Applied to the juvenile justice system, this type of program would also require effective collaboration of juvenile justice system professionals.

Community Socializing Agents

Appropriateness of environment is also important in mentor/mentee relationships. Socialization agents, such as community organizations (e.g., schools, churches, or other local organizations centered on well-organized mentoring programmatic activities and familial involvement), can help or hinder mentor/mentee relationships.^{18,19,20} Collaboration between JTDC mentoring programs and these organizations is critical and can significantly enhance the effectiveness of mentoring programs and the impact of mentoring programs on youth.

Effective Mentoring Practices Applied to JTDC Programs

JTDCs have several features that fit well with the characteristics of mentoring programs described above that research has found to be effective. Because JTDC programs can last from 9 to 24 months (or longer), long-term mentor/mentee relationships are achievable, and they might lead to relationships that extend beyond the term of the JTDC program. However, because

youth are usually in the program for several months before receiving a mentor, shorter programs (e.g., 9-12 months) might include structural barriers, preventing the positive effects of long-term relationships. JTDCs can gender match mentors/mentees relatively easily as well, but this is dependent on the mentoring pool. Some JTDCs have very small mentoring pools or use a few paid mentors for several youth. In these cases, gender-matching might be difficult. Still, JTDCs should strive to match mentors and mentees as best as possible.

Mentoring programs can also include a focus on relationship style and communication style in the criteria they use and the information they obtain from mentors and mentees about their preferences and interests. JTDCs can help facilitate the use of effective relationship styles and communication styles by providing adequate opportunities for certain activities and events consistent with the relationship and communication style. This individualized approach to mentoring relationships is consistent with what JTDCs already do to individualize other aspects of the program (e.g., case planning and treatment planning). Lastly, JTDC programs that already emphasize school participation and educational achievement would find it easy to implement a school and education-based focus within their mentoring program.

In sum, several mentoring strategies have evidence to support their effectiveness in youths' lives. JTDCs have certain structures that enable them to incorporate many of these processes into their existing practices. However, JTDCs might also face barriers to implementing some of these practices.

Best Practices

Outcomes from mentoring program evaluations suggest that program success is strongly linked to the application of theory-driven and evidence-based practices.²¹ According to research, the best results for *mentor programs* are achieved by:

- Implementing a formal structure;
- Developing clear expectations;
- Providing consistent and ongoing support for mentors, mentees, and family members; and
- Implementing organizational self-monitoring practices (e.g., staff evaluation and training).

Further, the research suggests that the best practices for *mentors* include:

- Appropriate and adequate training in mentoring program rules and guidelines (e.g., 6-8 hour orientation and consistent training opportunities throughout the program);
- Commitment to the mentor relationship (typically a year or longer);
- Incorporation and respect for the mentee's family, outlook, and attitudes (e.g., culture);
- Engaging in mutually enjoyable and beneficial activities; and
- Access to support from the mentor program, communities, schools, and other organizations.

Combined, these best practices can lead to the mentee's success in school and the community, an increased sense of self-worth, improved communication skills, and a long-term contribution to society.^{22,23} Mentor programs incorporating several

or all of these practices may contribute to longer mentor/mentee relationships, increased school attendance, improved grades, reduced violence, reduced drug use, increased positive behaviors, increased peer relationship behaviors, improved relationships with parents, and active participation in societal events.^{24,25,26}

Similarly, understanding the frameworks of effective organizations can benefit courts when implementing mentoring programs. Below is a list of characteristics found in highly effective organizations. Characteristics of effective organizations can help inform good practices for JTDC mentoring programs and help create effective structural processes.



*Twelve Characteristics of Effective Organizations:*²⁷

1. Clear, specific, and measurable goals;
2. Clear, documented, and shared values;
3. Clear internal communication;
4. Alignment of mission, vision, values, and strategic objectives;
5. Clear and unambiguous organizational roles; precisely defined duties and responsibilities;
6. Clarity regarding individual goals, including measurable benchmarks for evaluating performance;
7. Performance is measured and evaluated on a consistent basis;
8. Incentives for people who consistently meet their goals;
9. Consequences for people who consistently fail to meet their goals;
10. Candor: highly successful companies uphold the highest standards of openness, honesty, and fairness;
11. People recognized as the most important resource; and
12. Recruit, train, motivate, and develop good people.

Observations from Juvenile Treatment Drug Courts with Mentoring Programs

Data Collection

1. Site Visits

From 2012 through 2013, NCJFCJ staff conducted on-site technical assistance visits to 10 jurisdictions operating JTDC Mentoring Programs. These 10 sites received a grant from OJJDP to implement a mentoring component within their already existing JTDCs. The purpose of the site visits was to gather information about the personnel, policies, and practices in place to operate JTDC Mentoring Programs.

