Designing a Successful Mentor Training

Excerpted from The EMT Group's Mentoring Plus Workshop Series 1

Training provides mentors with the knowledge and tools they will need to manage a successful mentoring relationship. The purpose of this session is to help you determine the content of your mentor training based on your program's goals and mentee populations, and to explore possible training designs.

Readiness and Training Quality Assurance Standard

The California Mentor Initiative specifies that quality mentoring programs have a readiness and training curriculum for all mentors and mentees that include:

— Trained staff trainers.
— Orientation to program and resource network, including information and referral, other supportive services, and school.
— Skills development as appropriate.
— Cultural/heritage sensitivity and appreciation training.
— Guidelines for participants on how to get the most out of the mentoring relationship.
— Do’s and don’ts of relationship management.
— Job and role descriptions.
— Confidentiality and liability information.
— Crisis management/problem-solving resources.
— Communication skills development.
— Ongoing sessions as necessary.
COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE TRAINING

Effective training provides mentors with tools that help them be successful in their mentoring relationship. Initial and ongoing training should include:

- Skills development
- Communication skills
- Cultural awareness
- Crisis management
- Dealing with adolescent behaviors
- Building self-esteem
- Do’s and don’ts of being a mentor
- Roles and expectations
- Confidentiality and liability issues
- Support and feedback

Training Design Worksheet

Important considerations in designing a mentor (or mentee) training:

- **What do we want to accomplish?** Consider program goals, targeted youth populations, and mentors’ level of experience.
- **What do participants need to know?** Mentors? Youth?
- **When will training take place?** Consider your mentor pool: When will you get the greatest turnout?
- **“Just in time” before relationship starts.** Allow time to conduct background checks (unless done during orientation).
- **“Follow-up sessions,”** depending on additional tools for mentors to deal with youth population’s special needs.
- **Where will we conduct the training?** Convenient location that is appropriate for adult learning.
- **Who will conduct the training?** Staff, other mentors, professional trainers? Who else might be appropriate?
- **What materials will we provide?** Handouts on program requirements, articles on youth-at-risk mentoring, communication tips.
Training Content

Training may last two hours or two days, but all trainings should cover these issues:

I. Program Overview
   - Program’s goals and objectives
   - Program procedures, including support and how to ask for help
   - Crisis procedures, and program’s child abuse reporting procedures
   - Practical policies: travel restrictions, parent approvals, entertainment costs
   - Confidentiality and liability policies
   - Additional resources

II. Relationship and Communication Skills
   - Insights into how young people behave and communicate
   - Effective strategies to develop the relationship
   - Stages of youth development and how they might affect the relationship
   - Orientation to children with different societal or economic backgrounds
   - Sensitivity to cultural differences
   - Understand issues youth face today

III. Mentor Supervision and Support
   - Clarify mentor’s role
   - Concrete issues
   - Visiting the mentee’s home
   - Handling missed appointments
   - Resources available to mentors
   - Staff support
   - Student services

Key Points

Key considerations in designing a mentor training:
   - Consider mentor’s time and interests
   - Provide useful information
   - Make presentation interactive and fun
   - Allow time for questions, discussion, and sharing concerns and ideas
   - Invite experienced mentors/mentees to give new mentors real-life background
   - Use methods to keep mentors engaged and allow time to practice new skills.
   - Try to balance a range of learning techniques including:
     - Icebreaker activities
     - Presentation and discussion
     - Videos
     - Role plays and experiential exercises
     - Written materials (program guidelines, youth development, communication)
SAMPLE TRAINING AGENDA
For Mentors And Mentees

PART I. MENTOR TRAINING

I. Introduction
   A. Remarks by organizational leader (purpose, importance and context of program, mentors' key roles and responsibilities)
   B. Goals, agenda, logistics (including agenda for Mentee Orientation)
   C. Ice Breaker: Names, titles, something interesting that we may not know about you

II. Overview of Mentoring
   A. Definitions and key concepts
   B. Your mentoring experiences (exercise, discussion in pairs)
   C. Benefits of mentoring to mentors and mentees

III. Building an Effective Mentoring Relationship with Youth
   A. Phases of your relationships
   B. Tips for being effective in each phase

IV. Critical Mentoring Skills Needed by Mentors and Mentees
   A. Core skills
   B. Mentor-specific skills
   C. Mentee-specific skills (how mentors can help mentees learn these)

V. How Will We Know We're Successful?
   A. Plans for evaluating the program
   B. One Tool: Mid-Program Review Form
   C. Other ideas?

VI. Potential Challenges and Solutions
   A. Examples of challenges and resolution strategies (small-group exercise)
   B. Other challenges?

VII. Final Thoughts
   A. How today's ideas apply to us (discussion in pairs)
   B. Plans and roles for Mentee Orientation
   C. Final quote, story, or video clip

Purpose: To acquaint the group with planned mentoring, practice some skills, outline specifics of what's expected of them in this program, and get better acquainted as mentors and mentees.

