

Colby Cares About Kids



2001-2002

Mentor Training Manual

~Words of inspiration~

"Working together, we can reach across the racial, cultural, social and economic gaps that divide us. We can recover our sense of community - our pride in being a nation of neighbors who care. We can revitalize the tradition of service to others that has been so much a part of our history and national character..." -Colin Powell

What Matters

*One hundred years from now,
It will not matter
What kind of car I drove,
What kind of house I lived in,
How much I had in my bank account,
Nor what my clothes looked like...*

*But the world may be a
Little better
Because I was important
In the life of a child.*

Author Unknown

"It should be our purpose in life to see that each of us makes such a contribution as will enable us to say that we, individually and collectively, are a part of the answers to the world problem and not part of the problem itself." -Andrew Cordier

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Contact Information and Channels of Communication:

**If you need to be absent:*

Schools: **Mentor must call by 10:00am for lunch slots, 1:00pm for after school**

Colby student → Teresa Hawko (x3098) → Site Coordinator → Mentee

Alfond Youth Center: **Mentor must call by 1:00pm**

Colby student → Site Coordinator → Mentee

**If your mentee is absent:*

Check your voicemail before you leave to go mentoring. If you do not need to go and the site has called Teresa, she will call you.

Schools: We will know by ~**10am** for lunchtimes and for afterschool.

Teresa will call you ASAP

Site coordinator → Teresa Hawko → Colby student (call or voicemail)

AYC: We will know by ~**2:30-3:00pm** and will call you.

Site Coordinator → Teresa Hawko → Colby student (call and email)

If you find yourself in an **uncomfortable situation or believe that your mentee is **in danger**:*

DO NOT WAIT!! Call ASAP or stop mentoring and go see:

Moira Bentzel

Albert S. Hall School

Work: 872-8071 ext. 248

Home: 453-7348

Laura Brock or Jeremy Garland

Alfond Youth Center

873-0684 ext. 229

Teddi Blakney

Clinton Elementary School

426-2181

Stephanie Tuck

Benton Elementary School

453-4240

Alice Hammond

Waterville Jr. High School

873-2144

Wini Turner

Vassalboro Community School

923-3100

Susan Shaw

George J. Mitchell School

873-0695

Teresa Hawko

Eustis 104 (8:30-4:30 M-F)

872-3098

If you feel as though the child is in **immediate danger, call:*

State Children's Emergency Services Hot Line: 1-800-452-1999

**Logistical questions should be directed to:* Teresa Hawko:

Email: tkhawko

Ext: 3098

Eustis 104 (8:30-4:30 Mon-Fri)



A Mentor is...

- A trusted guide or friend
Young people today do not get much opportunity to be friends with adults; especially adults who will listen to them and take them seriously.
- A caring, responsible adult
For many of our mentees, there is not always a consistent adult presence in their lives who can model appropriate behaviors, interactions and attitudes.
- A resource who provides access or exposure to people, places and things outside their mentee's routine environment.
- A positive role model
Today's youth have many role models; however, they are not necessarily positive role models.

A Mentor is NOT...

- All things to their mentee.
- A parent/legal guardian

The role of the parent or legal guardian (governed by law) is to provide food, shelter and clothing. It is not the mentor's role to fulfill these responsibilities. If the mentor believes his/her mentee is not receiving adequate support, he/she should contact and speak ONLY with the appropriate people (pg. 4).
- A social worker

A social worker is a licensed professional with the necessary skills and training to assist in family issues. If a mentor believes there is something wrong in the mentee's home life, the mentor should share this information ONLY with the appropriate contacts (pg.4).
- A psychologist

A mentor is not a formal counselor or therapist.

