



Mentoring Mentors

Mentoring Mentors Program

Prepared for Mentoring Mentors by Alphonso Mayo

May 11, 2017 updated May 11, 2018

Summary

Mentoring Mentors is a non-profit organization working to inspire and guide African American adolescents to become future mentors in their community. Unlike standard mentoring programs, Mentoring Mentors utilizes a unique approach in order to achieve its mission. provides the solution that a standard mentoring program does not provide. This approach addresses trauma by pairing students who have experienced trauma with a mentor who has shared life experiences allowing them to more easily relate to the students and help them to build morals values, and standards. This helps the mentee's learn better coping strategies.

Below, we describe a) the need for Mentoring Mentors, b) the stages of change and personal trauma that the program addresses, c) program logic model, d) program inputs, e) program activities, and f) outcomes to be achieved.

A. The Need for Mentoring Mentors

Mentoring Mentors is a nonprofit 501(c)3 mentoring organization supporting African American youth in the Baltimore City area in their positive development into adulthood.

Many of the youth served share experiences of trauma, due to challenging home and community circumstances. Too often, they have no one to talk to about the trauma. As a result, they normalize trauma and keep it bottled up inside. That bottled-up trauma can lead them to become more distant, angrier, and more disengaged. Students may be unable to focus in school because of a negative experience.

Trauma can affect a student's grades and ability to focus on their schoolwork. A student who did not get a good night's sleep because of a traumatic event may be irritated when his teacher asks him something. Some have Individual Education Plans, but schools have not found an effective way to solve that trauma.

Among African American boys, having a natural mentor who was active in the African American community predicted stronger ethnic identity, which predicted better academic, psychological, and social outcomes.

Recent American Institute for Research study



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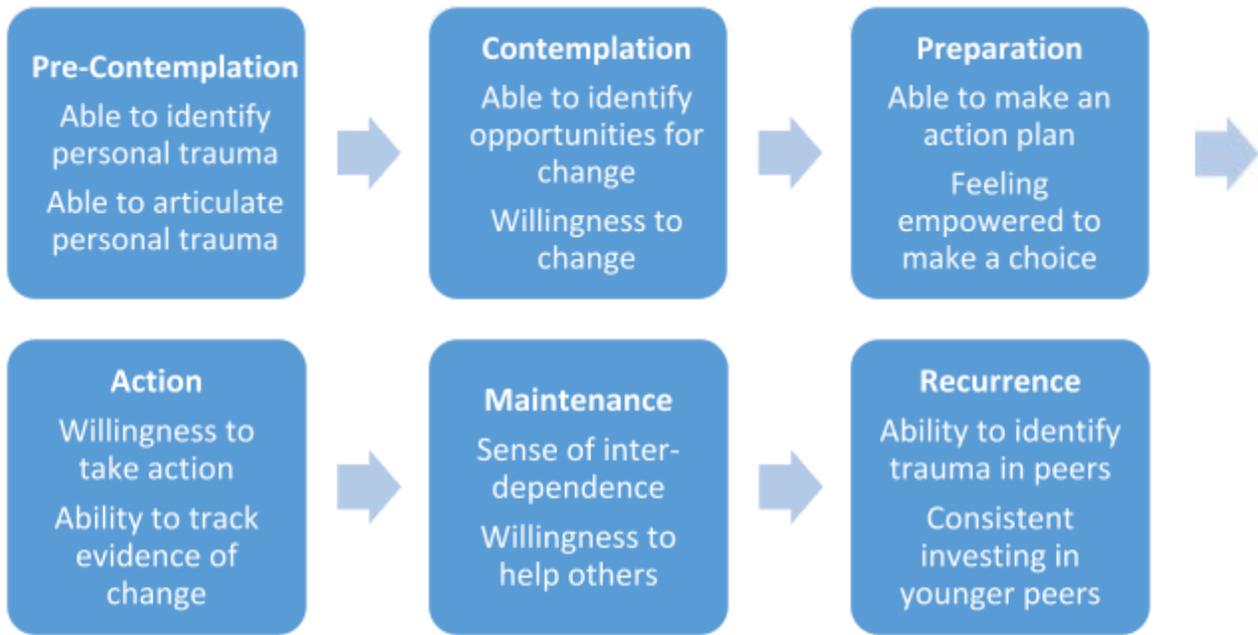
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B. Stages of Change and Personal Trauma

Mentoring Mentors activities center around the six stages of change model. The program is designed to help students understand the six stages of change in respect to their personal trauma as students may enter the program at different stages. Some are not yet aware of their trauma. Some already know they have trauma and want support. Some have started to make a plan.