Design: Mentors receive training for first 3.5 hours (including working lunch) and participate in Mentee's Orientation (1.5 hours). Mentees attend only their orientation.
PART II. MENTEE ORIENTATION

Set up: Have a table near door for printing name tags (letters large enough to read a few feet away). Cover other tables with butcher paper and provide marker pens for the first activity.

Activity: Begin session while mentors are still in their training. Have mentees use pens and paper to show the types of work, play, and school activities that they like to do. Tell them the mentors will be in and look forward to seeing and hearing about the pictures.

I. Introduction
   A. Welcome by program leader (encourage mentors to take a quick look at all the drawings and allow mentees to answer general questions; there will be time later to explain in more detail)
   B. General introduction (purpose of the program, roles of mentors and mentees, and any other expectations)

II. Some Do’s and Don’ts
   A. Brief introduction of 4 or 5 key pointers (these are samples only):
      1. Keep your commitments
      2. Keep continuous contact
      3. Respect the differences in the relationships
      4. Jointly take responsibility for planning your activities
   B. Skits (2 or 3 scenarios illustrating problems that can arise when the pointers are not followed, try to have older mentees act these out, carry signs stating the key points)

III. Ideas for Mentoring Relationships
   A. While enjoying refreshments, mentors join mentees at their drawings; mentees can explain content; small groups (not pairs, so mentees without mentors present won’t feel left out) can discuss possible activities that could be done by mentoring pairs
   B. Small groups share with the entire group

IV. Closing
   A. Comments about what took place
   B. Announcement of next steps in the program and any final thoughts
   C. Inspiring quote or clip
FORMAL MENTORING TRAINING
Leader’s Checklist Of Tasks

The following are suggested tasks or activities to complete as you prepare for, implement, and evaluate your mentor training. They’re suggestions only—options to help you conduct your effort. One way to use this tool is to check the first box next to each task you plan to do, then check the second box as you finish each task.

I. Preparing for Training

AGENDA ITEM

☐ 1. Determine what your desired role and responsibilities will be in training mentors, mentees, and others.

☐ 2. Keep a personal log of program activities, experiences, and learning.

☐ 3. Organize a training committee.

☐ 3a. Seek volunteers who have various types of expertise and who can be the voices for different audiences.

☐ 3b. Help the training committee determine who will act as leader (or rotate leadership).

☐ 3c. Determine responsibilities that members would like.

☐ 3d. Study resource materials in this notebook.

☐ 3e. Determine the members’ expectations for training.

☐ 3f. List tasks to be completed.

☐ 3g. Project a timeline for the tasks.

☐ 3h. Schedule meeting dates for several weeks in advance.

☐ 4. Decide who will be formally trained (mentors, mentees, family members, staff, etc.)

☐ 5. Determine the competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) that you’d like program mentees to develop during the program. **NOTE:** This is one of the most critical steps to take in developing your program.

☐ 5a. Obtain competency domains that experts have targeted as potential development areas for youth/mentees.
5b. Compile a master competency domain to fit your target mentees. This may mean adding items that don’t appear on others’ lists.

5c. Duplicate the final version of your domain for use by mentors in planning mentee development activities.

6. Study additional resource materials on mentoring and training.

7. Talk with other mentoring program leaders to see what training they’ve provided.

8. Prepare and submit to decision makers a training proposal and budget.

9. Get necessary approvals for your training plans.

10. Develop a process for advertising the training.

10a. Prepare and distribute a flyer or letter describing the opportunity.

10b. Ask program leaders to mention the training in meetings with mentors, mentees, and their families.

10c. If appropriate, put up announcement signs and posters.

11. Develop training evaluation procedures and forms.

12. Try to meet personally with each participant (mentors, mentees, mentees’ families) at this point in order to answer questions and provide encouragement.

13. Organize mentor and mentee development materials.

13a. Decide which of the materials in the conference notebooks could be used, adapted, or purchased for your use.

13b. Develop or purchase additional mentor and mentee skill-building materials.

   - Book/booklets
   - Workbooks
   - Audio cassettes
   - Videotapes

13c. Obtain extra materials to have on hand.

14. Make plans for the initial training event. Consider two same-day events that provide learning for mentors and also for mentees. Plan about 3.5 hours for mentor training and 1.5 hours for mentees. The mentors’ session should be actual training, while the mentees’ session can be a less-intensive orientation on how to work successfully with mentors. Mentors should stay for and participate in the mentees’ session. (See Sample Training Agenda, pages 4–5.)
Designing a Successful Mentor Training

☐ ☐ 14a. Determine desired learning outcomes
☐ for mentors ☐ for mentees ☐ for others: ________________

☐ ☐ 14b. Line up trainers/facilitators and other presenters.

☐ ☐ 14c. Design training session for mentors. (See Sample Training Agenda, pages 4-5.)