Expectations of Mentors:

- I agree to commit 1.5-2 hours a week out of my schedule to be matched with a mentee at one of the CCAK sites.
- If I am unable to meet with my mentee, I will call Teresa Hawko, the CCAK Program Coordinator, by the appropriate time, to tell her of my absence so that she can contact the school/AYC to inform my mentee (see pg. 4).
- I will arrive on time (as scheduled) and devote that time to my mentee.
- While devoting that time to my mentee, I will act in a positive and appropriate manner, which means that I will not intentionally influence my mentee in any negative way.
- I shall not talk about inappropriate subjects (i.e. skipping classes, drinking/drugs, dating relationships, or partying) in the presence of my mentee.
- I will not talk inappropriately to or about other people.
- I will do my best to be a positive role model that my mentee can look up to.
- I will not see my mentor outside of this commitment unless as a participant of a CCAK event.
- I will always stay within areas that are visible to other adults and will not take my mentee off of my assigned site's grounds or into a vehicle.
- I will join my mentee in extracurricular activities as well as assist them with academic work.
- I will attend periodic reflection and/or training sessions with other mentors that will be facilitated by CCAK staff.
- If I have ANY concerns about my mentee's well being, I will talk directly with my site coordinator or program coordinator (Teresa) ASAP. (**Please do this in person or via phone-no email**)

Guidelines for Mentors:

- Be on time.
- Be honest and respectful.
- Always call Teresa Hawko by the assigned time if you have to change your plans so the child will know what to expect (see pg. 4).
- Give your mentee advanced notice if you have to miss a regular visit for vacation. (Hint: a postcard or letter lets your mentee know you were thinking of him/her)
- Encourage the child to suggest activities and help plan them.
- Give you mentee your full attention when you are together.
- Be consistent and clear with your expectations. In new situations, be patient if you have not explained the limits ahead of time.
- Allow and encourage your mentee to be open about his/her thoughts, feelings and values...but don't pry. Respect the mentee's opinion...don't discount it as foolish.
- Be aware that your actions, thoughts and words may be picked up by your mentee even if that is not your intention.
- Value diversity--chances are that your mentee will be different from you in fundamental ways. Remember that you can learn from him/her just as he/she learns from you.
- Set a positive example by obeying laws and school rules.
- Do not be drawn into family conflicts. The parent-child relationship is "family business" and you should not be involved beyond listening to the mentee's feelings.
- Help your mentee make decisions and formulate their own conclusions without telling him/her what to do. Explore alternative solutions together.
- Never make promises you can't keep.
- Let your mentee know that you like him/her through words of praise and encouragement.
- Give the relationship time to develop. Don't judge it too quickly!!
- Talk to Teresa Hawko if you are ever confused or concerned about anything in your match--no matter how insignificant it may seem. "Insignificant" things tend to blossom into larger issues if not addressed.

Values

A value is the attitudes and beliefs that determine how we relate to the world.

It is good to take the time to identify what is important to you, because these values are the foundations for your judgements, decisions and actions. They may also be in conflict with the values of those around you, especially if those people come from different backgrounds and experiences than yours.

Your mentee may have different values from you. However, differences are not necessarily negative. They can be a positive and valuable part of a relationship. Differences are normal and should be expected. Here are some questions to ponder before and during your mentoring experience:

- *What are the big differences between what you and your mentee perceive to be really important?*
- *What would you do if your mentee or your mentee's family felt very differently about an issue than you do?*
- *How would you handle a situation in which your mentee is in conflict with his/her parent(s)/guardian?*
- *Do you see actions/values in your mentee about which you have strong feelings?*
- *Which of your mentee's values do you think that you might want to try to change?*
- *How realistic is it to expect to influence change in your mentee's values?*
- *What can you do to productively influence a change?*
- *What may be the (positive and negative) consequences of your influencing your mentee's values?*
- *Where do you see your mentee having to make value judgements? Can you help with these judgments?*

How to Help a Mentee Clarify Values... (what to do...)

In working with children, we want to encourage them to think through the consequences of possible actions when they are faced with a dilemma. A mentor can help by asking a mentee questions like:

How do you feel about this?

What would happen if you did...?

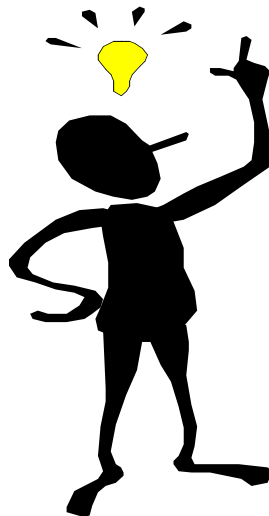
How would you like this to work out?

*How will the results of this decision affect you and others?
Is that the effect that you want?*

Would it help to get more information?