Each site visit included a review of the available materials describing the mission, scope, purpose, and operations of the respective program as well as interviews or meetings with one or more key personnel: the juvenile drug court judge, the program coordinator, the program manager, the mentor coordinator, mentors, the JTDC

case worker, and the juvenile probation officer. On-site, NCJFCJ staff met with one or more mentees as well. In addition, staff met with educators, service providers, law enforcement, and other interested parties in the community. On-site activities also included observations of JTDC staffing sessions and hearings.

2. Focus Groups

In addition to conducting the site visits with the 10 jurisdictions listed above receiving OJJDP funding, NCJFCJ staff held a focus group meeting in January 2014. Selected drug court and mentoring professionals from each of the sites attended the focus group meeting to discuss the effective use of mentors in a JTDC. During the focus group meeting, the participants completed a force field analysis addressing key factors

THE FOLLOWING JURISDICTIONS HOSTED SITE VISITS	
Ashland County, WI	Monroe, County, NY
Brown County, MN	Muscogee County, GA
Denver, CO	St. Mary's County, MD
El Paso County/Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, TX	Washoe County, NV
Maricopa County, AZ	Worcester County, MD

that increased the chance of success (i.e., driving forces), as well as factors that inhibited success (i.e., restraining forces) for mentoring programs within JTDCs.ⁱⁱ



Results: Key Components of Mentoring Programs within JTDCs

1. Mission and Goals

A strong mission points an organization in the right direction, from which logical goals and objectives may be derived. Mission statements and goals are a key component in mentoring programs. Effective mission statements are short, memorable, and meaningful and share a number of other common characteristics. Characteristics of effective missions include²⁸:

- Emphasizing the organization's core values;

- Recognizing the major spheres of interest in which the organization operates;
- Providing a long-term or strategic point of view;
- Focusing on just a limited number of goals; and
- Pointing to desirable organizational outcomes.

During the focus group meeting, a mentoring program's mission and goals were frequently mentioned as the most important programmatic component to success; they were viewed as foundational when implementing a mentoring program (or any program). The most prevalent goals suggested by missions across the sites included both reducing substance use and providing mentors for each of the youth. These goals overlapped for both JTDCs and mentoring programs, suggesting that collaboration between mentoring programs and JTDCs could be mutually beneficial in accomplishing these goals. Other important goals for both JTDCs and mentoring programs, shared by the majority of sites, include:

- Increasing community safety;
- Increasing pro-social behavior; and
- Increasing family functioning.

Factors related to mission and goal achievement include:

- Team members skilled in specific jobs, tasks, or roles;
- Community support and recognition;
- Adequate resources for the mentor and the program; and
- Positive catalysts (initiators of positive

ii For the focus group seminar, NCJFCJ also invited participants from Dayton, OH and Caldwell, ID.

and productive practices).

Factors identified as inhibiting mission and goal achievement include:

- Lack of adequate resources;
- Competing visions/goals;
- Family cynicism;
- Poverty and mental illness;
- Status quo mentality (not wanting to change/improve); and
- Lack of mission clarity – lack of vision and goal clarity seemed to be a common area of conflict as one member of the focus group suggested that when two people have competing goals, they end up pulling the youth in two different directions by confusing the youth and holding conflicting expectations.²⁹

2. Follow the Model

Program models are typically structured sets of specific elements or characteristics related to the purpose or outcome of the program.ⁱⁱⁱ The specific mentoring model utilized in each of the sites is another important component of mentor programs within JTDCs. This includes both the overall JTDC model as well as the specific mentoring model used. Effective mentoring models proposed by the sites were characterized by a clear mission, unambiguous goals, measurable objectives, implementation with integrity, and a commitment to measuring performance and evaluation outcomes. The Mentoring JTDC sites we visited employed *juvenile treatment drug court models* or *youth*

iii In organizational terms, a model is an adjective meaning very good or excellent and deserving to be copied by others. Although having an excellent mentor program is ideal, fidelity to a good program is more realistic and equally important.

and family driven models characterized by significant incorporation of treatment planning, mentor matching, and program-related decisions, emphasizing empowering youth. Participants from the sites identified several factors related to maintaining youth and family driven models.