☐ ☐ 14d. Design orientation session for mentees. (See Sample Training Agenda, pages 4-5.)

☐ ☐ 14e. Compile mentors’ training materials.

☐ ☐ 14f. Compile mentees’ training materials.

☐ ☐ 14g. Prepare overhead transparencies/slides.

☐ ☐ 15. Take care of logistical details in advance of the training/orientation.

☐ ☐ 15a. Plan food (lunch for mentors, snacks and drinks for mentees and mentors).

☐ ☐ 15b. Set up the training room (arrange for a sign-in table, chairs/tables, audio-visual equipment, materials table, refreshment area; adjust temperature; note location of phones and restrooms).

☐ ☐ 15c. Provide name badges and/or tents and pens for mentors.

☐ ☐ 15d. Get blank name tags or materials for making own for mentees and mentors.

☐ ☐ 15e. Prepare flip charts, test overhead projector, cue video(s).

☐ ☐ 15f. Assign helpers for the day (a registration table, servers, crisis management, etc.)

☐ ☐ 16. Prepare introductory remarks to be given by you or another leader.

☐ ☐ 17. Make and go over contingency plans for all aspects of the event.

Your notes about preparation:

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II. Implementing Training

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<th>TO DO</th>
<th>AGENDA ITEM</th>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>1. Conduct the mentor training event.</td>
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<td>☐</td>
<td>1a. Follow the planned agenda.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>1b. Collect attendance information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>1c. Monitor participants' responses throughout training and adjust appropriately.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>1d. Collect evaluation data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>2. Conduct the mentee training event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>2a. Follow the planned agenda.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>2b. Collect attendance information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>2c. Share information about what happened in the mentors' training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>2d. Monitor mentees' responses throughout orientation and adjust appropriately.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>2e. Collect evaluation data.</td>
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Your additional ideas for implementing training:

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III. Follow-Up Training

AGENDA ITEM

1. Conduct training follow-up activities.

1a. Debrief the training with the facilitators and other leaders.

1b. If any mentors or mentees miss the training, provide materials and one-on-one coaching for them, and ask one or more of the trained mentors to be resources.

1c. To reinforce learning, mail participants something (e.g., tips generated by the group during the combined session).

1d. Provide self-instructional materials in the library or learning center.

1e. Write and submit a story about the training to a newsletter or newspaper.

2. Continue to make notes about the program in your log.

3. Monitor and encourage the mentors and mentees throughout the rest of the program.

3a. Answer questions.

3b. Comment positively on any effective mentoring you observe.

3c. Share ideas tried by the various pairs.

3d. Pass on interesting articles discovered by you or the participants.

3e. Identify and solve problems as they come up.

4. If a pair clearly cannot succeed, re-match the participants, using alternates as needed.

5. Continue to collect and analyze evaluation data and adjust program as needed.

6. Keep all decision makers informed of the program’s progress and problems, if any. (Schedule special meetings with family members and others, as appropriate.)

7. Make plans for second mentor and mentee training events to be held one third to midway through the program. (Follow similar steps as above.)

Your notes about additional training:

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_____________________________________________________________________________________
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IV. Other Training Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAN TO DO</th>
<th>AGENDA ITEM</th>
<th>DONE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐  ☐  1. Continue to help mentors and mentees improve their skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐  ☐  1a. Organize or let participants know of other training and events that may be of interest to them.</td>
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<td>☐  ☐  1b. Continue to monitor the pairs on a regular basis, providing information, coaching, and encouragement as needed.</td>
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<td>☐  ☐  2. Approximately halfway through the program, ask each mentor to review his/her accomplishments. (See the Sample Mid-Program Review.)</td>
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<td>☐  ☐  3. Collect the completed review forms.</td>
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<td>☐  ☐  4. See that the evaluation data are analyzed and reported.</td>
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<td>☐  ☐  5. Continue to compare notes with other mentoring program leaders.</td>
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<td>☐  ☐  6. Continue to read literature on mentoring and mentoring programs.</td>
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Other tasks I’ll do:

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Why provide follow-up training?

— Provides mentors opportunity to network with other mentors.
— Provides feedback to mentors that they are (or are not) doing the right things.
— Increases confidence level of mentors.
— Gives opportunity to share experiences and solve common problems.
— Increases mentor’s skills.
— Offers support and assistance by program staff.
— Opportunity to assess commitment of mentors.
APPENDIX A

Tips for Trainers

Principles of Learning
Assessing Training Needs
Selecting a Training Location
Use of Learning Objectives
Designing a Session Plan
Determining Session Content
Methods of Instruction
Use of Questioning
Training Aids
Guidelines for Training Preparation and Facilitation
Managing Difficult Situations
Multicultural Training Approaches
Measuring Training Effectiveness
Measuring Participant Reactions
Measuring Participant Achievement

* This appendix was designed by Victoria Stuart of EMT Associates as a companion piece to the Project Youth Connect training-of-trainers curriculum. It provides an overview of the basic strategies and practices used by experienced trainers in designing and delivering effective training programs.
PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

Knowledge of the basic principles that underlie the learning process can guide staff in developing a training curriculum that optimizes participants’ learning. What are these basic principles?

