

A New Day Begins ...

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A New Day Begins Youth Mentorship Society is a nonprofit community-based program that describes its role as “striving to bring communication and relationship skills to a generation striving to be understood”. It specializes in therapeutic programs working with sensitive, strong-willed children and their families; the children are often seen as acting out or shutting down as a result of frustration, and their behavior is blocking receipt of “what they truly want and need”. The staff of professional therapists bring over 30,000 hours of clinical expertise.

The organization is moving from a staff led programming model to a staff-led mentor supported model. This shift reflects the reality that families and teens participating in the program often wish to maintain a relationship, but client loads prevent staff from providing such long-term supports. Mentors are being incorporated into two programs: *The Journey*, and *Beyond Mentoring*.

Mentoring Programs

1) The Journey

i Program Purpose and Roles:

Purpose: This is a facility-based, group program runs one evening a week for eight weeks and supports sensitive, strong-willed youth. In age appropriate groups, and through an activity-based format, youth participate and learn skills that will help them strengthen relationships. Specifically, the program seeks to teach youth the skills that promote leadership and personal accountability, and help them discover their strengths and gifts. The program may be complemented with individual sessions for specific youth.

In parallel programs, parents, teachers and caregivers are also given the opportunity to gain skills that will promote sustained change, given the identified root cause of the issues (e.g. developmental/organic; situational/relational; learning strategies).

Mentor role: The mentor works along side professionally trained staff, participating with youth in staff-led activity-based learning. Specific activities could include cooperative games, trust games, personal puzzle messages, addressing the tornado within, tornado talks, and the mars bars event. The sessions also incorporate team-building strategies. Through participating in these activities, the mentor learns the strengths and steps individual youth employ to get their needs met, and “travel the journey with them”.

Mentors work with a team of youth in a 4:1 ratio. The mentor develops relationships with the youth through the initial 8-week program. Following the program, mentors are encouraged to remain in weekly telephone contact with their mentees. Follow-up could also include getting together to talk, or even participating together in recreational

activities. It is anticipated that this follow-up role would involve about 3-4 hours per month.

Monthly coffee-houses are also hosted at the Society, to bring mentors and mentees together in their original environment.

ii ***Current and Projected Recruitment Demand for Mentors: The Journey***

Current Matches:

- ◆ Number of mentors: 3
- ◆ Number of mentees: 12 mentees / session

Target Number of Matches *September 2003*:

- ◆ Number of mentees: (new): 64
- ◆ Number of returning mentees: 12
- ◆ Number of mentors (new): 4
- ◆ Number of returning mentors: 3

2) Beyond Mentoring

i ***Program Purpose and Roles:***

Purpose: Beyond Mentoring is a facility-centred, and community-based group program that runs five days a week for three months, followed by weekly sessions for three months. Professional staff lead the youth in a 1:2 ratio. This comprehensive program addresses all aspects of a student's world: work, home and school. It holds youth "in relationship" while they gain new habits and attitude. The focus of the program is preventative, to interrupt patterns before the family "breaks" or the legal system becomes involved.

Work activities include construction, landscaping and design. The academics component is coordinated with the family, student and the Society teacher, and consists of teacher assisted supported correspondence or outreach models.

Leadership training is presented through a customized Society curriculum. This component addresses issues of trust, loyalty, anger, choice, communication, giving and character, through an activity-based format to strengthen learning. Each Monday, a new theme is introduced. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, processes and interaction reinforce the theme. On Friday, youth return to share on video their thoughts and experience.

Mentor role: The mentor works along side professionally trained staff in chosen areas (e.g. work, academics, leadership) as often as they are able. For example, in the leadership component, mentors might participate in activities around a specific theme during a few hours a week.

Following the program, mentors are encouraged to remain in weekly telephone contact with their mentees. Follow-up could also include getting together to talk, or even participating together in recreational activities. It is anticipated that this follow-up role would involve about 3-4 hours per month.

Monthly coffee-houses are also hosted at the Society, to bring mentors and mentees together in their original environment.

ii ***Current and Projected Recruitment Demand for Mentors: The Journey***

Current Matches:

- ◆ Number of mentors: 2
- ◆ Number of mentees: 4 mentees / session

Target Number of Matches *September 2003*:

- ◆ Number of mentees: (new): 6
- ◆ Number of returning mentees: 4
- ◆ Number of mentors (new): 4
- ◆ Number of returning mentors: 2

3) Outcomes for A New Day Begins Programs:

Youth Outcomes: Youth are able to identify their strengths, challenge their old patterns of behavior, and gain new interpersonal and relationship skills (e.g. how best to communicate with those around them and still get their own needs met). Youth build an ongoing relationship with a caring adult(s), which will continue after the program.

