

Youth mentoring relationships:
A youth development wrap-around approach

Literature review of better practice

This report was prepared by Youthline Auckland for Counties Manukau District Health Board.

Youthline is a regionally focused, nationally linked service promoting community-based youth development. Youthline operates from an integrated model of evidence-based practice within a community development, training and youth development, and clinical services framework. Youth development is about being connected, having quality relationships, fostering participation and being able to access good information.

Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB) was established on 1 January 2001 under the provisions of the New Zealand Public Health & Disability Act (2000). CMDHB is responsible for the funding of health and disability services and for the provision of hospital and related services for the people of Counties Manukau (Manukau City, and Franklin and Papakura Districts) as set out in the DHB functions and objectives in the Act. CMDHB's shared vision is to work in partnership with our communities to improve the health status of all, with particular emphasis on Māori and Pacific peoples and other communities with health disparities. Child and Youth health is one of the development areas the CMDHB will be focusing on over the next three years.

Project Team

Principal reviewer: Amber Davies

Contributors: Jayne Lowry
Paul McBride
Sheetal Desai
Vicki Withers
Wendy Sundgren

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- PILLARS
- I Have a Dream
- Brothers in Arms
- TYLA (Turn your life around)
- Big Buddy
- Tautoko Teina
- Project K

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Disclaimer

This review was commissioned by Counties Manukau District Health Board to review youth mentoring in Aotearoa. The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the official views of Counties Manukau District Health Board, nor Youthline.

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Executive summary

Introduction

Mentoring recognises that a young person's development can be positively influenced by relationships with those around them, particularly adults that the young person can look up to and learn from. This has occurred informally in communities for generations, and in the continued search for evidence-based approaches to youth development, formal mentoring is an intervention worthy of consideration.

The aim of this review is to identify better practice principles for mentoring relationships with at risk youth. To do this the report looks specifically at the mentoring relationship, what happens in this setting and how the relationship can be best supported.

This review uses the definition of youth mentoring proposed by The Youth Mentoring Trust:

...the process by which a more experienced, trusted, guide forms a relationship with a young person who wants a caring, more experienced person in their lives, so that the young person is supported in growth towards adulthood and the capacity to make positive social connections and build essential skills is increased.

Methods

The methodology for this report is a modified literature review. The two modifications to the review are the use of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA) (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002) as the frame to view the literature and the inclusion of key informant interviews with seven local providers including:

- PILLARS
- I Have a Dream
- Brothers in Arms
- TYLA (Turn your life around)
- Big Buddy
- Tautoko Teina
- Project K

Literature was sourced from international online databases, with further sources including government publications, grey literature and the reference lists of included articles. Search terms included combinations and synonyms of mentoring, youth, at-risk and relationship. Included literature focussed on articles published post 2000 and those that focused on the mentoring relationship and mentoring activities. The literature on youth mentoring is vast; therefore, a number of areas including school and faith-based mentoring, group mentoring, workplace mentoring, organisational best practice and mentor training, were largely excluded and noted only where relevant to the mentoring relationship.

The reviewed literature was discussed with implications for practice summarised at the end of each chapter. These are included as key findings below.

Key findings

Youth development is shaped by the big picture

- Mentoring needs to recognise that young people are shaped by the environment around them. Outside of families, young people are most influenced by their peers, neighbourhoods and communities. The mentoring provider, mentor and mentoring relationship also exist in these contexts which are unique to each community.

- Mentoring relationships with successful adults of the same ethnicity can strongly influence the young person and have a positive impact on their sense of cultural identity; however, ethnic match is not as important as cultural competency.
- Mentoring needs to recognise that young people are not a homogenous group and are influenced by their individual experiences. A young person's sense of identity is not restricted to their ethnicity, but is also impacted by their age, social group and interests.
- When working with taiohi Maori and Pasifika youth it is important to consider alternative methods of mentoring and to not assume that a Pakeha framework will best meet their needs.
- Consideration of whakapapa (it may be advantageous to have a mentor from the same iwi or waka as the mentee), whanaungatanga (whanau or group mentoring may be more culturally appropriate), use of te reo, preservation of mana (balancing constructive criticism with acknowledgement of strengths), and wairuatanga (spiritual connection) is important when developing a mentoring relationship that is specifically tailored to working with Maori youth.
- Building a relationship with the family and community is fundamental in mentoring Pasifika youth.
- A youth development approach to mentoring Pasifika youth must engage with and support parents, education and church as major cultural influences. Mentoring activities run through the church or school may be an ideal way to engage Pasifika youth and their families.
- Mentors need to share commonalities with their mentees. This may be shared interests, qualities, similar experiences and location.
- Girls and boys may benefit from different mentoring methods. Girls prefer psychosocial approaches while boys favour instrumental approaches.

Youth development is about young people being connected

- Mentoring relationships build a one on one connection with young people. Because connections with family, peers, school and community are important to developing resiliency, the mentoring relationship needs to help the young person build broader pro-social connections.
- Significant benefits can be seen for those young people that have developed natural mentoring relationships, and it may be useful to investigate how these can be encouraged.
- There are mixed views about schools as a mentoring venue. Schools have benefits including being accessible, having resources and can develop peer leadership; however, school based mentoring may be more useful for some age/gender combinations than others. A randomized study of 512 youth (Karcher, 2008a) found that school-based mentoring was useful for high school age girls and pre-teen boys but may be contraindicated for pre-teen girls and high school boys.
- Group mentoring may be useful for young people who have difficulty developing one to one relationships but needs to involve pro-social peers to create good outcomes.
- E-mentoring creates another avenue for young people who may find it difficult to initiate contact face to face or reside in isolated areas. It is important to consider how mentoring might be adapted to meet the preferences of young people including the use of text communication as an adjunct to face to face mentoring .
- Parents' feelings and involvement in the mentoring can heavily influence its success. In order to achieve positive results for the young person, interaction between parents, mentor and mentee are essential.
- Parenting skills training support for parents, parent involvement in decision-making and family group conference decision-making, can generate better outcomes for at-risk youth and can be a useful part of the mentoring process.
- Molnar et al. (2008) found that mentoring programmes were most effective when community support was present.
- Mentoring programmes that are linked into the community while remaining independent from school, social services or other formal agencies may help to reduce potential stigma for mentees.
- Opportunities for interaction and community involvement are increased when mentor and mentee live in the same geographical area.
- Other professionals may be required to address broader needs and the mentoring provider has a role to play in helping to make these connections and advocating for the young person. Mentors need to

recognise the boundaries of their relationship and notify the mentoring provider when outside support is needed.

- Wellbeing for at-risk youth is improved by intensive, integrated or 'joined up' services that meet a range of young peoples' needs and that work alongside and wrap around the young person and their family. Mentoring needs to be part of a wrap-around approach to working with at-risk youth.

Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach

- Mentors need to focus on developing young people's strengths to build their resiliency.
- Mentors can increase competency and resilience in mentees by exposing them to supportive and empowering environments where they have a range of opportunities to engage in skill building and horizon broadening experiences.
- The strengths-based mentor needs to remain focused on the young person's potential, despite personal and contextual challenges and often hold the hope for the future, even before the young person can see this for themselves.
- A key characteristic of a strengths-based mentor is having high expectations for their mentee. As many at-risk youth may have had their competencies negatively stereotyped this must be actively countered by the mentor.
- High expectations of the mentee from the mentor need to be accompanied by coaching to enhance skill development through support, motivation and encouragement. Coaching involves ongoing persistence and follow up balanced with allowing the young person a sense of agency in the relationship.
- Positive feedback from mentors helps build mentees' self-esteem and having firm boundaries around acceptable behaviours encourages responsibility. Mentor's clear communication when mentees have crossed the line assists in building mentees belief in their own competency.
- Mentors who provide strengths-based feedback to parents and teachers help to encourage consistent and positive messages.
- Role modelling is a subtle process but involves 'walking the talk' and mentors need to model the six C's; competence, confidence, connection, character, caring and contribution.
- There is little description of the activities mentors and mentees do together in the literature and although there can be no formulaic approach there are some core social and emotional competencies found to be consistent internationally with positive youth development that the mentor can assist the mentee to develop. These include; a positive sense of self, self-control, decision making skills, a moral belief system and pro-social connectedness. An effective mentor will engage with the young person in activities that develop these competencies.
- Some activities the strengths-based mentor can initiate are; finding out and doing things the mentee likes to do, finding out and doing what the mentee does well, connecting the mentee to other organisations and people, connecting the mentee to community activities and encouraging the mentee to join boards, faith based or voluntary organisations.
- Mentors should consider activities that the young person can continue after the relationship has ended and be guided by young people's preference for leisure activities.
- Structured, community based activities are shown to have better results. The mentoring provider may have a role in offering these.
- Developmental activities may be more effective at developing self-esteem and social skills than instrumental activities and requires further testing.

Youth development happens through quality relationships

- Research identifies different mentoring needs for particular times during adolescence. For example, work-based mentoring and apprenticeships may be developmentally more appropriate for older adolescents and offer an incentive for establishing and maintaining the relationship.
- The age of the mentees and mentors may affect the development of the relationship – mentor youth friendliness and the ability of mentors to connect with youth culture is important in establishing a connection.
- Identity development; forming peer relationships and individuating from parents are key developmental tasks for young people which need to be recognised by the mentor.

- Young people with attachment or developmental difficulties may struggle to form mentoring relationships. Mentors need to work sensitively in connecting with these young people and be able to handle rejection.
- Mentees with environmental risk may benefit more from mentoring than those with personal vulnerabilities.
- A mentor's sense of efficacy in dealing with complex or new situations can influence the success of a relationship. Mentors need to feel prepared to deal with a range of situations.
- Mentors need ongoing supervision and support to form effective relationships.
- **The core elements of successful mentoring relationships are:**
 1. a sense of mutual trust
 2. friendship (although the relationship is more than this)
 3. clear expectations
 4. duration and frequency (regular face to face meetings over a longer period of time)
 5. multi-level activities (mentoring, skills groups and volunteering)
- **The six key themes of mentoring relationship failures are:**
 1. mentor or protégé abandonment
 2. perceived lack of protégé motivation
 3. unfulfilled expectations (for both mentor and mentee)
 4. deficiencies in mentor relational skills
 5. family interference
 6. inadequate agency support
- **Counselling and psychotherapy literature addressing effective relationships may inform the mentoring process. A healing relationship must be based on:**
 1. unconditional positive regard (as an attitude in conjunction with structured activities)
 2. empathy
 3. congruence
- By setting goals and agreeing on activities the mentoring relationship becomes something that is co-created, and is able to be reflected on by both parties. A strong working alliance between mentor, mentee and the family is a prerequisite to a successful relationship.
- Mentors need to keep the end of the relationship in mind from the beginning and support mentees to develop wider connections.
- Mentoring should take an overall development focus that is youth friendly, fun, sets high expectations, has firm boundaries and supports the young person to develop strengths rather than focusing on changing behaviour. Mentors that incorporate this focus will be the most successful in improving connection, self-esteem and competence.

Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate

- Mentoring needs to understand the importance of participation to the social development of young people and its role in individual development, organisational development and young people's ability to create change in their communities.
- Youth participatory mentoring activities should be relevant, carried out in a safe environment, engaging and interesting for young people, and offer them clear roles.
- Youth participatory processes at an organisational level may involve substantial effort from the adults involved and involves finding a balance between supporting and resourcing young people and allowing them autonomy in decision-making.
- Mentors need to help remove barriers that may make it difficult to engage, such as transport, food and flexibility.
- Reciprocal activities between mentors and mentees provide natural motivation to participate and form relationship.

- Strong communication between mentor and mentee provides feedback that ensures both partners in the relationship understand the needs of the other.
- Young people in mentoring relationships should ideally be partners in the decision making process of how they wish to occupy themselves when together. This process encourages the important skills of decision making and interpersonal communication.
- Collaborative participation is particularly effective when the young person and adult focus their attention on a task or project of interest to the young person. Thus, mentoring relationships can contribute both to the learning needs of young people and at the same time attend to their social needs.
- Mentoring providers should encourage and support youth participatory processes through all stages of mentoring programmes from design to delivery.

Youth development needs good information

- Building an evidence base for mentoring is difficult as it is a complex intervention impacted by contextual factors further complicated by different approaches to understanding and measuring mentoring. A combination of evidence based and practice based research may provide the best information.
- Programmes should implement an evaluation framework which identifies clear hypotheses or goals. These goals need to align with theoretical frameworks on which the mentoring programme is based.
- The key measurements should be related to improvements in the young person's connectedness and skills as well as the strength of the relationship.
- Simple evaluation tools should be favoured over those that will be prohibitively costly to implement. Cost, time and complexity are barriers to successful evaluation processes, especially for community organisations.
- Building on a collaborative approach, mentoring providers could work together to build evaluation processes and tools which will improve the ability to compare effectiveness under different approaches while reducing costs and enhancing youth sector partnership and credibility.

Conclusion

Youth mentoring is a complex intervention with a range of processes that occur at an individual level, relationship level and systems level. This review, through the lens of the YDSA (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002a) looks at the wider context within which mentoring occurs, discusses the role that family and community can play in the success or failure of a mentoring relationship, identifies the characteristics of quality mentoring relationships and areas where mentoring may not be efficacious.

Overall, the literature shows that the strength of mentoring as an intervention lies in the ability to develop a close, positive and supportive relationship (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002) which is related to developing resilience (Rhodes, 2002). Within this relationship there is capacity to influence the social, emotional, cognitive, and identity development of the young person (Rhodes, 2005) through activities that are youth friendly, ideally strengths focussed and involve the young person in decision making. The development of a youth-centred, trusting relationship with clear expectations is the first task of the mentoring relationship but not the only task, as mentoring relationships that are only unconditionally supportive show no positive outcomes (Langhout, Rhodes & Osborne, 2004). Mentoring needs to be an intentional activity where the mentor is supported to recognise and aid in the growth of both instrumental and psychosocial competencies through activities and honest feedback. This said, there are mixed results in the literature of the ability of mentoring to assist in the development of competences in these areas. On investigation, the main reasons for this are in the lack of clear definitions for mentoring, differing goals for mentoring and the methodological challenges associated with measuring relationships and deciding what constitutes 'healthy' youth (Keating et al., 2002). Second; there is a lack of clarity in the literature regarding exactly which mentoring activities contribute to enhancing which outcomes.

The literature further points to some caveats for mentoring. This includes recognising that mentoring may not always be beneficial for youth who have been abused (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2005), that it can be

harmful if the mentoring relationship is terminated early (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002), that it may not be useful for particular age/gender combinations (Karcher, 2008a) and that a traditional mentoring model is not appropriate for all cultures (Afeaki-Mafile'o, 2007).

A youth development approach tells us that mentoring relationships exist within a wider social context and are part of a system of interconnected relationships. These include relationships with families, which play a crucial role in the success or failure of the mentoring relationship (Dubois et al., 2002), relationships with peers, which can have both positive and negative influences, and relationships with the wider community, where involvement in community based activities can enhance youth development (McLaren, 2002). Reflecting this understanding, multi-level or interventions where mentoring is one part of a range of interventions, including skills groups, psycho-education and volunteering, have demonstrated an increase in protective factors for at-risk youth, particularly regarding self-esteem (Keating, Tomishima, Foster & Allesandri, 2002; Moody, Childs & Sepples 2003). However, a greater understanding is required of the interplay of these features on outcomes.

Given the above findings, mentoring is not a stand-alone intervention and needs to be part of a wrap-around approach that works with young people and their family, which is a recommended approach for youth at risk (Fleming, Kainuku-Walsh, Denny & Watson, 2004; Youthline 2008). This points to an important role for mentoring providers in linking and connecting with the mentor, family, other services and wider community. From these understandings and resulting practice implications recommendations for further research and development are described below.

Further research and recommendations

The National Research Summit on Mentoring in the United States (2003), consisting of 27 youth mentoring scholars identified the following areas for further research:

- Evaluation of new generation mentoring programs (peer, group, e-mentoring and strategies tied to the different settings where mentoring is expanding (school, work-place, faith-based).
- Integrating mentoring with other programs and services – how to maximise the benefits from a wrap-around service.
- Understanding the relationship process from mentor and mentee perspectives and how this influences outcomes.
- How to improve mentor recruitment, training and retention.
- Greater understanding of mentoring effectiveness for special populations of mentees and greater understanding of the relevance of age, ethnicity and gender to mentoring outcomes. The development of research tools that can be used by mentoring programme providers to evaluate and improve their programs. (DuBois & Rhodes, 2006.)

These recommendations reflect some of the current gaps in knowledge about mentoring at a wider level; however, the authors of this project also propose a number of recommendations to be implemented at a local level.

- That mentoring providers continue to develop links with other community agencies to offer a wrap-around service to young people and their families.
- That a definition and scope of mentoring are agreed upon.
- Commissioning of a major national longitudinal study to understand youth mentoring in Aotearoa, particularly as there is little understanding internationally of the long term effects and whether any short term outcomes are maintained.
- To further investigate relationships where there is no engagement or early termination.
- To further investigate mentoring activities to understand which activities contribute more to which types of outcomes.
- To include young people in all levels of mentoring programmes, including high level decision making.
- That standard evaluation practices and tools are developed that match the goals of the mentoring relationship. This may be supported by work in other sectors, such as the evaluation developments around Youth One Stop Shops and work done by local providers.

- To build links between providers, to facilitate information and resource sharing, for example the network meeting organised by the Youth Mentoring Trust in 2008

Overall, this report reveals the complexity of mentoring relationships and it is hoped that the key findings as outlined above can be used to inform mentoring providers, training programmes, mentor practices and evaluation.

Chapter One: Introduction and methodology

Mentoring recognises that a young person's development can be positively influenced by relationships with those around them, particularly adults that the young person can look up to and learn from. This has occurred informally in communities for generations, and in the continued search for evidence-based approaches to youth development, formal mentoring is an intervention worthy of consideration. Internationally, mentoring programmes are commonly used to address a range of issues that affect young people including: delinquent behaviour, school failure, aggression, substance use and strained family and peer relationships (Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995). More recently, in Aotearoa, youth mentoring programmes have proliferated and while many effective interventions spring from an intuitive framework, there is a need to integrate theory, research and practice across mentoring in Aotearoa to ensure the best outcomes for young people.

Bringing the practice of mentoring into alignment with a solid research base is critically important not only for maximizing the potential good that mentors and mentoring interventions can do, but also for ensuring that they do no harm. (DuBois & Karcher, 2005, p. 9).