Factors related to following the model include:

- High levels of collaboration;
- High levels of communication among the JTDC team, mentors, and the mentor program team;
- Freedom of choice for mentors (the ability to choose qualified mentors rather than being assigned with available mentors);
- Effective and/or evidence based training for mentors (e.g., conflict resolution, at-risk youth, cultural competence, etc.); and
- Adequate guidance/training for mentors by the JTDC and mentor program teams.

Factors identified as inhibiting the ability to follow the program model include:

- Contractual constraints (e.g., where, when, and how long mentors/mentees can meet);
- Poor community connections; and
- Lack of collaboration and funding.

The TA sites followed a variety of practices related to the use of paid or volunteer mentors and one-on-one or group activities for how mentors and mentees spent time together. Five sites used volunteer one-to-one mentors, five sites used paid one-to-one mentors, two sites used group mentor

Sites	MENTORING PROGRAM ELEMENTS			
	Volunteer One-to-One Mentors	Paid One-to-One	Group Mentor	Group Peer Mentor
Maricopa County, AZ		X		
Muscogee County, GA	X		X	X
St. Mary's County, MD	X	X		
Worcester County, MD		X		
Brown County, MN		X		
Washoe County, NV	X			
Monroe County, NY		X		
El Paso County and Yselta Del Sur Pueblo, TX	X			
Ashland County, WI	X		X	X

models, and two sites used group peer mentor models. St. Mary's County (MD) used both volunteer one-to-one and paid one-to-one mentors, and Ashland (WI) and Muscogee (GA) used volunteer one-to-one, group, and group peer models.

Within these mentoring programs and juvenile drug court programs, program characteristics differed significantly. For instance, Muscogee County (GA) used volunteer mentors. Adults (21 and older) were recruited for one-on-one mentoring while college students (under 21) from the local university were recruited for peer group activities that are supervised by the mentoring program coordinator. This mentor program emphasized academic goals related to future success. The peer mentor group helped to provide role modeling for education success to mentees and provided opportunities for JTDC mentees to learn about setting and achieving academic goals. In this program, one-on-one mentors received a packet filled with a year of mentor/mentee activities for a new and interesting activity each week that included

service activities.

In Ashland County (WI), monthly structured group activities were provided for the mentors, mentees, and families to attend. Because culture was important, this program model also included activities that provided opportunities to explore cultural identity. These activities were popular among the bi-cultural and bi-racial youth. The Ashland County mentoring coordinator utilized L.I.F.E. (Living In Female Empowerment), a female empowerment program to help address female issues related to body image and self-esteem. Mentors were also allowed to attend family planning meetings with the youth and their family, if invited. This provided the opportunity for the mentoring relationship to guide some relational development between youth and their families.

Also, several juvenile drug courts used professional mentoring organizations to provide mentoring models for their drug court youth. For instance, El Paso County (TX) and Saint Mary's County (MD) both

used Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) as mentoring agencies. BBBS provides a mentoring model for youth which is evidence-based and typically related to positive outcomes. The use of these organizations helped provide structure to the mentoring program for JTDC youth without taxing the JTDC's resources. Professional mentoring agencies provided the advantage of implementing an already developed professional mentor model that can be adapted to the specific court. These agencies can also help develop a mentoring case plan designed to address the specific needs of the JTDC youth and their families.

However, not all sites found that external professional agencies fit with their JTDC program. In El Paso, the BBBS organization experienced significant conflict with the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo court. Clashes in cultural understandings led to the court dropping the BBBS mentor service. Cases such as these stress the importance of cultural competence in implementing mentor programs. This is especially salient when hiring external professional mentoring agencies with previously established

practices and procedures. Other courts might not formally hire professional services but instead adopt the models used by these professional services. In these situations, a court's ability to adapt and use the resources available can be important when determining whether to use certain professional agencies with specific models or to develop a novel mentoring model specific to the court.

Although these JTDCs use different mentoring strategies (e.g., paid, volunteer, one-to-one, and group), two common themes emerged. First, it is important to choose a model that fits best with the JTDC, and mentor strategies were found to be an important element. Second, adhering to that specific model and conducting frequent evaluations is foundational to a successful mentor/mentee relationship. This approach involves utilizing the resources in the most efficient and effective way (i.e., increases program sustainability and improves program facilitation).



3. Recruitment, Screening, and Matching

A third key component of mentoring programs was the recruitment, screening, and matching process. These steps in developing mentor/mentee relationships were considered crucial to a successful mentor program. Mentor recruiting processes might coincide with resources available to JTDCs and mentor programs, but enhanced recruiting strategies (using more or better recruiting mediums) can lead to an increased quantity of mentors. Larger mentor pools provide mentoring programs with more options when matching mentors with mentees.