*Have you ever been in a similar situation? What did you do?
How did it turn out?*

However, always remember that even if you do not agree with the mentee's decision/values, your job is to give him/her the proper support to make that decision *on his/her own*.





Roadblocks to Communicating about Values... (what not to do)

- **Moralizing, Preaching, Obliging**
"You should..." "You ought to..." "It's your duty to..."
*These messages induce guilt, reduce self-esteem and build general resistance to authority (including you!!).
- **Persuading with Logic, Arguing, Instructing, Lecturing**
"Do you realize..." "Here is why you are wrong..." "The fact is..."
*These invite counter arguments, increase defensiveness, reduce openness and belittle the opinion against which you are arguing.
- **Advising, Recommending, Providing Answers or Solutions**
"What I would do is..." "Why don't you..." "It would be best for you..."
*Statements like these imply superiority, deprive the receiver of the esteem-building experience of solving their own problem and may encourage dependency.
- **Criticizing, Blaming, Judging Negatively, Disapproving**
"You are lazy..." "You aren't thinking straight." "You are really mixed up..."
*These statements instantly lower self-esteem, induce guilt, reduce openness and arouse resentment.
- **Kidding, teasing, joking, using sarcasm**
"You think that you know it all." "Were you just born yesterday?"
"Get up on the wrong side of the bed this morning?"
*These messages may arouse feelings of rejection and resentment.

When in doubt, USE YOUR COMMON SENSE. Take a moment to try and place yourself in your mentee's shoes and think about how you would feel if you were he/she. Then proceed.

Communication Skills

Mentors need to listen well to communicate effectively. Being a good listener and understanding a person's values begins with respect. Respect the person with whom you are communicating, whatever their age. Focus on hearing what the other person is saying and be attentive to how they act.

To enhance your relationship with your mentee and avoid misunderstandings, it is important to have good communication skills, including listening.

Listening communication means:

- Getting away from distractions and paying attention to the child. You may even need to stop whatever you are doing in order to focus on the child's message.
- Don't pretend that you are listening when you are really not. If the timing is bad, tell the child you are having a hard time listening right now, but would like to discuss things with them later. Be sure to follow through!
- Stay focused. Many times we think that we are listening, when in fact we are rehearsing what we will be saying next. We worry about our remarks and practice them to make sure we get our point across. Other times we simply get lost in our own thoughts or actions.
- Remember that words have many meanings. Young children may take your words literally. Almost any message can be interpreted in several ways. We cannot assume just one meaning for the words heard.
- Clear communication is not the sole responsibility of the speaker. As a listener we have to be actively involved. Communication is a two-way street. Hear the words, watch the body language and try to understand the meaning of what the speaker is saying verbally and non-verbally.
- Keep your mind open. Be aware of your emotional triggers and deaf spots-the topics, words, or ideas that upset us and close down our ability to listen.
- Talk to children as you talk to friends. Give them choices. Ask for opinions. Encourage them using positive language. Use "Do" phrases instead of "Don't" phrases.
- ALWAYS be polite and use your manners.

DO:

Please hold your coat so it doesn't drag.
Please carry the kitten gently.
Close the door quietly, please.
Be careful not to spill, please.

DON'T:

Don't drag your coat on the ground.
Don't squeeze the kitten!
Don't slam the door!
Don't spill that.

Active Listening

Active listening involves listening carefully to words and feelings expressed and repeating those facts in such a way that the speaker knows he/she has been understood.

Active listening takes energy and concentration. It attempts to identify the emotions underlying the words. "What is this person really feeling?" "What are they actually saying?" Active listening requires that the listener reflect the feelings heard. Here are some tools to help you:

- **Paraphrasing:**
"Do I hear what you are saying?" "I believe you mean...am I right?"
"Sounds like..."
*The listener, in his/her own words, states what has been heard and asks the speaker to verify or correct the interpretation.
- **Door Opening**
"Please tell me more about that." "Can you give me an example?"
"I'm not sure I understand..."
*This invites the speaker to elaborate about something that is important to them. The speaker shows interest and stays open-minded.
- **Probing (this should not turn into prying!!)**
"Have you ever noticed that happening at other times?" "What do you usually do when that happens?" "How did that make you feel?"
*This asks the speaker to elaborate in a specific direction. It helps to recognize patterns and can be useful in solving problems.
- **Perception Checks**
"I've noticed that you clench your fists when you talk about your sister. I sense a lot of anger. Are you mad at her?" "You are really quiet today; I'm sensing that you are sad...Is that correct?"
*This allows the listener to check what they are hearing through non-verbal clues.
- **Open-ended Questions**
"What did you do at school today?" "What was the best part of your weekend?"
*These questions require more than a "Yes" or "No" answer. This can be helpful in drawing out your mentee and helps you discover their world.