Mentoring is a relational intervention, where the young person is guided, supported and encouraged by an older more experienced person, usually an adult (Randolph & Johnson, 2008). Because of this relational nature and the vastness of the international body of literature on mentoring, this review will look specifically at the mentoring relationship, what happens between mentor and mentee and how this relationship can be supported. Additionally, the review has a special focus on working with at-risk youth or those with issues, which left unaddressed, may have disproportionately negative consequences for themselves and their communities. These young people are a priority for attention due to the inherent complexity of their needs. The aim of this review is to identify better practice principles for mentoring relationships with at-risk youth. If better practice can be identified for effectively supporting our most vulnerable youth, then gains will be made for the community as a whole.

This report will look at the aforementioned areas through the lens of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002a) and with additional information from key informant interviews with local mentoring providers. The use of the YDSA is based on the recognition that youth development involves addressing the holistic needs of the young person.

Our best chance of positively influencing adolescent development through programmes lies in increasing the web of options available to all youth in all communities, and ensuring that those options take an approach consistent with the youth development framework. (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003, p. 97).

Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003) identified that addressing one aspect of a young person's world may go some way to achieving outcomes but resiliency will best be built when interventions take a comprehensive and development focussed approach. A seminal meta-analysis on youth mentoring conducted by Dubois, Holloway, Valentine and Cooper (2002), looked at 55 randomised control trials of youth mentoring. Their best practice recommendations for successful mentoring programmes were as follows:

- There are procedures for systematic monitoring of programme implementation.
- The programme is in a community setting compared to school setting.
- The programme uses mentors with backgrounds in helping professions.
- The programme has clear expectations for the frequency of mentor-youth contact.
- The programme provides ongoing training for mentors and a variety of supports for the mentoring relationship.
- The programme provides structured activities for the mentoring pair.
- The programme provides mechanisms and support for parental involvement.
- There is a high quality relationship between mentor and mentee (evidenced by emotional closeness, frequency of contact and longevity).

- The young person enters the programme with some form of environmental risk (e.g. low socio-economic status) either alone or in combination with individual rather than solely individual risk (e.g. academic difficulties).

(DuBois et al., 2002).

In 2008, the Youth Mentoring Trust produced *A Guide to Effective Youth Mentoring New Zealand*, which recognised that while there is much international literature, there is currently a limited national evidence base. This report provided a comprehensive overview of youth mentoring, mentoring characteristics and the delivery of effective programmes in Aotearoa. The aim of this current literature review is not to duplicate the work done by the Youth Mentoring Trust but to build on understandings of the mentoring relationship. Increased understanding and evaluation of the relationship was recommended as a focus for further research in Dubois et al.'s (2002) meta-analysis described above.

This report will begin by defining youth mentoring, defining at-risk youth and providing an overview of the methods of this review. Following this, the report constitutes six chapters, aligned with the YDSA.

Chapter Two considers the big picture, including societal and population level characteristics that may influence the mentoring relationship, and better practice addressing these characteristics, particularly regarding matching of mentor and mentee. Chapter Three looks at connection; which mentoring types might foster connection and where the mentoring relationship might be supported through linking with family and community. Chapter Four explores a strengths-based approach to mentoring and the role and functions of a strengths-based mentor. In Chapter Five, the mentoring relationship is discussed in-depth, looking specifically at the characteristics of successful relationships and equally, where relationships fail. Chapter Six looks at youth participation and ways to involve the young person at all levels of the relationship. Finally, Chapter Seven covers accessing good information, looking at evaluation of mentoring programmes. At the end of each chapter, implications for practice will be summarised. A concluding discussion will identify recommendations and areas further research

What is youth mentoring?

While there is much written about youth mentoring, there is no standard definition. This review uses the definition of youth mentoring proposed by The Youth Mentoring Trust (2008):

...the process by which a more experienced, trusted, guide forms a relationship with a young person who wants a caring, more experienced person in their lives, so that the young person is supported in growth towards adulthood and the capacity to make positive social connections and build essential skills is increased.(p. 1)

If mentoring is considered to be a 'helping relationship' that supports social or skill development, mentoring could potentially take a myriad of forms and identifying best practice becomes problematic. Table 1 (p. 15) offers a snapshot of youth mentoring types in international literature based on their focus, aims and location in the community.

Table 1: Youth mentoring definitions

Name	Definition	Reference
Natural/informal mentoring	When a sustained relationship develops naturally between an adult and a young person	DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005.
Formal mentoring	When an organization officially supports and provides structure, guidelines, policies and assistance for developing, maintaining and ending mentor-mentee relationships.	Finkelstein & Poteet, 2007.
School-based mentoring	Formal mentoring that takes place at schools.	Karcher, 2008; Randolph & Johnson, 2008; Rollin, Kaiser-Ulrey, Potts, & Creason, 2003.
Faith-based mentoring	Formal mentoring run by faith organisations.	Bauldry & Hartmann, 2004.
Group mentoring	Group mentors interact with small groups of youth and simultaneously promote positive peer interactions.	Herrera, Vang, & Gale, 2002; Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2007.
Cross-age peer mentoring	Using older students to mentor younger students in school. Aims to foster older students' leadership and collaboration skills and younger students' connectedness, self-esteem and academic achievement.	Karcher, 2008
Psychosocial mentoring	Process oriented, focussed on modifying personal qualities rather than behaviours.	Darling, Bogat, Cavell, Murphy, & Sanchez, 2006.
Instrumental mentoring	Problem focussed, helping individuals to reach particular goals.	Darling et al., 2006.
Alternative mentoring	Shared learning with a vision of empowerment and equity. Does not involve the transfer of a skill but instead promotes a sharing of experiences.	Sperandio, 2008.
E-mentoring	Mentoring via email and internet.	Davies, 2005; deJanez, Ensher, & Heun, 2009; Purcell, 2004; Shpigelman, Reiter, & Weiss, 2008.
Cultural/ethnic mentoring	Mentoring with an emphasis on indigenous values, cultural knowledge and history.	Washington et al., 2007.

Given the differences in location, purpose and configuration summarised above, it cannot be assumed that all mentoring relationships will have the same positive impact. The question then becomes about the nature of the mentoring relationship, what parts, configurations and characteristics best contribute to good outcomes.

Who are at-risk youth?

It is important that the concept of at-risk youth does not become a diagnostic category used to describe the deficits of individuals (Evans & Ave, 2000). At-risk youth do not constitute a well-defined or homogenous group and as several of the key informants identified, any young person may be at-risk. Youth 07 findings showed over half of students surveyed engage in risk behaviours (Adolescent Health Research Group, 2008). Caution must be exercised with the use of any 'labels' as they can develop powerful connotations that serve to disempower young people and their families. What is agreed upon in the literature is that at-risk youth have a number of environmental stressors and life circumstances that increase the likelihood of risk behaviours (Aronowitz, 2005). These stressors are consistent throughout the developed world (Currie, Hurrelmann, Settertobulte, Smith, &

Todd cited in Aronowitz, 2005). Included in these stressors are: biological, psychological, economic and social factors (Moody, Childs, & Sepples, 2003). There are a variety of risk-based variables in the literature that, when studied singly or in combination, may contribute to putting young people at risk for developing problem behaviours (ibid).

Frequently, studies of at-risk youth concentrate on particular high-risk segments of the population including those who are involved in the juvenile justice system, have dropped out of school, and those who are involved with care and protection agencies (Aronowitz, 2005). At-risk youth are more likely to have personal histories of neglect, abuse or abandonment, are more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as substance abuse and unprotected sex, and struggle to make the transition from adolescence to adulthood (Denny, Clark, Fleming, & Wall, 2004; Smith, 2004). Although not all young people at-risk will fit into these categories, at the more severe end of the at-risk continuum, these issues are often the norm. In Aotearoa, there are high numbers of young people with limited access to health care, others who witness or suffer physical abuse, and many who experience economic hardship (Adolescent Health Research Group, 2008).

From a youth development perspective the characteristics used to define at-risk youth are largely symptomatic of a larger concern; namely that the young person is disconnected or disengaged from either themselves, their cultural identity, their family/whanau, their school, their community or any combination of these (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2001). Similarly, a youth development approach looks at interventions that foster these connections and are usually relationship based (ibid). Figure 1 and Figure 2 (p. 17) illustrate these points; thus, it is important to consider mentoring as part of a youth development approach.

Figure 1: Positive youth development – a young person who is “connected”

(Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2001, p. 7).

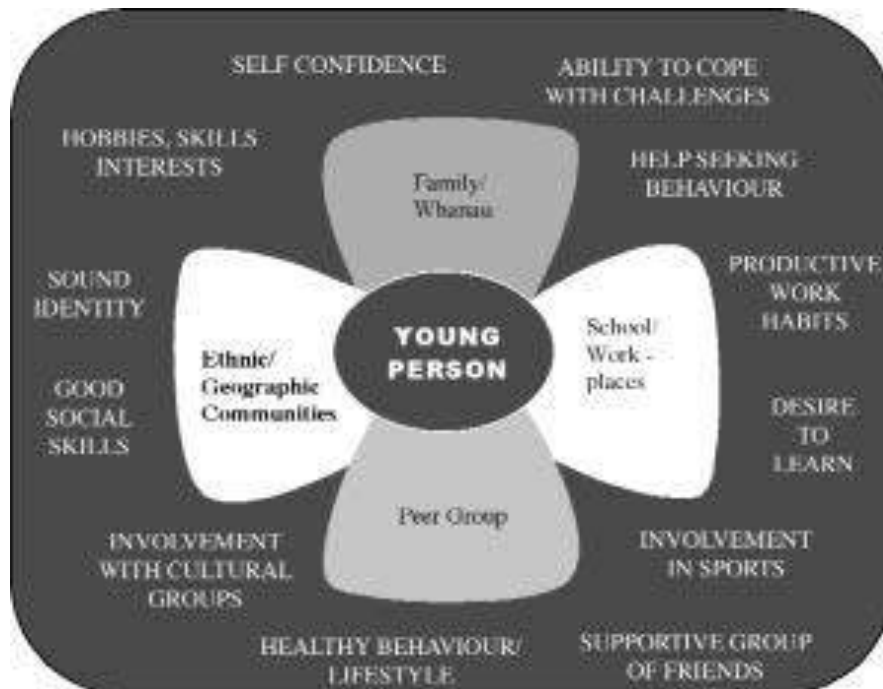
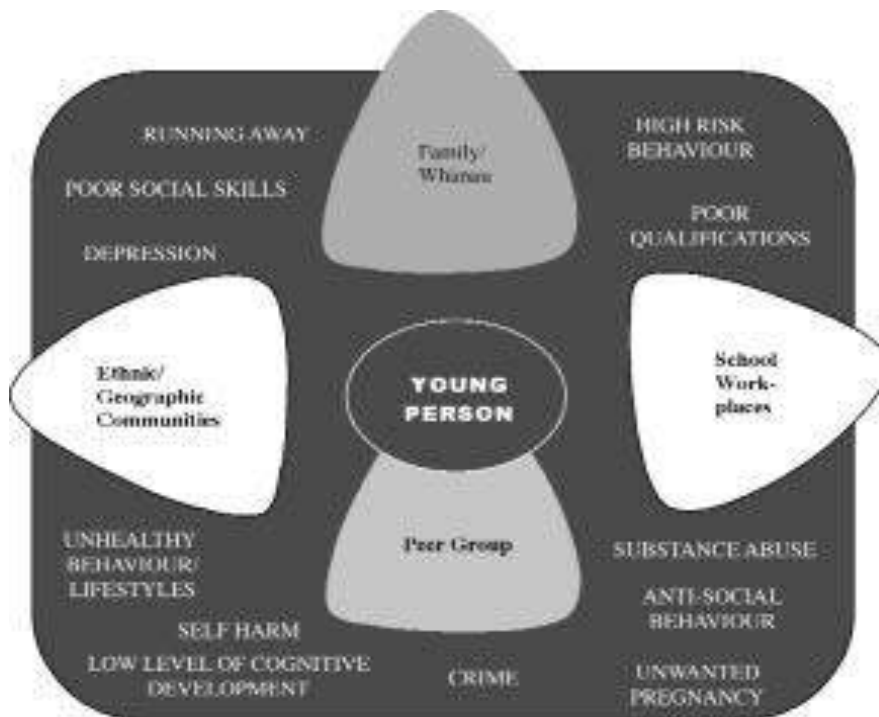


Figure 2: A young person who is “disconnected”

(Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2001, p. 10).



Review methods

The methodology for this paper is a modified literature review. The two modifications to the review are the use of the YDSA (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002a) as the frame to view the literature and the inclusion of key informant interviews. The YDSA is recognised by the Ministry of Youth Development as a key framework to guide intervention and improve outcomes for young people. The YDSA is based on a 'positive youth development approach' and has six key principles that will form the framework of the chapters for this review:

1. Youth development is shaped by the big picture
2. Youth development is about young people being connected
3. Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach
4. Youth development happens through quality relationships
5. Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate
6. Youth development needs good information

These principles in combination contribute to the desired outcome of positive youth development where young people gain a:

- Sense of contributing to something of value to society
- Feeling of connectedness to others and to society
- Belief that they have choices about their future
- Feeling of being positive and comfortable with their own identity (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002a).

It is outside of the scope of this report to do a full systematic review of all at-risk mentoring literature; however, it includes systematic reviews and up-to-date research found using the following online databases:

- Cochrane review

- Pubmed
- EBSCO host
- Academic search premier
- Expanded academic
- Springer link
- Psych INFO
- ProQuest 5000 international
- Wiley InterScience journals

The search terms used for searching the literature included:

- Mentoring youth
- Mentoring at-risk youth
- Mentoring and young people
- Mentoring and adolenscen*
- Mentoring relationship
- At-risk youth relationships
- Mentoring practice
- Mentoring intervention

Further information was sourced from government publications, 'grey literature' including unpublished or locally published reports and searching the reference lists of included articles. Included literature focussed on articles published post 2000 and those that focused on the mentoring relationship

The literature on youth mentoring is vast, therefore a number of areas including school and faith-based mentoring, group mentoring, workplace mentoring, organisational best practice and mentor training have been largely excluded and noted only where relevant to the mentoring relationship. Additionally, given the breadth of interventions that constitute mentoring this report cannot be exhaustive. As acknowledged by The Youth Mentoring Trust (2008) many mentoring relationships are informal, and as such, are rarely captured in research or literature. Hence, this report can only draw on what has been investigated; largely formal mentoring programmes.

The use of key informant interviews to enhance this review was based on the lack of New Zealand specific research literature, as well as to enhance cross-sector relationships and knowledge sharing. Learnings from key informant interviews, conducted using semi-structured interviews, are included throughout the report (Appendix A). Seven organisations were interviewed including:

- PILLARS
- I Have a Dream
- Brothers in Arms
- TYLA (Turn your life around)
- Big Buddy
- Tautoko Teina
- Project K

A brief description and contact information for these mentoring providers is provided in Appendix B.

Chapter Two: Youth development is shaped by the big picture

The first principle of the YDSA acknowledges that young people exist in, and are shaped by the environment which includes their culture, family, community, values, beliefs, and social and economic status. The environment also includes the political systems and the attitudes, policies and strategies that dictate how young people are valued and cared for, and how as individuals and collectively, we consider their wellbeing. This chapter looks at some of the wider contexts in which at-risk youth and mentoring relationships exist to provide an understanding of the many factors that influence mentoring outcomes. The chapter looks briefly at the community followed by consideration of culture, ethnicity and gender.

Community and peers

Outside of family, young people have the most contact with their peers, schools and neighbourhoods (McLaren, 2002). Recognising that young people exist within social systems, the role of the community is frequently cited in both youth development and mentoring literature as one of the biggest protective factors and determinants of positive outcomes (Broussard, Mosely-Howard, & Roychoudury, 2006; Denny, 2004; Rhodes & Ryan-Lowe, 2008; Rose & Jones, 2007). McLaren (2002) noted that community involvement helps to shape a young person's identity, gives them the opportunity to interact with peers and adults and can reduce risk behaviour including drinking, drug taking and truancy. The interplay between the community and the mentoring relationship will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Forming peer relationships is a key task of adolescence and those who form relationships with peers who are coping well are more likely to transition to adulthood successfully (ibid). Further, pro-social peer involvement has been shown to increase positive outcomes for at-risk youth (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Molnar, Cerda, Roberts, & Buka, 2008). However, the biggest risk factor for anti-social behaviour is a lack of social ties, as opposed to whether the peer group is pro or anti-social (McLaren, 2002). Mentors have the potential to act as a doorway to peer involvement for isolated youth (Keating, Tomishima, Foster, & Alessandry, 2002).

Culture and ethnicity

The Manukau Youth Development Model, an outcome-based model of what positive youth development would look like in a healthy community, identifies developing a young person's connection to their cultural identity as a key outcome for youth development (Youthline 2007). This may be particularly important for young people of cultural or ethnic minorities who in New Zealand and internationally are shown to have lower health and social outcomes overall (Ministry of Health, 2002: Phillips, Hagan, Bodfield, Woodthorpe, & Grimsley, 2008,). Attention has been paid to culture in mentoring literature, particularly with regards to the matching of mentor and mentee.

Ethnic match

Studies of natural mentoring relationships have shown that when youth choose their own mentors they tend to select people from the same racial or ethnic background (Liang & West, 2006). Mentees' perceived similarity has been associated with mentees' levels of satisfaction in the relationship and mentors' fondness for mentees. Although young people gravitate towards mentors with similar racial or ethnic backgrounds, research investigating ethnicity as a factor in mentoring relationships has yielded mixed results (ibid).

In support of ethnic matching, a study of student-faculty mentor relationships showed that initial gains in academic performance and retention were not retained over time if mentees were not matched with mentors of their ethnic identity (Campbell & Campbell, 2007). Similarly, a study by Ensher and Murphy (cited in Liang & West, 2006) found that same-race mentees reported receiving more instrumental support than cross-race matches. However, there was no association between ethnicity and youth-reported levels of emotional support or satisfaction with mentors. Evans and Ave (2000) suggested that matching young people with successful adult members of the same group may impact positively on the young person's cultural identity through role modelling. These authors cautioned that cultural mis-match can cause conflict for the mentee when behaviours adapted from the mentor act against cultural norms.

Sanchez and Colon (cited in Liang & West, 2006) suggested that ethnic match is not necessary, rather what is more important is the way in which mentors and mentees are able to negotiate cultural issues within the relationship. This could be influenced by the degree of cultural sensitivity of the mentor, cultural mistrust by the mentee and feedback provided to the mentee (ibid). A study by Cohen, Steele and Ross (cited in Liang & West, 2006) of matches between African-American mentees and white mentors in the United States, showed that if critical feedback given to mentees was not accompanied by positive comments, the feedback was interpreted negatively. Thus, another important aspect of cross-cultural matches is the mentor and mentees ability to communicate and interpret social cues specific to cultural characteristics. Liang and West (2006) found that Asian mentees were less likely to express their interest in the mentoring relationship due to cultural differences in emotional expression and respectful boundaries rather than their actual interest in the relationship.

