Developing Your Mentoring Relationship and How to Set Healthy Boundaries with Your Mentee: Facilitator's Guide

Objectives:
✓ Impart how healthy mentoring relationships generally develop.
✓ Provide a better understanding what a boundary is and why they are needed in mentoring relationships
✓ Help participants identify key areas where boundaries are essential for mentoring relationships; also provide general strategies for how to continue those boundaries during the course of their mentoring relationship.

Materials:
Remember that the number of materials needed is dependent upon the number of participants present at training.
✓ Pens
✓ Printed Handouts (Refer to page 8)
✓ Evaluations

Outline:
Welcome and Introduction 5 minutes
Prezi Presentation 40 minutes
Setting Boundaries Activity 35 minutes
Questions and Evaluations 5 minutes
Total Time 1 hour 20 minutes

Instructions for Guide:
✓ Prepare and review this guide prior to giving presentation.
✓ The sentences in quotation marks indicate that the information will not be presented visually to your audience on the Prezi presentation slide, and should be read aloud.
✓ Be aware of facilitator’s notes that will appear in italics throughout the guide.
  o Everything that is not in italics will be spoken aloud by facilitator; including those sentences without quotation marks.
Welcome and Introduction 5 minutes

“Welcome everyone! My name is_________ and I will be facilitating this training today. Today we will review the stages of how healthy mentoring relationships generally develop. We will also identify some key areas where boundaries are essential for mentoring relationships as well as providing some general strategies for how to maintain those boundaries during the course of your mentoring relationship. Let’s begin.”

Prezi Presentation 40 minutes

Slide 1: The Mentoring Relationship Cycle

Beginning of the Match:
“The beginning of any relationship is often awkward, and the relationship between a mentor and a mentee is certainly no exception. Your first few meetings will focus on getting to know each other, exploring similar interests, discussing expectations and starting to form norms and bonds that will shape the rest of your year together. During this phrase, mentors should work with their mentees to set parameters for the match, such as when to meet and for how long, what kinds of activities will take place, and how to contact each one another.”

“During this stage you should be striving to:”

Strategies:
- Always be consistent. (Even if your mentee is not.)
- Set healthy boundaries for your relationship. (This is something we will be covering in depth today).
- Be open and honest about what you are able to commit to.
- Be fully present with the youth. (When you are with your mentee, you are with them. Don’t be distracted by thoughts of work, home or school. Don’t use your cell phone except in an emergency.)
- Remember to be yourself. (Don’t ever try to be someone you’re not!)
- Be nonjudgmental.

“So, moving along…”

Building your Relationship:
“In this stage, you will begin to build trust within your relationship. This trust will help move you and the mentee along the developmental pathway.”
“As the relationship develops you will, of course, continue to implement the same strategies as at the beginning but you should also keep in mind:”

- Setbacks may happen. “And that’s okay! There are very few life experiences that happen without any hiccups. So just continue to try your best and keep a positive attitude and encourage your mentee to do the same as well!”
- “You should also…” Be patient. “Frustrations may occur and it is important to always remain calm and understand that things may happen more slowly than you anticipated.”
- Always set a good example. “Be polite and respectful, not only towards your mentee but towards everyone else in the program. When in involved in group activities, you should actively participate and encourage your mentee to do the same.”
- Encourage your mentee’s participation in decision-making.
- Be involved, yet remember to keep perspective. “Keep working positively towards whatever goals you and your mentee have set together but remember that realistically those goals may not be attainable within your year together.”

“During this phase of your relationship you may also encounter:”

**Challenging and Testing:**
“Once the mentoring relationship is off the ground, it is normal for your mentee to start testing various boundaries of the relationship. Though you’ve spent time affirming that you appreciate and enjoy working with your mentee, they still may want to see how far your commitment really goes. Because mentees often come from situations in which adults can’t always be relied on, trusting another adult is difficult for them. They may even try to sabotage the relationship by ‘acting out.’”