"I" Statements

The way we talk can build or destroy another person's confidence or self-esteem. For many mentees, self-esteem is virtually non-existent or easily destroyed. How we talk to our mentees, therefore, is an important factor in reinforcing how they feel about themselves. A good way to think about the differences between ineffective and effective communication is to think of sending either "YOU" or "I" messages.

"YOU" messages are belittling and blaming. They put the responsibility for your feelings on the other person.

"YOU make me so mad!"

"YOU disappoint me."

"Don't talk back to me."

"I" statements are more effective. They let you express your feelings and thoughts directly, honestly, and clearly...without blaming, accusing or labeling. An "I" message states how you feel, a specific behavior, the effect the behavior had on you and/or what you want. They may also induce further more responsible or more clearly thought out behavior from your mentee.

"I feel...when you...because..."

"I feel disappointed that you lied to me about going to school because I thought that you trusted me."

"I get nervous when you ride your bicycle without a helmet because I worry you'll get hurt."

"I feel frustrated when you are not ready when I arrive, because we may be late."

"I feel happy that you are my mentee because I have had a lot of fun with you."

LIMIT SETTING

Expect that:

- Children will want and need limits placed on their behavior. Limits provide security.
- Children will test limits frequently. It is crucial to be consistent with your limits.
- It will be important to set limits right at the start of the relationship.
- Setting limits will clarify your role as an adult friend.

DO:

*Find out what the child thinks is acceptable behavior and then state your expectations.

*State the consequences for not respecting those limits. Remember... the only behavior you can control is your own. State what you will do, then follow through.

*Have the consequence fit the situation.

- "If you spill your milk, I will not give you any more."

- "If you can not be nice to the cat, I'll have to put her away."

- "If you do not stop poking Jimmy in the head with the pencil, I will take it away and we will stop this project."

*Stress that the mentee is making the choice. If he/she chooses not to listen, he/she has chosen the consequence.

*Set limits and consequences in advance whenever possible.

*BE AS CONSISTENT AS POSSIBLE!!!!

DO NOT:

*Use the loss of the relationship as a consequence.

*EVER use physical force to set limits.

*Promise a material reward for good behavior...that sets you up to be manipulated when a child wants something.

Remember: You are responsible for the mentee and have a right to set limits when the child is with you. **You are the adult...** don't be afraid to say "NO". And do not be afraid to use CCAK guidelines as an explanation for why you cannot do something or go somewhere with your mentee.

Ex: "No, I'm sorry, Jen, but I cannot drive you to Dairy Queen. It is against CCAK rules for us to leave the AYC and I don't want to get in trouble with my boss. (You can use something like this as a catalyst for a valuable conversation.)"

Catalysts for Dialogue

Use situations your mentee raises to reinforce problem solving methods, brainstorm for positive results or apply relevant materials. Convert a sticky or confusing situation into a positive learning experience.

Possible Scenarios:

1. Your mentee complains about her weight and expresses her desire to try diet pills that were advertised on TV.

You can use this as an opportunity to talk about the culture of thinness and discuss the differences between real girls and women and the idealized images we see in the media.

2. Your mentee tells you that sometimes he just gets so frustrated he feels like hitting people or breaking things and that yesterday he beat up his little brother for borrowing a CD without asking.

An opportunity to normalize anger—i.e., we all feel anger at times-- and to talk about constructive ways to channel anger and aggression. You might also talk about how it feels to be in and out of control and finding choices in moments where no choice seems obvious.

3. Your mentee confides that she feels uncomfortable with her mother's' new boyfriend, that he makes sexual comments and touches her in ways that make her feel uncomfortable when her mother isn't around.

A chance to talk with her about appropriate boundaries and her right to feel emotionally and physically safe. Brain-storm her options and the risks involved. (Check with your supervisor if you have any question about her present or future safety).

