DCF Credentialing Chronicle

2013 NATIONAL MENTORING SUMMIT

MENTORING WORKS:
Inspire. Achieve. Advocate.

January 24 - 25, 2013

The Value of Mentoring

At its most basic level, mentoring helps because it guarantees a young person that there is someone who cares about them. A child is not alone in dealing with day-to-day worries. Think back. Did you know how to study for a test or make plans for college? Do you remember wanting your first car or looking for a part-time job? Simple things that seem easy or straightforward to you now may appear to be a complete mystery to a young person. Mentors provide their mentees with an experienced friend who is there to help in any number of situations.

Support for education
- Mentors help keep students in school.
- Students who meet regularly with their mentors are 52% less likely than their peers to skip a day of school and 37% less likely to skip a class (Public/Private Ventures study of Big Brothers Big Sisters).
- Mentors help with homework and can improve their mentees' academic skills.

Support with day-to-day living
- Mentors help improve a young person's self-esteem.
- Mentors provide support for students trying new behaviors.
- Youth who meet regularly with their mentors are 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs and 27% less likely to start drinking (Public/Private Ventures study of Big Brothers Big Sisters).
- About 40% of a teenager's waking hours are spent without companionship or supervision. Mentors provide teens with a valuable place to spend free time.
- Mentors teach young people how to relate well to all kinds of people and help them strengthen communication skills.

The number of ways mentoring can help a youth are as varied as the people involved in each program. While the lists and statistics can be impressive, personal stories can be even more impressive.

To learn more visit http://www.mentoring.org.

CONNECTICUT MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

In Connecticut, there are more than 190,000 children (25 percent of Connecticut youth) that have life situations that place them at risk for personal and academic failure. These situations include poverty, inadequate early childhood experiences and preparation for school, family drug use, violence, involvement in the criminal justice system, and lack of access to needed social and mental health services, among others.
Children who have ongoing relationships with caring adults are more likely to avoid alcohol or other drugs, stay in school and get good grades, have a better self-image and have better relationships with their families and friends. Many more mentors, especially men and minorities, are needed.

Since its inception, CMP has:
- Created over 300 new mentoring programs
- Established a state-wide and a specialized male mentor recruitment campaign
- Initiated the Mentor Training Institute
- Established quality standards and formed Regional Mentoring Networks

*** Training and Events ***

Supporting and Supervising Mentors - Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™ Standard 5: Monitoring and Support
Match monitoring is an essential component of successful mentoring programs and fulfills a variety of needs. Checking in with mentors, mentees, and parents on a regular basis is an important tool for risk management and has been found to lead to stronger, longer lasting relationships. Matches that are monitored and supported are more satisfying and successful, which, in turn, leads to more positive youth outcomes.
When: **Thursday, January 10, 2013; 9:00am - 11:00am**
Where: **The Governor's Prevention Partnership - Training Facility, Wethersfield, CT**
Cost: **$40** *per person*

The Fundamentals of Mentor Screening -Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™ Standard 2: Screening
Careful screening improves the quality of your mentors and helps to ensure the safety of youth involved in your program and manages the level of risk and liability. This training will present details on effective practices for screening potential mentors including interview techniques as well as reference and back ground checks.
When: **Wednesday, January 23, 2013; 9:00am - 11:00am**
Where: **The Governor's Prevention Partnership - Training Facility, Wethersfield CT**
Cost: **$40 per person**

Build the Right Structure; Effective Program Operations - Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™
The day-to-day procedures you establish for operating your mentoring program create the environment in which your program staff, mentors, mentees and other stakeholders work to build safe and effective mentoring relationships and a sustainable mentoring program. Your program operations must reflect the key characteristics of such relationships: consistency, compatibility, support and accountability.
When: **Friday, February 8, 2013; 8:30am - 10:30am**
Where: **The Governor's Prevention Partnership - Training Facility, Wethersfield, CT**
Cost: **$40** *per person*

To learn more about the Governor's Prevention Partnership, visit www.preventionworksct.org.

Become a Mentor

To be a mentor, you don't need special skills, just an ability to listen and to offer friendship, guidance and encouragement to a young person. And you'll be amazed by how much you'll get out of the experience.

Mentoring happens in a number of settings:

- The community.
- Schools.
- The faith-based community.
- Business.
- Through the Internet.

