SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING: Drawing Strength From the Community to Help At-Risk Students

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Overview

• Intro
• Methods
• Results
• Conclusion
Risk Factors

- **Poverty**, parental unemployment, parental criminality, large family size, and poor parenting techniques (Howard & Dryden, 1999)

- **Strained family relationships**, family conflict, poor communication skills contribute to rates of depression among children (Merrell, 2001)
Risk Factors

- 20% of children suffer from mental health problems (Power, 2003)

- Less than 50% of those children receive services

- 5-6% of school age children are eligible for special education services under the classification of emotional disability. Only about 2% receive services (Kauffman, 2001).
Risk Factors

- Poor attachment patterns between children and parents are linked with anxiety problems along with high rates of stress and exposure to highly stressful events

(Merrell, 2001)
Foundations Of Mentoring

- Homers Odyssey
- Extended Families
- Heroic Legends
- Sports
- Business
- President Bush $450 million
Variations of **SCHOOL-BASED Mentoring**

- Older Student mentors Younger Student
- Informal Mentoring by Faculty & Staff
- Formal Mentoring by Faculty & Staff
- Partnership with a Business, Community Group, University, or Interested Individuals
- Specialized Mentor for a child who is both at-risk and gifted
- Team Mentoring
Rationale

- Relationships with non-parental adults are vital assets for positive youth development (Scales, 2003)
- Studies of resilience among youth from at-risk backgrounds first alerted scholars to the protective functions that can be fulfilled by relationships with non-parental adults (Werner, 1995)
What is a Mentor?

- Someone with greater wisdom or experience

- Someone who offers guidance or instruction intended to facilitate growth and development

- Guide, teacher, friend, tutor, advocate, motivator, role model, link to another generation

There is an emotional bond between mentor and mentee, a hallmark of which is a sense of trust (Freedman 1992)
Mentors Help By...

- *Enhancing* Social Skills and Emotional Wellbeing

- *Improving* Cognitive Skills through Listening & Dialogue

- *Serving* as a Role Model/Advocate *(Rhodes, 2002)*

- *Advocating* Health and Safety

- *Promoting* Self Sufficiency *(Jekielek, 2002)*
Contexts of Mentoring

**Community**
- Less Structure
- Less Supervision
- More Variety in Activities
- Selection by Parents and Community

**School-Based**
- More Structure
- More Supervision
- Academics
- Regular Scheduled Visits
- Selection by School

(DuBois & Karcher 2005)
Benefits of School-Based Mentoring

• Less Costly
• Identify Children in School Context
• School Resources Staff Administration
• More Convenient for Volunteers
• Time Commitment
• Older Adult’s Feel Safer
• Establish Community Support within School

Dubois & Karcher (2005)
The goal of true mentoring is the development of the youth—not necessarily the solution of specific problems.
Common Interventions

- Reactive
- Punishment
- School psychologists or counselors
- Suspension and Expulsion
Positive Behavior Support

3-5% Additional professional intervention is needed

7-10% Additional intervention needed:

85-90% of students respond to PBSI without additional intervention

All children receive School-Wide PBS
Research Question

Is School-Based Mentoring an Effective Intervention for Students At-Risk for Emotional and Behavioral Disorders?
Setting

- 1 Elementary School in Central Utah
  - 532 Students
  - Over 50% free or reduced lunch

- Student Support
  - Principal
  - Advocate
  - .25 Psychologist
Participants

- Students
- Mentors
- Parents
- Teachers
- Administration
- Research Team
Student Selection

- Systematic Screening For Behavior Disorders (SSBD) (Walker & Severson 1992)
- Screens All Students
- Identifies 2 Categories of Behavior
  - Internalizing
  - Externalizing
- Identifies Level of Need
  - Primary
  - Secondary
  - Tertiary

~80% of Students

~5%

~15%
Recruitment of Mentors

- Start with school contacts
  - Principal and staff suggestions
  - PTA suggestions
  - School volunteers
- Businesses connected with the school
- Community service groups
- Church out-reach programs
- Retirement Communities
# Profile of Mentors

## Methods

### Age Range

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### Education

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<td>Some College</td>
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<td>BA/BS Degree</td>
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### Employed

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<td>Part-time</td>
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<td>Full-time</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Retired</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Student</td>
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Expectations

- Time commitment
- Reliability and Consistency
- Optimism
- Honesty
- Support Acceptance
- Don’t preach or lecture
- Good example
Mentor Training

- **COMMUNICATION**
  - Clear and specific
  - Recognize differences
  - Supportive and accepting
  - Maintain eye contact

- **Effective Praise**
  - Specific
  - Sincere
  - Contingent
  - Immediate

- **Methods**
  - *Listen* - 70% of the time
  - *Listen*, then respond
  - *Listen*, don’t assume
  - *Listen*, don’t shut down
Mentoring Skills