4. Your mentee complains that he doesn't have any friends, that no one will play with him, or that other boys call him names, push him around on the bus, and make fun of him.

An opportunity to talk about times when you've felt that way or had similar experiences and to think together about how to respond. You may have noticed something that he does that could be misunderstood or you may take this chance to mention some of the really positive things you see in him that make you enjoy being his friend.

5. Your mentee tells you she hates school and doesn't see any reason why she needs to be there. She finds academic work too hard and doesn't see how it relates to her life.

This is a chance for you to talk about what you've gained from school and also how hard it has been at times and what you've done in those moments. Find out more about her difficulties and offer to work with her; think together about how to make school fun and interesting and relevant.

6. Your mentee discloses to you that he is afraid of another boy in his class because this boy calls him names, takes his lunch money, and threatens to beat him up.

Take this opportunity to problem-solve—e.g., to identify people he can turn to for support and assistance and to come up with different ways to respond and react that can improve the situation or at least remove him from immediate danger.

Child Development

AGES 8-10

General Characteristics:

- Interested in people and aware of differences.
- Busy, active, full of enthusiasm, may try too much, interested in money and its value.
- Capable of prolonged interest (maybe).
- Reasonable with a sense of right and wrong.
- Enjoys spending time talking and discussing.

Physical Characteristics:

- Very active and need frequent breaks.
- Bone growth is not yet complete. Early maturers may be upset with their size, but a listening ear and your explanations will help.
- Tend to be accident-prone.

Social Characteristics:

- Can be very competitive and may have a strong desire to win.
- Are choosy about their friends, and being accepted by peers becomes quite important.
- Team games become popular.
- Worshiping heroes, TV stars, sports figures is common.

Emotional Characteristics:

- Are very sensitive to praise and recognition. Feelings may be hurt easily.
- Begin feeling the pressure of conflict between peers' rules and parents' rules.

Mental Characteristics:

- Their idea of fairness becomes a big issue.
- Are eager to answer questions.
- Are very curious, collectors of everything, and may jump from one thing to another.
- Want more independence, but know they need guidance and support.
- Can be decisive and dependable.

Child Development

AGES 11-13

General Characteristics:

- Vulnerable, insecure, fear of rejection, mood swings.
- Testing limits, “know it all attitude”.

Physical Characteristics:

- Small muscle coordination is good, and interests in art, crafts, models and music are popular.
- Are very concerned about their appearance, and self-conscious about their growth.
- Their diet and sleep habits can be bad, which may result in low energy levels.
- Girls may begin menstruation.

Social Characteristics:

- Being accepted by friends is quite important which means there is a real need to conform.
- Peers often set the general rule of behavior.
- They dress and behave alike in order to “belong”.
- Cliques start to develop outside of school.
- Crushes on members of the opposite sex are common.
- They have a tendency to manipulate others.
- They are interested in earning their own money.

Emotional Characteristics:

- Are caught between being treated like a child and feeling like an adult.
- Because friends are so important during this time, there can be conflicts between adult’s rules and friend’s rules.
- Loud behavior hides their lack of self-confidence.
- Look at the world more objectively, and more subjectively and critically at adults.

Mental Characteristics:

- Tend to be perfectionists. If they try to attempt too much, they may feel frustrated and guilty.
- They have mood swings often, and may be vulnerable.
- Want more independence, but know they still need guidance and support.
- Attention span can be lengthy.

Effects of Family Stress on Children

A Healthy Family:

GOAL: Grow together, support, nurture, etc.

Signs:

Each member can...

- Respect each other for each person's differences.
- Negotiate with others without being put down.
- Say "yes" or "no" without the fear of being rejected.
- Ask without demanding.
- Be confident in the stability of family relationships.
- Show feelings of all kinds without the fear of losing family relationships
- Have specific relationships with individual family members
- Be confident in honesty of family members and feel trusted by them.
- Celebrate, have fun and play

A Troubled Family:

GOAL: To survive.

Signs:

- Members have feelings that they can't afford to show
- Communication among members is guarded
- Each member is insulated by the "No Talk" rule
- Behavior of individuals not congruent with internal feelings
- Don't acknowledge the existence/cause of pain in order to hide it
- Convince *themselves and others* there is no pain

Mentor's Role:

GOAL: To be a supportive friend who offers new experiences and new ways of dealing with the world.

