Youthline

Changing lives.

Best Practice for Youth Mentoring: A Review

Youthline

Youthline's vision is to create communities that relate to the needs of young people, respond to them and support them to achieve their potential.

Youthline overview

- Youthline has nine centres across the country
- Youthline has over 60 full time staff and 1000 volunteers across the country
- Youthline works in five key service areas:

  Counselling services

  Information and referral

  Youth work services

  Training and leadership

  Research and advocacy

  Social Enterprise

- Our work is guided by the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa, best practice research and nearly 40 years experience

Projects and research

- Better Practice for Mentoring At-Risk Youth

- What would a health service for alternative education students look like? Review of best practices

- Are we doing a good job? Providing evidence for the effectiveness of Youth One Stop Shops

- Parenting Teenagers: A review of best practice principles In New Zealand parenting programmes

- Scoping of a Pacific One Stop Shop

- MYD Youth Engagement Project

- Manukau Youth Development Model

- Young Men's View on Risk-taking Behaviours

Community based research

Plan

Act

Reflect

Observe
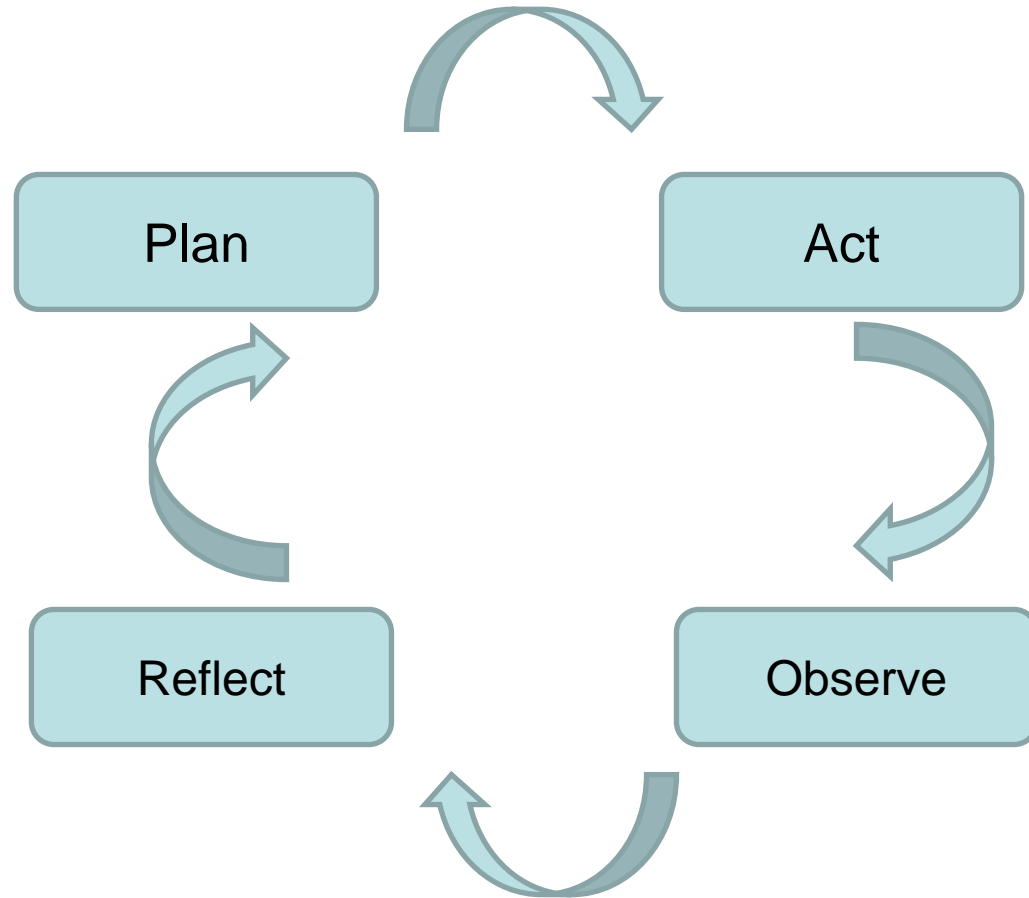
Action Research Cycle

Community based research

Community based youth research can:

- Engage young people
- Engage young people in research process
- Develop youth research capacity
- Implement findings of academic research
- Demonstrate effectiveness
- YDSA in practice
- Engage the community
- Assist the community to understand society's impact on young people
- Strengthen links with other community agencies working with youth.

