

Mentoring: What works?

Judith MacCallum, Murdoch University

Kathleen Vella, Youth Mentoring
Network

Introductions

- Judy
- Kath
- Participants

Overview

A mix of activities and presentation

- What is mentoring?
- Is it a panacea for young people (at risk)?
- Does mentoring make a difference?
- What factors are important for successful programs?
- How can we increase effectiveness?
- Support? - Youth Mentoring Network
- Success stories?
- Other issues?

What is Mentoring?

- Activity - Think-Pair-Share
- Consider your own experiences of mentoring or mentoring-like experiences -
 - when someone has provided you with a learning experience that allowed you to move forward on a significant issue or changed your thinking in a way that really helped you...
 - when you helped someone uncover an aspect or ability that prior to this, had lain dormant...
- What were the elements of that experience for you?

Elements from group feedback

- empowerment
- respect
- trust
- non-judgemental
- no targets, learning that occurs
- role modelling
- roles within the relationship
- right person - right time
- someone believing in you
- follow up
- holistic and personalised
- shared interests
- mix of formal and informal mentoring

Mentoring: some definitions

- Mentoring is an old idea that works.
Supportive one-on-one relationships provide youths with the opportunity to explore career paths and broaden their horizons. Adult mentors serve as beacons of hope for young people adrift in an uncertain world. (Dondero, 1997, p. 1)
- Mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship which involves a more experienced person helping a less experienced person to achieve their goals. (Mentoring Australia, 2000)

Mentoring: key components

- Mentoring usually involves:
 - emotional and social support,
 - direct assistance with skill, cognitive, career or professional development, and
 - role modelling and networking (adapted from Jacobi, 1991)

A mentor is like:

- A tight rope walker
- A fire fighter
- A gardener
- ...

Is it a panacea?

- No program, by itself, can be a panacea for everyone
- Mentoring can be a valuable strategy - may need to be one of a suite of strategies, especially for young people at risk
- Substitute for informal mentoring

Links to resilience

- Resilience - coping in difficult times
- The *Footprints to the Future* (2001) Report found that all young people needed “at least one adult to turn to who will reliably respond, provide support and be a mentor” (p. 87)
- Mentoring and the development of resilience - the common threads (Beltman & MacCallum, 2006):
 - Relationship with a caring adult
 - Individual competence and skill development
 - Networking with peers and others

Does it make a difference?

- Because of the nature of mentoring and the long term nature of many outcomes, it is often difficult to demonstrate outcomes
- Not always a consensus as to which outcomes are important
- Difficult to show outcomes are due to mentoring
- Current research shows that mentoring is a modest intervention

Overseas evidence

- Public Private Ventures study of community based mentoring in USA - major controlled study
 - increased school attendance
 - lower levels of substance abuse
 - more positive relationships with peers & family
 - less aggression
 - higher grades
- Considerable variation in outcomes - depends on program quality

Australian evidence

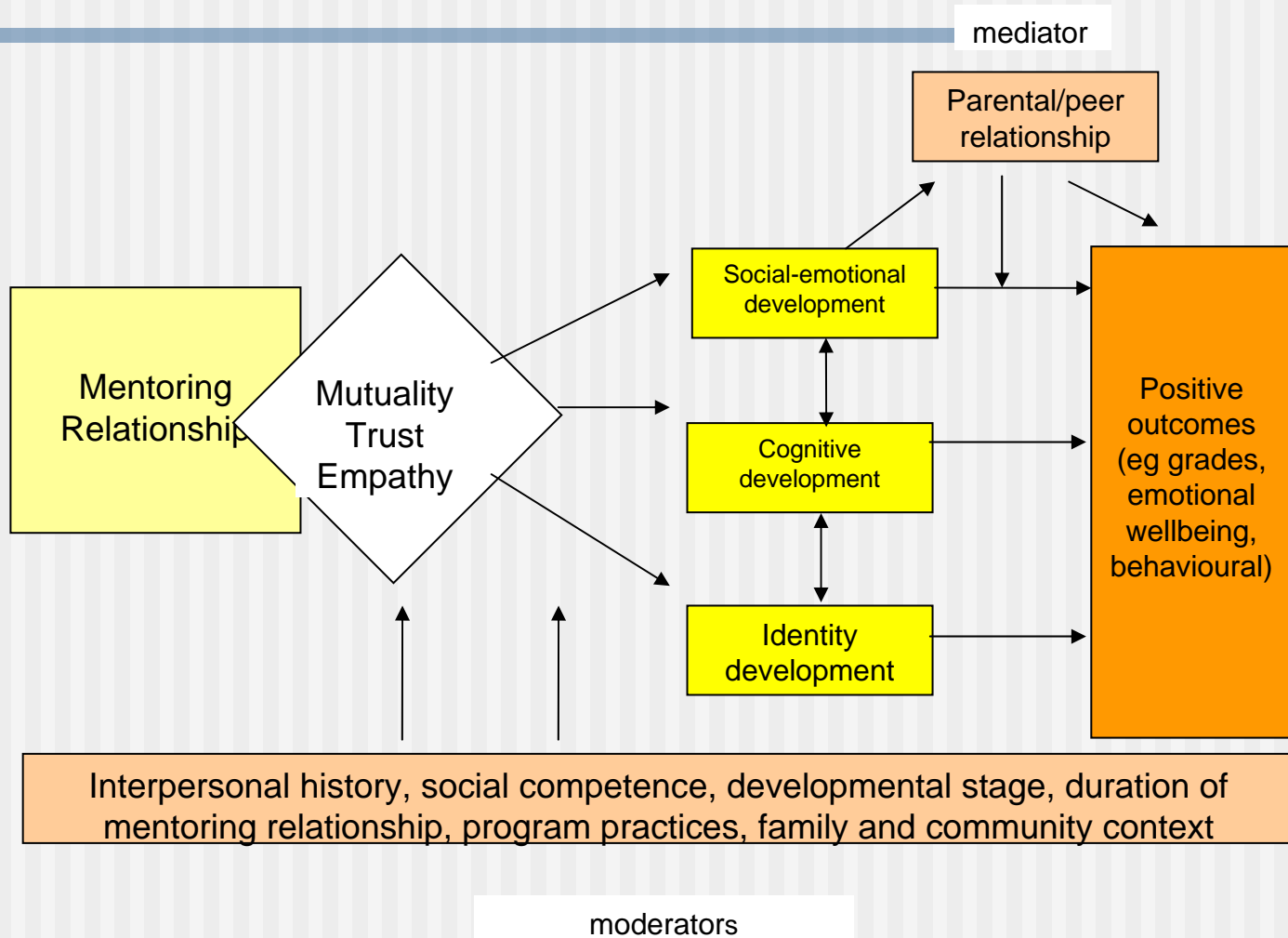
- Research in school and community mentoring - MacCallum & Beltman
 - motivation - have a go, respond to challenge
 - social/relationships - social & communication skills
 - identity - confidence & valued
 - career/life direction - purpose, decision-making
 - academic - some evidence of improvement
 - community development - networks