While there is no clear evidence to suggest a need for ethnic match Bogat, Liang and Rigol-Dahn (2008) believe that one of the keys to a successful mentoring connection is “culturally-sensitive communication at each of the various stages of the relationship” (p. 338). In the New Zealand context this is referred to as cultural competence.

Cultural competence is a subset of individualised care, in the sense that it is the ability to provide individualised care that accounts for the influences and benefits of the client’s culture. An organisation that gains skills in cultural competence increases its ability to serve all diversity. (Ministry of Health, 2008, p. 8)

Results from a qualitative study of when mentoring relationships fail suggests that it may be beneficial to provide training for mentors that address issues of class and race differences to a greater extent than is currently typical. This may include understanding how both the mentors and mentees culture and ethnicity may impact the relationship (Spencer, 2007). The Foundation for Youth Development’s Project K Mentoring views cultural knowledge as an important mentoring competency. One of the key learning outcomes of their mentor training is to assist mentors to identify and understand cultural differences and commonalities in communication skills and values.

It is important to note that not all young people will have strong connections to their cultural heritage and may wear different cultural hats in different settings. An assessment of mentees connectedness with their cultural traditions and whether they would like to develop this may be an important aspect of the matching process.

Youth culture

The cultural identity of young people is often layered and fluid. Cultural identity may be linked with their ethnic group, whanau, church, sports club, school, music tastes, the clothes they wear, their peer group and wider ‘Kiwi’ culture. Interaction between an adult and a young person therefore, will likely be a cross-cultural experience on many levels. Taking a broad approach to culture, Rhodes, Reddy, Grossman and Lee (cited in Liang & West, 2006) suggested that perception of similarity in some form, for example shared interests and geographical proximity, is just as beneficial to the relationship as ethnic matching.

While there is little attention in mentoring literature to working with youth culture, young people themselves are the best sources of information. Through a number of consultations young people have described what works with regards to the people they want to interact with them in helping professions and the environments where they want these interactions to occur (Youthline, 2006, 2008). They would like staff to be: professional, friendly, trustworthy, confidential, youth-friendly, approachable, casually dressed, non-judgemental and the initiators of contact. They would like to be helped in environments that offer: time to chill out, entertainment such as gaming and pool tables, 24 hour access and use of technologies including internet, email and text (Youthline 2008, 2008a). In this way it is important for young people to be involved not only in decisions within the mentoring relationship but in all aspects of programme design, delivery and evaluation. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter six.

Taiohi Maori

It is important to consider the methods of mentoring for Maori and not to assume that a Pakeha framework will best meet the needs of taiohi Maori. Traditionally, Maori had a range of culturally sanctioned developmental processes that prepared taiohi for adulthood. These are described below and have been taken directly from the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa Code of Ethics (2008, pp. 10-11).

1. *Pūkengatanga:*

One of the most common and important strategies was where an elder (pukenga) took a young person under their care and taught them directly as a mentor to feed them knowledge. The student would accompany the elder to hui and special occasions – the child functioning as a link between generations that ensured survival of critical knowledge about connections between people, places and the natural world.

2. *Whare Wānanga:*

Whare Wānanga were formal structures established to pass on specialist skills and knowledge – participants were often selected because they displayed giftings in the particular interests of each whare wananga (e.g. diplomatic skills, cultivation, physical aptitude, carving, etc.).

3. *Urungatanga:*

A third approach has been termed 'education through exposure' – where participants were not given formal instruction but were exposed to a situation and expected to work out what was going on and solve problems that arose. This type of education included areas as diverse as cultivation, childcare, and public occasions such as the structure and roles within hui and tangi.

These processes describe the role of both formal and informal mentoring in traditional settings and could assist in guiding contemporary mentoring relationships with taiohi Maori. Further, Hook, Waaka and Raumati (2007) and Ratima and Grant (2007) in their papers on mentoring within workplaces have looked at foundational concepts in Maori culture and identity that have implications for mentoring relationships. These concepts are explained below:

- **Whakapapa (genealogy)**
Whakapapa describes “the relationship that exists between the present and the past as well as into the future” (Hook, 2007, p. 6). From a Maori framework it may be more advantageous to have a mentor from the same iwi or waka as the mentee and ideally mentors will be tribal elders or whanau leaders. The development of strong relationships between taiohi and adults who hold cultural knowledge and community links will assist in providing young Maori with opportunities to integrate the tikanga of their ancestors into programme activities. (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002b)
- **Whanaungatanga (relationship/togetherness/collectivity)**
Related to whakapapa, whanaungatanga “emphasises one’s connection to all people and all things in the natural world” (Ratima, 2007, p. 2). Where the Maori concept of the individual is linked to past, present and future, mentoring may need to reflect this. Fulcher (2001) recommended activities such as developing a genogram to map whanau connection, while Ratima (2007) posited that mentees need to participate in design to ensure their thoughts are incorporated into the process.

It may be that whanau or group mentoring are more culturally appropriate than the one-on-one setting typical of traditional Pakeha mentoring. In addition, the mentor may have a role to play in fostering whanau relationships and obligations (Ratima, 2007) as well as maintaining trust within the mentoring relationship.

- **Use of Maori language (te reo)**
Te reo is the most powerful means of expressing Maori concepts and worldviews and the use of te reo in a Maori mentoring framework would be ideal (Hook et al., 2007). In the absence of ability, Ratima (2007)

suggested that Maori mentoring would contain a commitment to learning te reo as part of the mentor-mentee developmental plan.

- Preservation of mana through manaakitanga (generosity), utu (reciprocity), and aroha (love)
The preservation and uplifting of mana is central to how mentor and mentee relate to one and other (Hook et al., 2007). Care must be taken to ensure mana is preserved within the relationship which in practice may include elements such as balancing constructive criticism with the acknowledgement of strengths.
- Wairuatanga (spiritual)
Maori acknowledge both the physical and the spiritual in all aspects of their being and the nourishment of spiritual connections is a fundamental aspect of Maori culture (Ratima, 2007). Mentors can assist mentees with taking time to reconnect and rejuvenate the wairua. This may include karakia, waiata or other spiritually enhancing activities (Ratima, 2007).

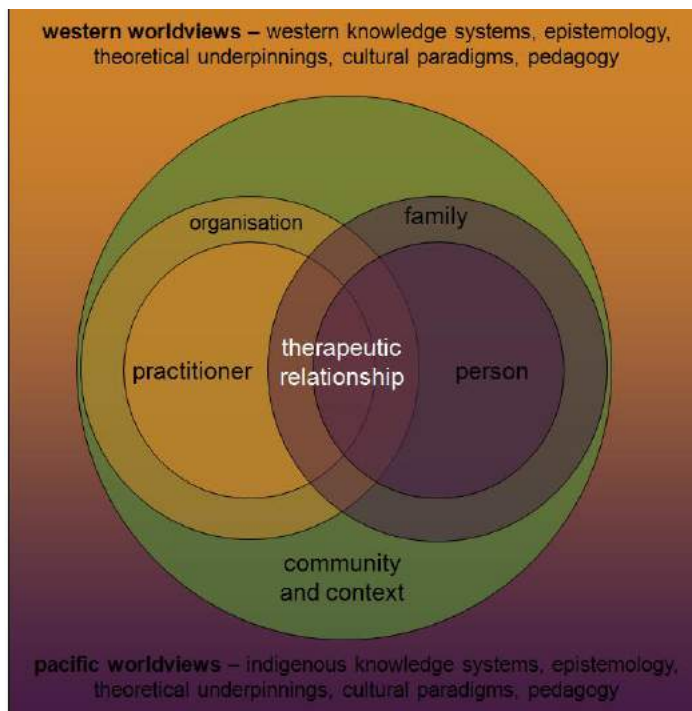
Maori health models suggest a need for mentoring programmes which regard the whole person rather than separate aspects being dealt with by specialist services. Durie (1998) noted that referral to specialist assessment and treatment may lead to missed opportunities for early intervention treatment and in the process a build up of mistrust. Mentoring programmes awareness of their role in enhancing whanaungatanga in relation to the young person's wider and interconnected whanau and whakapapa will assist positive Maori youth outcomes.

Pasifika youth

The Youth Mentoring Trust (2008) noted that Pasifika youth face significant barriers including lower health, socio economic and educational levels. What is also of significance for Pasifika youth is the importance of family and community in shaping identity. As with mentoring any youth, these contexts need to be taken into account when developing a relationship that is appropriate and relevant to the young person, their family and their wider context. In this way, Darling et al. (2006) contend that those from collectivist cultures benefit from mentoring that fosters relationships between the young person and numerous adults or between the mentor and the family as a whole. This is further supported by Ala Fou, Strategic Directions for Pacific Youth (2003) which recommended approaches that support families and communities to assist youth development.

The Pasifika Youth Development Strategy (Ministry of Social Development, 2005) identified three key areas that significantly impact Pasifika young people's development: parents, education and church. Therefore, a youth development approach to mentoring must engage with and support these three key areas. A further key challenge for many Pasifika youth is straddling two distinct cultural worlds, particularly for those young people who are second or third generation New Zealand born, where ties to language and culture may not be as strong (Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2003). It is essential that mentors have an understanding of these unique challenges and work to 'build cultural confidence and a positive sense of identity' (ibid, p. 9). This combination of Palangi and Pacific cultural paradigms is depicted in Figure 3 (p, 23), which shows the interface between two cultural paradigms in a relational context (Faleafa, 2009).

Figure 3: Va Model



For Pasifika youth, parents have a particularly strong influence, where respect, obedience and family/community needs are paramount (Alefaio, 2007). Consultation with Pasifika young people regarding accessing health and social services revealed that if parents do not support the service or activity then young people may not engage (Youthline, 2006b); therefore, building a relationship with the family is a fundamental prerequisite in mentoring Pasifika youth.

Church is a cornerstone of many Pacific communities and is a key place for young people and families to come together. Because of this, church may be an ideal place to initiate mentoring activities and a key strategic partner for mentoring organisations. Further, the emphasis on family and community in Pacific culture supports both natural and group mentoring approaches and church provides an ideal setting for this. Young people themselves support these types of mentoring, naming that they would like 'cool adults' and informal mentors to be available to them in community spaces (Youthline, 2008). Afeaki-Mafile'o (2007) argued that one-on-one approaches are not appropriate for Pasifika youth and instead recommend a collective model of mentoring, where young people engage with peers, in group activities and with specialist mentors. The importance of the role of community, church and family are emphasised in this model.

Gender

There is little research into mentoring outcomes focused on gender differences and what research there is has not provided compelling evidence that gender of mentee/mentor or gender matching significantly impacts youth outcomes (Bogat & Liang, 2005). However, it is noted in the literature that girls favour psychosocial, relationship based mentoring while males prefer instrumental, activity based mentoring (Rhodes, 2002; Sanchez & Colon, 2005).

Bogat and Liang (2005) suggested these differences may be related to social identities for males and females where adolescent females place high value on intimacy and connection while adolescent boys tend not to engage in direct forms of help-seeking. Based on this Sanchez and Colon (2005) suggested that mentors need to understand these differences, particularly young men's reticence in seeking help and suggest focusing on

friendship and shared activities. Barwick, (2004) noted that for boys a combination of physical and reflective activities work best in youth development.

Conclusion

While a mentoring relationship is frequently one-to-one, it exists within a broader context which can both influence and be influenced by mentoring. This chapter has looked briefly at the role of the community. It has also summarised some cultural considerations within mentoring, and briefly looked at gender with regards to mentor matching.

Practice Implications: Youth development is shaped by the big picture

- Mentoring needs to recognise that young people are shaped by the environment around them. Outside of families, young people are most influenced by their peers, neighbourhoods and communities. The mentoring provider, mentor and mentoring relationship also exist in these contexts which are unique to each community.
- Mentoring relationships with successful adults of the same ethnicity can strongly influence the young person and have a positive impact on their sense of cultural identity; however, ethnic match is not as important as cultural competency.
- Mentoring needs to recognise that young people are not an homogenous group and are influenced by their individual experiences. A young person's sense of identity is not restricted to their ethnicity, but is also impacted by their age, social group and interests.
- When working with taiohi Maori and Pasifika youth it is important to consider alternative methods of mentoring and to not assume that a Pakeha framework will best meet their needs.
- Consideration of whakapapa (it may be advantageous to have a mentor from the same iwi or waka as the mentee), whanaungatanga (whanau or group mentoring may be more culturally appropriate), use of te reo, preservation of mana (balancing constructive criticism with acknowledgement of strengths), and wairuatanga (spiritual connection) is important when developing a mentoring relationship that is specifically tailored to working with Maori youth.
- Building a relationship with the family and community is fundamental in mentoring Pasifika youth.
- A youth development approach to mentoring Pasifika youth must engage with and support parents, education and church as major cultural influences. Mentoring activities run through the church or school may be an ideal way to engage Pasifika youth and their families.
- Mentors need to share commonalities with their mentees. This may be shared interests, qualities, similar experiences and location.
- Girls and boys may benefit from different mentoring methods. Girls prefer psychosocial approaches while boys favour instrumental approaches.

Chapter Three: Youth development is about young people being connected

Principle two of the YDSA recognises the need for young people to develop healthy social relationships within many of the contexts they are involved in – schools, family, community, church, sports groups, and their peers. While ‘connectedness’ is a difficult thing to measure, it has important impacts on risk taking behaviour. Adolescents who report being more connected to a group (sports, church etc.) also report more confidence and a sense they are contributing to society (Crespo, 2007). Furthermore, Denny et al. (2004) concluded that strong family caring and connectedness, peer support and school connection were crucial factors for positive outcomes in youth health. Finally, preliminary results from the Youth Connectedness Study at Victoria University show that for children and adolescents, connectedness with family, peers, school and community positively impact wellbeing, with family having the most impact, peers and schools close behind and community connectedness having greater impact for older youth when peer influences may become less important (Jose & Kleeb, 2006).

Building on the importance of the roles that society, community, gender and ethnicity play in the mentoring relationship as, discussed in Chapter Two, this chapter will examine the role the mentoring relationship can play in developing connection. First it will look at methods of mentoring which may assist in fostering wider connections. Second this chapter considers the importance of connecting with family and community, followed by the role of the mentoring provider. From this a wrap-around model will be proposed.

Methods of mentoring

One to one mentoring can be highly effective at creating a safe and healthy relationship for a young person, which can then become a model for other relationships in their lives (Rhodes, 2005). However, connections with family, peers, school and community are also important to developing resiliency, particularly for at-risk youth who may be most disconnected from those around them. Thus, it is important to look at non-traditional mentoring methods that may assist with building wider connections.

Natural mentoring

Natural mentoring looks to informal relationships that may occur within the young person’s life. It would follow that those young people who have the ability to form natural mentoring relationships may be less at risk than their peers who do not have either the relational capacity or suitable role models already in their lives with whom they can form these relationships.

In an American study with 3187 participants, nearly 73% of respondents (18-26 years) reported having a natural mentor. The most common mentors were family members (40%) and teachers or guidance counsellors (26%), with mean relationship duration of 9.1 years (Dubois & Silverthorn, 2005). While it is not possible to show that the mentoring relationship alone was the most significant factor, these young people were more likely to exhibit good outcomes in the areas of: education/work, problem behaviour, psychological wellbeing and physical health. The authors further suggested that given the length and natural formation of the relationship, natural mentoring is likely to be linked to other relationships in the young person’s life; and therefore, able to facilitate linkages to community structures and be more accessible.

Therefore it may be useful to investigate how natural mentoring relationships can be encouraged. A cultural model, which privileges the involvement of the wider whanau and community, may be a useful approach alongside building the mentoring skills of parents, whanau and teachers. The practice implications from this report may be useful to guide the development of informal mentoring relationships.

Group mentoring

By its very nature, group mentoring lends itself to assisting young people to build connection. However, involvement with anti-social peers has been found to be the most powerful risk factor related to youth offending (Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999) and therefore, group mentoring may not be suitable for all young people. Dishion et al. (1999) suggested groups with anti-social youth need pro-social peers involved to create good outcomes.

Herrera, Vang and Gale (2002) discussed the benefits of group mentoring: namely that this generally happens in familiar environments with familiar people and can engage young people who may have difficulty in developing one-on-one relationships. Key reported outcomes included improvements in social skills and relationships with teachers, parents and friends.

Group mentoring does not simply consist of several distinct adult-youth relationships developing independently in the context of the larger group. Rather, it is a context in which youth are mentored by a group that consists of adult and one or more peers. Both the adult mentor and peers seem to play crucial interactive roles in bringing about positive youth outcomes. (Herrera et al., 2002, p. vi)

Group mentoring may be an excellent intervention with both Maori and Pasifika groups where this method fosters “a sense of community in which participants have a responsibility toward the group over their own needs” (Sanchez & Colon, 2005, p. 199) which is harmonious with collectivist cultural values. Group mentoring that is culturally designed may also offer additional benefits of enhancing cultural identity (Washington, Johnson, Jones, & Langs, 2007), increasing access to cultural role models and the opportunity to build relationships with other group members. Additionally, groups that include both verbal and non-verbal activities (recreational) have been seen to contribute to successful group outcomes for young people (Malekoff cited in Washington et al., 2007). Group mentoring also allows for greater economies of scale where mentors may be scarce (Washington et al., 2007).

School-based mentoring

School-based mentoring is gaining momentum internationally but is not yet well researched (Karcher & Herrera, 2006; Randolph & Johnson, 2008). School-based mentoring includes either traditional mentoring in a school setting or peer based initiatives. School based settings can encourage youth participation and leadership through engaging peer mentors and the mentor/mentee relationship may also role model positive relationship for other peer interactions, improve connectedness and influence academic performance (Karcher & Herrera, 2006; Portwood & Ayres, 2005).

Portwood and Ayres (2005) further noted that school based mentoring can improve self-esteem and connectedness to the school, a finding supported Karcher (2008a) in his randomised study of school based mentoring as part of a multi-component programme for 516 Latino students in 19 schools. However, Karcher also found differing effects for gender and age, where high school girls (aged 14-18) and elementary school boys (aged 10-11 in this study) reported higher social skills, self-esteem and connectedness, while high school boys and middle school girls (aged 11-14) experienced either no improvement or negative effects from the mentoring. These included reduced connectedness to the school; reduced future oriented thinking and reduced cooperation for boys and lower self control for girls. While there are no clear reasons for these different findings, and results may not be generalisable, it does suggest school based mentoring is more appropriate for some groups than others. Overall, the meta-analysis conducted by DuBois et al. (2002) found community based programmes more effective than school based.

