Low-Cost, High-Impact Mentoring Practices
(He Len Chung, Dan-anh Tran, and Aleisa Campbell)

The question asked by the TPPB working group was, "If we were to request/require each mentoring program to do one thing that was high-impact, low cost, what would be most impactful in preventing Juvenile Crime?" We answered this question first by making a general recommendation about how programs can have a significant impact now, as well as in the long run (across different staff members and organizational constraints). We then provide recommendations about specific high-impact, low cost program components that, based on the existing scientific literature, are most likely to prevent juvenile crime.

General Recommendation
The primary recommendation is for every mentoring program to charge an existing staff member with the responsibility of reviewing and making decisions about implementing free program resources (including free technical assistance) to ensure that its programing integrates evidence-based recommendation and best practices. These resources include written manuals, online web-based training videos/modules, and technical assistance from experts in the field of mentoring. We recommend this critical task for at least four reasons:
- Individual programs will differ in terms of how they currently implement (or how they plan to implement) best-practices, and these resources will allow programs to develop free, concrete, individualized recommendations that fit their program's specific needs.
- Resources are likely to change according to changes in research- and practice-based recommendations, and having a staff member in charge of monitoring these changes will help programs stay current with up-to-date best practices.
- These resources are supported by organizations and individuals with specialized expertise for preventing juvenile crime and promoting positive youth development.
  - Expert technical assistance can be invaluable for helping programs troubleshoot (inevitable) problems with implementing best practices.
  - Resources are available to assist with different types of populations (e.g., youth involved with foster care, pregnant teenagers, adjudicated youth transitioning from residential placement back to the community), which can create unique challenges.

Below is a list of three resource recommendations.
1. *The National Mentoring Resource Center: A Program of OJJDP* (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention)
   http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php
   The National Mentoring Resource Center serves as a comprehensive and reliable resource for mentoring tools, program and training materials, and information. In addition to accessing online resources, mentoring programs can apply for no-cost training and technical assistance to support them in more deeply incorporating evidence-based practices, ultimately leading to greater positive outcomes for youth. The site includes:
   - Information about the *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* (document that summarizes the research- and practitioner-informed recommended practices for implementing a quality youth mentoring program).
   - Insights about programs and practices to incorporate into your own program.

- Descriptions of peer created resources you can use to strengthen your own program.
- Access to no-cost training and technical assistance support.

2. *The Center for the Advancement of Mentoring (TCAM)*
   http://advancementoring.edc.org/online-training
   With funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, TCAM has created free web-based training resources. The self-paced, online training modules incorporate mentoring research and best practices, interactive activities, opportunities to learn and practice skills, and recommended resources. Each of the modules can be completed in 30–40 minutes—at a time that is convenient to the user.

3. *Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series*
   http://www.mentoring.org/program-resources/collaborative-mentoring-webinar-series/
   MENTOR (The National Mentoring Partnership) – in collaboration with The National Mentoring Resource Center, OJJDP, and other mentoring organizations – delivers a webinar each month focused on strengthening mentoring practice, sharing new resources, and helping the field put research into practice. Free technical assistance is available, along with approved quality mentoring materials. Users can participate in the live webinars, as well as access previous webinars (including presentation slides) which are archived on the web site noted above.

Recommendations about Specific Program Components

All research suggests that having a positive and engaging relationship between a mentor and mentee is the key to program impact (see Dubois et al., 2002; Miller et al., 2012; Tolan et al., 2013). Current research suggests that the most positive outcomes happen for mentees when:

- Mentors
    - Undergo an initial screening to determine fit for the position
    - Receive a formal orientation and training to be an effective mentor (see web sites identified earlier for resources; see also Big Brothers Big Sisters Training Manual available online)
    - Receive support and supervision from a more experienced mentor (see also Peaslee & Teye, 2011; Sipe, 2002)
    - Place emphasis on advocacy for the mentee (e.g., helping mentee reach a personal school or career goal, helping mentee access other resources/services)
    - Are interested in furthering their professional careers (which is linked to mentors' personal commitment to the mentoring process)
- Mentors and mentees
    - Are paired according to some shared interest
    - Meet frequently (and the expectations about frequency are specific and clear)
    - Meet for a long span of time (see also Sabol & Listenbee, 2014)
    - Engage in structured activities with specific goals
        - Structured activities – especially ones that highlight skills-based activities – are more effective than less structured approaches, such as general counseling (see also Britner et al., 2006). *Note*: The April 21st webinar for the *Collaborative Mentoring Webinar Series* is titled, "Activity-Based Mentoring: Can Structured Activities Make Mentoring Better? What

happens when activities are a central focus of mentoring relationships?" (This webinar will be archived at the web site noted earlier).

- Programs that focus on providing unconditional and uncritical support (without any type of skill development for mentees) do not produce positive outcomes (see also Kellermann et al., 1998)

Research does not indicate if one of these specific factors is most important for implementing a successful mentoring program, but the evidence clearly indicates that programs should (1) provide an infrastructure that fosters the development of effective mentor-mentee relationships, and (2) monitor program implementation to ensure that program recommendations are carried out successfully.

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