Better Practice for Mentoring At Risk Youth

Background:

• Mentoring has been a key part of Youthline's approach

• Mentoring is a popular intervention with young people

• Positive relationships with adults are shown to have good outcomes for youth

• We wanted to investigate the relationship specifically

What happens in the relationship?
How can it best be supported?

• Done in partnership with Counties Manukau District Health Board

Methodology

- Review of local and international literature

- Key informant interviews
    - PILLARS
    - I Have a Dream
    - Brothers in Arms
    - TYLA (Turn your life around)
    - Big Buddy
    - Tautoko Teina
    - Project K

- Data reviewed through the lens of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa

- Key findings summarised as implications for practice

What is Youth Mentoring

This review used the definition of youth mentoring proposed by The Youth Mentoring Trust (2008):

…the process by which a more experienced, trusted, guide forms a relationship with a young person who wants a caring, more experienced person in their lives, so that the young person is supported in growth towards adulthood and the capacity to make positive social connections and build essential skills is increased.(p. 1)

Name	Definition
Natural/informal mentoring	When a sustained relationship develops naturally between an adult and a young person
Formal mentoring	When an organization officially supports and provides structure, guidelines, policies and assistance for developing, maintaining and ending mentor-mentee relationships.
School-based mentoring	Formal mentoring that takes place at schools.
Faith-based mentoring	Formal mentoring run by faith organisations.
Group mentoring	Group mentors interact with small groups of youth and simultaneously promote positive peer interactions.
Cross-age peer mentoring	Using older students to mentor younger students in school. Aims to foster older students' leadership and collaboration skills and younger students' connectedness, self-esteem and academic achievement.
Psychosocial mentoring	Process oriented, focussed on modifying personal qualities rather than behaviours.

Name	Definition
Instrumental mentoring	Problem focussed, helping individuals to reach particular goals.
Alternative mentoring	Shared learning with a vision of empowerment and equity. Does not involve the transfer of a skill but instead promotes a sharing of experiences.
E-mentoring	Mentoring via email and internet.
Cultural/ethnic mentoring	Mentoring with an emphasis on indigenous values, cultural knowledge and history.

With so many different types of mentoring, what parts, configurations and characteristics best contribute to good outcomes?

Who Are at-risk Youth
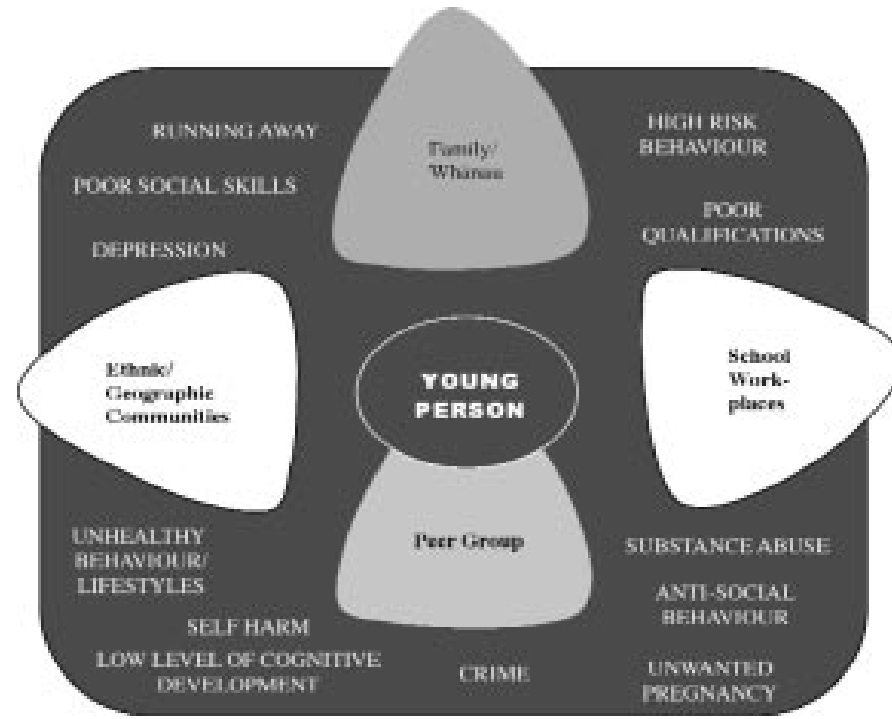
Findings

Youth Development is Shaped by the Big Picture:

•A youth development approach to mentoring recognises that young people are shaped by their contexts

•Outside of families young people are most influenced by peers neighborhoods and communities which all influence the mentoring relationship

•Young people have different identities in different settings

•Mentors need to share commonalities with their mentees, e.g. shared interests or location

•Girls favour psychosocial approaches while boys favour instrumental approaches

Findings

Youth Development is Shaped by the Big Picture: Mentoring Maori & Pasifika youth

• Ethnic match can have a positive impact on cultural identity but cultural competence is more important

• Important concepts for Maori mentoring include
  ➤ Whakapapa – a mentor from the same iwi or waka as the mentee
  ➤ Whanaunatanga – whanau or group mentoring
  ➤ Mana preservation – balancing constructive criticism with recognising strengths
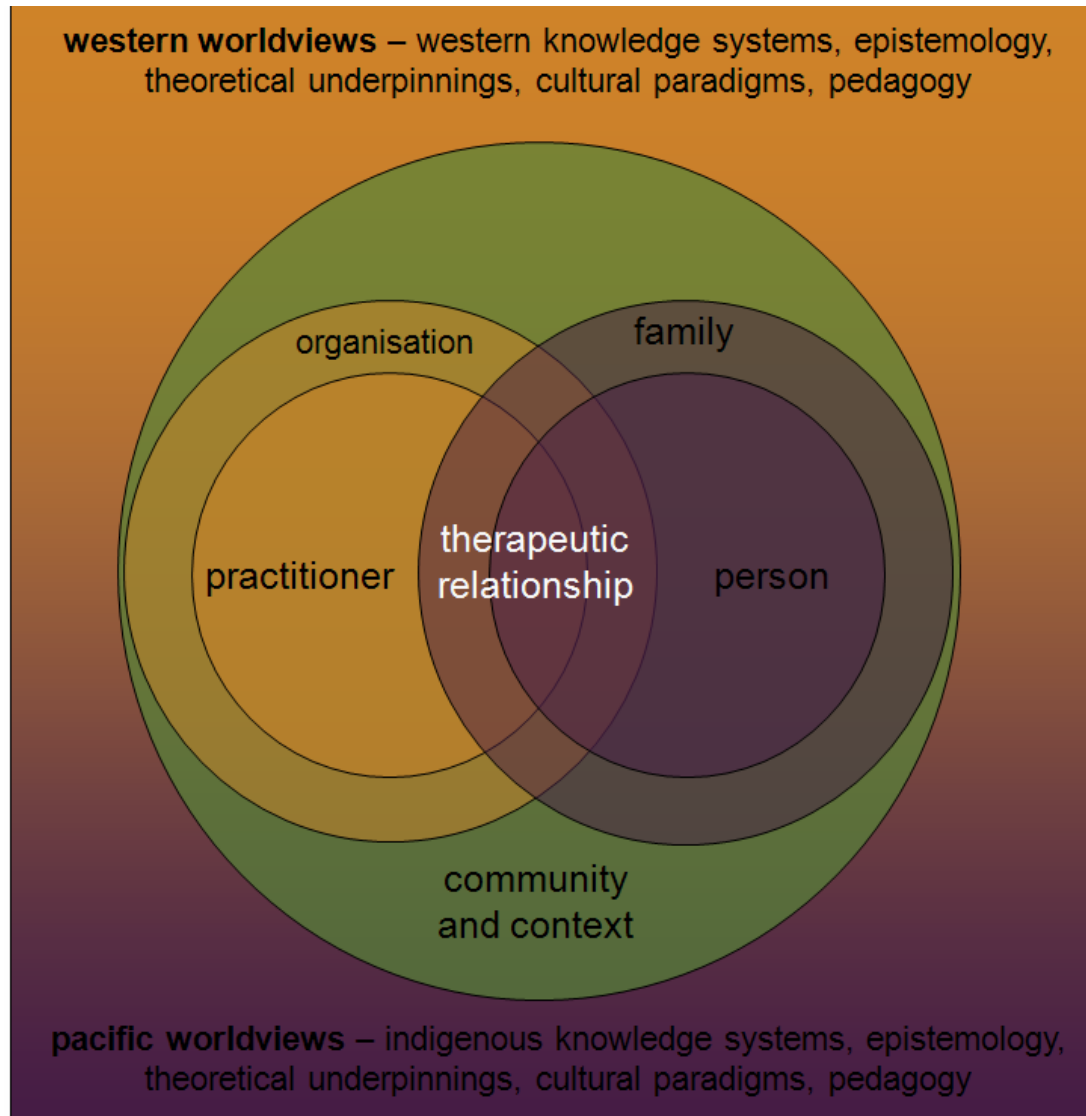 ➤ Wairuatanga – acknowledging spirituality

