Enhancing Cultural Competence in Youth Mentoring Relationships

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Workshop 16 August 2011

New Zealand Youth Mentoring Network
Agenda

- What is cultural competence?

- Research on the role of cultural competence in the quality of youth mentoring relationships.

- Examples of how to enhance the cultural competence of mentoring programs.
What is cultural competence?

- The extent to which individuals have the capacity to work with individuals of a cultural group (Sue, 2006).
  - Cultural awareness and beliefs
  - Cultural knowledge
  - Cultural skills
Consider cultural competence at 3 levels

- Mentor-youth relationship
- Organization
- Coalitions of organizations
Role of Cultural Competence in Youth Mentoring
How we assessed youth’s perceptions of mentor’s cultural sensitivity

- My mentor seems to understand my racial/ethnic background and culture
- My mentor is respectful of my…
- My mentors makes me feel proud of my…
- My mentor seems interested in my…
- My mentor helped me understand and feel good about my racial/ethnic group

Sanchez, DuBois, Silverthorn, & Pryce, 2010
Youth’s perceptions of mentor’s cultural sensitivity

- Study of 40 early adolescent girls and their mentors (Sánchez, DuBois et al., 2010).

- Youth’s perception that their mentor is culturally competent at 3 mths is related to the following youth reports...
  - Greater instrumental satisfaction at 3 & 12 mths
  - Lower overall dissatisfaction in relationship at 3 & 12 mths
  - More youth-centered relationship at 3 & 12 mths
  - The more mentor helped to cope at 3 & 12 mths
  - The more available youth is for mentor’s support at 3 mths
Mentor’s cultural sensitivity

- Youth’s perception that their mentor is culturally sensitive at 3 mths is related to the following *mentor* reports…
  - More outlook-focused relationship at 3 & 12 mths
  - Closer relationship at 3 mths
Youth’s perception of mentor’s cultural sensitivity

- Study of 34 older, ethnically diverse adolescents and their mentors (Sanchez, Feuer, & Davis, 2010)

- The more youth perceives mentor to be culturally sensitive...
  - The more available mentor is to provide support
  - The more dependable is mentor
  - The more youth and mentor relate to one another
  - The more growth-focused activities they engage in - e.g., teaching, learning
Cultural sensitivity from mentor’s perspective

- Ethnocultural empathy (Wang et al., 2003)
  - Ability to put ourselves in the shoes of racially or ethnically different persons
Components of Ethnocultural Empathy
(Wang et al., 2003)

- **Ethnocultural emotions & expressions**
  - Affective responses to the emotions and/or experiences of racially/ethnically different people.
  - Communicating concern in light of prejudicial attitudes, beliefs, behaviors

- **Acceptance of cultural differences**
  - Understanding, valuing and accepting the cultural customs and traditions of racially and ethnically different persons.
Role of EE in quality of mentoring relationship (Sanchez, DuBois et al., 2010)

- The more accepting mentor is of cultural differences in the beginning of the program...

- the more Mentor perceives her protégé to seek academic support from her at 12 mths.
Role of EE in quality of mentoring relationship

- Mentor reports of empathic feelings and expressions at the beginning of program are related to the following *youth* reports...
  - Less dissatisfaction in relationship at 3 & 12 mths
  - Less trust is broken in relationship at 3 & 12 mths
  - Less growth-focused relationship at 3 mths
  - Feeling happier in relationship at 12 mths
Other ways that cultural competence plays a role in mentoring

- Some mentors are unable to bridge cultural differences which led to relationships failing (Spencer, 2007)
  - Mentors’ inability to effectively deal with cultural differences.
  - Some mentors were unaware of cultural misunderstandings that took place between them and their mentees.

- Mentors’ efforts in getting to know youth’s cultures may increase relationship quality (Lederer et al., 2009).
  - Getting to know mentees and their families.
  - Sensitivity and respectful of cultural differences.
  - Deliberately sharing their cultural differences and experiences.
How to Enhance the Cultural Competence of Mentoring Programs
POWER Acronym:
- P = Pride
- O = Opportunity
- W = Women-in-the-Making
- E = Energy & Effort
- R = Relationships

Program Target Areas:
- Health promotion (e.g., exercise, nutrition)
- Risk behavior prevention (e.g., substance use, violence)
- Education (academic success, career exploration)
- Positive youth development (e.g., social relationships, goal-setting, problem-solving, coping skills, cultural identity)
Sample Steps in GirlPOWER! Program (DuBois et al., 2008)

- Reviewed research literature on important issues to African American and Latina adolescent girls.