Teachers may also play an informal mentoring role. Hamilton, Hamilton, Hirsch, Hughes, King and Maton (2006) explored the natural mentoring role of the teacher, noting that young people who have positive relationships with their teachers are more likely to form positive peer interactions, regulate their emotions and show increased self-esteem and reduced depression. However, they also identified that only one empirical study has been conducted on this topic. Similarly, a study of school-based violence prevention with at-risk youth found that successful mentoring programmes included warm teachers as well as social skills education, school-community integration and school-child relationship promotion (Rollin, Kaiser-Ulrey, Potts, & Creason, 2003).

E-mentoring

Anecdotal evidence from Youthline’s text support service, which receives 10,000 texts per month from young people seeking help, suggests that this is a preferred medium of contact and support for many youth. The following discussion considers e-mentoring and how mentoring might be adapted to reflect technological developments and young people’s daily interactions.

E-mentoring is defined by Bierema and Merriam (cited in Miller & Griffiths, 2005) as “a computer mediated, mutually beneficial relationship between mentor and protégé, which provides learning, advising, encouraging, promoting and modelling, that is often boundary-less, egalitarian, and qualitatively different than face-to-face mentoring” (p. 300). E-mentoring in practice has a variety of approaches, with some programmes providing no face-to-face contact, and others combining e-mentoring with traditional mentoring.

E-mentoring has the potential to increase contact opportunities between mentors and mentees and breaks down the barriers of time and geography by offering more flexibility in pace and scheduling (Davies, 2005). E-mentoring may improve mentoring relationships that may ordinarily wither away by creating another avenue for contact, particularly for young people who find it difficult to initiate contact face to face (deJanasz, Ensher & Huen, 2009). Another advantage is that young people may be more comfortable in their own homes or educational environments, therefore decreasing discomfort or intimidation (Griffiths & Miller, 2005).

A number of challenges have also been noted of e-mentoring, namely the potential for electronic communication to be misunderstood because there are no nonverbal cues to put things in context (Purcell, 2004). Purcell further noted that the mentoring relationship is a personal one based on trust, respect and commitment; this may be harder to achieve by email versus face-to face contact. Purcell also posited that e-mentoring is useful for planning and scheduling appointments but not a good forum to discuss controversial or sensitive issues. Again, anecdotal evidence from Youthline’s text and email counselling services shows, that in practice, young people are using technology to discuss all sorts of sensitive issues such as sex (which accounts for about 10% of texts, compared to 2% of calls and 2.5% of face to face counselling relationships based on Youthline’s 2008 statistics) which are far easier to discuss via this medium.

E-mentoring research has yet to provide formal evaluation of long term outcomes such as effects on grades, anti-social behaviour or employment and mostly concentrates on participants’ feelings of satisfaction (Griffiths & Miller, 2005). Further to this, consideration of parental involvement in the process has rarely been discussed, which will be shown below as being significant to the success of the mentoring. E-mentoring may also require different training and support for mentors to become comfortable with digital media (Griffiths and Miller, 2005). However, from Youthline’s experience, comfort with using digital media is generally more a challenge for adults than youth.

Despite its challenges, e-mentoring may be an excellent adjunct to face to face mentoring or a useful method for young people from isolated areas, where face to face mentors are not accessible. Developments in internet affordability and accessibility may support e-mentoring to happen. Purcell (2004) conceded that the use of web cam and video contact could be employed alongside an initial face to face interaction to facilitate greater connection. The Foundation for Youth Development’s Project K mentoring component encourages phone or email contact in addition to fortnightly face to face meetings. Additionally, online forums can act as a simple and cost effective way to assist mentees to build peer connections or connections between mentors and mentoring organisations across the country.

E-mentoring for minority groups

Role modelling, a key factor in traditional mentoring relationships, is noted as the function that is least effectively achieved via electronic communication (DeJanasz, Ensher, & Heun, 2008). However, limited personal contact in an e-mentoring relationship may be useful. DeJanasz et Al. (2008) suggested that the lack of visual cues that can reinforce bias or stereotypes is advantageous, particularly for women or minorities, who they argue, may have difficulty in establishing and maintaining mentoring relationships because of prejudice and/or a lack of representation in positions of power.

Because their relationships are based more on commonality of interests and goals than on stereotypes and assumptions related to demography, participants may be more likely to self-disclose and thus build deeper relationships more quickly than in face-to-face settings. (DeJanasz et al., 2008, p. 397)

E-mentoring has also been proffered as useful for youth with disabilities. In a small scale study, consisting of five mentoring matches over a 3 month period (Shpigelman, Reiter & Weiss, 2008), qualitative research methods were used to ascertain the contributions of e-mentoring for young people with mild to moderate mental, physical emotional and/or behavioural disabilities. The goal was to “reduce the social isolation of adolescents with special needs by providing channels of communication and socio-emotional support by those who had previously experienced similar reactions to disability and with whom the protégés could identify” (p. 197). The results were very promising. All mentees reported enjoying their participation and 4 of the 5 youth reported that they learned to use a computer and the internet, developed communication skills and gained a friend. Teachers further reported that the mentees began developing stronger relationships with their classmates and demonstrated compassion for others with disabilities. The mentors too reported benefits such as feeling that they could help other people and for the first time feeling that they were not disabled (Shpigelman, Reiter, & Weiss, 2008).

Connecting families

The importance of family, caregivers and whanau in the lives of young people cannot be overestimated. All organisations involved in key informant interviews spoke about the importance of the role of, and engaging with the family. A strong familial relationship is fundamental to healthy youth development (Denny, 2004; McLaren, 2002). Families, especially primary caregivers, provide a forum in which adolescents find ways to protect themselves from risk through building identities (Ungar, 2004). Young people with more supportive family relationships and higher levels of shared family decision-making are more likely to report having natural mentors (Zimmerman cited in Rhodes, 2005). Conversely, family conflict is reported to relate to the “onset, duration, and recurrence of adolescent and adult mood disorders” (Birmaher, Brent, Kolko, Baugher, Bridge, Holder et al., 2000, p. 34).

The nature of parental involvement in the mentoring programme may have a pivotal influence over the long term relationship (Nakula & Harris, 2005). While the mentor is acknowledged as being able to develop successful one to one relationships (Dubois et al., 2002), several authors have indicated the importance of parental¹ involvement in successful mentoring relationships (Cavell et al., 2002; Dubois et al., 2002; Frecknall & Luks, 1992; Jekielek et al., 2002; Rhodes, 2002; Ungar, 2004). Soucy and Lorose (cited in Rhodes, 2005) found evidence that mentees who reported higher levels of security in their relationships with their mothers were more likely to have positive mentorship outcomes. On the other hand, parents for example who disapprove of the relationship have the power to discontinue it. More subtly, parents who are outwardly supportive of the relationship but have other underlying feelings about the match may undermine the mentee’s trust in the relationship (Nakula & Harris, 2005).

Frecknall and Luks (1992) study found that parents felt the mentoring relationship to be more successful when the frequency of communication between themselves and the mentor was greater. Parents who feel involved in the mentoring relationship, rather than ‘shut out’, of the process, are more likely to reinforce the mentor’s positive influences. However, it must also be acknowledged that family breakdown may be one of the key reasons mentoring is recommended in the first place, which can create a challenge in successfully engaging families. In a study by McLaren (2000) families that had high levels of conflict and poor-quality relationships were more likely to develop inadequate monitoring of children by parents. Thus, poor monitoring and anti-social peers, which are important risk factors, often result from highly conflicted and negative family relationships. When there has been a major breakdown in the parent-child relationship, research has found that peer influence is powerful in determining risk factors for youth offending (McLaren, 2000).

Interventions that focus on high-risk parents have shown improvements in parenting and adolescent problem behaviour (Dishion et al., 1999). In a comprehensive review of interventions for offenders 13 years or younger, Lawrence (cited in McLaren, 2000) found that training and support for their parents in areas such as parenting skills as well as diagnosis and treatment of key risk factors such as drug involvement, school failure, antisocial peers and abuse were all reliable interventions. Maxwell and Morris (cited in McLaren, 2000) found that youth

¹ References to parents include caregivers and whanau

offenders were less likely to be reconvicted when parents participated in decision-making and the young people themselves were involved in family group conference decision-making.

From these findings it is clear that involving the family in interventions generates better outcomes for at-risk youth. Helping parents understand that the mentoring provider needs their support and offering support and assistance with parent-youth relationships may have the additional effect of helping natural mentoring relationships to develop. Having planned meetings to enhance communication between mentees, mentors and family members is a model recommended by Weinberger (2005). These meetings are most successful when families are offered food, transportation to and from events and child care for other children. Other creative ideas for involving families included having planned family-mentee-mentor-provider fun days where the family is invited to celebrate the young person and support the mentoring relationship.

Connecting communities

In Chapter Two the influence of communities and involving communities in creating good outcomes for young people was touched upon. This section looks at how community connection might be fostered in a mentoring relationship.

Data analysis from a longitudinal study of over 2000 Chicago based youth found that the likelihood of aggression was lower in neighbourhoods where organisations and services were available to young people (Molnar, Cerda, Roberts, & Buka, 2008). In particular, community services that were most protective against aggressive youth behaviour were those that had youth specific services and where there was a presence of pro-social youth. The authors concluded that mentoring interventions were most effective when community support was present (ibid). Similarly, participants in a volunteer community mentoring programme identified a key strength as the project's ability to be linked into the community, while remaining independent from school, social services or other formal agencies (Rose and Jones, 2007). This generated enhanced individualised support for the mentees and invaluable support and connection to external agencies for the mentee and the family. Remaining supported by, but outside of, formal social services may help to reduce potential stigma for mentees (ibid), while connecting mentees to community activities and other young people may assist in creating positive youth development (McLaren, 2002).

Community connection can further be viewed on the micro level when considering matching. Key informant interviews spoke about both mentor and mentee as being part of the same local community and geographical area. Geographical considerations are important for several reasons. First, close proximity increases the likelihood of mentee and mentors meeting and spending time together. Second, the pair will share knowledge of the local community which may help with their initial connection; and third, both the mentor and the mentee may become more connected with their community through exposure to local people and groups and participation in community based activities together (Hamilton et al, 2006).

Because our mentors are not based in a school or structured programme we match them with someone who lives close by. With volunteer mentors they are more likely to see a mentee who lives 5 minutes from their house than one that lives 30 minutes away. This helps build community with mentors who know the culture of the area they live in. (Mentoring provider, Brothers in Arms)

Mentoring provider Tautoko Teina have found that encouraging the community to step up and make a difference through the use of creative and positive mentor recruitment campaigns, alongside challenging local businesses to give workers time to spend with mentees has enhanced their community wide reach. Further, communities often have several strong, professional and talented cultural and community experts that can assist in the development and governance/accountability of mentoring programmes.

The role of the mentoring provider in building connection

It is clear that better practice in mentoring involves the understanding of and working within the family system and engaging the community. However, all key informants noted that there is a level at which this type of work is outside of the role of mentor; namely, when it steps into a social work role with at-risk youth and families. Therefore, other professionals may be required to address broader needs, such as family conflict and the mentoring provider can play a role in facilitating these relationships.

The families of at-risk young people were noted by Manukau mentoring provider Turn Your Life Around (TYLA) as often having several (up to 5 or 6) government social service agencies involved in their lives, which has also been noted with Alternative Education students (Fleming, Walsh, Denny, & Watson, 2004). The involvement of multiple agencies can be a complex web for families to negotiate and TYLA described families not even knowing where the person visiting them was from or what they were doing. Greater coordination between social services and the health and youth sectors, such as strengthening families' initiative, would help minimise such duplication.

Mentoring provider PILLARS work from a family and community perspective. While this service is aimed specifically at young people who have an incarcerated parent, their approach with families is holistic where they initially have a whole family assessment done by a social worker who then determines any further intervention or referral to other social services necessary to stabilise the family situation (e.g. ensuring they have financial assistance). Only once the family is stable is the mentoring intervention added. In a similar vein, I Have a Dream, Brothers in Arms and TYLA, who work alongside social workers already involved in the family, acknowledge the vital importance of this relationship.

The relationship with the social worker is key. If issues at home, such as safety, come up for the mentee, the mentor can relay this back to the Programme Manager who will then discuss the issue with the social worker. This way mentors don't have to carry the burden of trying to resolve the entire family's issues. Mentors are also encouraged to make it clear they are not going to keep things confidential with their mentee if it concerns their safety. By doing this we again try to avoid mentors being burdened by information from their mentees. (Mentoring provider, Brothers in Arms)

I Have a Dream noted that if they were to employ one more full time person this would be someone who worked with the families of the 'dreamers' (the name they give their mentees) assisting them with things such as budgeting and parenting programmes. Tautoko Teina run a 6 week positive parenting programme that has a strong Maori and spiritual focus alongside their mentoring work. This course came out of community development research which concluded a need for parental support on topics such as budgeting, goal setting and whanau leadership.

These examples show a clear role for the mentoring provider in terms of wrapping around the mentor/mentee relationship and offering further services that can support the relationship and build connection between the family, community and the young person. Mentoring providers who have strong links to schools and other community organisations and yet, are perceived as outside of statutory services, can assist in translating needs and advocating for the young person. The literature highlights that parents of at-risk youth may feel uncomfortable with meeting professionals in what they perceive are official establishments such as schools (Rose & Jones, 2007). Mentoring provider I Have a Dream bring their background knowledge of the young person (through their academic programmes) to the schools and teachers to enhance the young person's educational experience.

This perspective implies interdependence among relationships whereby the quality of one relationship influences, and in turn, is influenced by other relationships (Gjerde cited in Keller, 2005). Hence, avenues of communication are critical in the mentoring system and will be strengthened by "direct, cooperative, and coherent communication" (Keller, 2005, p. 173) where information flows openly and efficiently. Boundaries in the flow of communication are also important for mentoring providers and mentors to consider to ensure that information is not disclosed inappropriately.

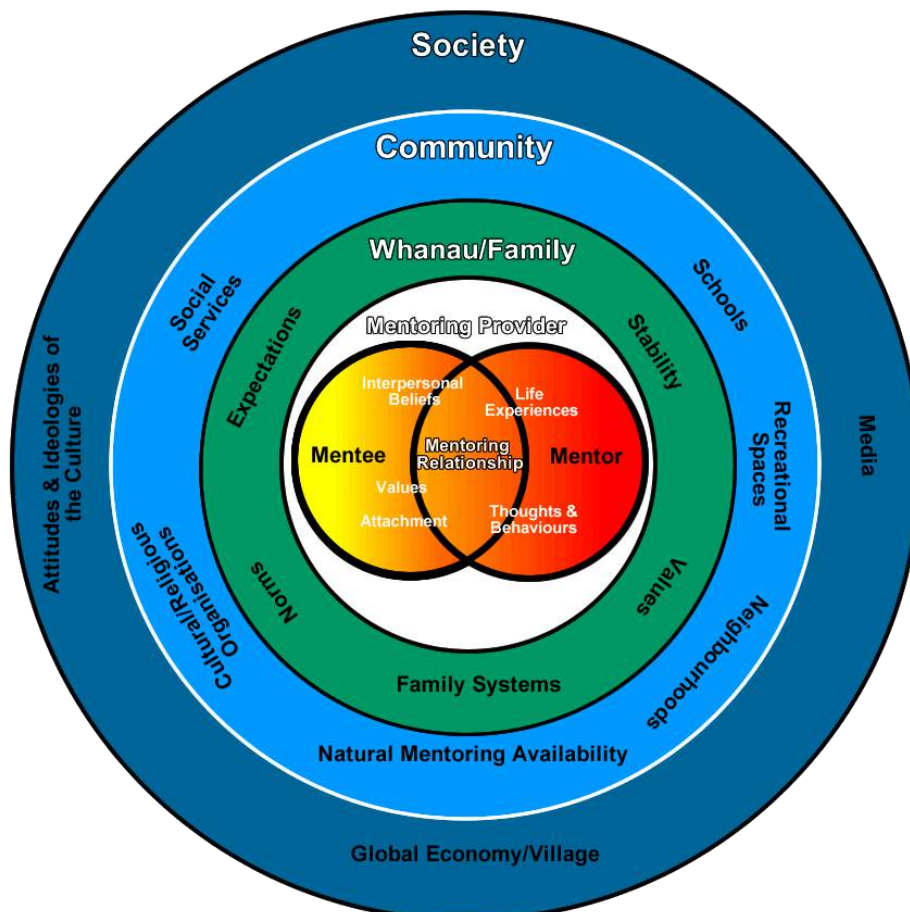
Developing connection is essential not just for the young person but also for the mentor, who needs to be closely connected with the mentoring provider and clear support systems; and for the mentoring provider, to be connected with other professionals and community agencies to offer support and other services where appropriate. The role of the mentoring provider in creating successful connections, outside of the mentor/mentee relationship is given little attention in the literature, but is essential to working from a youth development perspective and to ensure that families do not receive fragmented services.

A wrap-around approach

In the natural mentoring study, described earlier in this chapter, a number of factors were shown to not be influenced by the mentoring relationship including, substance use, depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation and STI diagnosis (Dubois & Silverthorn, 2005). Coupled with the evidence regarding the role of the family and community in creating positive outcomes for young people, it is clear that a one-on-one mentoring relationship cannot meet all needs for at-risk youth. This is supported by research findings that indicate that the most promising outcomes for significant long-term gains for wellbeing for Alternative Education students who are generally at high risk, are from intensive, integrated or 'joined up' services that meet a range of young peoples' needs and work alongside the family (Fleming, et al 2004). Looking further at those in Alternative Education settings; Youthline (2008) proposed a wrap-around approach as being most effective for addressing their broad health and social needs. Young people themselves support this approach, recommending joined up services that combine health, recreation and mentoring activities (Youthline, 2006, 2008).

From this, the authors of this project have developed a wrap-around model for youth mentoring depicted in Figure 4. This model demonstrates the wider context in which a mentoring relationship exists and while each layer is depicted separately, each area is interconnected and influences the others. Ideally, all levels would be engaged in supporting the mentoring relationship.

Figure 4: A wrap around approach to youth mentoring



Conclusion

This chapter has considered the importance of connecting mentoring with the family and community and has discussed how particular mentoring types may facilitate greater connection to community families and peers, including natural mentoring, school based mentoring, group mentoring and e-mentoring. In addition, the role of the family in either facilitating or threatening the mentoring relationship and the importance of engaging family to enable the best outcomes for at-risk youth have been examined. Similarly, this chapter has looked at the mentoring provider, arguing that they have a significant role to play in connecting mentees and their families to community agencies. From this discussion, a wrap-around method of mentoring was proposed.