Mentor Outcomes: Mentors interested in working with strong-willed youth are able to learn, develop and/or refine transferable skills that enable them to “break through the concrete” to the strength and courage of individual youth. They are able to witness new behaviors in hardened, rebellious teens that are making different choices, and families with renewed hope and possibilities.

Family / Community Outcomes: Parents are given the opportunity to learn new parenting skills through an 8 week introductory program, participation in relevant negotiated agreements, and accessing support for transferable learnings during a 3-month implementation phase. Teachers, parents and caregivers are also given the opportunity to gain advanced skills in working with the sensitive, strong-willed youth.

The Society also seeks to promote improved abilities across the human services field in successfully supporting sensitive, strong willed youth.

4) Relevant Recruitment / Promotional Messages for A New Day Begins Programs:

Youth Best Suited to these Programs: Families and youth are referred to the Society by others who have found acceptance and learning in the agency. Youth in the two programs differ in the following ways:

The Journey: This program supports youth that are encountering difficulties in family and / or school relationships, and are open to building leadership and relationship skills.

Beyond Mentoring: This program supports 14-17 year olds that have been or are on the verge of being unable to stay at home, and may also be at risk of being suspended from school. This often includes youth who are having difficulty with peer groups and relationships, or with productivity and follow through. Relationships may be at risk, due to a broken trust. Families may have concerns about drugs and/or alcohol use, and eating disorders may be an issue.

Mentors Best Suited to Society Programs: Mentors best suited to programs offered by A New Day Begins are those that wish to specialize in their career in working with strong-willed active youth, and “hunger” to connect with misunderstood youth.

Prospective mentors are most often adults in post-secondary education, with an interest in family, youth or relationship issues. Prospective mentors may also include psychologists wishing to upgrade their skills.

Prospective mentors may have overcome difficulties themselves as an adolescent, and are wishing to support youth headed in a similar direction.

Mentors also must have the following personal characteristics: they share the philosophy inherent in the program; they see through behaviors to unmet needs; they perceive and relate to how a youth sees the world; they are capable of addressing issues quickly and confidently; and they are able to stay emotionally connected while not taking on the hurts of the youth.

Mentors seeking to teach versus mentor would be inappropriate placed in this program.

Motivations and Potential Fears of Prospective Mentors: Mentors are satisfied, and motivated by the thought that when strength can be placed into families, chances of true change can be very high.

Mentors are motivated by the concept of working alongside trained professionals, are appreciative of not being left to their own devices, and are wanting to learn through role modeling. They are seeking the skills gained through participation in this program, as they appreciate the transferability of skills and the depth of the training offered to mentors.

Mentors may lack confidence in their abilities to listen effectively, and to identify the real issues underlying the communication and behavior of youth. They may be fearful that they will be overwhelmed by the truth of lives of individual youth. They may feel they lack the maturity or experience to be able to accept what they hear without judgment, or avoid prematurely addressing issues.

Current and Planned Program Practices:

1) Recruitment / Screening:

- i **Orientation / Training:** Volunteers are required to meet with the two therapists for an individual session to discuss profiles and goals. All volunteers must attend the “Building Bridges” program offered by the Society, to ensure that they share a consistent philosophy. This is a comprehensive 20 hour communication skill training course that is appropriate for anyone desiring to communicate with others more effectively. This is the only training requirement for *The Journey*, and costs \$250.

For *Beyond Mentoring*, volunteers are required to take advanced skill training in co-facilitation. This program runs over a 4-day period, and participants are expected to practice their skills in each element of the program (the modules are also available separately).

This training is comprehensive and addresses 10 modules, and includes the following topics:

- The Challenge to Change
- Influences that Affect Relationship
 - Self
 - Circumstances
 - Development

Establishing a Purpose Statement
The Window
Broken Windows, Broken Trust, Broken Relationships
Accountability and Productivity within Relationship
Addressing Conflict With Integrity

Discussion also includes roles, responsibilities, confidentiality and boundaries. Efforts are underway to get this program credited; the cost is \$750.

A New Day is in the process of negotiating a sponsor to cover the costs of training the volunteers.

The following are current dates for training, in relation to programming:

Building Bridges™ starting June 26
Co-facilitator training starting on July 8
Beyond Mentoring™ starting on July 15
The Journey™ starting on July 22

The first mentor for Beyond Mentoring is being trained in the July 8 session.

- ii **Matching:** Matching is more related to skills than preference, and considers appropriate values and reactions to situations.
- iii **Follow up / Evaluation:** The position of volunteer management is being considered. Currently, group events are scheduled, and families typically remain very connected to agency staff. Perspectives of the mentors, the mentees and the families will be incorporated in the implementation of mentoring programs.