Figure 1: Stages of Change and Personal Trauma



C. Logic Model

The logic model (Figure 1) summarizes Mentoring Mentors’ program inputs, activities, and outcomes and the causal relationships between them.

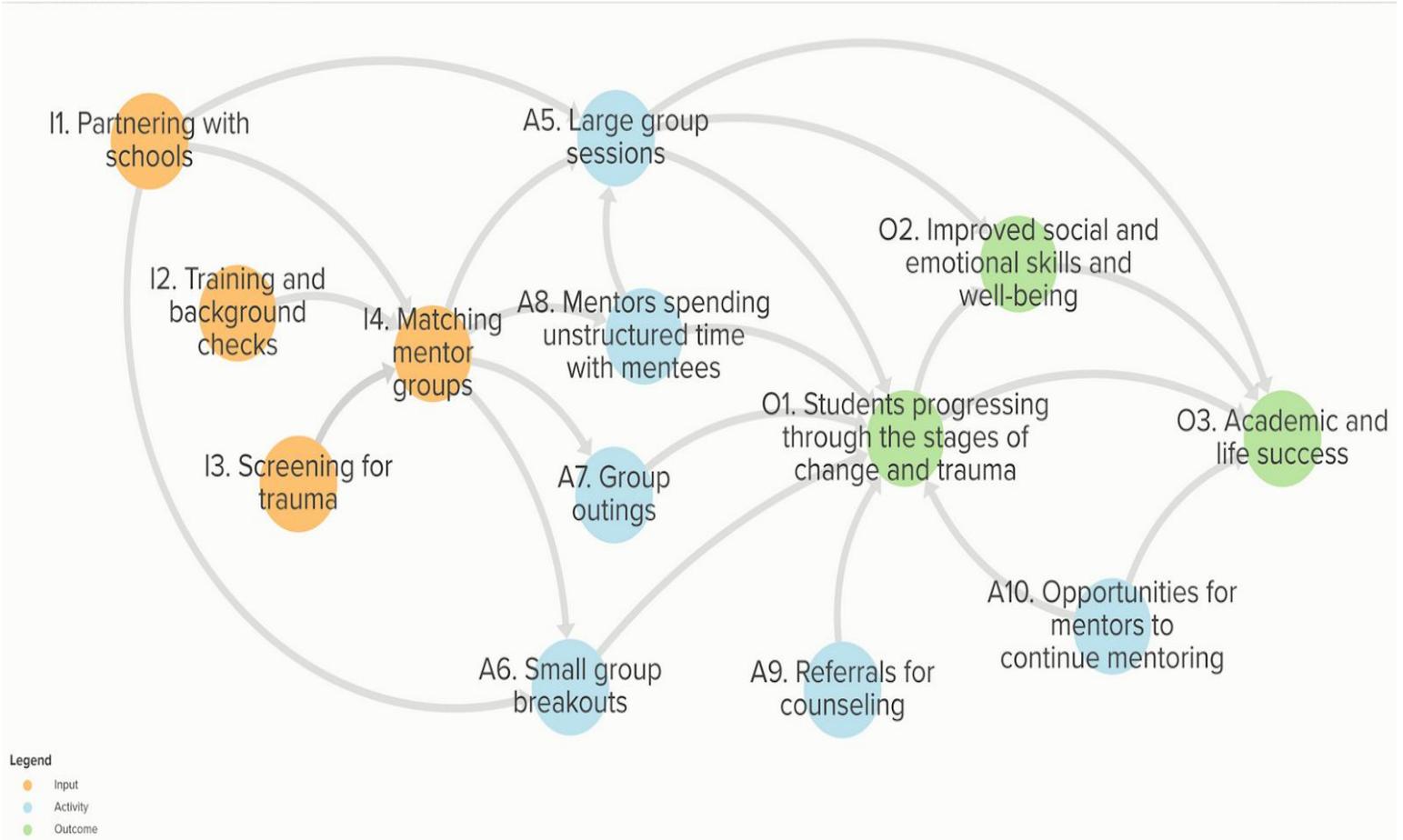


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Figure 2: Mentoring Mentors logic model (arrows = causes more)