Practice Implications: Youth development is about young people being connected

- Mentoring relationships build a one on one connection with young people. Because connections with family, peers, school and community are important to developing resiliency, the mentoring relationship needs to help the young person build broader pro-social connections.
- Significant benefits can be seen for those young people that have developed natural mentoring relationships, and it may be useful to investigate how these can be encouraged.
- There are mixed views about schools as a mentoring venue. Schools have benefits including being accessible, having resources and can develop peer leadership; however, school based mentoring may be more useful for some age/gender combinations than others. A randomized study of 512 youth (Karcher, 2008a) found that school-based mentoring was useful for high school age girls and pre-teen boys but may be contraindicated for pre-teen girls and high school boys.
- Group mentoring may be useful for young people who have difficulty developing one to one relationships but needs to involve pro-social peers to create good outcomes.
- E-mentoring creates another avenue for young people who may find it difficult to initiate contact face to face or reside in isolated areas. It is important to consider how mentoring might be adapted to meet the preferences of young people including the use of text communication as an adjunct to face to face mentoring .
- Parents' feelings and involvement in the mentoring can heavily influence its success. In order to achieve positive results for the young person, interaction between parents, mentor and mentee are essential.
- Parenting skills training, support for parents, parent involvement in decision-making and family group conference decision-making, can generate better outcomes for at-risk youth and can be a useful part of the mentoring process.
- Molnar et al. (2008) found that mentoring programmes were most effective when community support was present.
- Mentoring programmes that are linked into the community while remaining independent from school, social services or other formal agencies may help to reduce potential stigma for mentees.
- Opportunities for interaction and community involvement are increased when mentor and mentee live in the same geographical area.
- Other professionals may be required to address broader needs and the mentoring provider has a role to play in helping to make these connections and advocating for the young person. Mentors need to recognise the boundaries of their relationship and notify the mentoring provider when outside support is needed.
- Wellbeing for at-risk youth is improved by intensive, integrated or 'joined up' services that meet a range of young peoples' needs and that work alongside and wrap around the young person and their family. Mentoring needs to be part of a wrap-around approach to working with at-risk youth.

Chapter Four: Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach

The vision of the YDSA is to produce a country where vibrant and optimistic young people are being supported and encouraged to take up challenges. A strengths-based approach builds on young people's capacity to resist risk factors by enhancing the protective factors in their lives. Understanding both risk-prevention and youth development is necessary for a full picture of wellbeing (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008). A strengths-based approach can effectively marry these two areas, working supportively to address issues and reduce risk while recognising and nurturing potential.

Youth development literature suggests that when the focus is on developing young people's strengths, their resiliency or ability to cope with challenges grows. Resilience can be increased through exposing young people to supportive and empowering environments, developing positive relationships and giving them opportunities to participate, build skills and expand experiences (Bernard, 2006; Ministry of Youth Development, 2004; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

While it is important to note that resiliency development happens through a combination of these things; for the purposes of this report, this chapter will focus on two key areas: strengths-based attitudes and strengths-based activities. Supportive environments have been discussed in Chapters Two and Three, and caring relationships and youth participation will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Strengths-based attitudes

High expectations

A key characteristic of any strengths-based approach involves setting high expectations for young people (Aronowitz, 2005; Benard, 2006; Ministry of Youth Development, 2004). This refers to a belief in the young person's competency (that is developmentally appropriate), despite being at-risk. A strengths-based approach represents a shift in perspective, as young people are frequently viewed as a problem to be fixed rather than a resource to be developed (Denny, 2004). Young people themselves may enter the mentoring relationship with a deficit approach. They may experience a limited sense of self, or hope for their future. In this way, a key task for the strengths-based mentor is to assist the young person to find their strengths and remain focussed on the young person's potential, despite personal and contextual challenges; and often, hold hope for the future before the young person can see this for themselves. Aronowitz (2005), referred to this process as "envisioning the future" (p. 205) which in turn builds resilience. Benard (2006) suggested that a strengths-based approach offers hope to the practitioner because protective factors are proven to have a more powerful influence than risk factors.

Aronowitz (2005) proposed that high expectations by the mentor must be accompanied by coaching to enhance skill development through support, motivation and encouragement. Examples given describe adults who have used an activity with the young person, such as sports or work, as an opportunity to help them learn goal setting, or to share their own stories. Coaching also involves ongoing follow up and persistence, even when the young person wants to disengage. This persistence must be balanced with allowing the young person a sense of agency in the relationship, including being involved in decision-making. Ungar (2004) noted that feeling a sense of personal agency is linked with identity formation, particularly for at-risk youth. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter Six.

Mentor-to-mentee feedback is important both for building the mentee's self-esteem as well as letting them know when they have crossed the line (Barwick, 2004). Boundaries that are not enforced send the message that appropriate behaviour is either not expected, or not believed to be possible, effectively reducing the mentee's belief in their own competency. Honest feedback encourages responsibility, where the young person learns the effects of actions, both positive and negative. Aronowitz (2005) discussed 'monitoring' where progress is tracked and, in particular, unsafe behaviours are noted and addressed.

Moody et al. (2003) suggested that inappropriate behaviour needs to be discussed and redirected. In this regard, feedback may involve coaching the young person on alternative communication strategies. The authors further argued that strengths-based feedback needs to be given to parents and teachers, so that the mentee receives consistent and positive messages. This is particularly important given the significant role parents can play in developing strengths (Barwick, 2004).

Role modelling

Rhodes (2002) suggested three areas where mentors may have the most influence: social and emotional development; cognitive development; and identity development. Given these areas, the mentor has a broad sphere of influence and can act as a powerful role model, which may not always be overt. Role modelling is considered a key agent for change in the mentoring relationship where through a process of identification and subsequent internalization, the mentee can strive to be like their mentor (ibid). Aronowitz (2005) noted the power of modelling positive behaviour: “several participants had experiences with significant others who showed them the possibilities open to them just by the way they lived their lives” (p. 203) while Barwick (2004) stated that adults can act as “anchoring points” for the young person (p. 7).

Lerner, Brittan and Fay (2006), described actions that the mentor needs to take to provide positive youth development. They are organised as six C’s: competence, confidence, connection, character, caring and contribution. Within this framework, they highlight the mentor’s place as a role model, stating that mentors must walk the talk by modelling being caring towards others, self disclosing, and asking for help when they need it. The full list of the Six C’s are included in Appendix C.

Strengths-based activities

Effective mentoring is an intentional activity (Barwick, 2004). However, while the intentional quality is acknowledged frequently in the literature, the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of putting intentions into action is given little attention with regards to the activities and behaviours of the mentor, outside of being caring, empathic and supportive. Aronowitz (2005) argued that literature focuses on the importance of a connected relationship but does not explain what connected adults do to promote resilience.

As every relationship is unique and personally shaped by the mentor and mentee, there cannot be a formulaic approach to mentoring. However, it is acknowledged that mentoring requires clear goals (Rhodes, 2006; Youth Mentoring Trust, 2008) and Langhout, Rhodes and Osborne (2004) have noted the importance of mentors’ training and activities reflecting the “characteristics, strengths, and constraints of the youth’s setting” (p. 245) Presumably some activities are better suited to meet particular goals or settings than others. Where mentoring focuses on developing an instrumental skill, activity selection may be obvious, for example in academic mentoring. Alternatively, where the focus involves developing social skills or connectedness, there may be a need for more guidance on developing suitable activities.

Activity development may be enhanced by understanding what competencies would exist within a healthy and supported young person. Drawing on current international knowledge, Guerra and Bradshaw (2008) have proposed a core set of strengths-based social and emotional competencies:

- A positive sense of self, comprising,
 - Self-awareness: an accurate view of one’s attributes underpinned by a positive and realistic view of future possibilities.
 - Agency: having influence in one’s own life.
 - Self-esteem: exists both as a global view of self and can be measured in specific domains, e.g. academic achievement.
- Self-control, which is defined as the “ability to regulate and manage affect and behaviour in a controlled versus automatic fashion in accordance with situational or normative demands” (p. 8).
- Decision making skills. Developing abstract thinking skills.

- A moral belief system. Making judgements based on values and beliefs alongside the recognition of behaviours that could harm others.
- Pro-social connectedness. Having positive relationships with peers and adults in different contexts.

In a strengths-based relationship it is important to choose activities that best support these competencies. The six C's, (Lerner et al., 2006) described above, are one of the limited examples in reviewed literature where 'doing' recommendations are made. These include:

- Finding and doing things that the mentee likes.
- Finding what the mentee does well and doing it.
- Connecting the mentee to other organisations and people.
- Connecting the mentee to community activities.
- Encouraging the mentee to join boards, faith-based or voluntary organisations.

A key theme in these activities is assisting young people to develop greater connections with others, supporting the findings that promote community involvement as discussed in Chapter Two. Activities that foster greater connection for the young person may mean that the mentee can continue them after the mentoring relationship ends; thus, reducing a potential sense of loss. Rose and Jones (2007) noted that many of the participants in their 6 month community based volunteer mentoring scheme were disappointed with the lack of continuation of both relationships and activities at the end of the scheme. Further, the authors mentioned that mentees often feel inadequate if they cannot afford to continue the activities at the conclusion of the relationship. Similarly, Evans and Ave (2000) cautioned that some activities require ongoing expense or social opportunity to continue. Voluntary activities can be sustainable and also foster the young person's sense of being able to contribute to their community (Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, 2008).

In a review of research on achieving good outcomes for young people in their families, peer groups, schools, careers and communities, McLaren (2002, p. 142) identified the following community based best practice points which may further guide mentoring activities.

- *Young people enjoy leisure activities in the community more than other activities, and may take part in a wide variety, from organised to unstructured, positive to antisocial.*
- *Leisure activities may provide opportunities to try out roles and identities, helping young people move into adult roles.*
- *The type of activities young people enjoy tend to remain fairly stable during the transition from adolescence to early adulthood.*
- *Participating in positive community activities has a positive impact on young people, including less drinking, drug taking and truanting, better education and career outcomes, less delinquent activity and better attitudes and behaviour regarding sex.*
- *Highly structured activities that have set timetables and rules, teach skills, give feedback and are supervised by skilled adults are associated with better outcomes than unstructured, unsupervised activities.*
- *Volunteering leads to more altruistic attitudes to community involvement, less cynical attitudes to the value of work and less emphasis on the importance of career and better long-term adjustment.*
- *Participating in community activities may make a difference by expressing and reinforcing a young person's identity and leading to contact with peers who influence young people in specific directions.*
- *Parents who are involved in community activities themselves and/or warmly encourage and praise their children for getting involved increase the likelihood of youth participation.*

These recommendation highlight the importance of fun activities that are structured, community based and ideally involve parents.

The literature searched yielded little information about best practice in activities, however, grey literature searching sourced a presentation by Karcher (2008b) based on findings from the randomised evaluation of school based mentoring (Karcher, 2008a) discussed in the school section in Chapter Two. This presentation,

(Karcher, 2008b) included the following charts of activities. Table 2 describes activities that are development focussed and in the study were related to increased connection, self-esteem and social skills, while the instrumental activities in Table 3 were related to decreased connection. These charts were based on mentor logs completed after each meeting. It is not clear from the presentation slides whether these results were for a particular age or gender, or how it was decided that these particular activities were more useful than others. However, as the only detailed activity list sourced this may be a useful guide to further research.

Table 2: Developmental mentoring activities

The mentoring activities below have been found to promote youth development, self-esteem and social skills		15 min	30 min	45 min	60 min
E	Casual conversation (Discussion of sports, weekend activities, holiday plans, Fiesta, etc.)				
F	Conversation on Social Issues (Current events/news, poverty, crime, religion, race-related issues, etc.)				
G	Conversation on Relationships: About whom? <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Romantic Friend				
H	Listening & Learning (Mentee's hobbies & interests, feelings, etc.) – Mentee talked most of the time while mentor listened.				
J	Sports or athletic (activity) (Played basketball, soccer, catch, volleyball, tennis, etc.)				
K	Creative activities (Drawing, arts and crafts, reading and writing for fun, photography, etc.)				
L	Indoor games (Board games, playing cards, chess, computer games, puzzle, etc.)				

Table 3: Instrumental mentoring activities

The below activities work best when suggested by the mentee (and can lead to poor mentoring outcomes when suggested by mentors)		How long and suggested by whom?			
A	Academics (discussion) (Grades, school, testing, etc.)				Mtor mtee
I	Tutoring/Homework (activity) (Helped with homework, did tutoring, helped with reading, library, computer wor.)				Mtor mtee m
B	Behavior (Discussed youth's behaviors related to problems with peers, teachers, adults = misbehavior)				Mtor mtee
C	Attendance and "Stay-in-School" discussion				Mtor mtee
D	Future talk (College, career, goals, dreams, etc.)				Mtor mtee

Together, the recommendations outlined in Tables 2 and 3, may inform the nature and structure of mentoring activities. Further, the Tables demonstrate the importance of involving parents and the wider community in youth development initiatives. As noted in Chapter Three, the mentoring provider may play a key role in linking with other agencies and supporting activity development.

Conclusion

A strengths-based approach provides a clear focus to mentoring relationships. Several key components comprise a strengths-based mentoring relationship. First, the mentor must have high expectations of the mentee

and must support the mentee appropriately to meet these expectations. Expecting the mentee to do well is important to counter low expectations that others may have had for the mentee in the past. Second, mentors should model positive behaviours to mentees. The instilled attitudes and behaviours will last long after the mentoring relationship has ended. Third, strengths-based mentoring must involve carefully selected activities, which support the protective factors in the mentee's life. It is important that the long-term outcome is considered when selecting activities, so that the mentee is able to continue these activities when the mentoring relationship ends.

Practice Implications: Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach

- Mentors need to focus on developing young people's strengths to build their resiliency.
- Mentors can increase competency and resilience in mentees by exposing them to supportive and empowering environments where they have a range of opportunities to engage in skill building and horizon broadening experiences.
- The strengths-based mentor needs to remain focused on the young person's potential, despite personal and contextual challenges and often hold the hope for the future, even before the young person can see this for themselves.
- A key characteristic of a strengths-based mentor is having high expectations for their mentee. As many at-risk youth may have had their competencies negatively stereotyped this must be actively countered by the mentor.
- High expectations of the mentee from the mentor need to be accompanied by coaching to enhance skill development through support, motivation and encouragement. Coaching involves ongoing persistence and follow up balanced with allowing the young person a sense of agency in the relationship.
- Positive feedback from mentors helps build mentees' self-esteem and having firm boundaries around acceptable behaviours encourages responsibility. Mentor's clear communication when mentees have crossed the line assists in building mentees belief in their own competency.
- Mentors who provide strengths-based feedback to parents and teachers help to encourage consistent and positive messages.
- Role modelling is a subtle process but involves 'walking the talk' and mentors need to model the six C's; competence, confidence, connection, character, caring and contribution.
- There is little description of the activities mentors and mentees do together in the literature and although there can be no formulaic approach there are some core social and emotional competencies found to be consistent internationally with positive youth development that the mentor can assist the mentee to develop. These include; a positive sense of self, self-control, decision making skills, a moral belief system and pro-social connectedness. An effective mentor will engage with the young person in activities that develop these competencies.
- Some activities the strengths-based mentor can initiate are; finding out and doing things the mentee likes to do, finding out and doing what the mentee does well, connecting the mentee to other organisations and people, connecting the mentee to community activities and encouraging the mentee to join boards, faith based or voluntary organisations.
- Mentors should consider activities that the young person can continue after the relationship has ended and be guided by young people's preference for leisure activities.
- Structured, community based activities are shown to have better results. The mentoring provider may have a role in offering these.
- Developmental activities may be more effective at developing self-esteem and social skills than instrumental activities and requires further testing.

Chapter Five: Youth development happens through quality relationships

The relationship principle of the YDSA recognises that it is important that everyone is supported and equipped to have successful, quality relationships with young people. Interestingly, the mentoring relationship itself has infrequently been the focus of research on mentoring outcomes (Langhout, Rhodes, & Osborne, 2004). Research shows having a relationship with a caring adult who has high expectations is one of the strongest predictors of resilience in young people (Broussard et al., 2006); however, approximately one quarter of formal mentoring relationships do not progress beyond the initiation phase (Bogat et al., 2008). When there is evidence to show that prematurely terminated mentoring relationships may do harm (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002), looking at what assists in the formation of quality relationships is an important area for focus.

This chapter begins with developmental considerations the mentor needs to take into account in the mentoring relationship. Next this chapter looks at the core elements of successful mentoring relationships, followed by research that explores what may go wrong in mentoring relationships and how to plan for and prevent some of these risks. Lastly this chapter considers common factors in counselling and psychotherapy and how these may be utilised to enhance mentoring relationships.

Developmental considerations

The developmental stage and age of the mentee form an important backdrop to the nature and course of the mentoring relationships.

Age

Research identifies different mentoring needs for particular times during adolescence. Younger adolescents who have not yet developed abstract thinking skills may benefit from structured recreational activities, which were seen to be more beneficial due to less confidence in verbal communication with adults (DuBios & Neville cited in Darling et al., 2006). Alternatively, older adolescents with greater cognitive sophistication may revel in abstract conversations with their mentors (Keating cited in Rhodes, 2005). Darling et al. (2006) recommended that those in middle to late adolescence may benefit from mentoring that emphasizes instrumental goals such as developing new skills engaging in new activities. Instrumentally focused activities, such as work-based mentoring and apprenticeships, may be developmentally more appropriate and also offer incentive for establishing and maintaining the relationship with older adolescents who are typically less interested in sustaining a relationship with a mentor at a time when they are gravitating more towards their peers and occupational skill building (Rhodes, 2005).

There is growing consideration for the age of young people beginning mentoring programmes in New Zealand. Big Buddy, Brother in Arms and the Tautoko Teina mentoring programmes have more recently targeted young people less than 12 years of age. This change has been driven by literature as well as their experiences with older at-risk youth who seem less open to suggestion or interested in forming a mentoring relationship. Mentoring provider Big Buddy explained *'something has switched off inside...by age 13-14 these young boys can already be hardened up, psychologically something has split'*. However, Cavell and Smith (2005) noted that children (under 12 years) have less ability to speak out if they are uncomfortable with the mentoring relationship.

Literature tends to focus on the age of mentees; yet, the age of the mentor may also make a difference. In a study that looked at mentoring high-risk youth, older teens tended to have shorter relationships with mentors aged 50 years and over. A possible explanation for this outcome is the generational difference may have been too great (Bauldry & Hartman, 2004). While these results do not give a full comparison of mentee/mentor age, it may be more important for older adolescents who are in the process of separating from parents/caregivers to have mentors whom they feel more connected with generationally. Mentees matched with younger mentors often mentioned the importance of mentor youthfulness in their evaluations in terms of their communication style and ability to connect with youth culture (ibid).

Developmental/interpersonal history

Identity development, forming peer relationships and individuating from parents are key developmental tasks for youth (Erikson, 1994) which mentoring relationships need to acknowledge and support. The literature highlighted that at-risk youth can experience both environmental and individual risk. Dubois et al. (2002) suggested that mentoring may not be beneficial for young people with individual level risk alone e.g. academic performance, but is beneficial for those who experience environmental risk, such as low socio economic status, or a combination. They posited that it may be easier for mentors to empathise with environmental risk but they may form judgements e.g. perceived laziness with individual risk. Similarly, research showed that young people with overwhelming social or behavioural problems or those who sustained emotional, sexual, or physical abuse were less likely to benefit from mentoring and relationships were less likely to stay intact (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2005).