Learning is most likely to occur when . . .

☐ Training material is relevant to participant needs.
When individuals recognize the benefits of training, they are more motivated to learn. The role of the trainer is to identify specific ways that material can be applied to the participant’s role as a mentor.

☐ Trainers give and receive feedback.
The use of constructive feedback opens lines of communication between trainer and trainee and helps to reinforce learning.

☐ Trainers use multi-sensory teaching approaches.
Individuals process information through different perceptual styles, including auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learning. Using a variety of activities to create multi-sensory training can accommodate different learning styles and can help to reinforce skills or knowledge acquired through other senses.

☐ Participants are actively engaged in the learning process.
The notion of “learning by doing” suggests that individuals will learn more effectively if they actively participate in the training process. Participant involvement has many benefits. It can help to improve retention, generate interest in material, and enrich the learning experience by offering opportunities for individuals to share relevant knowledge and experiences.

☐ Participants have opportunities to practice and review material.
When participants practice or repeat new information, they are more likely to retain what they have learned. Asking questions, summarizing often, and providing exercises are tools that trainers can use to encourage over learning.
ASSESSING TRAINING NEEDS

A training need is a gap between existing knowledge, skills, or attitudes, and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by individuals to carry out their work effectively. A training needs assessment can be used to identify these training gaps and to shape the training design to address participant needs appropriately. The specific purposes of conducting a training needs assessment are:

- To determine if training is needed
- To ensure that training content covers topics that address participants’ needs
- To ensure that the training material is appropriate to the ability level of the group

Once a training need has been established, trainers and program staff can select specific content, and begin designing the training session.

Who should participate in the training needs assessment?

- Mentors
- Mentees
- Program Supervisors

When should the training needs assessment be conducted?

- Before the training design has been developed
- As follow-up to the initial training event to determine if additional needs are present

SELECTING A TRAINING LOCATION

One of the first steps in planning a training is selecting a location that can accommodate both trainer and participant needs. It is important to keep in mind that the physical training environment, though often overlooked, can play an important role in promoting the learning process. The following factors should be considered when choosing a training site:

- **Size of the Meeting Space.** The size of the meeting space should be large enough to accommodate the trainer and participants without overcrowding them. Remember to allow ample space for any training equipment that is used in the session. The space should not be so large that there is a considerable amount of unutilized space, which can detract from learning. A general rule is to postpone the selection of a site until the number of training participants has been confirmed.
Room Arrangement. The arrangement of the meeting room is usually dictated by the training design. For example, a training session that involves role-playing or small group activities will require more space for participants to maneuver, than a simple lecture format. Similarly, chairs arranged in a circular formation might be best suited to group discussion, whereas chairs placed in rows may be more appropriate for a lecture format. Before deciding on a room arrangement, think of all the ways that the space will be utilized by the trainer and participants. If participants are expected to take notes or to complete written assignments, it is always best to provide tables and chairs. Overall, the most important consideration in choosing a room arrangement should be that the trainer can be seen and heard from every section of the room and that participants feel included in the training process.

Additional Facilities. Before the training event, check to make sure that facilities at the training site, including telephones, restrooms, and break areas, are well-maintained and adequate to meet the group needs. Inform participants before the training begins, where these facilities are located.

Temperature. A common complaint among training participants is the temperature of the room. Although it can be difficult to satisfy everyone, it’s important that the majority of the group is comfortable. Prior to the training event, find out how to make adjustments to the temperature of the room.

Access to the Location. Training events should be held at sites that are centrally located and accessible. This is a particular concern when trainees have limited access to transportation. If the designated training site is not centrally located, program staff should consider providing transportation to and from the site.

Acoustics and Background Noise. The acoustical qualities of the meeting space can influence the ability of the trainer to be heard. If the acoustics of the room are good, most background noise will be absorbed by the room and won’t detract from the speaker.

Training Aids. Many training sites will provide equipment either free-of-charge or at a cost to the trainer. Check in advance with the site to determine whether training aids are available for use and that costs are reasonable.
USE OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Clearly stated learning objectives are important tools for trainers to help link training content to learning goals. Learning objectives serve the following purposes:

- To set the direction for the training
- To communicate a training purpose to participants
- To establish guidelines for measuring training effectiveness

Learning objectives are usually developed after a training needs assessment has been completed and a training need has been identified.

Well-written objectives . . .