Findings

Youth Development is Shaped by the Big Picture: Mentoring Maori & Pasifika youth

•Building a relationship with family and community is fundamental in mentoring Pasifika youth.

•Important to engage with parents, education and church as major cultural influences.

•Activities run through church or school can be a good way to engage Pasifika youth and families.

Va Model (Faleafa, 2009)

western worldviews – western knowledge systems, epistemology, theoretical underpinnings, cultural paradigms, pedagogy

organisation

family

practitioner

therapeutic relationship

person

community and context

pacific worldviews – indigenous knowledge systems, epistemology, theoretical underpinnings, cultural paradigms, pedagogy

Findings

Youth Development is about young people being connected

•Mentors have a role to play in helping mentees to develop wider community connections

•Interaction between parents, mentor and mentee are essential.

•Molnar et al. (2008) found that mentoring programmes were most effective when community support was present.

•Mentoring providers have a key role to play in connecting mentees and families with other supports.

•Wellbeing is improved by intensive, integrated or 'joined up' services that meet a range needs and wrap around the young person and their family.

A wrap around approach to youth mentoring
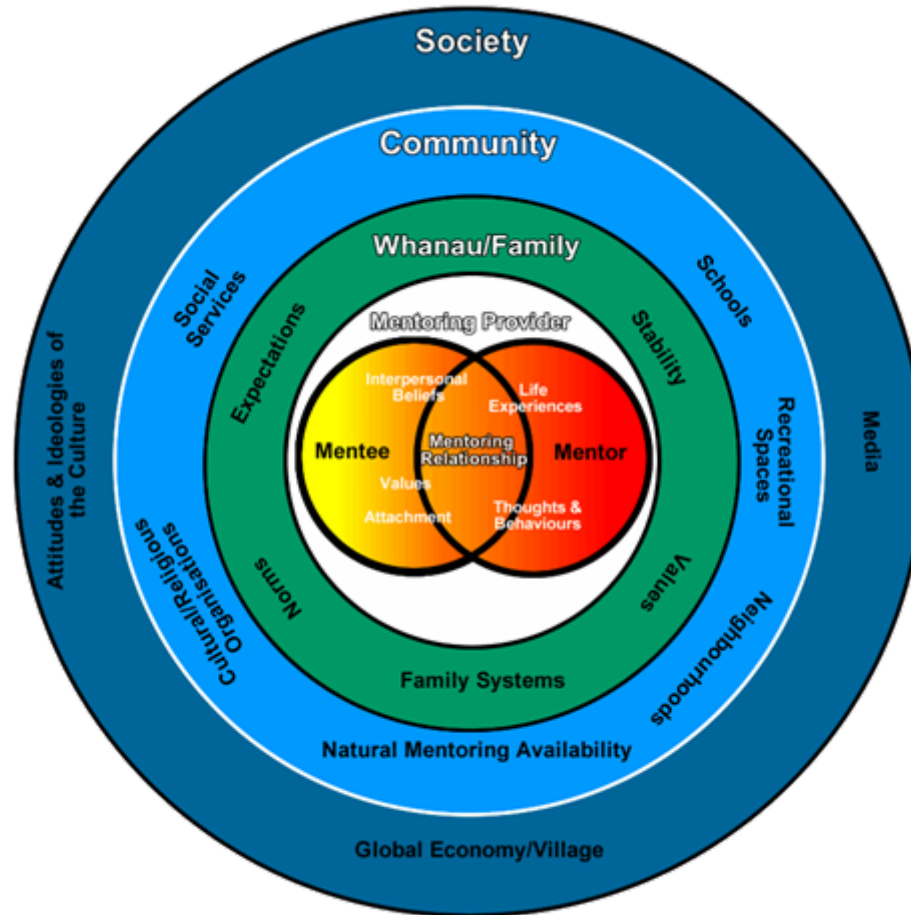
Findings