Both attachment (Bowlby, 1982) and parental acceptance-rejection theory (Rohner cited in Britner & Kraimer-Rickaby, 2005) may assist in understanding these outcomes. Young people who have experienced parental rejection or with insecure attachments, which can be related to abuse, neglect and inconsistency of adult support, may struggle to form mentoring relationships or benefit from this type of intervention (DuBois et al., 2002). In practice, a secure young person may not be largely affected by a missed meeting with a mentor; however, a young person with a difficult interpersonal history may be far more likely to experience this as a rejection.

Mentors need to be trained in dealing with issues likely to occur with at-risk youth (Langhout, Rhodes, & Osborne, 2004). Mentors' sense of efficacy in the face of complicated or new situations has been linked to successful relationships (Karcher, Nakula, & Harris, cited in Rhodes, 2006; Parra, DuBois, Neville, Pugh-Lilly, & Povinelli, 2002). Mentors who understand the background and circumstances facing their mentees and their parents and caregivers will be better prepared to support the young person (Adalist-Estrin & Mustin cited in Bilchik, 2006).

Developmental history may further influence match choice, where the complex needs of some at-risk youth may require support that cannot always be provided through a voluntary relationship. The value of professionals who work with young people (such as social workers, youth workers, nurses or probation officers) lies "in their training, their capacity to assess strengths and needs, their knowledge of how to intervene successfully and their ability to connect young people to services and resources" (Smith, 2004, p. 8). The limitations of this relationship, however, are determined by the public systems that employ these workers. Professionals are often stretched in their capacity by large case loads and targets. Further, the professional, who represents 'the system', is obliged to monitor and report on the young person, which may interfere with the development of a trusting relationship.

Volunteers are outside of the public system and are an essential part of a participatory community (Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, 2008). However, due to the voluntary nature of their role, they may lack the time required for the development of close relationships with at-risk youth. To bridge this gap, Smith (2004) proposed the 'paid mentor' whose sole task is to interact with the young person, largely on their terms. Smith evidenced three American programmes which have shown success with this model. In addition to remuneration, there is a risk of polarising volunteers and professionals, enhancing the view that volunteers are somehow 'less skilled'. While qualifications are a standardised measure of competence, the youth worker competencies being developed by the National Youth Worker's Network Aotearoa, could act as a measure, with the development of advanced competencies to work with 'high risk' youth. Regardless of volunteer or paid staff, or the developmental stage of the young person, a successful mentoring relationship exhibits a number of core elements that are outlined below.

Core elements of successful mentoring relationships

The dynamics through which mentoring relationships can promote positive developmental outcomes are unlikely to unfold without a strong interpersonal connection, specifically one characterized by mutuality, trust, and empathy. (Rhodes, 2005, p. 31)

Trust

Trust is a commonly cited quality that young people desire in their mentoring relationship (deAnda, 2001). A sense of mutual trust where one is understood, liked and respected improves chances of a meaningful mentoring relationship being established (Rhodes, 2005). Trust is the basis for communication and relationship development and hence, the vital component in mentoring relationships (Sipe, 1996, 2002). Trust takes time to develop and mentors who appreciate and allow for this to develop naturally have shown to be more effective in encouraging change in young people (Sipe, 1996). Levels of trust and closeness in mentoring relationships have been found to predict positive academic and behavioural outcomes (Rhodes, 2005).

Friendship

The beautiful thing about mentoring is that there are no exact rules or guidelines as to how it works. Although the relationship is constructed, we want to make it as natural as possible. Most of us have natural mentors in our lives and they've kept us going.... the point is that kids at risk often don't have those mentors, and we want to provide them with one. We approach mentoring from a friendship perspective because we feel that is the most natural and effective way for a mentoring relationship to begin. (Mentoring provider, Brothers in Arms)

From a youth perspective, seeing the mentoring relationship as a friendship is a fundamental element in the success of the relationship (deAnda, 2001; Herrera, 1999; Rhodes & Lowe, 2008; Sipe, 2002). Mentoring relationships centred on having fun and adopting a youth-centric approach are more successful than those that focus on transforming or changing behaviour of the mentee through an authoritarian or parental role (Freedman cited in Evans & Ave, 2000). Research further shows that empathy, authenticity and mutual respect and caring, are important for the mentoring relationship (Rhodes, 2005; Rhodes & DuBois 2006; Sperandio, 2008). However, a study of the Big Brother Big Sisters programme found that mentoring relationships that were purely unconditionally supportive, did not demonstrate any different outcomes from control groups. Those that reported a moderate level of activity and structure had the best outcomes including decreased alienation from parents, decreased conflict with friends, improved self worth and school competence. This group also found that the mentoring relationship had less unconditional support and higher negative affect (Langhout, Rhodes, & Osborne, 2004). The authors suggested that the role of the mentor is similar to that of an authoritative parent who can provide positive activities, have high expectations and set boundaries (ibid). This is aligned with a strengths-based approach.

It seems that an overall development focus that is youth friendly, fun and supports the young person to develop strengths; rather than focusing on changing behaviour, sets high expectations and has firm boundaries, will be the most successful in improving connection, self-esteem and competence. These findings also suggest that the mentor themselves needs to be resilient and able to handle not always being liked. This balance between friendship, or a general sense of liking and firm boundaries may be adequately explained as a therapeutic alliance which will be discussed below.

Clear expectations

Having a clear sense of what it means to be a mentor or a mentee and what to expect from the relationship is important (Rhodes & Dubois, 2006). Many mentors enrol in programmes with expectations that may not match the reality of mentoring (Madia & Lutz, 2004). In such cases mentors may begin working towards their own goals in anticipation of changing the young person's behaviour which has been seen to negatively impact trust in the relationship (Jucovy, 2001). Furthermore, mentors and mentees may be discouraged or disappointed leading to premature termination of the relationship; hence, the need for consistency between the expectations of the mentor, mentee and the mentees caregiver/s to reduce the probability of conflict (Sipe, 2002).

Duration and frequency of contact

The frequency of face to face meetings is a focus of research (Chan & Ho, 2008; DuBois & Neville, 1997; Turner & Schermam, 1996) and has been found to correlate with improved academic outcomes and scholastic confidence (Jekielek et al., 2002). Regular meetings are associated with increased connectedness including, engagement in beneficial activities, emotional and instrumental support and deeper relationships with the young person's social networks (Parra et al.; Herrera et al.; DuBois et al., cited in Rhodes, 2006). However, there are

no clear evidence based guidelines of the frequency or length of meeting times that would be most beneficial. In the Big Brothers Big Sisters programme 70% of mentees met with their mentors at least 3 times per month (Tierney, Grossman, & Reisch, 1995). Further, mentoring relationships in the same programme lasting a year or longer showed improvements in psychosocial and behavioural outcomes (Grossman & Rhodes 2002). Conversely young people in relationships that terminated within 3 months reported diminished self-worth and perceived scholastic competence (ibid). Project K mentors have weekly phone or email contact with mentees over a 12 month period, with face to face contact occurring every fortnight. Without intense contact, mentoring is not effective for at-risk youth (Keating, Tomishima, Foster, & Alessandri, 2002) and in some cases may have a negative impact if the mentoring is infrequent or of a short duration (Southwick, Morgan, Vythilingam, & Charney, 2005).

Multi Level Activities

A study by Keating et al. (2002) of 6 months of intensive mentoring (3 hours weekly), group activities and monthly psychoeducation/life skills groups, showed improvements in mentees' self concept and behaviour. A similar multi-level community based intervention including skills groups, volunteering and mentoring, where mentoring was seen as a place to practice skills learned in group settings also showed an increase in protective factors for at-risk youth (Moody, Childs, & Sepples, 2003). At completion the participants perceived higher levels of self-esteem, body image, mentor support, positive peer bonding, social skills attainment, school attachment and attitudes against drug use (ibid). The areas of positive group bonding and increased social skills showed impressive results with increases of 119.5% and 82% respectively. However, as previously noted, combining anti-social youth in one group can be contraindicated, as this can contribute to the growth of anti-social behaviour over time (Dishion et al, 1999). While further follow up studies are needed to provide a clearer picture of what interventions are more effective and in what combinations, these preliminary findings suggested a multi-level approach may be an effective intervention, particularly for meeting the complex needs of at-risk youth.

Within a wrap-around model, multi-level activities need not be provided by the mentoring provider and would increase community connectedness if the young person was linked into a range of supports. For example, the Youth Connectedness Study (Crespo, 2007) showed that young people who are involved in sports clubs are more connected to their communities, suggesting that centres such as the YMCA could be good places for both group and one to one interactions. Community activities could easily be continued by the mentee once the programme is completed.

Challenges for mentoring relationships

Factors that contribute to termination of mentoring relationships are rarely discussed in the literature but offer avenues for improvement of mentoring programme strategies and mentor competencies. Given that the key intervention of mentoring is the relationship, qualitative research investigating mentee and mentor experience is essential. A qualitative study that looked at mentoring relationship failures revealed six key themes: mentor or protégé abandonment, perceived lack of protégé motivation, unfulfilled expectation, deficiencies in motor relational skills, family interference, inadequate agency support (Spencer, 2007). Each of these themes are discussed below.

Mentor or protégé abandonment

This is where either the mentor or mentee simply disappeared. Both mentees and mentors who experienced abandonment expressed feelings of disappointment and reduced enthusiasm for the programme (Spencer, 2007). An in-depth study of the interpersonal processes with pregnant adolescent females in an alternative school (aged 12-18 years) looked at the challenges faced in the initial stages (1-3 months) of the mentoring relationship (Bogat et al., 2008). Mentee withdrawal from the relationship, apparent lack of interest and indifference were more common than smooth engagement. When faced with these challenges mentors tended to withdraw and reduced their attempts to contact the mentee. Given what is known of at-risk youth, particularly the likelihood of attachment difficulties (Barrera & Bonds, 2005), coupled with life stressors; withdrawal and ambivalence may be common. Therefore, mentors need to recognise the mentee's need to establish security and test acceptance. In these cases, mentee withdrawal is best met with positive, gentle and friendly persistence (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).

Perceived lack of protégé motivation

Here mentors felt that their mentees were not particularly interested in having a mentor. This may have been because mentees had gone along at their parents request rather than of their own volition (Spencer, 2007). Young people need to want the relationship as documented in *The Youth Mentoring Super 14: Characteristics of Effective Youth Mentoring* (The Youth Mentoring Trust, 2008). Mentoring must be a mutual relationship, not an intervention that is 'done to' at-risk youth.

Unfulfilled expectations

Spencer (2007) found that several mentors had somewhat romantic expectations of their relationships with their mentees. The mentors described looking forward to a close personal relationship with their mentee which was in fact a more difficult task than they had anticipated, particularly with vulnerable youth. Mentors typically felt overwhelmed by the needs of youth and the difficult situations they and their families faced. Mentors who imagined becoming a significant person in the mentees life felt disappointed if the mentee did not appear to need them, or they felt they were not making a difference. This demonstrates the need for mentors to be able to handle rejection from mentees. For mentees, termination frequently occurred because they felt they could not connect with their mentor or did not share the same interests (ibid).

Another study of mentoring pregnant adolescents showed the importance of clear expectations and mentor support. Both mentor and mentee in this study defined the middle stage, 4–6 months, as having the greatest amount of conflict, which was also when most mentees gave birth (Bogat et al., 2008). Mentees' needs grew during this time and were perceived as demands by mentors. However, mentors who spent time with mentees to help them find ways to identify and fulfil their needs appeared to be more successful than those who felt obliged to do everything their mentee's requested. Developing the young woman's self-efficacy and focusing on maintaining a dialogue around a mutually satisfying relationship provided greater chance of continuation than when the mentor simply provided tangible assistance.

Deficiencies in mentor relational skills

Mentors' lack of relational skills was a key factor in termination of the relationship (Spencer, 2007). This included not being able to relate to the young person on their level or engage in activities that were fun and interesting. Mentees also noted that some mentors expected them to relate and behave like adults, while some mentors were disappointed if the young person did not show overt appreciation. A final relational problem occurred if the mentor was unable to bridge cultural differences, in which misunderstandings stemmed from unexamined biases and stereotyping. Ultimately, these mentors seemed unprepared to work with cultural differences or talk about them with their mentees, which points to the need for important skills in the mentor, including youth friendliness, understanding developmental stages, resilience and cultural competency.

Family interference

Some mentors have noted that they felt the family had a part in the disconnection, either through not returning calls or passing on messages from mentor to mentee (Spencer, 2007). This has been discussed previously in Chapter Three.

Inadequate agency support

Too much and too little agency support were seen by mentors as challenges to the mentoring relationship. One mentor felt that she received inadequate support dealing with unsafe behaviour on the part of the mentee, while another felt that indirect communication within the agency led to a break down in the relationship (Spencer, 2007). This highlights the need for clear roles for both the mentor and mentoring provider in the relationship, along with structured support, supervision and reporting systems.

Ending the relationship

In addition to these six challenges Bogat et al. (2008) identified the process of ending the mentoring relationship, after 6-9 months, as a significant challenge. Mentors during this time were noted to avoid planning future contact which was their responsibility. Not planning future contact is problematic, given that many at-risk youth may have attachment difficulties and are likely to experience the termination or ending of the mentoring relationship

as a further loss resulting in adverse behavioural or emotional effects (Ingram, Johnston, & North cited in Bilchik, 2006). Bogat et al. (2008) recommended that the end of the relationship is thoroughly considered and planned for from the outset and this is included in training for mentors. Ending the relationship may be informed further by a greater understanding of mentoring activities and activities that can be continued after termination, as discussed in Chapter Four.

Two challenges expressed by mentors in Bogat et al.'s (2008) study, during the final phase of the relationship, was their uncertainty of their efficacy of their role and their value in the eyes of the mentees. The authors recommended more intensive tracking of the mentors' activities by supervisors as well as a thorough introduction for both mentor and mentee to the intervention and expectations of the relationship. Further, the authors believed that clear goals and ongoing evaluation, both between mentor and mentee and between mentor, mentoring provider, mentee and family would help to give mentors a sense of their achievements. The therapeutic alliance, which will be discussed next, and evaluation discussed in Chapter Six may inform these processes.

Counselling and psychotherapy research to inform quality mentoring relationships?

In a study that looked at mentoring for teacher-identified aggressive youth, the mentees were randomly assigned to either 'therapeutic' or 'standard' mentoring (Cavell & Hughes cited in DuBois, 2006). The mentors who were part of the therapeutic group received 18 hours of training aimed at enhancing their understanding of childhood aggression and how to develop and maintain an emotionally supportive relationship with aggressive children. The 'standard' mentors received one hour training on safety and appropriate mentoring activities. Results revealed no significant difference between the two groups on outcome measures (e.g. aggression), however the young people in the therapeutic mentoring reported viewing their mentors more positively. Results further suggested that therapeutic mentoring was a better fit for young people who had experienced parental rejection or those who were viewed negatively by their peers (Cavell & Hughes cited in Dubois, 2006). An understanding of therapeutic and developmental concepts may be useful for mentoring young people with greater emotional needs.

We do a lot in the area of counselling training, like patience and communication skills. Especially in the area of high risk these are the qualities the mentors need. (Mentoring provider, Big Buddy)

Spencer (2004) noted common elements of effective therapy, derived from Rogers' person centred counselling model, including unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence. These elements, along with that of the therapeutic alliance, will be discussed below as they relate to mentoring.

Unconditional positive regard

Unconditional positive regard means that the mentor communicates an absolute acceptance of the young person's individual worth. Acceptance and positive regard for the client have been seen as catalysts to the change process as it fosters clients' sense that their feelings, thoughts and ideas matter (Spencer, 2004). However, considering the low efficacy of simply supportive mentoring (Langhout et al., 2004) unconditional positive regard needs to be an attitude, combined with structured activities.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to see the young person's point of view and to express an understanding of how they feel. Research shows that higher levels of perceived therapist empathy have been correlated with greater likelihood to stay in treatment, better outcomes and feelings of safety which in turn increases client self disclosure and sense of self (Spencer, 2004).

Congruence

This involves sensitively communicating an honest reaction whether positive or negative; However, it is important to ensure that feedback is specific and focussed on observed behaviours (Barwick, 2004).

The therapeutic alliance

The therapeutic alliance represents the interactive, collaborative elements of the relationship in the context of an affective bond or positive attachment (Zack, Castonguay, & Boswell, 2007). The therapeutic alliance takes into account the contributions of both the therapist and the client (which could be translated to mentee and mentor) and usually entails:

- the bond between the two people
- agreement of goals of treatment
- mutual engagement in tasks that facilitate movement towards these goals (Spencer, 2004)

The quality of the therapeutic alliance is a consistent predictor of more effective treatment (Spencer, 2004). The therapeutic alliance can also extend to include the family in the mentoring intervention (Thompson, Bender, Lantry, & Flynn, 2007) and is seen as strongly predicting positive outcomes in the area of family therapy. Where this larger alliance is formed, it is important that the young person's goals are not overlooked in favour of the adult's goals (Zack et al. 2007).

In addition, those mentors who strive to build collaborative working relationships rather than being overly directive are more effective. Adults who find ways of balancing structure, challenge and support are proven to be most effective according to research on adult-youth relationships in family and after-school settings (Spencer, 2004). By setting goals and agreeing on activities, the mentoring relationship becomes something that is co-created and able to be reflected on by both parties.

An alliance with a young person in a mentoring context may be different from a therapeutic alliance, particularly through the use of recreational and social activities which would rarely happen in a counselling setting. These differences are more fully explored by Zack et al. (2007) who are developing a youth alliance measurement tool.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at some of the specific elements of successful and not so successful mentoring relationships, which is influenced by both the mentor and the mentee, where the mentees age, development and interpersonal history can affect the relationship. Similarly, the mentors sense of efficacy, communication skills and resiliency influences the relationship. Successful relationships are further characterised by trust, friendship, a working alliance, clear expectations, higher duration and frequency and multi level activities. Counselling and psychotherapy literature may further inform the development of strong mentoring relationships.

Practice Implications: Youth development happens through quality relationships

- Research identifies different mentoring needs for particular times during adolescence. For example, work-based mentoring and apprenticeships may be developmentally more appropriate for older adolescents and offer an incentive for establishing and maintaining the relationship.
- The age of the mentees and mentors may affect the development of the relationship – mentor youth friendliness and the ability of mentors to connect with youth culture is important in establishing a connection.
- Identity development; forming peer relationships and individuating from parents are key developmental tasks for young people which need to be recognised by the mentor.
- Young people with attachment or developmental difficulties may struggle to form mentoring relationships. Mentors need to work sensitively in connecting with these young people and be able to handle rejection.
- Mentees with environmental risk may benefit more from mentoring than those with personal vulnerabilities.
- A mentor's sense of efficacy in dealing with complex or new situations can influence the success of a relationship. Mentors need to feel prepared to deal with a range of situations.
- Mentors need ongoing supervision and support to form effective relationships.

