

SUCCESSFUL FUTURES:

PEER MENTOR TRAINING BOOKLET



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Spring 2022

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WHAT IS A PEER MENTOR?

Do you or your friends dream of being a manager, working for the government, or getting a job in education, health care, computers, or industry?

Achieving these dreams is hard work. By being a peer mentor, you can learn how to help yourself and your peers reach their goals!

A peer mentor is a leader who supports their peers to make positive choices that lead to brighter futures.

GOAL OF PEER MENTORING

The purpose of this peer mentor training manual is to give you, as a peer mentor, the knowledge and skills necessary to help your peers make choices that lead them to have better futures.

As a peer mentor, your role is to inspire, encourage, and guide your peers to develop their own ideas, find their passion, and reach their goals. This is done by serving as a role model and helping your peers set goals and choose a career path. ¹

Benefits of becoming a peer mentor...

- Increases leadership skills
 - Builds confidence
 - Improves mental health
 - Helps creativity
- Helps peers reach their goals
 - this is good for the community!

¹ Arnold, M., Sandset, E. C., Aguiar de Sousa, D., & Demchuk, A. M. (2021). *Transitioning from mentee to mentor: how and when to start developing the skills needed to support others?* *Stroke* (00392499), 52(12), e848–e851.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PEER MENTORS

There are many characteristics of good peer mentors. Here are some of the most important ones. Check off each box with a characteristic that describes you to find out if you would make a good peer mentor!

- I am honest
- I am dependable
- I am patient
- I am good at listening
- I am non-judgmental
- I am optimistic
- I can set realistic goals and achieve those goals
- I am often a source of support for others
- I am interested in helping others succeed
- I can meet with a peer on a regular basis

If you checked 9-10 of the boxes off, you are on track to make a great peer mentor!

**Being a peer mentor can
help both you and your
peers reach goals!**

EXERCISE 1

IDENTIFYING MENTORS²

Good peer mentors typically have had their own mentor in the past who has helped them. Complete this exercise to reflect on your own experiences with mentors.

Think about people who may have had a significant influence in your life, such as a favorite teacher, supervisor, or family member. This person might have been someone who taught you in primary school. Perhaps it was a high school teacher who inspired you to do more. Specifically, who was this person that motivated you to learn, inspired you to excel and to try harder than you otherwise would have?

What's his or her name?

What characteristics did he or she have?

What inspired you to do or be your best?

How did you respond to his or her efforts?

² Rosengren, D. B. (2018). *Building motivational interviewing skills: A practitioner workbook* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

HOW DOES PEER MENTORING WORK?

Now that you understand the importance of peer mentoring and how it can help you and your peers achieve your dreams, let's talk about how it works.

Once you decide to become a peer mentor, you will seek a peer to be your mentee. You will have regular meetings with your mentee to get to know them and build a relationship with them.

During your meetings you will guide your mentee to examine their current lifestyle, discover what passions they have in life, and learn how to make goals and achieve those goals.

To effectively be a peer mentor, it is important to first understand the relationship between you and your mentee.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER MENTOR AND MENTEE³

A peer mentor relationship is different than a teacher-student relationship where the teacher has power over the student and can tell them what to do.

In a peer mentor relationship, the peer mentor and mentee...

- Are equals
- Respect each other

The peer mentor and mentee are EQUALS in their relationship!

³ Anderson, T., & Watkins, K. (2018). *The value of peer mentorship as an educational strategy in nursing*. Journal of Nursing Education.

- Learn from each other
- Are each responsible for the choices they make
- Work to change their current lifestyle to align with their beliefs, values, and goals

In a peer mentor relationship, the peer mentor SHOULD...

- Listen to the mentee
- Encourage the mentee

In a peer mentor relationship, the peer mentor SHOULD NOT...

- Tell the mentee what to do
- Provide solutions to the mentee's problems
- Force the mentee to change
- Judge the mentee for current or past choices

PEER MENTOR SKILLS

Now we will touch on a set of skills that are essential to being an effective peer mentor. These skills will help build your relationship with your mentee so that they can take steps towards reaching their goals.

Some of these skills you may be familiar with, others you may have never used before. Included with each skill are examples of how the skill is used along with some exercises that will help you develop the skill.