Youth Development is based on a strengths based approach

Strengths Based Mentors:

- Focus on developing resilience
- See potential
- Hope for the future
- High expectations
- Coaching to help meet expectations
- Positive feedback
- Letting young people know when they have crossed the line
- Role modelling.

Youth Development is based on a strengths based approach

Strengths Based Activities:

•Little description in literature about activities that generate the best outcomes

•An effective mentor will engage mentees in activities that help to develop social and emotional competencies

  •A positive sense of self
  •Self control
  •Decision making skills
  •Moral system of belief
 •Pro-social connectedness (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008)

Findings

Youth Development is based on a strengths based approach

Strengths Based Activities:
• Finding and doing things that the mentee likes.

• Finding what the mentee does well and doing it.

• Connecting the mentee to other organisations and people.

• Connecting the mentee to community activities.

• Encouraging the mentee to join faith-based or voluntary organisations. (Lerner et al, 2006)
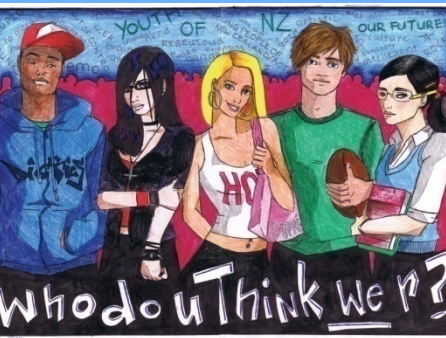
Findings

Youth Development is based on a strengths based approach

Strenghts Based Activities:

•Leisure activities help young people try out and transition to adult roles and they prefer leisure activities over others

•Highly structured activities that have set timetables and rules, teach skills, give feedback and are supervised by skilled adults are associated with better outcomes than unstructured, unsupervised activities (McLaren, 2002)

•Developmental activities may be more effective at developing self-esteem and social skills than instrumental activities (Karcher, 2008)

	The mentoring activities below have been found to promote youth development, self-esteem and social skills	15 min	30 min	45 min	60 min
E	**Casual conversation** (Discussion of sports, weekend activities, holiday plans, Fiesta, etc.)				
F	**Conversation on Social Issues** (Current events/news, poverty, crime, religion, race-related issues, etc.)				
G	**Conversation on Relationships: About whom?** ❑ **Family** ❑ **Teachers** ❑ **Friends** ❑ **Romantic Friend**				
H	**Listening & Learning** (Mentee's hobbies & interests, feelings, etc.) – Mentee talked most of the time while mentor listened.				
J	**Sports or athletic (activity)** (Played basketball, soccer, catch, volleyball, tennis, etc.)				
K	**Creative activities** (Drawing, arts and crafts, reading and writing for fun, photography, etc.)				
L	**Indoor games** (Board games, playing cards, chess, computer games, puzzle, etc.)				

The below activities work best when suggested by the mentee (and can lead to poor mentoring outcomes when suggested by mentors)	How long and suggested by whom?			
A **Academics (discussion)** (Grades, school, testing, etc.)				Mtor mtee
I **Tutoring/Homework (activity)** (Helped with homework, did tutoring, helped with reading, library, computer wor.)				**Mtor mtee m**
B **Behavior** (Discussed youth's behaviors related to problems with peers, teachers, adults = misbehavior)				Mtor mtee
C **Attendance and "Stay-in-School" discussion**				Mtor mtee
D **Future talk** (College, career, goals, dreams, etc.)				Mtor mtee

Findings

Youth Development happens through quality relationships

- The strength of mentoring is the ability to develop a close, positive and supportive relationship which can help build resilience

- Young people have different developmental needs at different times during adolescence.