- **The core elements of successful mentoring relationships are:**
 1. a sense of mutual trust
 2. friendship (although the relationship is more than this)
 3. clear expectations
 4. duration and frequency (regular face to face meetings over a longer period of time)
 5. multi level activities (mentoring, skills groups and volunteering)

- **The six key themes of mentoring relationship failures are:**
 1. mentor or protégé abandonment
 2. perceived lack of protégé motivation
 3. unfulfilled expectations (for both mentor and mentee)
 4. deficiencies in mentor relational skills
 5. family interference
 6. inadequate agency support

- **Counselling and psychotherapy literature addressing effective relationships may inform the mentoring process. A healing relationship must be based on:**
 1. unconditional positive regard (as an attitude in conjunction with structured activities)
 2. empathy
 3. congruence

- By setting goals and agreeing on activities the mentoring relationship becomes something that is co-created, and is able to be reflected on by both parties. A strong working alliance between mentor, mentee and the family is a prerequisite to a successful relationship.
- Mentors need to keep the end of the relationship in mind from the beginning and support mentees to develop wider connections.
- Mentoring should take an overall development focus that is youth friendly, fun, sets high expectations, has firm boundaries and supports the young person to develop strengths rather than focusing on changing behaviour. Mentors that incorporate this focus will be the most successful in improving connection, self-esteem and competence.

Chapter Six: Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate

Principle five of the YDSA recognises that young people need to be given the opportunities to have greater control over what happens to them and around them, through advice, participation and engagement. In addition to the YDSA, the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Children, Mahere Rautaki ma ta Hunga Tamariki: Agenda for Children (2001), A framework for Taiohi Māori Development (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002), and the Youth Engagement Project (Youthline, 2006a) recommended that youth participation be enhanced and youth involved in projects from the beginning so that they can be supported to establish their place as respected citizens with valuable contributions to make.

Youth participation can strengthen the social development of young people in a number of ways through increasing their individual involvement, their organizational development and their ability to create change in their community (Checkoway, Richards-Schuster, Abdullah, & Aragon, 2003). Literature based on consultation with young people shows that participation needs to be meaningful, empowering and has real outcomes. Participation is more effective when it is relevant, carried out in a safe environment, engaging and interesting for young people and importantly offers them clear roles (Youthline, 2006a). Young people themselves consistently consider relationships that work best for them when they are treated as partners rather than subordinates (Eyrich-Garg, 2008).

The benefits of youth participation are universal. The community benefits from having the diverse inputs of young people into decision-making, the youth community benefits from having its voice represented, and the young people involved experience youth development benefits from being part of the process. In a mentoring context, greater attention is being paid to viewing mentoring as a learning partnership with benefits for both mentor and protégé (Darling et al., 2006).

Participation in mentoring

By its very nature, the mentoring relationship is a participatory process, involving the mentor and mentee agreeing to work together through shared activities. Within the relationship, the core elements, of trust, friendship, clear expectations, duration and frequency and multi level activities, discussed in the previous chapter will help to increase a young person's participation. A series of recent Youthline research projects commissioned by Counties Manukau District Health Board have included meaningful youth participation (Youthline, 2006a, 2006b, 2008). These projects have built a model of what successful youth participation might look like and include the key elements of accessibility, food, effort, environment and flexibility. Each of the key elements are described below as they relate to the mentoring process.

Accessibility

Providing transport for young people achieves increased participation. Many young people have limited means of transport. Providing transportation through an adult that the young people know is preferred to providing taxis, which can make young people uncomfortable. In a mentoring context, mentors usually provide transport to activities however, accessibility is further reflected in geographical matching and activities that the young person can continue in their own community once the mentoring relationship has ended.

Food

Food is a simple means of connecting with young people. Care should be taken to ensure that young people are asked what food they like and that any dietary needs are catered for. Mentoring provider I Have a Dream noted that a meal together can be an excellent way of connecting around busy schedules, particularly with Pasifika youth who may have a large number of family and church commitments.

Effort

As noted in the discussion of relationships, engaging with less connected or at-risk youth requires increased effort and persistence. This should be considered in project planning. Disengaged young people may have

chaotic lives with little routine and may be difficult to contact. They may not have access to the means of communication that others take for granted, such as mobile phones or e-mail.

Environment

Mentors need to ensure that the places they take young people are relaxed, safe and youth friendly, for example community centres where young people like to hang out.

Flexibility

Forward planning and flexibility with young people is needed, as youth often have different and varied commitments. While working around these commitments is usually possible, meetings should be planned well in advance to ensure that arranged times are mutually beneficial

When these elements are met young people can achieve a high level of participation which has obvious benefits for the young person but also for the mentor and the organisation. These are discussed below.

Benefits of youth participation

Researchers studying cognitive development suggested that learning takes place for young people through collaborative participation (Spencer, 2004). Spencer noted that such participation is particularly effective when the young person and adult focus their attention on a task or project of interest to the young person. The mentoring relationship can therefore contribute both to the learning needs of the young person while attending to their social needs.

The importance of the young person's autonomy in the mentoring relationship should not be underestimated. Young people in mentoring relationships should ideally be partners in the decision making process of how they occupy themselves together (Morrow & Styles, 1995; Sipe, 2002). This process in itself encourages decision making and interpersonal communication skills. Another important skill learnt in this process is that of refusing to participate rather than unthinkingly or resentfully always doing so. Saying 'no' and negotiating something different based on ones one preference may be an important developmental task for those young people whose sense of autonomy is diminished.

Demonstration by the mentor to show that he/she is willing to allow the mentee to take the initiative and have faith in his/her capacity to choose is theorized as leading to an increase relationship quality and duration (Rhodes,2006) Alternative mentoring of Bangladeshi street girls was conducted in such a way that participants were consulted about their preference regarding how the time spent with the volunteer mentors would be organised. This project was based on interventions aimed at increasing empowerment, which was seen to be marked by an "increasing sense of self-confidence and self-esteem, a growing sense of agency and of the self within a wider context, and a general sense of worth" (Sperandio, 2008, p. 210).

High level participation

Better practice in mentoring must ultimately recognise the value of youth participation to all aspects of mentoring programmes. Ungar (2005) emphasised the importance of spending time asking individuals what they need and how they resource themselves in often challenging situations; thereby, ensuring that the design and integration of the programme or service can be tailored to the people it is intended to serve in ways that are meaningful to them.

Youth participation processes may take substantial effort from the adults involved to ensure they are successful. This often means finding a balance between supporting and resourcing young people appropriately and allowing them autonomy in their own decision-making. The case study of the Nelson Youth Council in New Zealand provides a model of striking this balance (McGachie & Smith, 2003). While young people are the majority decision-makers on the youth council, an adult representative from an adjoining committee also sits on the council. Further, youth councillors are mentored by other councillors. The Nelson Youth Council is well-respected because its successful model demonstrates that young people are a major asset to the community.

Despite the wide-ranging benefits of youth participation, no literature was identified in this review that discussed youth participation in the conception or design of mentoring programmes. Hence, to date, the scope of youth participation in mentoring has largely been limited to occurring within the mentor-mentee relationship, where power-sharing is viewed as critically important. However, as noted in previous chapters, the mentoring relationship is part of a broader system of interconnected relationships that include the family, mentoring provider and the community. Therefore, full youth participation in mentoring would include youth involvement in decision making at all these levels.

It is probable that some mentoring organisations employ youth participatory processes that have not been described in the literature, however, the degree and scope of this is currently unknown. Certainly, most programmes use mentee evaluations of their experiences to shape the delivery of their services. At a local level, Brothers in Arms involves youth mentors (under 25) with younger mentees and is an entirely youth developed and youth led service. Their model could further inform youth participation in mentoring programmes.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at youth participation in the mentoring process and considerations for involving young people. While mentoring is inherently a participatory process there is scope to involve young people in all aspects of mentoring.

Practice Implications: Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate

- Mentoring needs to understand the importance of participation to the social development of young people and its role in individual development, organisational development and young people's ability to create change in their communities.
- Youth participatory mentoring activities should be relevant, carried out in a safe environment, engaging and interesting for young people, and offer them clear roles.
- Youth participatory processes at an organisational level may involve substantial effort from the adults involved and involves finding a balance between supporting and resourcing young people and allowing them autonomy in decision-making.
- Mentors need to help remove barriers that may make it difficult to engage, such as transport, food and flexibility.
- Reciprocal activities between mentors and mentees provide natural motivation to participate and form relationship.
- Strong communication between mentor and mentee provides feedback that ensures both partners in the relationship understand the needs of the other.
- Young people in mentoring relationships should ideally be partners in the decision making process of how they will occupy themselves when together. This process encourages the important skills of decision making and interpersonal communication.
- Collaborative participation is particularly effective when the young person and adult focus their attention on a task or project of interest to the young person. Thus, mentoring relationships can contribute both to the learning needs of young people and at the same time attend to their social needs.
- Mentoring providers should encourage and support youth participatory processes through all stages of mentoring programmes from design to delivery.

Chapter Seven: Youth development needs good information

This principle of the YDSA reminds us that young people and the people that work with them need access to good information to be able to make informed decisions. This includes effective research, evaluation and information sharing that is necessary for the ongoing advancement of the field of youth development. Enthusiasm for mentoring programmes in New Zealand needs to be backed by a solid research base and funding that reflects the resourcing required for such research. Additionally, a key recommendation of the meta-analysis by Dubois et al. (2002) was further research to understand the relationship. It is, therefore, important to consider how this might be done on a local level.

This chapter looks at some of the challenges to youth mentoring research and proposes the need for the use of both evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence to inform better service delivery and considers developing evaluation capacity to provide a local evidence base. Finally, the chapter will discuss information sharing within mentoring.

The challenge of researching mentoring

Researching mentoring relationships is complex because the mentoring relationship is a highly individualised intervention. Further, there are numerous factors including the mentoring provider, family, community and wider society that may impact the relationship. Research methods need to capture this complexity (DuBois, Doolittle, Yates, Silverthorn, & Tebes, 2006) and look at the quality of the relationship, the young person's development of social and emotional competencies, and the interaction between this relationship and the young person's wider social context.

Research on mentoring is further complicated by the lack of a universally accepted definition, as noted in the introduction. It is also of note that a number of studies combine a range of interventions including skills training and groups, further complicating our ability to understand the impact of mentoring. Tolan (2008) noted that many empirical reports give little description of programme characteristics, or a mentoring definition, which makes it difficult to form useful comparisons or identify exactly what elements are effective.

Dubois (2006) claimed that the central objective of any youth mentoring is to develop a beneficial relationship. However specific measures of this are as yet unclear. Some studies focus on measuring instrumental improvements, while others focus on psychosocial outcomes and many positive outcomes are assumed from measuring the absence of a negative behaviour (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). This is evidenced in findings, where the literature presents differing views of how mentoring can be efficacious. For example the Big Brothers Big Sisters review (Tierney, Grossman, & Reisch, 1995) of 959 young people aged 10-16, where the treatment group had the opportunity to be matched with a mentor, obtained the following results for the treatment group compared to the control group:

- 46% less likely to initiate drug use
- 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use
- 1/3 less likely to hit someone
- Skipped half as many days of school
- Reported improved relationship quality with parents
- Reported improved relationships with peers

However, there were no statistically significant improvements in self concept or involvement in social and cultural activities. Additionally, in this study only 78% of the treatment group had actually been matched and engaged with a mentor, while the remaining 22% did not receive intervention but were still included in treatment group statistics.

The meta-analysis conducted by Dubois et al. (2002) did not claim such strong positive results, but concluded that mentoring does have overall, average positive outcomes on emotional/psychological wellbeing, risk behaviour, social competence, academic achievement and career/employment opportunities. However, they

also noted that these outcomes, while statistically significant, are “modest in terms of absolute magnitude,” (ibid, p. 187) and further contend that mentoring is shown to have less impact than psychological, educational and behavioural treatments and mental health prevention programmes generally.

In a later study Dubois and Silverthorn (2005) concluded that natural mentoring shows favourable outcomes in education, risk behaviour, psychological wellbeing, and physical health. However, it did not have an impact on binge drinking, drug use, smoking, depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation or STD diagnosis. While it is difficult to fully understand the differences (if any) between natural and formal mentoring relationships, and therefore we cannot accurately make comparisons, Dubois and Silverthorn (2005) proposed that mentoring be used to promote positive strengths-based developmental outcomes such as emotional wellbeing as opposed to attempting to decrease risk behaviours; thus, becoming a preventative intervention.

Additionally, studies in the reviewed literature are generally short term, with immediate or short term evaluation as opposed to a long term understanding of outcomes and whether short term gains are maintained. Studies generally focus on the outcomes of relationships where mentor and mentee have engaged, and there is limited understanding of what happens when young people do not engage or the relationship is terminated. Finally, a number of different measures are used across studies. Some are based on mentor, family, teacher and mentee reports, others use measure-specific behaviours such as academic performance, while still others, use different connectedness scales. While all contribute to the body of knowledge on mentoring making global claims about effectiveness from studies that are based on one such measure of success must be avoided. Caution is also warranted given the huge variation between programme types (Rhodes, 2008). These critiques are succinctly summarised by Keating et al. (2002).

Mentoring programmes focus on different populations, (delinquents, the mentally ill, children in dysfunctional families, school dropouts); use mentoring to achieve different goals, (prevention of delinquent behaviours, prevention of mental illness, improvement of school attendance and grades); and vary in the training, monitoring, and time requirements of volunteers. Compounding this problem is the tendency of the mentoring research to rely on self report indices, to use no random assignment to treatment vs. control groups, to not obtain data about the intensity of treatment, or mentoring contact, which took place. (pp. 720-21)

To demonstrate the effectiveness of mentoring, a more unified approach to definition, goals, interventions and identified outcomes is required. As Roberts (cited in Rhodes, 2008a, p. 41) commented: “robust research does indicate benefits from mentoring for some young people, for some programmes, in some circumstances, in relation to some outcomes”. However, in working with vulnerable youth and families, these generalisations are not enough.

Evidence-Based Practice and Practice-Based Evidence – complementary paradigms for the enhancement of youth mentoring outcomes

This challenge of developing robust evidence for something that is both complex and undefined is played out in the debate between evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence. Evidence-based practice uses available research to inform practice. There are levels of evidence-based practice, with the ‘gold standard’ being systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials, which are considered the most reliable form of scientific evidence as they eliminate spurious causality and bias (Lachin, Matts, & Wei, 1988). The strength of evidence-based practice lies in its ability to generalise to the population, however the use of randomised controlled trials becomes difficult when the number of variables is high, when variables are difficult to control, or when variables cannot be appropriately quantified (Wolff, 2000). This is largely the case for youth mentoring where individual mentee, mentors, mentoring pairs, the activities they do together and the context in which they occur are highly varied.

Qualitative concepts such as relationship and connection are, by their nature, difficult – but not impossible – to measure. Qualitative data that can be gathered from a practice-based evidence framework can connect with real

practice that acknowledges the contexts within which the individual and teams work. Practice-based evidence can be defined as utilising research methodologies to gather data from practice (Walker and Bruns, 2006). Practice-based evidence gives a voice to the people involved who have first-hand knowledge and experience of what works, what needs to change and how it may change, none of which can be generated by evidence-based practice. Dubois and Rhodes, (2006) noted the importance of investigating mentoring from a process perspective where the views of mentors and mentees are sought and changes measured over time.

Evidence-based practice is a top-down process and practice-based evidence is a bottom-up process and the two can be seen as “adjoining pieces of a jigsaw, enabling the concurrent consideration of internal/statistical validity and external/naturalistic validity issues” (Newman et al., 2003, p. 73). This approach is embedded within the community and draws upon cultural knowledge and context to create interventions that are appropriate to the community (Isaacs, Huang, Hernandez & Echo-Hawk, 2005).

Developing a local evidence base

While there is much international evidence, both from top-down and bottom-up perspectives regarding mentoring, there is room to develop a unique, Aotearoa evidence base of mentoring, reflecting this country's many cultures and contexts and measuring the validity of international findings against national experience. Hence, there is a need to develop strong evaluation practices in local programmes from which to generate evidence regarding the outcomes and effectiveness of local mentoring.

There is no single, standard evaluation process for mentoring, which is not surprising given the range of mentoring programme types, goals and interventions. Dubois (2006) has outlined a set of steps to evaluate a specific youth practice.

1. Identify a problem, challenge or opportunity your program is facing
2. Develop a hypothesis or prediction regarding a practice that addresses the problem
3. Determine what practice you need to assess to test your hypothesis
4. Formulate the research question you want to answer
5. Design the evaluation including what your comparison group will be and how you will measure the outcomes
6. Collect and analyse the data
7. Use the results to feedback to practice and inform further research

Similarly, an action research based framework has been developed by Youthline (2008) to inform evaluation of community youth health centres (see Table 4, p. 54), which could be used by mentoring providers to structure evaluation processes.

Table 4: Summary of evaluation capacity building and evaluation and planning process

Stage (Based on action research cycle)	Development Tasks
1. PLANNING	Project objectives identified and reflection and planning processes established
	Programme Logic developed
	Strategic Plan developed
	Action Plans developed for all key service objectives
	Identification of particular aspects (focus) of programme/ service/ intervention to be evaluated for a specific time period
	Indicators/Measures for each focus area identified
	Evaluation Data collection processes and systems identified
EVALUATION READY	
2. ACTION	Implementation of services (ongoing and including new activities)
	Data collection – ongoing
	Areas for evaluation confirmed and evaluation plan written
	Methods established
3. OBSERVE	Base line information collected
	Interim information collected
	Outcome information collected
	Analysis
4. REFLECT	Analysis/ review / discussion
	Changes implemented and new areas for development identified
ACTION EVALUATION RESEARCH CYCLE COMPLETE	
NEW CYCLE	New action and evaluation plans established
1. PLANNING	

What is clear from both DuBois and Youthline’s frameworks is that the evaluation of outcomes needs to occur against clearly defined hypotheses or goals (Youth Mentoring Trust, 2008) and that these goals need to be aligned with theoretical frameworks on which the mentoring programme is based (Rhodes, 2002). In keeping with the definition of youth mentoring developed by the Youth Mentoring Trust (2008), the key measurements should be related to the strength of the relationship and the improvement in a young person’s connectedness and skills. Randolph and Johnson (2008) noted, “evaluations would benefit from creating models that include relevant relationship-based theories” (p. 183).