- Should make statements about the outcome of the training session
- Should focus on the trainee, not the trainer or the training content
- Should clearly communicate what is required
- Should use action words
- Should emphasize a single learning outcome

DESIGNING A SESSION PLAN

Session plans are written overviews of the training session that are used to structure the training design and guide implementation. Each session plan should include the following components:

- **Time Frame for the Session.** A time frame indicates the amount of time required to cover all material in the session. Trainers may also choose to set time allotments for specific sections or exercises to help keep the session on schedule.

- **Session Content or Key Points.** Session content provides an overview of the topics that will be covered in the training session.

- **Training Activities and Techniques.** Training activities and techniques identify the types of things that participants will be doing during the session and the method of instruction used.

- **Training Aids/Equipment.** Any training aids required for the session should be noted in the session plan.

Sample learning objectives . . .

- “By the end of the training session, participants will be able to identify the various stages of the mentoring relationship.”
- “By the end of the training session, participants will be able to utilize active listening skills.”
DETERMINING SESSION CONTENT

Using a Learning Target

Generally, time constraints will limit the amount of material that can be conveyed during the training session. To determine which material should be presented it is useful to set a “learning target” and to prioritize training material accordingly. One useful approach is to categorize student learning in terms of what participants “must know,” what they “should know” and what they “could know.” Material that participants “must know” serves as the “learning target,” to which remaining material can be added.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

Trainers can choose from a wide range of instructional methods when designing their training sessions. A general rule is to include multiple methods, when appropriate, to maintain interest and to allow for multi-sensory learning. Trainers should be cautious of selecting a technique solely to add variety. Methods should be employed only when they provide the most effective mechanism for conveying information.

■ Lecture

The lecture method is the most traditional form of training instruction. In a lecture format, the trainer presents material to a passive audience. When using the lecture format, trainers should try to vary content and make use of training aids to maintain interest and momentum.

■ Modified Lecture

A modified lecture is similar to the lecture, but involves some level of group participation. Trainers will generally prefer a modified format over straight lecture to allow participants to actively engage in learning.

■ Group Discussion

Group discussion can encompass a variety of formats. One form is the structured discussion which involves guided interactions among training participants. The trainer plays the role of the facilitator by setting the direction and tone of the discussion and keeping the group on track.
Panel Discussion

Panel discussions more closely resemble the lecture format in that group participation is limited. The panel is comprised of topic “experts” who each present a portion of the training content. Panel discussions typically conclude with a brief question and answer period to allow participants to raise additional questions or issues.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a commonly-used training approach that allows participants to actively contribute to the training process. In a typical brainstorming session, the trainer will pose a question or problem to the group and will ask participants to generate as many ideas or responses as possible. The trainer records each response, and at the conclusion of the session discusses each idea with the group. Brainstorming is an effective method of both generating participant involvement and drawing on the resources of the group to enrich the learning experience.

Role Play

Role-plays are situational examples that involve the trainer and one or two training participants. The trainer provides participants with a script or scenario that requires them to act out a designated role, using previous experience or new skills acquired through the session. At the conclusion of the role play, trainers will hold a debriefing session to provide feedback and to focus discussion on issues that arose during the exercise. Role-plays are excellent tools to promote multisensory learning and to engage participants by allowing them to “experience” learning first-hand.

Group Exercises and Games

Group exercises provide opportunities for participants to practice what they have learned and to apply new learnings to real-world examples. Games are one form of exercise that can be used to reinforce key content points. In some cases, the relevance of the game to the topic may not be revealed until after the game has been completed and participants discuss outcomes.
USE OF QUESTIONING

Questioning should be used throughout the training session to establish communication between trainer and participants. Questioning can serve several useful purposes:

- To assess the level of group knowledge or ability
- To reinforce information that has already been introduced
- To actively engage participants in the learning process
- To generate discussion
- To assess understanding
- To provide and gain feedback

Types of Questions

A trainer can use different forms of questions to serve a variety of purposes.

- **Direct Questions.** Direct questions are specific questions that are posed to an individual within the group. They may be used to gather information, to check for understanding, or to redirect the group if the discussion moves off topic.

  EXAMPLE: “Ann, what are the key components of a mentor recruitment plan?”

- **Group Questions.** Group questions are posed to the group as a whole, rather than directed toward a single individual. Group questions are typically used to assess the group’s level of understanding.

  EXAMPLE: “What are some key considerations in the matching process?”

- **Leading Questions.** Leading questions are used by trainers to generate a specific response. The trainer describes a situation or problem to the group and then follows with a related question. Often the question will include some indication of how the trainer would like the participant to respond. Leading questions can be used to reinforce ideas or material and to assess understanding.

  EXAMPLE: “You realize that lately you and your mentee have begun to separate. Your meetings have become less frequent and you’ve observed a greater sense of self-reliance in your mentee. What stage have you reached in the mentoring relationship?”
Rhetorical Questions. Rhetorical questions are used to encourage participants to think about given issue, rather than to generate a response. Rhetorical questions are often used to open a training session, or to transition from one section to another.