Your role is NOT to change or "save" the child. You are NOT the counselor or the parent. You are a friend. Any change that happens in the child will be the child's choice

Common Characteristics of Children in Need of Mentors

Lacks self-confidence

Fear of taking risks

Anxious

Have few friends

Distrustful

Unable to take frustration in stride

Very sensitive to criticism

Moody

Impulsive

Inappropriate emotional releases

Unusually sensitive to noise, lights, temperature

Day-dreams

Emotionally detached

Lower academic achievement

Believes chaos is normal

Boys likely to be hyperactive and unable to concentrate

Girls likely to complain of illness and pain

The "perfect" child

EFFECTIVE MENTORING

The key is development of trust between two strangers of different ages and stations of life, a process that is largely determined by the mentor's approach.

Developing Trust

1. Involve the mentee in deciding how you will spend your time together.
2. Make a commitment to being consistent and dependable—a steady, stable presence in the child's life.
3. Recognize and accept that the relationship can be one-sided, and take the responsibility for keeping the relationship alive.
4. Pay attention to the youth's need for "fun". This is not only key for relationship building, but is a chance for the youth to have experiences that she/he may not otherwise have.
5. Respect the mentee's point of view.
6. Only offer sincere praise.

****Confidentiality for Mentors****

It is ok to introduce each other as "Mentor" and "Mentee" to other people if you have both discussed it and are comfortable with those titles.

As a mentor, you will likely learn a lot about the private matters of your mentee and his/her family. There will be times when you want to talk to roommates, friends or relatives about what is happening in your relationship with the mentee or what you know. This is where confidentiality comes in.

PLEASE...

Remember that Maine is "small town America." You never know when you are talking to someone's cousin, sister-in-law, neighbor, co-worker, babysitter, significant other, pet groomer, etc...

A person who has probably had a very difficult time trusting many people in his/her life has entrusted you with private information. Please respect the family's right to keep some matters private. If you need to talk, call or make arrangement to see your site coordinator, Teresa (see pg. 4) or write in your journal. Things can be worrisome, shocking, annoying, etc and it is understandable that you need to process this information. We ask that you do so in the appropriate and mature manner.

HOWEVER... confidentiality does not prevent you from disclosing information or evidence of a harmful situation for you or your mentee TO THE APPROPRIATE PEOPLE. Situations that cause you to be uncomfortable inhibit your ability to fulfill your mentor role and will be addressed. And it is the LAW that you report all cases of potential abuse.

Consider the CCAK staff as part of your support system. Your friends and family do not have the whole picture or the contact with the family, so their input, however well-intentioned, is not going to be the most useful. The professionals that make up the CCAK staff are trained in the skills and resources to best help your mentee.

CHILD ABUSE DISCLOSURE

If a child comes to you about abuse:

- Remain calm (take 3 deep breaths) and deal with the disclosure at the child's level- stay focused on listening and pay close attention to the child's story.
- Maintain eye contact while talking to the child.
- Stress that he/she did the right thing by telling you.
- Allow the child to relate the incident in his/her own terms.
- Stress that you believe him/her.
- Tell him/her that it is NOT his/her fault.
- Express that you feel bad, too, and want to help.
- Do not ask too many questions unless the child wants to answer them.
- Show affection to let him/her know your friendship is constant and that he/she is still worthy of that friendship.
- Avoid displays of shock. Never use terms such as "bad", "awful", "disgusting" to describe the incident. The child may feel he/she is disgusting due to his/her role in the incident.
- Tell the child you have a responsibility to report this incident to the school counselor. (**This is NOT a violation of your trust-it is an action done with the best interests of the child in mind**).
- Do NOT confront the abuser. A confrontation can jeopardize the match and the child, not to mention the mentor. Go through the appropriate channels-they are designed to help you and your mentee.
- Call your site coordinator or Teresa ASAP!! The abuse may constitute a mandated report to DHS. The child and you may need information and support to cope with the situation.

GUIDELINES FOR CHILD ABUSE DISCLOSURE

TELL THE SCHOOL/CENTER COUNSELOR!!!!