**Strategies:**
- Do not take this type of behavior personally.
- If necessary, reinforce boundaries.
- Reaffirm your intention to remain in relationship.
- Seek assistance from fellow mentors or program staff if needed.

“Which brings us to the final stage:”

**Transition towards closure:**
“This period can be a difficult time for both the mentor and youth. It is important to not let the process of ending the match negate any positives it provided to everyone involved. As the end of your match approaches, work closely with your match supervisor to end on a high note.”

**Strategies:**
- Focus on any progress made by the mentee.
• Provide opportunities for saying goodbye in a healthy, respectful manner.
• If it is applicable to your relationship, address and establish appropriate situations for staying in touch.

“But right now there’s no real need for you to be concerned about this stage. In fact there will actually be a separate future training that will cover this final stage.”

Proceed to the next slide.

Slide 2: Setting Boundaries
So what is a boundary?
• A protective barrier that helps to keep us safe.

Who needs boundaries?
• All of us can benefit from having healthy boundaries in our relationships.

But why is it especially important for mentoring relationships?
• Setting boundaries helps to establish and nurture trust within your relationship with the mentee.
• Boundaries are also a way for the mentee to feel safe and protected, as well as providing a model for what healthy relationships can be like.

“That’s why it is vital for you and your mentee to discuss and agree together upon appropriate and firm boundaries within your relationship.”

“While some of you may feel that setting boundaries will make you seem insensitive or even controlling, keep in mind that when boundaries are set too loosely or causally, they may be misinterpreted, which could lead to disastrous results for both you and your mentee. At the same time, bear in mind that when boundaries are too rigid, they can also undermine the process of building the trust needed in your mentoring relationship.”

Proceed to the next slide.

Slide 3: Some common areas where boundaries are needed can include...
• Time
• Money
• Self-Disclosure

Proceed to the next slide.
Slide 4: Time Boundaries

“Consistency and frequency of meetings are important elements of a successful mentoring relationship. If you do not set boundaries in regards to your personal time, you can unknowingly create the very conditions that will lead to burning out or even quitting the program.”

“So what does that really mean?”

As a student we understand that you have a lot on your plate...

- School
- Family
- Friends

“Some of you may also work part-time or even full-time jobs on top of everything else.”

“A lot of students who participate in this program find themselves having difficulties handling the changes to their schedule arising from their new commitment to this program. So take some time to plan out how you will fit in your mentor volunteering hours into your schedule. Also, have a back-up plan in mind. If a school project comes up or you are needed to work more hours at your job, a back-up plan will give you a ready-made strategy to make up your hours as a mentor volunteer.”

“So when we talk about setting time boundaries, what we mean is that it’s important to understand that while it’s wonderful that you have committed to volunteering your time to help support someone else, it is not selfish whatsoever if you find yourself stretched too thin to take some time to navigate your own life.”

“Of course, this does not give you a constant hall pass on neglecting your responsibilities you accepted when you entered this program.”

Proceed to the next slide.

Slide 5: Time

- How much time do I feel comfortable spending with my mentee on a weekly basis?
  “Within this program you are striving to complete a set number of hours working with the mentee but it is important to remember to plan your schedule conservatively.”
- Do I feel comfortable receiving phone calls from my mentee on a regular basis? What about text messages? “Please check with your campus coordinators first on their policy regarding this.”
- How late is “too late” to receive a phone call, or how early is “too early”?
- How will I balance my schedule so I will not end up stretching myself too thin?
What steps will I take to ensure to my mentee that I still am committed to the relationship, even when I have to cut back on my mentoring hours on a certain week because of other responsibilities?

How will I make up those hours?

Proceed to the next slide.

Slide 6: Boundaries Concerning Money

- Remember a mentor’s role is not that of a provider. “As discussed in the ‘Defining Your Role as a Mentor training’ you are not there as a means of finical support for your mentee. That is not your responsibility.”
- Try to keep your planned activities simple and reasonable.
- Gift-giving should be reserved for special occasions such as birthdays, holidays or graduations. “However, this does not mean that you cannot give a “gift” to your mentee if they reached a certain goal that the two of you have previously discussed. That is at your own discretion. But again keep it simple.”