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D. Program Inputs

I1. Partnering with schools

Mentoring Mentors builds relationships with guidance counselors, principals and administrators at partnering schools and includes them as part of their team. The schools help Mentoring Mentors to identify students who need the program. School guidance counselors provide lists of students who could use a mentor, such as students who have been suspended, absent from class, or in multiple fights and who are struggling academically. These are usually, but not always, male students. The program is capped at 10 to 15 students.

The schools are also open to sharing data such as standardized test scores and report cards, for Mentoring Mentors to measure outcomes.

Mentoring Mentors has also used school facilities as a place to provide mentoring (the large group sessions and small group breakouts).

I2. Training and background checks

Adult mentor volunteers (age 18+) receive a two-hour training from Mentoring Mentors. Much of the curriculum is adapted from existing best practices from Big Brothers/Big Sisters models. The training covers topics such as the history and vision of Mentoring Mentors, outcomes the program wants to obtain, what mentoring is and is not, what being a mentor involves, and dos and don'ts for mentors. Mentoring Mentors has not found a standardized training that it could offer 12th grade mentors.

Mentors also receive ongoing training through partnerships with outside organizations. For example, Mentoring Mentors signs its mentors up for a training provided by Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

Mentoring Mentors staff are working with Maryland Mentors to develop a certification program for mentors, including young mentors in 12th grade, to become certified. They are in the process of determining what the program will look like.

Mentoring Mentors also conducts background checks on mentors.



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13. Screening for trauma

Mentoring Mentors will screen all middle school mentees and high school mentors for trauma, using the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) survey. ACE is a standardized screening to see whether a person has experienced a traumatic experience in their childhood. Mentoring Mentors used some of the ACE questions and created their own survey. They are working with a neurologist who does related research studies to develop a standardized screening for middle school and high school students, similar to ACE.

Mentoring Mentors staff will use the screening results to understand where students are, how to approach them, and how to help them develop. They also compare screening results at the beginning and end of the school year.

14. Matching mentor groups

Mentoring Mentors' screening process includes a matching sheet for pairing mentees and mentors. The matching sheet asks about topics such as what they like, what they do on a daily basis, whether they grew up in or live in a single parent household, what subjects they struggled with or are struggling with in school, their favorite subject, and their hobbies. Mentoring Mentors uses that information to match each volunteer with a student who is the best fit. Once they create a match, they set a date for a group meeting. The mentor apprentices are committed to work with their middle school mentee until their mentee enters high school, when the mentee becomes a mentor and the apprentice graduates from high school. Positive bonds form over their time in the program.

The mentor groups each bring together three participants who have shared experiences for peer-to-peer “intergenerational mentoring” (Figure 2):

1. A *middle school mentee*, a middle schooler in their first three years of the program
2. A *high school mentor apprentice*, a former mentee who is preparing to become a mentor (grades 9 – 11)
3. A *volunteer adult mentor or graduating mentor*, an adult volunteer or graduating senior who has completed the program