The majority of the sites used word of mouth, human resources, and flyers/posters as recruitment strategies. For example, Monroe County (NY), Maricopa County (AZ), and Worcester County (MD) use human resources or civil service mechanisms to recruit mentors because these mentors are paid staff typically housed within other agencies. The mentor coordinator in Ashland County (WI) attends volunteer fairs and uses personal contacts (thought to be one of the most successful strategies for Ashland County) to find and obtain mentors. Muscogee County (GA) similarly uses volunteer and career fairs for recruitment; the coordinator also attends meetings with community organizations to promote the mentoring program and recruit mentors.

Screening strategies used by the majority of the sites included criminal background checks, human resources screening, in person interviews, applications, and personal references. Other screening practices included making home visits, setting age requirements, and asking prospective mentors about their personal interests and life experiences (including a

history of abuse). However, a majority of the sites do not use these strategies. Muscogee County (GA) initially had prospective mentors fill out an application including professional references, a background check, and personal information. Then the prospective mentors filled out an interest survey, and participated in an in-person interview in which the coordinator asked the prospective mentor numerous questions including perspectives on discipline. Lastly, the case manager conducted a home visit to a mentor's home and planned a meeting between the mentor and mentee with the coordinator.

Matching strategies used by a majority of the sites include matching youth to mentors by location, gender, interests, availability, and race/ethnicity/culture.

Factors related to increasing chances of getting a stable match include:

- Building a quality mentor pool;
- Establishing trust among mentors, families, and mentees; and
- Incorporating several factors in the matching process (e.g., matches on several characteristics such as gender, race, and culture).

Factors identified as inhibiting the ability to develop and maintain stable matches include:

- Lack of resources and funding; and
- Inability to find mentors with critical matching characteristics.

For instance, Muskogee County (GA) experienced difficulty finding Caucasian mentors for their JTDC youth, but African-American mentors seemed to be more available. Matching based on race and

gender was considered important because it engendered the youths' sense of being understood by their mentors. In Saint Mary's County (MD), Ashland County (WI), and El Paso County (TX), mentors and mentees were matched on activity preferences or interests. This type of matching provides a common ground for both mentors and mentees in the relationship and also provides the mentors with an understanding of the types of activities the mentees might enjoy.

4. Collaboration

Collaboration, or the extent to which all members of the program work together toward the same intended outcome, is the fourth key component of mentoring programs within JTDCs. Important collaborators included the juvenile court, juvenile probation, school boards, prosecutors, public defenders, and mentoring programs. For example, in Monroe County (NY), each JTDC team meeting included individuals from the family court, judge's office, attorney's office, mentor agencies, and the school district. Worcester County (MD) and Saint Mary's County (MD) were highly collaborative programs. They included representatives from the office of the state attorney, the juvenile court, the department of juvenile services, the county health department, the board of education, the public defender's office, and law enforcement as well as the juvenile drug court coordinator. In some sites, collaborating agencies also included mental health and private service providers.

One key aspect of collaboration was the inclusion of mentors in court hearings and potentially case planning. Some sites mentioned this as an important component, but few sites implemented it. Allowing

mentors to listen in and even speak up during these sessions can enhance the overall mentoring relationship and potentially provide relational insight in discussions about the youth, their progress, and challenges while in the JTDC.

Factors related to enhanced collaboration across mentoring programs, mentors, and JTDCs include:

- Effective training;
- Perceptions of being needed;
- Recognition of efforts and success;
- Strategies to increase team member communication, motivation, and commitment; and
- Personal desire among mentors to help substance-abusing youth.

Factors identified as inhibiting collaboration include:

- Lack of funding;
- Team turnover;
- Lack of transition policies;
- Burnout; and
- Lack of community support.

Inclusion of mentors in JTDC programmatic practices and collaborative planning might increase the effectiveness of mentoring programs in JTDCs. Involving mentors in case planning, team meetings, treatment plans, incentives and sanctions, and educational activities may help to bridge the JTDC with the mentor program. However, confidentiality must be respected.

However, an important consideration for mentoring programs within JTDCs is whether mentoring adds *another* activity or requirement for the youth

that is perceived by the youth or family as a burden. JTDC youth are required to show up to court, attend treatment and school, and participate in service. Adding a meeting with a mentor each week might be overwhelming (to both courts and the mentee and mentees' families). However, integrating mentors into the overall JTDC program might alleviate the perception of an *additional requirement* and instead instill the idea that mentors are simply part of the overall program and case plan.