EXAMPLE: “What does it mean to be culturally competent?”

Discussion Questions. Discussion questions are typically open-ended and are posed to the group as a whole. They are designed to generate interest and discussion around a specific issue, and usually allow for numerous responses and interactions among participants. Discussion questions can be used by trainers to check understanding or to encourage participants to think of ways that training material might apply to their real-world experiences.

EXAMPLE: “What are some common problems that you’ve encountered in your mentoring relationships?”

Tips for Effective Questioning

When posing a question to a group, it is helpful to keep in mind these strategies:

• When someone responds to a question, it is helpful to repeat the answer to ensure that everyone in the group benefits from the interaction.

• When directing a question to the group, avoid focusing attention on a single individual.

• When an answer is incorrect, be sure to acknowledge the reply. It may be helpful to offer prompts or suggestions for rethinking the response, or to pose the same question to the larger group.

• When asking a question, provide ample opportunity for participants to respond, before revealing the answer.

Good questions . . .

• Are brief
• Focus on a single idea
• Are relevant to the material presented
• Help stimulate interest
• Emphasize key points
• Assess knowledge or understanding
TRAINING AIDS

Training aids are designed to facilitate participant learning. When used effectively, they can simplify instruction, create and maintain interest, promote multi-sensory learning, and increase participant retention. What are some common types of training aids?

- **Transparencies and Overhead Projector**. The overhead projector and transparencies are standard training aids that allow participants to visualize material as it is presented to the group. An advantage of using transparencies is that they aid trainers in structuring their presentation and to help keep things on track. (See the following page for a list of tips for using the overhead projector.)

- **Flip Charts**. Flip charts can be used to record information provided by participants during the training. Advantages of flip charts are that they are portable, easy to use, and provide a written record of material discussed during the training.

- **Handouts**. Handouts are generally used to provide background material that is not covered in the session. Handouts are inexpensive to produce and provide participants with a written reference that they can take away from the session. A disadvantage of handouts is that they can detract attention from the presenter if they are not timed properly.

Other aids include videos, charts, posters, slides, and computerized presentations.

**Visual aids**...

- Should be simple and easy to understand
- Should be concise
- Should stress key points
- Should be visible from a distance
- Should be interesting
- Should be directly relevant to the session content

**When not to use training aids**...

Training aids, when used appropriately, can generate interest in material and increase student retention. When used ineffectively, they can create a barrier to communication. The following two examples are situations where training aids might actually detract from student learning.
When training aids don’t function properly. Stopping to adjust training equipment can be very distracting and can cause participants to quickly lose interest. Trainers should check to be sure than training aids are in working order before the training session begins.

When training aids don’t match the topic. When the material presented through training aids doesn’t reflect what is being discussed, it can create confusion. Training aids should be used to highlight or expand on key points covered in the session, and should not address unrelated material.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION AND FACILITATION

Prior to the training event:
- Provide participants with a brief overview of the workshop that includes a summary of the content, and the date, time, length, and location of the training.
- Familiarize yourself with the characteristics and experience level of training participants.

Before the training begins:
- Prepare participant materials including handouts and other information before the workshop begins.
- Arrive early to allow time to set up the room and make last minute preparations.
- Provide a registration sheet and name tags.

During the training:
- Introduce yourself to the group, providing a brief overview of your training experience and mentoring background.
- Use icebreakers at the beginning of the session to ease tension to allow participants to become acquainted (see the resources section for a sample icebreaker).
- Provide clear instructions and time frames for activities.
- Follow the agenda and designated time frames to the extent possible. Avoid exceeding the amount of time allotted for the training session.
- Demonstrate your knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject matter.
- Allow for informal breaks in instruction throughout the session. Any session lasting for two hours or more should include a formal break.
MANAGING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Trainers will often encounter difficult situations in the training session that must be managed appropriately to maintain a positive learning environment.

The following section provides examples of problem situations that are likely to arise during training, and offers suggestions for managing these situations effectively:

- **DIFFICULT SITUATION #1. The group is silent, despite encouragement from the trainer.** When the group is unresponsive to the trainer, it's important to determine the reason. A potential problem is that participants are not yet comfortable interacting with one other, in which case an icebreaker or team-building exercise might be needed to break tension and increase comfort levels. Other common problems might be that the trainer is covering material that is too basic for the ability level of the group, or conversely, that the material is too advanced, creating barriers to understanding. To determine the cause, ask questions, probe for a response, and pay close attention to nonverbal communication.

- **DIFFICULT SITUATION #2. The session is moving too quickly.** When the training is moving too quickly, the trainer’s role is to slow the pace. Useful strategies include asking for further clarification, encouraging other members of the group to comment on responses, or to use a more difficult line of questioning.