MEET ZAMA

For the remainder of this training manual, let's imagine you are assigned as a peer mentor to Zama.

Zama is a 15-year-old girl who dreams of going to college and becoming a teacher. She lives with her grandma and three siblings in Big Bend. She gets good marks in school. Zama has two close friends who have recently started having boyfriends. Zama has never had a boyfriend.

Follow along Zama's story to see the challenges she faces and how you can help her achieve her goals.

EMPATHY

Expressing empathy involves seeing the world from your mentee's perspective. Recognize and accept how your peer is feeling without judging them.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Having empathy for your peer does not mean you have to agree with the choices they have made.
- Avoid criticizing your mentee as this will help them trust you and further explore their thinking.
- Avoid sharing common past experiences, making suggestions, or providing solutions. Remember that you are not supposed to tell your mentee what to do!
- Maintain good eye contact while your peer is talking so they know you are truly listening

As you seek to understand your mentee, they will open up to you and share their thoughts and future goals. Evidence shows that by thinking about their interests and identifying goals, your mentee will become excited about their future and be more likely to make good life choices. ⁴

HELPFUL TIP!

Give "encouragers" while your mentee talks to help build trust

This includes...

- nodding
- saying "go on" or "that must have been very hard"

⁴ Miller, W. R., Zweben, A., DiClemente, C. C., & Rychtarik, R. G. (1992). Motivational enhancement therapy manual: A clinical research guide for therapists treating individuals with alcohol abuse and dependence. Rockville, MD: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

EXERCISE 2

EMPATHIZE WITH ZAMA

During your first meeting with Zama, you ask her what she does in her free time. She tells you "I used to hang out with my two friends a lot, but my friends hang out with their boyfriends all the time now. I barely see them anymore. I feel left out."

How would you respond? Take a minute to write down your response:

Now select which response best shows empathy to Zama:

- a) "When you have a boyfriend you will understand how your friends feel."
- b) "It sounds like you miss your friends. That must be very hard for you."
- c) "Your friends are probably making bad decisions. It's good you don't see them anymore."
- d) "If I were you, I would get a boyfriend so you don't feel so lonely."

Correct Answer: B

REFLECTIVE LISTENING

Reflective listening is a way to ensure you are accurately understanding what was said by your mentee. It involves restating your peer's words to show that you acknowledge and understand how your peer is feeling.⁵

EXAMPLE STATEMENTS

- "So you feel..."
- "It sounds like you..."
- "You're wondering if..."
- "You mean that..."

EXAMPLE SCENARIOS

Peer: So, I'm not too worried, but it's been over a year since I've had an HIV test.

Helpful Responses:

It sounds like it's been awhile.

You're wondering about your HIV status.

So you feel a little worried.

Peer: I want a boyfriend, but I'm not sure it's the best idea right now.

Helpful Responses:

You want to wait until you are older to have a boyfriend.

You are worried that having a boyfriend will lead you to make decisions you regret.

You like the idea of having a close relationship.

⁵ Romano, M., & Peters, L. (2016). *Understanding the process of motivational interviewing: A review of the relational and technical hypotheses.*

EXERCISE 3

REFLECTIVE LISTENING WITH ZAMA⁶

For the following statements generate at least five alternate explanations for each of Zama's statements below. Use the sentence stem "You mean that . . ." to begin each sentence. This phrasing is a beginning form of reflective listening. Here's an example. If you need more examples, check out the answers on page 12.

I am an organized person.

You mean that . . . you like to have things orderly.

You mean that . . . you tend to rely on routines.

You mean that . . . you don't like when things change unexpectedly.

You mean that . . . your home is neat.

You mean that . . . you like to make lists.

Notice that several of these statements go well beyond what *organized* might mean. Some may be wrong, though all acknowledge some component of what could be considered organized. This process allows us to find exactly what our mentee is trying to say. Now try this statement testing with the following sentences.

I am lonely.

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

⁶ Rosengren, D. B. (2018). *Building motivational interviewing skills: A practitioner workbook* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

I never have time to get my work done.

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

I let things bother me more than I should.

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

I am loyal.

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

You mean that _____

SAMPLE RESPONSES⁷

I am lonely.

You mean that . . . you have a lot of free time.

You mean that . . . you miss your friends.

You mean that . . . you feel that no one cares about you.