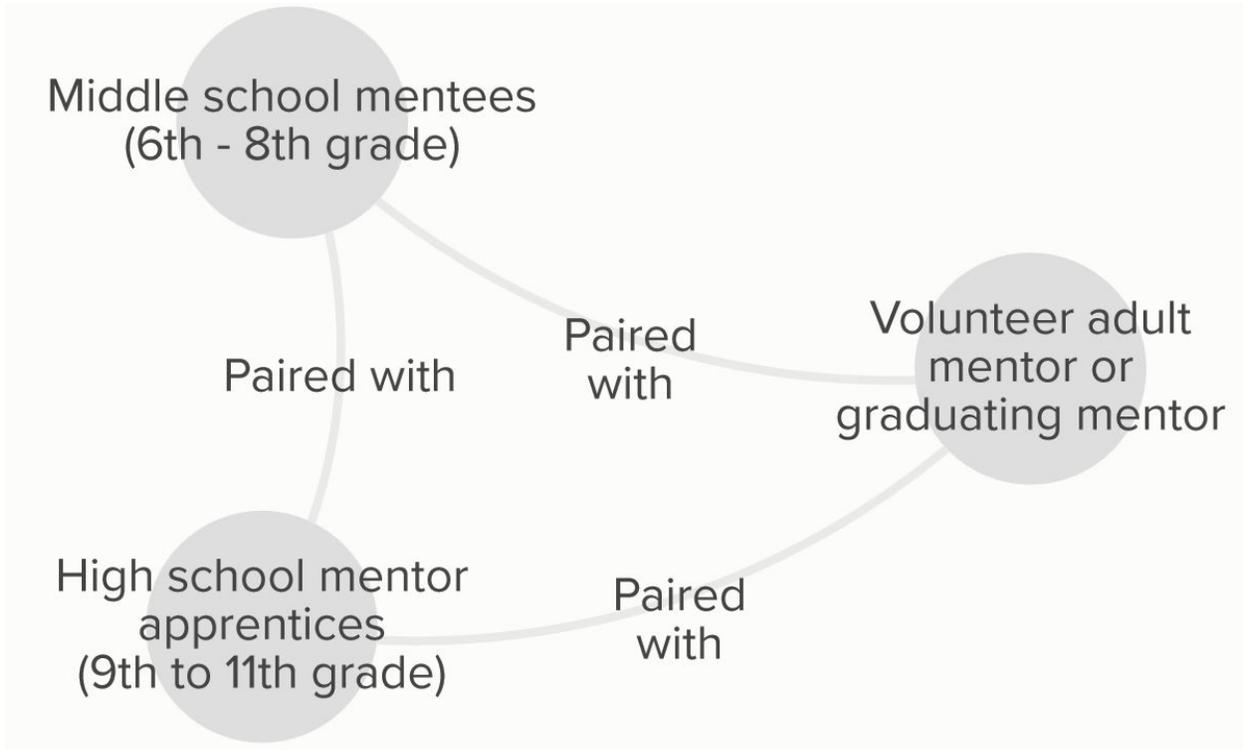


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Figure 3: A mentoring group



Participants may enter the program at any of these points--in middle school, high school, or as an adult volunteer. Mentoring Mentors engages participants in the program for up to seven years (grade 6 through 12), as they progress from mentee to mentor apprentice to mentor, with the hope that they will continue mentoring in college (Figure 4). When a student graduates from high school, a new middle school mentee is brought into the group to continue the cycle.

Figure 4: Progressing from mentee to mentor apprentice to mentor





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E. Program Activities

A1. Large group sessions

The full group of all mentors, mentees, and group leaders meet twice a week at a set location in the community. Each session focuses on a specific knowledge or skill for the young men to learn, through demonstration or lecture.

The lessons cover a wide variety of topics. The box provides some examples. Mentoring Mentors uses existing curricula, such as the “Authentic Manhood” 33 Series curricula. In addition, Mentoring Mentors staff use their conversations with the school guidance counselors and the mentors to plan additional group session topics. For example, something that a mentor was talking about with their mentee might suggest a topic to cover in the group session.

EXAMPLE LARGE GROUP SESSION TOPICS

- Changing behavior (approaching situations, bad habits)
- Education - why class is important
- Building a business
- Art therapy
- Family dynamics
- Domestic violence
- Being a gentleman
- Values, ethics, and morals (Biblical approaches)
- Professionalism

Originally, the meetings took place from 4pm to 6pm. However, the timing is being changed to 6pm to 8pm to better accommodate participants’ work schedules.

A2. Small groups breakouts

Another key component is the small group breakouts. After the large group lesson, the mentor/mentee pairs breakout into small groups to talk about the importance of the information. For example, after a lesson about how to tie a tie, the group might discuss the importance of professionalism or dressing for success.

SMALL GROUPS: A SAFE SPACE TO TALK ABOUT TRAUMA

As an example of a Mentoring Mentors small group situation, a student comes to school in the morning. The night before, his house was raided. His brother was arrested. He was up late. He was questioned by the police. That morning, he might have a hard time focusing on his schoolwork. If someone mentions his brother, his reaction might be different than usual. Mentoring Mentors gives this student a space where he can share these things, get solutions of how to address them, and then go to class and go about his day.