Internationally a number of tools have been developed to measure relationships in youth mentoring including: The Youth Survey (P/PV cited in Nakula and Harris, 2005), the Match Characteristics Questionnaire (MCQ) (Nakula & Harris, 1999), and the Mentor-Youth Alliance Scale (MYAS) (Zand et Al., 2009). Locally, Project K have developed their own youth development focussed evaluation process and strengths-based tools to measure relationship quality, duration and frequency including both qualitative and quantitative measures. An evaluation of the Foundation for Youth Development's Project K programme was designed by its research team and carried out in partnership with the Centre for Social Research and Evaluation (CSRE), Ministry of Social Development (MSD). A randomised control trial (RCT) was used to evaluate outcomes for young people who participated in the Project K programme. The evaluation showed an increase in self efficacy for the test group, which was maintained for those who participated in a 1 year follow up. These results may inform further youth mentoring evaluation development in New Zealand.

Guerra and Bradshaw's (2008) core competencies of healthy youth discussed in Chapter Four (positive sense of self, self control, decision making skills, a moral system of belief, pro-social connectedness) could form the basis of areas for evaluation of psychosocial outcomes for the young person, alongside measures of relationship quality. If evaluated together, then the nature of their interaction can be more fully understood and the 'how' and 'why' good outcomes are achieved can be explained and put into practice in relationships.

Further, it has been noted that the mentor/mentee relationship is only one of a number of interconnected relationships, including family, mentoring provider and the community. It is strong relationships in these spheres that will support the development of effective mentoring and robust evaluation would also measure connectedness in these areas, which Dubois et al. (2006) noted are given little attention in current mentoring research. Based on research findings provided by Kaye McLaren, PILLARS (cited in Youth Mentoring Trust, 2008) are developing a tool that measures changes that happen both for the young person and their family and will be the first of its kind internationally.

Provider evaluation challenges

While mentoring providers acknowledge the importance of evaluation, there are many challenges to doing so in a consistent and ongoing way. The first is related to the challenge of measuring complex relational interactions. Mentoring provider Big Buddy expressed this challenge when discussing formal evaluation "*we're trying to fit human, internal experiences into boxes*". While the academic community struggles with this challenge, community organisations are further hampered by a need for evaluation to be simple enough to be done regularly and on limited resources (Youthline, 2008). Further, good evaluation needs baseline data as a benchmark for comparison. This may be difficult and time consuming to do on an individual level.

To meet these challenges, mentoring provider Big Buddy has developed a qualitative approach where the details of a relationship and narrative of the progress are recorded in a database as reported by mentors. This is used to monitor and support the relationship. External evaluation is conducted alongside the mentor, mentee and family. Keeping a monitored narrative of the relationship provides interim data which can be used to shape and improve the relationship as it happens and can potentially provide further explanation of the results of formal evaluation.

Big Buddy acknowledges the cost and resources involved in this evaluation process can be an inhibiting factor for many community organisations. Dubois et al. (2002) noted programmes that have evaluation, training and structured activities produce better results, but that these require time and money which may not be available, particularly to volunteer-driven organisations. Just as mentoring requires a sensitive, relational and youth-centric approach, so too does evaluation which can be highly resource intensive. Mentoring provider TYLA recommend, engaging face to face with the young person and family to find out what is and is not working for them.

DuBois et al. (2006) emphasised the importance of collaboration with community partners at each stage of the mentoring research process. Building on a collaborative approach, mentoring providers could work together to build evaluation processes and tools to reduce costs and enhance youth sector partnership and credibility.

Information sharing

Given the stretch that robust evaluation can have on time and resources, the development of formal networks and information sharing processes may prove useful. An example of this in practice is described by Walker and Bruns (2006) where 31 stakeholders came together to define the wrap-around process for children and young people with serious emotional and behavioural problems. From this consensus-building process a Wraparound Fidelity Index was created and provided the field with “a critical starting point for measuring fidelity and evaluating impact” (Walker and Bruns, p. 1582). The authors concluded that:

...using the experience of a wide base of stakeholders to operationalise a complex model such as wraparound is feasible and holds many potential benefits, including building consensus in the field, improving service quality, and accelerating the incorporation of evaluation results into real-world practice.(Walker & Bruns, 2006, p. 1579)

This same process could be utilised in Aotearoa to harness the wisdom of the people working in youth mentoring. The Youth Mentoring Trust and other youth organisations have websites that greatly assist this process through the posting of relevant and up to date research and literature as well as contact information for those wishing to learn more from mentoring providers. This could further be utilised to develop a Practice Research Network where clinicians collaborate on research to inform their day to day practice. Data is used from ‘real world’ practice settings and a collaborative approach can generate large data sets (Walker & Bruns, 2006).

Conclusion

The mentoring relationship is complex and multifaceted, creating a challenge for research and evaluation, which can be further complicated by the range of definitions, goals, activities and measures of mentoring. However, robust research and evaluation is essential to understand the efficacy of mentoring and guide further programme development. A combination of evidence-based and practice-based research may provide the most beneficial data. At a local level, the implementation of evaluation practices and information sharing amongst providers may assist in understanding and developing effective mentoring relationships.

Practice Implications: Youth development needs good information

- Building an evidence base for mentoring is difficult as it is a complex intervention impacted by contextual factors further complicated by different approaches to understanding and measuring mentoring. A combination of evidence based and practice based research may provide the best information.
- Programmes should implement an evaluation framework which identifies clear hypotheses or goals. These goals need to align with theoretical frameworks on which the mentoring programme is based.
- The key measurements should be related to improvements in the young person’s connectedness and skills as well as the strength of the relationship.
- Simple evaluation tools should be favoured over those that will be prohibitively costly to implement. Cost, time and complexity are barriers to successful evaluation processes, especially for community organisations.
- Building on a collaborative approach, mentoring providers could work together to build evaluation processes and tools which will improve the ability to compare effectiveness under different approaches while reducing costs and enhancing youth sector partnership and credibility.

Chapter Eight: Recommendations and conclusions

Youth mentoring is a complex intervention with a range of processes that occur at multiple levels including the individual, relationship and systems level. This review, framed by the YDSA (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002a) has looked at the wider context within which mentoring occurs, discussed the role that family and community can play in the success or failure of a mentoring relationship and identified the characteristics of quality mentoring relationships, as well as areas where mentoring may not be efficacious.

Overall, the literature shows that the strength of mentoring as an intervention lies in the ability to develop a close, positive and supportive relationship (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002) which is related to developing resilience (Rhodes, 2002). Within this relationship, there is capacity to influence the social and emotional, cognitive, and identity development of the young person (Rhodes, 2005) through activities that are youth friendly, ideally strengths focussed and which have involved the young person in the decision making process. The development of a youth-centred, trusting relationship with clear expectations is the first task of the mentoring relationship but not the only task, as mentoring relationships that are only unconditionally supportive show no positive outcomes (Langhout et al., 2004). Mentoring needs to be an intentional activity where the mentor is supported to recognise and aid in the growth of both instrumental and psychosocial competencies through activities and honest feedback.

This said, there are mixed results in the literature of the ability of mentoring to assist in the development of competencies in these areas. Further investigation reveals the main reasons for this are in the lack of clear definitions for mentoring, differing goals for mentoring and the methodological challenges associated with measuring relationships and deciding what constitutes 'healthy' youth (Keating et al., 2002). In addition, it is as yet, unclear from the literature exactly which mentoring activities contribute to enhancing which outcomes. The literature further points to some caveats for mentoring. These include recognising that mentoring may not always be beneficial for youth who have been abused (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes, 2005), that it can be harmful if terminated early (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002), that it may not be useful for particular age/gender combinations (Karcher, 2008a) and that a traditional mentoring model is not appropriate for all cultures (Afeaki-Mafile'o, 2007).

A youth development approach recognises that mentoring relationships exist within a wider social context and are part of a system of interconnected relationships. These include relationships with families, which play a crucial role in the success or failure of the mentoring relationship (Dubois et al., 2002), relationships with peers, which can have both positive and negative influences, and relationships with the wider community, where involvement in community based activities can enhance youth development (McLaren, 2002). Reflecting this understanding, multi-level or interventions where mentoring is one part of a range of interventions, including skills groups, psychoeducation and volunteering have demonstrated an increase in protective factors for at-risk youth, particularly regarding self-esteem (Keating et al., 2002; Moody et al., 2003). A greater understanding is required of the interplay of these features on mentoring relationship outcomes.

Given the findings of this literature review, it can be concluded that mentoring is not a stand-alone intervention and needs to be part of a wrap-around approach that works with the young person and their family, which is a recommended approach for youth at-risk (Fleming et al., 2004; Youthline 2008). This points to an important role for mentoring providers in linking and connecting with the mentor, family, other services and wider community. From these understandings and resulting practice implications recommendations for further research and development have been made and are described below.

Further research and recommendations

The National Research Summit on Mentoring in the United States (2003), consisting of 27 youth mentoring scholars identified the following areas for further research:

- Evaluation of new generation mentoring programs (peer, group, e-mentoring and strategies tied to the different settings where mentoring is expanding (school, work-place, faith-based),
- Integrating mentoring with other programs and services – how to maximise the benefits from a wrap-around service,
- How to improve mentor recruitment, training and retention,
- Greater understanding of mentoring effectiveness for special populations of mentees and greater understanding of the relevance of age, ethnicity and gender to mentoring outcomes,
- The development of research tools that can be used by mentoring programme providers to evaluate and improve their programs. (DuBois & Rhodes, 2006)

These recommendations reflect some of the current gaps in knowledge about mentoring at a wider level; however, the authors of this review also propose a number of recommendations to be implemented at a local level.

- That mentoring providers continue to develop links with other community agencies to offer a wrap-around service to young people and their families.
- That a definition and scope of mentoring are agreed upon.
- Commissioning of a major national longitudinal study would be useful to understand youth mentoring in Aotearoa, particularly as there is little understanding internationally of the long term effects.
- To further investigate relationships where there is no engagement or early termination.
- To further investigate mentoring activities to understand which activities contribute more to which types of outcomes.
- To include young people in all levels of mentoring programmes, including high level decision making.
- That standard evaluation practices and tools are developed that match the goals of the mentoring relationship. This may be supported by work in other sectors, such as the evaluation developments around Youth One Stop Shops and work done by local providers.
- To build links between providers, to facilitate information and resource sharing, for example the network meeting organised by the Youth Mentoring Trust in 2008.

Overall, this report has revealed the complexity of mentoring relationships and it is hoped that the key findings as outlined in each of the chapters can be used to inform mentoring providers, training programmes, mentor practices and evaluation.

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Appendix A: Questions for mentoring providers

- There are a variety of descriptions of at risk youth in the literature, for the most part identified as having either environmental, individual or a combination of risk factors such as: attending a low decile school or leaving school early. How does your organisation understand at-risk young people?
- What do you suggest are the differences/challenges/considerations to mentoring 'at-risk' young people and what processes does a service need to have in place to meet these needs?
- What do you suggest are the most important things to consider when matching mentor and mentee pairs and how does your organisation support the mentoring relationship?
- Do you involve the mentee's family in the intervention? If so, what do you suggest are the best ways for involving them in your work?
- Does your organisation take a multi-faceted approach to working with 'at-risk' youth, and in a perfect world what aspects of a mentoring programme would you suggest be further enhanced to meet the needs of 'at-risk' youth?
- What is the evaluation process for your mentoring program?

Appendix B: Mentoring provider profiles and contact information

PILLARS

PILLARS is an innovative long term, prevention program serving children with a parent in prison. Established in 1988, services are delivered by professional social workers and volunteer mentors utilizing the natural and professional networks already available to the child, their parents and their family / whanau through a family wrap-around which encompasses one on one social work support, children of prisoners mentoring, residential services (Auckland only) and strengthening family meetings. Services are child focused and family centered, ensuring that the care and protection of the child is paramount at all times. The Pillars Mentoring Programme provides mentors to children/youth aged 5-18 years, who have a parent in prison. Mentors provide children and young people with individualised time and attention on a regular basis. This is typically once a fortnight for 2 to 6 hours, with telephone contact weekly.

Phone: (09) 631-0575

Website: www.pillars.co.nz

Brothers in Arms

Brothers in Arms exist to bring hope and change to the young people of New Zealand who grow up in a world without a positive role model. Through one on one mentoring, young kiwis will have their eyes opened to a range of new experiences that will impact their lives forever. There are thousands of young people in Auckland who are in need of a mentor right now and BIA are taking up the challenge of inspiring ordinary New Zealanders to stand up and give of themselves to volunteer and fill this role.

Phone: (09) 524 7676

Email: info.bia@xtra.co.nz

Turn Your Life Around

The Turn Your Life Around Trust (TYLA) was established in Auckland in 1996. It is a coaching program that identifies boys and girls between 10-16 years attending school. These are young people who, without some guidance and support, could struggle to keep their lives moving forward in a positive direction. The Trust uses a mentoring and coaching system to help guide these young people toward making the right choices for themselves. It encourages them to think about their future and to focus on goals that will make their lives constructive. TYLA offers opportunities for young people to grow through physical and mental challenges. The TYLA program has a 5 year plan for participants that operates around 3 steps. The first is to identify and select candidates requiring guidance. Second, to coach them and equip them with the skills and confidence to make the right choices, and third to encourage them to be independent.

Big Buddy

Big buddy mentoring is based on the simple philosophy that boys need good male role models in their lives to become good men. Unfortunately, many boys do not have a father or male role model in their lives. Big buddy's solution is to match these boys with a well-screened male mentor who can foster a relationship similar to that of say an uncle. Men are recruited from around the community to act as mentors to these fatherless boys, big buddy mentors commit to spending 2-3 hours a week with a boy (little buddy, aged 7-12) for at least a year but after that year most say it's for a lifetime. They spend quality time together doing ordinary things like, kicking a ball around a park, fishing, walking on the beach or simply hanging out together.

Phone: 09 838 4448

Website: www.bigbuddy.org.nz

I Have a Dream

I Have A Dream projects motivate and empower children from low-income communities to reach their education and career goals by providing a long-term program of mentoring, tutoring and enrichment, along with tuition and assistance for higher education. Each project selects one entire year level from the founding primary school, not just the talented kids or the troubled kids. Each project works with that same group of children from early primary school right through to tertiary study. Volunteers serve as tutors, mentors and in many other roles, providing "Dreamers" with the support of additional caring adults. The I Have a Dream program is flexible, and is intended to be tailored to suit the particular needs of the communities where its projects operate. The I Have a Dream program balances supports with challenges, encouraging "Dreamers" to set high expectations for themselves, but also permitting them to make mistakes and still remain in the program. "Once a Dreamer, always a Dreamer" is the rule.

Phone: 09 620-5411

Website: www.ihaveadream.org.nz

Tautoko Teina

Tautoko Teina is a youth mentoring program based in Whangarei for young people aged 8-14 years, who are referred by other agencies e.g. schools, Barnardos, Child Health Centre, Health Camp, Police etc., although they can also be referred by parents. Tautoko Teina works alongside the mentee's family. The mentors are there solely as a friend for the young person. They spend between 1-3 hours together once a week, just hanging out, and do things together that they mutually enjoy. Later, if the mentor chooses, the young person can meet and socialise with the mentor's family. Tautoko Teina also runs a Positive Parenting course for parents of the mentees on the programme.

Phone: (09) 4303 575.

Project K

Project K mentors are ordinary people that come from all walks of life. What makes them extraordinary is their commitment to support a young person to help them maximise their potential. Mentors attend a 20 hour training programme and are screened and interviewed, after which they qualify for consideration as Project K mentors. Mentors build a trusting partnership with a Project K student and assist them to set and achieve goals as well as engage in fun, shared activities. Mentors meet with mentees once a fortnight and catch up once a week by phone or email, for a period of 12 months. Monthly mentor meetings and community activities are also part of the programme. Project K has a comprehensive evaluation process which has shown improvements in self efficacy as a result of the programme which in addition to the year of mentoring includes a 3 week Wilderness Adventure and a 10 day Community Challenge.

Phone: (09) 477 6237

Website: www.projectk.org.nz

Appendix C: The six C's

Competence

- Find things your protégé likes and support these passions and activities without taking over.
- Find things that your protégé does well and encourage him/her to pursue interests, activities, or hobbies that emphasize these skills.
- Help your protégé see that the skills s/he has are portable, that they can be transferred into other areas where s/he feels not-so-skilled.
- Actively involve your protégé in making decisions that impact the completion of family tasks.
- Turn mistakes—whether trivial or serious—into teachable moments.

Confidence

- Make sure your protégé has a convoy of support so s/he feels loved and valued everyday and everywhere.
- Share your own life woes and lapses in confidence and ask your protégé for help when you can.
- Be especially attentive to obstacles that may challenge your female protégé's confidence: Confidence is likely to dip more for girls than for boys during early and middle adolescence.
- Increase youth social capital by connecting him/her to institutions and people to whom s/he might not otherwise have access.

Connection

- Respect your protégé's privacy but appreciate that privacy can be perilous. Be respectful but vigilant.
- Create opportunities in your community so your protégé feels his/her voice is being heard. All youth want to feel that they matter.

Character

- If you don't approve of a friend, relationship or activity, speak out! Let your protégé know your values and explain why some behaviors aren't acceptable.
- Make sure your actions align with your words—you are, after all, a key model for your protégé.
- Keep a sense of perspective—and sometimes a sense of humor—about minor infractions in character.
- Provide opportunities for your protégé to make his/her own decisions—and, when you give him/her this opportunity, live with the decisions s/he makes.

Caring

- The times when our protégés treat us as if we're disposable may be when they need us the most. Hang back, wait for an opening to talk, and respond.
- Caring is contagious: caring mentors help develop caring teens. Model caring in your interactions with your protégé and in your community.
- Encourage protégés to join school boards, civic organizations, or faith-based institutions to promote caring and social justice in the world around them.

Contribution

- Encourage your protégé to participate in causes that align with his/her interests.
- Encourage people and institutions to welcome youth participation.
- Help youth marshal the resources they need so their contributing efforts have a good chance of succeeding.
- Don't overprotect your protégés from failure; they need to understand that even the most worthwhile efforts sometimes meet with disappointment.

(Lerner, Brittan, & Fay, 2006, pp. 5-6)

Appendix D: Glossary of Maori Terms

Taiohi Māori – young Māori

Whakapapa – genealogy, family tree

Iwi – people, extended kinship group

Waka – canoe, vehicle, conveyance, spirit medium

Whanaungatanga – relationship, togetherness, collectivity

Te Reo – Maori language

Mana – authority, prestige

Hui – a meeting or gathering

Tangi – to cry or mourn

Whanau – family group, extended family

Karakia – pray, to recite prayers, to recite ritual chants

Waiata – song, to sing