You mean that . . . you like spending time with other people.

You mean that . . . want to start a new hobby.

I never have time to get my work done.

You mean that . . . you find it difficult to be stay focused.

You mean that . . . you look for ways to avoid work.

You mean that . . . you don't feel motivated.

You mean that . . . you are too busy.

You mean that . . . you need to be more organized.

I let things bother me more than I should.

You mean that . . . you're somebody who cares about the details.

You mean that . . . you want to let things bother you less.

You mean that . . . you're sensitive.

You mean that . . . you're too sensitive.

You mean that . . . you wish you didn't worry about what others think.

I am loyal.

You mean that . . . you stand by people.

You mean that . . . you'll stand by people when maybe you shouldn't.

You mean that . . . if someone makes a mistake, you're forgiving.

You mean that . . . you value loyalty in others.

You mean that . . . it makes you angry when others betray you.

⁷ Rosengren, D. B. (2018). *Building motivational interviewing skills: A practitioner workbook* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions are questions that require more than a simple “yes” or “no” response. They are used to encourage the mentee to speak more and express themselves fully. This skill will help the mentee to reflect further on their how they feel and how they want to act in the future.⁸

Open-ended questions generally start with...

- “How...”
- “What...”
- “Tell me about...”

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS WITH ZAMA

Instead of saying...

Say...

Do you want to go to college?

What you want to do after high school?

Do you have hobbies?

Tell me about what you like to do in your free time.

Do you live with your parents?

What is your living situation like?

Do you want to become a teacher because you want to tell others what to do?

How did you decide you want to become a teacher?

Do you think having a boyfriend is a good idea?

What impact could a boyfriend have on your life?

Do you feel anxious or depressed?

How has your mood been recently?

⁸ Jarvis, C & Eckhardt, A. (2020). *Physical examination & health assessment (8 ed.)* Elsevier.

SUMMARIES⁹

Summaries provide a way for you as a peer mentor to show your mentee that you have been listening. Additionally, summaries reinforce the key ideas your mentee has said to promote good decision-making.

EXAMPLE STATEMENTS

- "So, let me see if I've got this right..."
- "You're saying...is that correct?"
- "Just so I understand exactly what you are saying..."

EXERCISE 4 SUMMARIES WITH ZAMA

Read through this conversation with Zama. Note how previous skills, such as reflective listening, are used by the peer mentor. Then think about how you would summarize the information Zama gave you to help lead her to make good choices for her future.

- Peer Mentor: So, Zama, what do you like to do in your free time?
- Zama: After school, I usually read and do my homework. I used to help my friends with their homework, but now they both hang out with their boyfriends all the time.
- Peer Mentor: It sounds like you like school a lot.
- Zama: Yeah, I do! My friends tell me I should become a teacher. I miss hanging out with them.
- Peer Mentor: It sounds like you are lonely.
- Zama: A little. I wish I had a boyfriend.

⁹ Romano, M., & Peters, L. (2016). *Understanding the process of motivational interviewing: A review of the relational and technical hypotheses*. *Psychotherapy research : journal of the Society for Psychotherapy Research*, 26(2), 220–240.

- Peer Mentor: What impact would a boyfriend have on your life?
- Zama: Well, I would have someone who loves me and spends time with me. Plus, my friends get gifts from their boyfriends. If I had a boyfriend, I wouldn't feel so immature around them. I haven't even kissed a boy yet.
- Peer Mentor: It sounds like you are feeling left out. That must be very difficult. What are your plans for after high school?
- Zama: I want to go to university to be a teacher. I think it would be fun to teach primary school and help kids learn how to read and write.
- Peer Mentor: That sounds like a great job to have! How do you think you can achieve your dream?
- Zama: Well, I think it would be important for me to continue to get good marks in school so that I can be accepted into university. I also want to start tutoring kids in nearby homesteads to get practice teaching.
- Peer Mentor: How do you think having a boyfriend would impact your future career?
- Zama: Well, I am a little worried that if I have a boyfriend now I will get pregnant before I go to university and will not be able to become a teacher.

Now summarize the information you just learned from Zama in the space below:

Sample Response: So, you're saying that going to university and getting a good job is very important to you. And although, you would like to have a boyfriend, you recognize that having one might not be

the best decision right now. Instead, you think it is important for you to continue working on your grades and start tutoring. Is that correct?