In these intimate sessions, students do not feel like they will be judged. They are comfortable sharing, knowing that they are guided by someone who has their best interests in mind.



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A3. Group outings

Local group outings provide positive life experiences and opportunity for team-building and for building positive connections and relationship. During the group outings, participants move from a lesson structure to connecting while doing something fun. The box provides some examples of the wide variety of Mentoring Mentors outings that have taken place.

A goal for the future is to expand the group outings to activities beyond the local area. Examples include horseback riding, college tours, national conferences such as a conference in Kentucky hosted by the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (“Rumble Young Man, Rumble”), and international travel.

EXAMPLE GROUP OUTINGS

- Basketball
- Go-kart racing
- Aquatic center – swimming
- National Aquarium at Baltimore Inner Harbor
- Bowling
- Paint balling
- Fitness centers
- Cross-fit
- Jujitsu
- Six Flags
- Barber shops

A4. Mentors spending unstructured time with mentees

Mentoring Mentors recommends that mentors reach out to their mentees outside of group time. For example, mentors and mentees might talk or go to a basketball game together. This builds a personal connection in a natural way because it is unstructured. It also provides opportunity for a mentor to see how the student’s day went and how they will work through issues. A mentor might ask the mentee, “What was the best part of your day?” “What was the worst part of your day?” Mentors then share this information with Mentoring Mentors for problem-solving.

A5. Referrals for counseling

Mentoring Mentors partners with “All of the Above,” a mental health organization with a mentoring model, to provide referrals for students who have issues that the mentors cannot address to get the help they need. When Mentoring Mentors notices that a student is not responding to small groups or interactions with their mentor, they see whether the student qualifies for counseling services with an “All of the Above” mentor, who will have mental health training and credentials.

A6. Opportunities for mentors to continue mentoring

Mentoring Mentors is developing a partnership with an organization that places African American young men age 18 to 24 as mentors in the school system. The program pays the



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mentors and provides a scholarship. This will be a way to encourage mentors to seek higher education and to continue to be a mentor, in the educational system.

F. Outcomes

Mentoring Mentors will collect data to measure its effects on desired outcomes and use that information to expand and become a national model.

O1. Students progressing through the stages of change and trauma

Through the large group educational meetings and building relationships with their mentors, mentees will progress through the six stages of change with respect to their personal trauma. They will:

- MS mentees will be able to articulate their trauma (stage 1)
- Identify opportunities for change (stage 2)
- Believe that their behavior and actions are their choice (stage 3)
- MS mentees will draft action plans with system of tracking progress (stage 4)
- MS mentees will believe in the importance of getting along with others (stage 5)
- MS mentees and HS mentor apprentices will be able to recognize trauma in others (stage 6)
- MS mentees become HS mentors and HS mentors will become adult mentors (stage 6)

O2. Improved social and emotional skills and well-being

As a result of getting help with addressing trauma, participants will demonstrate the following improved social and emotional skills and well-being:

- MS mentees and HS mentor apprentices will improve in social competence
- MS mentees will believe in the importance of being respectful
- MS mentees and HS mentor apprentices will improve relationships with their peers
- MS mentees and HS mentor apprentices will improve their relationships with each other and with their adult mentors
- HS mentor apprentices will increase their concern for others
- HS mentor apprentices will believe in the importance of being good role models
- HS mentor apprentices will engage in more prosocial behaviors. This will be measured by self-report of behaviors such as not having negative interactions with the law, not going to jail, not joining gangs, not doing drugs, and not having children for whom they are not taking parental responsibility.

O3. Academic and life success

Mentoring Mentors helps students to achieve the following outcomes for academic and life success:



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- MS mentees and HS mentor apprentices will believe in the importance of doing well in school
- MS mentees and HS mentors will improve their engagement with school
- MS mentees and HS mentors will have fewer unexcused absences
- MS mentees and HS mentors will have fewer behavioral referrals
- MS mentees and HS mentors will participate in Mentoring Mentors' incentive programs
- MS mentees and HS mentors will show better school performance (grades, GPA, standardized tests, graduation)
- HS mentors will enter college or post-secondary vocational training
- Young men who Mentoring Mentors works with become positive male role models in their home, school, and community, where positive male role models did not exist