5. Community Support

Community support is an essential programmatic component of mentoring programs within JTDCs. Community support increases the adaptability and sustainability of mentoring programs by providing mentors, funders, team members and collaborators, and communication agents. Community support can be present in the activities available to mentors and mentees, as in Ashland County (WI) and Muscogee County (GA). These counties have support from various local organizations and businesses that offer mentors and mentees activities such as skiing or snowboarding sessions, space for group meetings and events, activities for service projects, and other opportunities.

Factors related to enhancing community support include:

- Team investment in the mentoring and JTDC program;
- Community buy-in;
- Education and training for mentors;
- Advertising and raising awareness about the program; and
- Funding (state, federal, etc.).

Factors identified as inhibiting community support include:

- Lack of community or program resources (e.g., funding, community activities, program teams support); and
- Lack of cultural awareness (this might stem from the lack of diversity among mentors).

In the focus group discussion, community support emerged as one of the most important resources for a mentoring program within a JTDC. Community support increases opportunities for contact between youth and positive environments, provides activities to fill in the gaps when mentors run out of ideas, and gives youth a feeling and experience of belonging. Community support and engagement also provide the youth with future opportunities for employment, school, and productive leisure activities. These opportunities carry significant weight because they involve influential socialization agents.



Tips for Starting Your Own Mentoring Program

The following four tips are considered to be the most important and foundational aspects of beginning or re-defining mentoring programs within JTDCs. These four aspects are listed in no particular order and are considered to be equally critical and important.

1. *Choose a Clear Mission, Clear Goals, and a Shared Vision*

A clear mission and unambiguous goals help increase the effectiveness of mentoring programs. Clear goals assist with several factors: identifying and attaining necessary resources, increasing team cohesion, increasing family support, increasing overall mentor program effectiveness, and assuring that mentors and JTDC staff share the same *vision*. Important mission-driven goals in new and existing programs might include effective recruitment of mentors, careful matching of mentors with all program youth, active supervision and monitoring of JTDC youth, linking youth with appropriate services, providing training for mentors, and substance use reduction.

2. *Practice Fidelity to the 16 Strategies and Mentoring Model*

Choosing a sustainable mentoring model is critical to the success of mentor/mentee relationships. Fidelity to this mentor model will benefit both the mentor and mentee and lead to program success and effectiveness. Fidelity may be increased through the availability of clear program missions and goals (i.e., aims and scope of mentoring program), significant training opportunities for mentors (i.e., extensive orientation training and periodic training throughout the program), and the use of one-to-one mentor/mentee practices (i.e., unique mentor for each unique youth). Implementing these mentoring program model components will allow youth to achieve consistency and dependability with the same mentor, while also allowing mentors to adapt and attend to the needs of the relationship. Also, JTDC fidelity to the *16 Strategies*³⁰ is essential. Overall program effectiveness and success are more likely to increase when the mentoring program operates in concert with the juvenile drug court model (i.e., *16 Strategies*) and the JTDC utilizes the mentors appropriately (fully embedding mentors into

the JTDC program practices and procedures). Fidelity to the mentoring model and the JTDC 16 *Strategies* will likely improve overall effectiveness, success, and goal attainment. Continuous evaluation and monitoring for fidelity will help ensure that JTDC and mentoring strategies are implemented and effective.

3. *Use Effective Recruitment, Screening, and Matching Strategies*

Including adequate *recruitment* and *screening* practices and carefully *matching* mentors and mentees will enhance outcomes. JTDCs should employ various advertising strategies (e.g., word of mouth, posters, volunteer fairs, and want ads) and engage with various agencies through human resource departments to increase recruitment. JTDC mentor programs should conduct in-person interviews and criminal background checks for screening, and collect information regarding interests, availability, and demographic characteristics of mentors for matching. While effectiveness and success might be hindered by inadequate mentor pools and

funding, increased trust and stability in mentor/mentee relationships might improve the process of acquiring quality mentoring relationships and increase positive outcomes for youth.

4. *Implement Collaborative Planning and Strategies*

Collaboration and community support are essential to successful and effective programs. These may be enhanced through team members' openness with each other, increased team member commitment, recognition of efforts by the JTDC team and mentors, motivation, advertisement and awareness of the program, and community interest and buy-in. When collaboration between courts and mentoring programs increases, it can help facilitate efficiency within the program and provide consistency and clear expectations for the youth. Also, increasing collaboration by including mentors in program and case planning could help increase continuity between mentoring and JTDC programs and the effectiveness of mentoring programs overall.



To learn more about the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, visit www.ncjfcj.org or www.ncjj.org.

Endnotes

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Notes

Action Items:



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