PROMOTING CHANGE

Now that you have learned how to talk to your mentee and guide them to examine their current lifestyle to see if it aligns with their goals for the future, it is time to teach them how to put in the work to achieve those goals.

It is most important to remember that it takes hard work to achieve your dreams. In order to be successful, you have to be willing to work hard. The choices you make now impact your future in big ways.

Ripple Effect:

Just like a single drop of water makes many ripples in water, a single choice you make now can impact your life in many ways.

When you or your mentee are making a decision, think of the ripple effect to determine whether the decision will be good or bad for your future.



GOAL SETTING

Once your mentee has identified some goals they have, it is time to start working towards reaching those goals. Creating a plan of how to achieve a goal makes achieving that goal much more of a reality.

SMART GOALS¹⁰

One tool that is useful when creating goals is the SMART goal format. This approach helps you to identify exactly what goal you have and helps you plan out how to achieve it.

S – **Specific**: State exactly what you want to achieve

M – **Measurable**: Establish clear definitions to help you measure if you are reaching your goal

A – **Action-Oriented**: Describe your goals with action words and outline the exact steps you will take to attain your goal

R – **Rewarding**: Give yourself the opportunity to succeed by setting goals you will actually accomplish. Be sure to consider the obstacles you may need to overcome.

T – **Time-bound**: How much time do you have to complete the task? Decide exactly when you will start and finish your goal.

¹⁰ University of California. (2017). *SMART goals: a how to guide*.

SMART GOALS WITH ZAMA

Below is an example of a SMART goal for Zama

Goal: I want to improve my teaching skills

S – Specific: I want to become a tutor.

M – Measurable: I will measure my improvement by how much the reading skills of the kid I tutor improve.

A – Action-oriented: I will start tutoring 1 kid in a nearby homestead to help them improving their reading skills. I will meet with the student once a week for 30 minutes.

R – Rewarding: I can realistically accomplish this goal. One potential obstacle would be getting a boyfriend since that would leave me less time to meet with the child and work on improving their reading skills.

T – Time-bound: I will give myself three months to accomplish my goal.

SMART Goal: To become a good teacher, I need to improve my tutoring skills. By reading with a kid in a nearby homestead once a week, I'll improve my tutoring skills so that, within three months, I will be a better tutor at helping kids improve their reading skills.

EXERCISE 3

SMART GOAL TEMPLATE¹¹

Initial Goal (Write the goal you have in mind):

1. Specific (What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to do this? Why is this a goal?)

2. Measurable (How can you measure progress and know if you've successfully met your goal?):

3. Action-Oriented (Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? What is the motivation for this goal?)

4. Rewarding (Why am I setting this goal now? Can I actually attain this goal? Is it aligned with my overall objectives?):

5. Time-bound (What's the deadline and is it realistic?):

S.M.A.R.T. Goal (*Review what you have written, and craft a new goal statement based on what the answers to the questions above have revealed*):

¹¹ University of California. (2017). *SMART goals: a how to guide*.

CONNECTING TO RESOURCES

When talking with your mentees, you might discover they face some big challenges. These challenges might be problems with alcohol or drugs. Maybe they are bullied at school or in a relationship with domestic violence. Maybe they just found out they are pregnant.

It can be hard to know how to help and it is ok to reach out to others to provide you and your mentee with additional support.

RESOURCE PEOPLE

Here is a list of people who you can go to for support:

- Elders with your family, such as a GoGo or Mkhulu
- Teachers
- Nurses
- Leaders in the Church, such as Priests, Pastors, Reverends, or elders
- Leaders in the Women's organization within the church
- Rural Health Motivators
- Community Counselors that work with the Chief
- Other peer mentors

THANK YOU!

Now that you have completed peer mentoring training, you are ready to help your peers make good life choices and set goals for the future. **This is an important role, and you should be proud of the work you are doing!**

As you start mentoring, **encourage other youth to become peer mentors.** By doing so, you are helping to support your community and encourage good futures for everyone! Finally, **consider creating a peer mentor support group** that is led by one of the leaders in the community. This group will help you to work together to become great peer mentors. You can use this group to practice your peer mentor skills or ask any questions you have.

REMEMBER...

YOU CAN MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!!