Development of community

- A formal mentoring program creates opportunities for the building of many relationships, such as mentor - student, coordinator - mentor, and student – student, and provides a context in which each participant learns from each other, about each other and about themselves. (MacCallum, 2001)

Model of youth mentoring

(Rhodes, 2005)



What factors are important?

- Activity - Group activity
- Perspectives of:
 - Coordinator
 - Mentor
 - Young person
 - Board/Funding body
- Question - Given the nature of mentoring, what do you think are the most important factors that need to be taken into account in developing a mentoring program? Expectations? Concerns?

Findings

Coordinator perspective

- equal access for all
- students able to volunteer
- offer training & support to mentors, debriefing etc
- screening and selection of mentors, processes for “not quite suitable” volunteers
- marketing and promotion of program
- partnerships and networking within program and outside
- understanding scope and limitations of program

Mentor perspective

- knowing the boundaries
- support and debrief
- roles and responsibilities, requirements
- exit procedures
- self questions - do I have time to be a mentor?
- ongoing training
- mentor for the mentor
- know your own expectations
- able to establish relationship before commitment

Young Person perspective

- shared interests
- choice on age of mentor
- flexibility in program
- reliable mentors
- trustworthy
- confidential
- FUN
- respect
- know purpose & outcome of program
- be informed

Board/Funder perspective

- legal responsibilities
- risk management
- accountability to the board
- key indicators
- model or structure of program procedures
- how are outcomes measured
- feedback & reporting
- screening & training of mentors

How increase effectiveness?

From the group discussion

- accreditation of coordinators and mentors
- networking
- relationship amongst participant groups - Board, program and participants
- action research model for improvement

How keep participants involved?

- support to meet needs - keeping in touch
- creation of networks
- processes for gaining feedback for ongoing improvement
- ...

Support available

- Support is important at all levels of a mentoring program

- Youth Mentoring Network

www.youthmentoring.org.au

See the Youth Mentoring Network presentation powerpoint

- Mentoring Australia website

www.mentoring-australia.org

Success stories

- Plan-It Youth - began on central coast of NSW, now a model used around Australia
- LAP program - began in SA, now international
- School Volunteers Program - began in WA, now in several states
- Programs showcased at Learning Choices Expo
- Mentor-mentee of the Month on the Youth Mentoring Network website

References

- Beltman, S & MacCallum, J. (2006) Mentoring and the development of resilience. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 8(1), 21-32.
- Dondero, G. M. (1997) Mentors: Beacons of hope. *Adolescence*, 32(128), 881-886.
- Jacobi, M. (1991) Mentoring and undergraduate academic success: A literature review. *Review of Educational Research*, 61 (4), 505-532.
- MacCallum, J. (2001) *Creating partnerships through mentoring*. Invited presentation at the 2001 Education Foundation Summit, Melbourne, October 2001.
- MacCallum, J., & Beltman, S. (1999) *Mentoring in schools by members of the community: A report of the Quality Outcomes Programme International Year of Older Persons Mentoring Research Project*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. Available [http:// www.detya.gov.au/schools/publications/index.htm](http://www.detya.gov.au/schools/publications/index.htm)
- Rhodes, J. (2005) A model of youth mentoring. In D.L. DuBois & M.J. Karcher (Eds) *Handbook of youth mentoring* (pp.30-43), Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Tierney, J. P., Grossman, J. B., & Resch, N. L. (1995) *Making a difference: An impact study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. Philadelphia, PA: Public/Private Ventures.

Contacts

- Judy MacCallum -
jamac@murdoch.edu.au
- Kath Vella -
Kathleen.Vella@smithfamily.com.au