For more information about these settings, as well as additional mentoring resources, visit www.mentoring.org

11 Facts About SCHOOL BULLYING

1. 56% of students have personally felt some sort of bullying at school. Between 4th and 8th grade in particular, 90% of students are victims of bullying.
2. The most common reason cited for being harassed is a student's appearance or body size. 2 out of 5 teens feel that they are bullied because of the way that they look.
3. 9 out of 10 LGBT youth reported being verbally harassed at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation.
4. 1 in 4 teachers see nothing wrong with bullying and will only intervene 4% percent of the time.
5. A victim of bullying is twice as likely to take his or her own life compared to someone who is not a victim.
6. One out of 10 students drop out of school because they are bullied.
7. Physical bullying peak in middle school and declines in high school. Verbal abuse rates remain constant from elementary to high school.
8. Researchers feel that bullying should not be treated as part of growing up (with the attitude "kids will be kids").
9. 41% of principals say they have programs designed to create a safe environment for LGBT students, but only 1/3 of principals say that LGBT students would feel safe at their school.
10. 57% of students who experience harassment in school never report the incident to the school. 10% of those who do not report stay quiet because they do not believe that teachers or staff can do anything. As a result, more than a quarter of students feel that school is an unsafe place to be.
11. Schools with easily understood rules of conduct, smaller class sizes and fair discipline practices report less violence than those without such features.

www.DOSOMETHING.org

Conflict
is a part of everyday life. As adults, we maneuver ourselves away from conflict throughout our days, and sometimes we know that it just happens. It goes without saying, then, that some conflict is normal in our children's lives in the same way that it is normal in our lives. It is only because of our experience in dealing with conflict that we, as adults, now know how to deal with conflict ourselves. In fact, many adults attribute the difficulties that we have faced in conflict with others as areas of growth that have built our resilience and helped us face life's adversities.

As adults – whether parents, school officials, or community members – we need to recognize that some of what we call "bullying" may actually be developmentally appropriate conflict and is a normal part of growing up.

Bullying
is a complex problem, but there are good tools and resources that can help parents, educators, and caring adults identify bullying behavior.

Did you know that there are four, specific characteristics that can qualify a situation as bullying? The behavior has to be intentional, be repetitive, be hurtful, and involve an imbalance of power.

- **Intentional**—Children can hurt other children by accident. Bullying, however, is always intentional and meant to cause some sort of harm, whether it is physical or verbal. This behavior may persist even after the victim has asked the bully to stop.
- **Repetitive**—In most cases, bullying happens repeatedly. Bullies often target children who they know will not do anything about the behavior, so they can continue bullying as long as they like.
- **Hurtful**—Bullying is a negative behavior that may include physical or verbal harm. The types of hurtful behavior that qualify as bullying are varied, but they all cause harm of some sort to the victim.
- **Imbalance of power**—If two children hold an equal amount of power, one cannot bully the other. This imbalance of power can come from different sources, including age, size, strength, and social status.

Helping Kids Rise above Bullying
While devising programs and plans to reduce the incidence of bullying is important, these actions can only do so much. All adults need to realize that they play an important role in preventing bullying. The action steps that adults can take start at home, and spread to schools and entire communities. These action steps are called building resilience, and it's the long-term solution to addressing bullying and other risky childhood behaviors.

Although some kids may have some biological inclination toward resilience, there is research that overwhelmingly points toward the ability for resilience factors to be learned. When we teach resilience, we are able to change the life trajectories of kids from risk to resilience, but it has to be taught to them by the adults in their families, their schools, and their communities.

Stepping In

Bullying and violence are very difficult issues to deal with. It can be heartbreaking to learn that your child has been bullied, and frustrating if he or she is the one doing the bullying. But with positive intervention, you can help improve the situation.

If your child is prepared to deal with negative situations, he or she will be better able to handle bullying, and may even have a positive influence on the bully. And if you know when to step in, you can help prevent further violence from occurring, no matter whose child is involved.