- **DIFFICULT SITUATION #3. The session is moving too slowly.** When a session moves too slowly, it may indicate that participants have lost interest or motivation to learn. Provide opportunities and incentives for participants to become more involved. It may also help to use direct questioning to generate more response. Keep in mind that it’s to everyone’s advantage to resolve the problem, rather than simply speed up the presentation.

- **DIFFICULT SITUATION #4. A small number of individuals dominate the group discussion.** Participant knowledge and experiences are a valuable resource in the training environment, but when one or two individuals dominate the discussion, it can be a detriment to others. Try to encourage participation from all trainees through use of such tools as direct questioning. If a speaker continues on for too long, wait for them to pause, politely interrupt by summarizing what they have said, and redirect the discussion to another participant or a new topic.
DIFFICULT SITUATION #5. The session gets sidetracked. When a session moves in the wrong direction, the trainer must bring participants back to the subject at-hand. An effective approach is to acknowledge the value of the current discussion, while reminding participants that training time is limited and will only allow for review of key issues. Encourage participants to continue their discussion after the training has concluded.

DIFFICULT SITUATION #6. Participants use the training session to voice complaints or resolve side issues. Avoid spending training time discussing issues that are largely beyond your control. Remind participants of the training purpose and suggest that they schedule a formal meeting outside of the training session to discuss problems or issues related to the organization.

MULTICULTURAL TRAINING APPROACHES

Increasingly, trainers are met with the challenge of working with training groups whose members represent a diverse array of cultural backgrounds. While you are not expected to be a “cultural expert,” following a few simple guidelines can help you to design and implement a training program that accommodates differences in language, cultural values, and learning styles.

- Learn more about the cultural background of participants prior to the training
- Be aware of your own preconceptions regarding cultural differences
- Speak clearly and pause occasionally to allow participants to keep pace
- Provide advanced notice when moving from one subject to the next
- Use simple language and avoid jargon
- Avoid complicated sentences or ideas
- Use direct questions
- Vary methods of instructions to accommodate differences in learning style
- Try to use culturally relevant examples
- Provide opportunities for participants to actively contribute through shared insights and experiences
MEASURING TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS

One of the most challenging aspects of training mentors and mentees is determining ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the training experience. Despite its challenges, evaluation is a critical component of the training design and should not be overlooked. Evaluating a training program involves two basic components:

- Measuring participants’ reactions to the training session.
- Measuring participant achievement as an outcome of the training experience.

MEASURING PARTICIPANT REACTIONS

Participant reactions to the training experience should be measured immediately following the training session or at the conclusion of a multi-session training event. While generally participants will react favorably to a well-designed and well-managed training, measuring specific reactions provides constructive feedback that can be used to shape future training programs. The following are potential issues that might be covered on a participant evaluation form:

- Did training content build on participants’ previous knowledge?
- Were there topics not covered in the training that you feel should have been?
- Were there topics covered in the training that you believe were not relevant to your work?
- Were there topics covered in the training that you wish would have received more time or attention?
- Were the methods of instruction appropriate to convey information or build necessary skills?

Additionally, trainers may ask participants to assess their overall satisfaction with the training facilities, materials, services, and any other component of the training experience.
MEASURING PARTICIPANT ACHIEVEMENT

Measuring changes in participant achievement is the truest test of training effectiveness.

What kind of achievement needs to be assessed?
• Changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes of training participants.
• Changes in behavior as it relates to the role of mentoring.

When should achievement should be measured?
• At the conclusion of the training event to assess immediate changes in knowledge or ability.
• After the participant has returned to the real world to assess whether the training experience led to desired outcomes.

Who should receive the results?
• Trainers
• Trainees
• Program Administrators
Developing a relationship is a process which assists mentors in developing realistic expectations for what it takes to establish a constructive relationship of influence. One useful model identifies four stages:

### Initiating

What do we talk about? How do we develop rapport? Discuss expectations, goals, general interests, careers. Use this time to develop a schedule and your communications plans. Start small and wait for the relationship to develop before making promises.

Is it worth the discomfort? The beginning of any relationship can be uncomfortable. Take it slowly. Changes will not occur immediately – maybe not for months. Just get to know each other.

Avoid the “Santa Claus Syndrome.” Your time, ideas and support for your mentee are you “gifts.” Although a mentee’s material needs are often very apparent, begin by sharing yourself. You may be the only adult the mentee knows who is supportive, yet nonjudgmental.

### Testing

Children are not smaller responsible adults. They learn responsibility as they grow. Mentors, as adults, must understand that this is not a rejection of them as people, but a challenge to guide them to learn responsible behavior.

To protect themselves from disappointments down the line, mentees may “test” your commitment to staying with them. Examples include: missed appointments, phone calls not returned, unreasonable requests, angry or sullen behavior.

In the eyes of the students, passing through this stage proves that you are committed and accept them as they are.