In Maine, any suspicion of abuse or neglect which occurred to anyone under 18 years old **MUST** be reported to the Dept. of Human Services. We ask that you contact your site coordinator or Teresa as soon as possible to report your suspicions. These professionals will then make a report to DHS. This allows the school to follow the investigation of the report and assist you, the child and DHS in any way.

Please understand that once this step is taken, further information may not be available to the mentor for confidentiality reasons. Please respect this. The CCAK staff honestly does have the best of intentions to help these children and will exhaust every possible avenue to do everything possible to improve the situation for the child.

Sometimes the child will tell the mentor about incidents that may be child abuse. This happens because mentors are trusted adults and the children feel safe in asking for help.

The child may not come right out and say what happened but indicators may point to abuse. It is up to the authorities to determine what actually happened.

If you feel as though the child is in immediate danger, then call the

State Children's Emergency Services Hot Line:

1-800-452-1999

Call this number in emergency situations or if you are unable to make contact with a CCAK staff person within 48 hours of disclosure.

STAGES OF A RELATIONSHIP

Each mentor/mentee relationship grows at a different pace, but they all start out in the same way: two strangers (one child, one adult) agree to try and become friends. How long that takes depends on many, many variables. Still, there is a pattern to the journey from strangers to friends. If you know what the pattern will be, you can be prepared to get through the risky points successfully.

In the beginning:

Mentors: have lots of energy and excitement for the relationship.

Mentees: on best behavior, generally likable and cautious about trusting.

Relationship: learning roles and discovering mutual interests.

Growth in the Relationship:

Mentors: newness wears off, needing to set limits, feeling the commitment, could feel easy to miss a visit.

Mentees: Child trusts enough to let down guard and be real self, may test mentor for consistency.

Relationship: Building trust, setting limits, some confusion about roles.

"Turning point"-It is an event that requires honest communication and cooperation. It is a significant point in the relationship.

Maturity:

Relationship moves to a level of friendly acquaintances. Roles are now clearly defined. Trust has been established and relationship is able to be flexible without feeling guilty. Only danger here is getting into a comfortable rut.

NOTE: The relationship can cycle through the "growth" and "maturity" phases a number of times during the relationship. The first time is the toughest because the bond of trust is weaker.

Ending:

Endings can be difficult for all of us. There is the temptation to simply withdraw, avoid, or deny feelings at this stage. However, doing so could hurt your mentee very deeply. While it is likely to evoke complicated feelings in both you and your mentee, you are the one in charge of making the “good-bye” a positive experience.

There are many ways you can say good-bye and end your time together on a reflective and positive note. You might want to plan a special final meeting that involves food and exchange of pictures or a small gift for your mentee. At that last meeting – or even at the second to last meeting – you might want to talk with your mentee about what you have learned from him/her or what she/he has meant to you; or you might perhaps write a card or note expressing those sentiments. You might talk with your mentee about how you have seen him/her grow as a person in your time together and comment on positive things you see and feel about him or her. It’s entirely appropriate to share your sadness at not seeing your young friend anymore. If your mentee shares sadness with you, try to be as receptive and understanding of those feelings as you can be.

Some mentees may want to stay in touch with their mentors. This is a fine thing to discuss as well. The most important thing is: *DO NOT PROMISE ANYTHING THAT YOU DO NOT INTEND TO DO*. If you would like to stay in touch, exchange addresses and plan to do so. If you’re not sure you’ll be able to follow through, you can say your own version of something like, “I’m a terrible letter writer. I don’t want to promise something I won’t do. But I’ll miss you and think of you often.”

Don’t be surprised if you have feelings you don’t expect after your last session. You may feel a little sad, depressed, or numb or relieved. If you are puzzled or bothered by your feelings as your mentor/mentee relationship ends, be sure to talk with a fellow mentor or staff member about it.

*You may be able to continue for a second year with your mentee. If interested, please speak with a CCAK staff member before mentioning the idea to your mentee.

Children Learn What they Live

When children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.

When children live with hostility, they learn to fight.

When children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy.

When children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

When children live with tolerance, they learn patience.

When children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

When children live with praise, they learn to appreciate.

When children live with fairness, they learn justice.

When children live with security, they learn faith.

When children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

When children live with acceptance and friendship,

They learn to find love in the world.

-anonymous

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