Proceed to the next slide.

Slide 7: Money

- How much money am I comfortable spending on an outing?
- How will I respond if my mentee asks me to buy something?
- How would I handle the situation if my mentee’s family requests help with their finances?

“Now it’s highly unlikely that any of you with be faced with this last scenario but it always best to be prepared for any situation.”

Proceed to the next slide.

Slide 8: Self-Disclosure Boundaries

- Be careful not to burden the mentee with your own life problems. “Whatever is going on in your own life should stay separate from your relationship with your mentee.”
- Don’t shut down communication by talking about your own personal experiences. “When faced with this kind of situation, listen to what your mentee has to say. They may not necessarily be looking for whether or not you too have had a similar experience. Sometimes they may just need an outlet to talk about difficulties in their own lives.”
- Do not disclose to your mentee any information that may be considered inappropriate. “If you have difficulty deciding if the information is appropriate, more than likely you should not be telling your mentee about it. So when in doubt, stay silent. If needed,
change the subject of the conversation. Or simply tell the mentee that the topic should not be under discussion and the two of you have more important things to talk about.”

_Proceed to the next slide._

**Slide 9:** When confronted with a situation that challenges your boundaries...
- Think carefully about how you can respond to the situation in a way that protects the well-being of the mentoring relationship.
- Consider the short-term and the long-term consequences of how you choose to handle the situation.
- Communicate from a place of personal honesty.
- Remember that if you are ever unsure about how to respond to a situation you have every right to request time to think about your response.

_Proceed to the next slide._

**Slide 10:**

It is best to set boundaries of your relationship from the very start. However, this does not mean you aren’t allowed to make adjustments to the relationship as necessary.

Most importantly, remember you are not alone. If you are still confused about how to handle a situation, you can always go to program staff for support.

_Close of Prezi Presentation, proceed to boundaries activity_

**Boundaries Activity**

**35 minutes**

**Beginning Discussion:**

Divide participants into small groups and distribute Boundaries Scenarios handout.

*Feel free to adapt and change scenarios if you want to increase relevance to your site.*

Ask participants to:

1. Select one person within their group to record responses and one person to present.
2. Take a few moments and look over your assigned scenario.
3. Discuss and write down all the wrong ways in which the assigned scenario could be handled.
4. Next, write down the different ways in which you feel as a group that the scenario should be handled.
Review Responses to Scenarios: 15 minutes

Ask each group’s representative to come to the front of the room. Have them read the group’s scenario out loud to the room and go over both sets of responses. Invite the rest of the participants to give feedback or ask questions.

At end of presentations, make sure to remind participants to always check with their site supervisors and Campus Coordinators on specific policies and procedures regarding these issues.

Final Questions & Closing: 5 minutes

Ask participants to share one insight gained during the training that they found particularly valuable. Pass out session evaluation forms. Answer any questions.
Boundaries Scenarios Handout

Scenario 1:
You arrive at your pre-arranged meeting place and it appears that your mentee has not arrived yet. You assume that they may just be running a few minutes late. A significant time passes and they still have not shown up. What should you do or say the next time you see your mentee?

Scenario 2:
You have been matched with your mentee for a few months now. One afternoon your mentee asks you if you have ever experimented with alcohol before. What do you say?

Scenario 3:
During a group sessions with other participants of the program, you happen to notice that your mentee is bullying one of the other mentees. No one else seems to realize what is happening. What should you do?

Scenario 4:
A few weeks ago your mentee started calling a few times a day. You are excited that she likes you so much and wants your advice, but you are starting to feel uncomfortable with how much she is reaching out to you. What should you do?

Scenario 5:
As a way to celebrate passing an exam with flying colors, you treat your mentee to ice cream. What do you do when your mentee begins to expect the same treatment for every passed exam but you cannot afford to do so?
Resources