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*This material is reproduced from the Project Youth Connect training-of-trainers curriculum.*
Appendix B: The Four Stages in the Mentor Relationship

■ Trusting

Confidentiality is important in the relationship. Explain to your mentee that your discussions will not be shared with others. The exception will occur and you will have to break the confidence when there is a threat of physical harm to your mentee or others.

Expect that developing trust will take weeks or sometimes months and that it involves becoming friends. Provide and request feedback as you and your student take risks and test limits.

Show that you have trust in the young person by asking for help with a project to be completed. Assist with a project, career investigation, or group activity with your student.

■ Terminating

Disappointment affects us all. In any transition, the self-worth of the young person must be considered and a sense of empowerment conveyed.

If the mentor leaves the area, plans for some follow-up communication would be helpful. (Postcards of new area, letters, career changes, etc.)

If the mentee changes schools, the contact person at the site will be able to forward correspondence to the mentee. When this happens without notice, it would be a great “gift” for the mentee to receive a note from the mentor.

If the relationship simply “doesn’t work” after much effort, the contact person will meet with the mentor and young person separately and end the relationship. Individuals may choose to participate again or drop the program. Written notification of the relationship’s end is essential.
As in any exchange between two individuals, the success of mentoring relationship depends largely upon the trust, empathy, and understanding that the mentor and mentee share. These seven aspects of adolescent growth highlight what young people are thinking, feeling and hoping to achieve.

1. **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.** Young adolescents’ spurts of boundless energy are as well known as their periods of dreamy lethargy. They need time to stretch, wiggle, and exercise rapidly growing bodies; they also need time to relax. Adults who work with young adolescents need to remember the diversity in strength, dexterity, and size of youth in this age group. Intensely competitive physical activity often places an unnecessary burden on late-bloomers who cannot compete successfully. Early-bloomers who are pressured into conforming to sexual stereotypes that reward athletic prowess rather than intellectual or social development also can be harmed by stressful sports competition.

2. **COMPETENCE AND ACHIEVEMENT.** Because young adolescents experience extraordinary self-consciousness about their own new selves and the attitudes of others toward them, it is easy to understand their overwhelming desire to do something well and to receive admiration for achievement. Young people hunger for chances to prove themselves, especially in ways that are rewarding if all goes well and not devastating if there are some disappointments. Young adolescents need to know that what they do is valued by others whom they respect.

3. **SELF DEFINITION.** Rapidly changing bodies and minds require time to absorb new ways of thinking, new mirrored reflections, and new reaction from others. To accommodate the new selves that they are becoming, young adolescents need chances to consider what it means to be a man or a woman and belong to a race or ethnic group. They need to find a friend to share a secret, or to have a good talk with an adult. They need opportunities to explore their widening world and to reflect upon the meaning of new experiences, so that they can begin to consider themselves not just as observers, but as participants in society.

*Excerpted 3:00 to 6:00 P.M.: Planning Programs for Young Adolescents, by Gayle Dormen, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, ©1985.*
Despite appearances, the person you are mentoring is not an “adult,” even though they may be big, tall, and physically developed. It is important to be aware of the developmental need of children and especially the developmental needs of adolescents.

The “normal” development cycle may have been interrupted in many of the at-risk youth. Drugs, alcohol, and childhood trauma often delay development. It is important for mentors to be aware of this possibility.

4. **CREATIVE EXPRESSION**. Opportunities to express creatively their feelings, interests, abilities and thoughts help adolescents to understand and accept the new people they are becoming. Performing and being exposed to drama, literature and musical works of others help them see that people before them have felt emotions and thought ideas that are new and confusing to them. In addition to the arts, young adolescents can find opportunities for creative expression in sports such as synchronized swimming and roller skating and in activities like tending a garden or painting a wall mural.

5. **POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WITH PEERS AND ADULTS**. Young adolescents’ parents and families remain of primary importance in setting values and giving affection. Their peers offer needed support, companionship and criticism. In addition, adults other than parents have an effect on the lives of young adolescents, who are so eager to understand the possibilities of adulthood. Young adolescents need relationships with adults who are willing to share their experiences, views, values and feelings with young people. These adults will also encourage young adolescents to develop positive relationships with peers.

6. **STRUCTURE AND CLEAR LIMITS**. Young adolescents live in a society of rules, and they want to know and understand their own limits within that system. Clear expectations are critical to unsure, self-critical young people. The search for security in a world of conflicting demands is helped by explicit boundaries that define the areas in which they may legitimately seek freedom to explore. They differ from young children, though, in that they are increasingly capable of participating with adults in framing their own rules and limits.

7. **MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION**. Youth need to participate in activities that shape their lives. Successful events are planned with, not for, young adolescents. As they develop a mature appearance and more sophisticated social and intellectual skills, they want the opportunities to use their new talents. And by learning that their actions can affect the world around them, they gain a sense of responsibility. Adults need to adapt responsibilities to the short-term attention span characteristic of early adolescence, and to select varied tasks that enlist diverse interests and abilities.