Resources for parents, school and the community:

- ✓ www.parentfurther.com
- ✓ www.bullyfree.com
- ✓ www.violencepreventionworks.org
- ✓ http://kidshealth.org
- ✓ http://www.pacer.org/bullying

Cyberbullying is

bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Being a victim of cyberbullying can be a common and painful experience. Examples of cyberbullying include:

- Sending or forwarding mean text messages or emails
- Tricking people into revealing personal information
- Spreading lies and rumors about victims sent by email or posted on social networking sites
- Posting embarrassing pictures, videos, websites of their victims without their consent and
- Pretending they are other people online by posting fake profiles to trick others

Effects of Cyberbullying

Cell phones and computers themselves are not to blame for cyberbullying. Social media sites can be used for positive activities, like connecting kids with friends and family, helping students with school, and for entertainment. But these tools can also be used to hurt other people. Whether done in person or through technology, the effects of bullying are similar.

Kids who are cyberbullied are more likely to:

- Use alcohol and drugs
- Skip school
- Experience in-person bullying
- Be unwilling to attend school
- Receive poor grades
- Have lower self-esteem
- Have more health problems

The New Face of Bullying

Why Cyberbullying is Different

Kids who are being cyberbullied are often bullied in person as well. Additionally, kids who are cyberbullied have a harder time getting away from the behavior.

FACTS:

Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a kid even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night.

Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.

Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

When teens were asked why they think others cyberbully, 81 percent said that cyberbullies think it's funny. Other teens believe that youth who cyberbully

- Don't think it's a big deal
- Don't think about the consequences
- Are encouraged by friends
- Think everybody cyberbullies
- Think they won't get caught

How Do Victims React?

Contrary to what cyberbullies may believe, cyberbullying is a big deal, and can cause a variety of reactions in teens. Some teens have reacted in positive ways to try to prevent cyberbullying by

- Blocking communication with the cyberbully
- Deleting messages without reading them
- Talking to a friend about the bullying
- Reporting the problem to an Internet service provider or website moderator

Many youth experience a variety of emotions when they are cyberbullied. Youth who are cyberbullied report feeling angry, hurt, embarrassed, or scared. These emotions can cause victims to react in ways such as
- Seeking revenge on the bully
- Avoiding friends and activities
- Cyberbullying back

Some teens feel threatened because they may not know who is cyberbullying them. Although cyberbullies may think they are anonymous, they can be found.

For More Information on Cyberbullying and its Prevention, please visit:

'Nobody likes me ... I can't believe what my so-called friends are saying about me...I cannot go to school tomorrow...'

'She's got a great group of friends... they all keep in contact with each other...'

What's wrong with this picture? Do we really know what our children are saying to each other?

> "Some people won't be happy until they've pushed you to the ground. What you have to do is have the courage to stand your ground and not give them the time of day. Hold on to your power and never give it away."
> — Donna Schoenrock

Just Saying.....

The 2008–2009 School Crime Supplement (National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics) indicates that 6% of students in grades 6–12 experienced cyberbullying.

The 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey finds that 16% of high school students (grades 9-12) were electronically bullied in the past year.

- ➢ www.ncpc.org
- ➢ www.wiredsafety.com
- ➢ www.stopbullyingnow.com
- ➢ www.stopbullying.gov

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Mandated reporters are required to report or cause a report to be made when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm. (Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101a)

DCF will provide Mandated Reporter Training for any provider in the state that wishes to receive it.

MANDATED REPORTER TRAINING ONLINE

DCF is happy to announce that Mandated Reporter Training is now available ONLINE for school employees and community providers. Please use the link in the section below that corresponds to your agency, organization, or facility to register for and view the video.

For "School Employees"
http://www.ct.gov/dcf/webForms/survey_BLANK.asp?domainid=1665&loginid=101192&surveySet=1189

For "Community Provider"
http://www.ct.gov/dcf/webForms/survey_blank.asp?domainid=1665&loginid=101192&surveySet=1192

The material in the presentation will be updated on a regular basis. DCF request that this registration link be used each time the video is viewed to ensure that you are receiving the current material.

For more information please visit: http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=3483&Q=413540

Who Must Report Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect?

Connecticut law requires certain citizens to report suspected child abuse and neglect. These mandated reporters are people in professions or occupations that have contact with children or whose primary focus is children. The law requires that they report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Learn **What Mandated Reporters Need to Know**:
http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=2556&Q=314384

Credentialed Provider Meeting

Are you a currently approved DCF Provider?

Attend the quarterly Community Program Review Meetings for program updates and valuable information.   Meetings are held at the **Albert J. Solnit Center, South Campus** (Riverview Hospital), Silvermine Training Center 915 River Road, Middletown CT 06457.