- **QUESTIONING**
  - Open ended
  - High quality questions

- **PROBLEM SOLVING**
  - **S** Situation
  - **O** Options
  - **D** Disadvantages
  - **A** Advantages
  - **S** Solution
Mentoring Skills

**SOCIAL SKILLS**
- Listening
- Showing gratitude
- Following instructions
- Respectfully resolving differences
- Accepting responsibility for actions
- Making good choices
- Getting teacher’s attention
- Apologizing
- Dealing with anger
- Asking to join in a group

**GOAL SETTING**

- **My Goal**
- I will do the following to achieve my goal:
- I will know I have achieved my goal when:
Experimental Design

- 1 Group
- Pre-Test Post-Test
What We Measured

- Social Competence
- Anti-social Behavior
- Academics
- Attendance
- Perception
School Social Behavior Scales (SSBS)

- Teacher Rated
- Social Competence
  - Cooperates with peers
  - Shows self control
  - Sensitive to others feelings
- Antisocial Behavior
  - Is physically aggressive
  - Is easily irritated
  - Gets into trouble

(Merrell, 2002)
Home and Community Social Behavior Scales (HCSBS)

- Parent Rated
- Companion to the SSBS
- 64 Items

(Merrell & Caldarella, 2002)
Qualitative Surveys

- End of Program
- All Participants
- Satisfaction
- Perceived Changes
- Suggestions
Mentoring Activities

Categories

- 44.5% Academic
- 40.8% Social
- 14.7% Games, puzzles, etc.

Top 3 Activities

- Goal setting at 18.4%
- Conversations at 15.6%
- Reading activities at 13.8%
Social Competence

Social Competence Total T-Scores

SSBS

Pre: 44
Post: 49.27

HCSBS

Pre: 49.75
Post: 52.82
Antisocial Behavior

Ant-Social Behavior Total T-Scores

SSBS

Pre: 58.94
Post: 53

HCSBS

Pre: 48.25
Post: 47.17

Results
# Means and T-tests

SSBS and HCSBS Mean T Scores, Standard Deviations, and Paired Sample t-Test.

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<th>Post Test Mean</th>
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<td>Social Comp Pre-Post</td>
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*p < .05 **

*p < .01 **
Academics

Academics Homework Citizenship

Grade Level Standard

Pre Intervention

Post Intervention

Academic Total: Pre 2.11, Post 3.05
Homework Accountability: Pre 1.87, Post 2.67
Citizenship: Pre 2.61, Post 3.21

Results
# Academics

**Academic Pre and Post Scores, Standard Deviations, and Paired Sample $t$-Test.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Post-mean</th>
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<td>3.07</td>
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<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
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<td>0.76</td>
<td>3.20</td>
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<td>Writing Expression</td>
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<td>0.56</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Total</td>
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<td>0.69</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.62</td>
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<td>Homework Accountability</td>
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<td>Citizenship</td>
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*p < .05  **p < .01  ***p < .001
Comparison: Secondary Tertiary

SSBS Anti-Social T-Score by SSBD Level

Secondary: Pre 56.90, Post 51.67
Tertiary: Pre 58.80, Post 48.00
Recap of Quantitative Results

- Increased Social Competence
- Decreased Anti-social Behavior
- Improved Academics
- Tertiary vs Secondary Students
Student Survey

- **100%** responded that they would like to be in the mentoring program again.
- **71%** help with academics the most important part of having a mentor.

*What did you like about having a mentor?*

- "A friend"
- "She’s nice, knows about me and cares"
- "Someone to trust"
- "We talk, she listens"
Teacher Survey

- **100%** saw positive changes for those who were mentored.

- **Comments included:**
  - “I wish more of my students could benefit from it”
  - “self-confidence has dramatically increased this school year”
  - “I love that Martin truly looked forward to this time, as was shown by the big smile on his face each time she appeared at our door. **This is worth more than completing 100 assignments on time!!** “
Mentor Survey

- **69%** would like to participate in the program again.
- **40%** would like more information on student needs
- **36%** wanted more contact with the teacher

- “They have touched my life for good”
- “I like feeling that I can make a difference in a child’s life”
- “It is very rewarding to help a child set goals and achieve them”
- “I like seeing them become more self confident”
Parent Survey

83% said they would like their child to participate in the mentoring program again

- “He appears to feel better about himself”
- “It helps them cope with problems and be better students!”
- “We love the program!”
- “Boost in self-confidence”
Recap of Qualitative Data

- Universal satisfaction
- Most would participate again
- All groups saw benefit
Limitations

- Control Group
- Number
- Length of Intervention
- Measure of Relationship Strength
Conclusion

Child receives

- Positive Reinforcement
- Guidance
- Accountability
- Support
  - Academic
  - Emotional
  - Social
- Career Exploration
- A New Friend
Resources

- Handbook of Youth Mentoring
  Dubois and Karcher, Sage Publishing (2005)
- www.beamentor.org
- www.mentoring.org
- www.ppv.org  Look at Mentoring and Publications