- Young people with attachment or developmental difficulties may struggle to form mentoring relationships. Mentors need to work sensitively in connecting with these young people and be able to handle rejection.

- Mentees with environmental risk may benefit more from mentoring than those with personal vulnerabilities.

Findings

Youth Development happens through quality relationships

•Mentors need to feel prepared to deal with a range of situations.

•Mentors need ongoing supervision and support to form effective relationships.

•A strong working alliance between mentor, mentee and the family is a prerequisite to a successful relationship

•Mentors need to keep the end of the relationship in mind from the beginning and support mentees to develop wider connections.
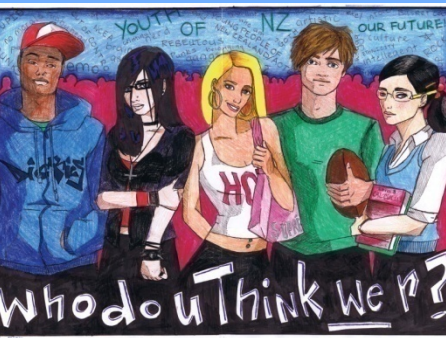
Findings

Youth Development happens through quality relationships

Core elements of successful mentoring relationships are:

- a sense of mutual trust

- friendship (although the relationship is more than this)

- clear expectations

- duration and frequency (regular face to face meetings over a longer period of time)

- multi level activities (mentoring, skills groups and volunteering)

Findings

Youth Development happens through quality relationships

The six key themes of mentoring relationship failures are:

• mentor or protégé abandonment

• perceived lack of protégé motivation

•unfulfilled expectations (for both mentor and mentee)

•deficiencies in mentor relational skills

•family interference

•inadequate agency support

Findings

Youth Development happens through quality relationships

Counselling and psychotherapy literature may inform mentoring. A healing relationship must be based on:

•A strong working alliance

•Unconditional positive regard (as an attitude in conjunction with structured activities).

•Empathy

•Congruence

•Understanding relationship dynamics

•Successful relationships: take an overall development focus, are youth friendly, fun, set high expectations, have firm boundaries and support the young person to develop strengths rather than focusing on changing behaviour.

Findings

**Youth Development is triggered when young people fully participate**

• The mentoring relationship is inherently participatory and young people need to be partners in decision making.

• Mentors need to help remove barriers that may make it difficult to engage, such as transport, food and flexibility

• Young people need to be interested in the task and have a clear role

• There is scope to increase youth participation at all levels from design to delivery, e.g. Brothers in Arms.

Findings

Youth Development needs good information

•Building an evidence base for mentoring is difficult because different types of mentoring may not be comparable

•Lack of universally accepted definition of mentoring and of measures of a successful relationship

•Studies are generally short term

•Locally, evaluation of programmes can be limited by cost, time and complexity
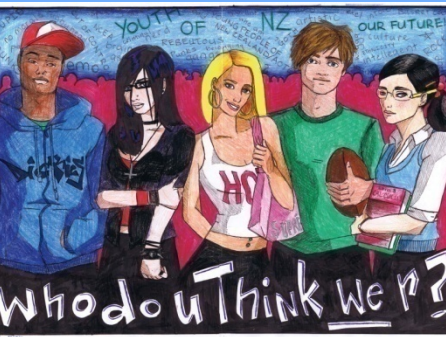
Recommendations

•Develop mentoring as part of a wrap-around approach

•Agree on a definition and scope of mentoring

•Commissioning of a major national longitudinal study would be useful to understand youth mentoring in Aotearoa.

•Develop better understanding of relationships
•where there is no engagement or early termination.

•To understand which mentoring activities contribute more to which types of outcomes.

•To include young people in all levels of mentoring programmes, including high level decision making.

•Develop standard evaluation tools

•Facilitate further networking and information sharing