- Interviewed various stakeholders (e.g., parents, youth, mentors, staff) about program development.

- Included an advisory board of youth, parents and staff.
Framework for enhancing the cultural responsiveness of programs (Resnicow et al., 2000)

- **Surface Structure**
  - Matching program materials and messages to the target population’s characteristics
  - Determining channels and settings that are most appropriate for delivery of messages/programs.

- **Deep Structure**
  - Adaptations that incorporate the cultural, psychological, social, environmental and historical factors that influence the behaviors of a target group.
Examples of surface structure adaptations in GirlPOWER!

- Included characters/pictures of women and girls from similar backgrounds.

- Staff came from similar racial/ethnic backgrounds.

- Diverse mentor pool.

- Delivering workshops in community space convenient to youth.
Program Components

- **POWERSessions**
  - 12 Monthly, 3-hour Group Sessions with 10-15 Mentor-Youth Pairs

- **POWERBuilders**
  - Between-session activities for Matches to do on their own
  - Thematically linked to topics of POWERSessions

- **Goal-Setting**
- **Parental Involvement**
  - Orientation and attendance at mid-program check-in & graduation sessions
  - Personalized notes sent home to parents after each session

- **Relationship Support**
  - Training for Mentors and Youth
  - Supervision through monthly check-ins with mentor and youth/parent
  - Training & supervision are keyed to program goals/activities and are designed to supplement training/supervision provided as part of the standard BBBS program

- **Program Monitoring & Evaluation**
  - Group Reunions at 6 month intervals following end of formal program
Example of Deep Structure Adaptation in GirlPOWER! (DuBois et al., 2008)

- **Celebrating our Sameness and our Differences: Cultural Diversity** (GirlPOWER!; DuBois et al., in press)

- **Workshop Goals:**
  - To help girls develop a positive ethnic & racial identity.
  - To help mentors and girls share their cultural backgrounds with each other.
  - To help girls learn strategies for coping with prejudice and discrimination.
POWERSession Overview

- Mystery Activity ("ice breaker" keyed to topic of session)
- Welcome & MatchBuilders (role play/discussion of issues/challenges that can arise in mentoring relationships)
- Introduction to Topic (e.g., what is culture?)
- Community Guest (presentation on session topic with emphasis on interactive learning/exploration)
- Lunch/Snack Break
POWERSession Overview Cont’d

- Review of POWERBuilders (i.e., between-session Match activities)

- POWERPlay (group experiential activity/project keyed to topic of session)

- Wrap-Up & Evaluation
POWER Builders - Suggested activities for mentor & youth to do after Culture Workshop

- She is POWERful!
  - Identifying positive female role model in youth’s culture

- My Culture in the Movies!
  - Exploring prejudice and discrimination and identifying healthy ways to cope with this.
POWERBuilders cont’d

- **My Culture is All Around Me!**
  - Mentor and youth attend a cultural event relevant to mentee’s culture or a restaurant that serves food of mentee’s culture.

- **Me and My Culture: An Unbeatable Combination!**
  - Mentor and youth read a book together that is about the mentee’s culture and/or that includes characters who are of the same culture as the mentee.

- **Know Your Roots!**
  - Big and Little create family trees to better understand their roots/cultures.
Differences between GP & non-GP Group in cultural processes

1 = Cultural Sens. – 3 mths
2 = Cultural Sens. – 12 mths
3 = Cultural Mistrust – 12 mths
4 = Ethnic Identity – 12 mths
Other ways to make programs culturally responsive
Suggestions

- Conduct a needs assessment of target population (Liang & West, 2007)

- Include parents and family in the mentoring relationship (Farruggia et al., 2010; Sawrikar et al., 2008) for groups in which family is highly valued.

- Enhance cultural competence (ongoing) of mentors and staff.

- Adapt mentoring model to fit with youth’s culture and community
Suggestions

- Consider arranging for consultants (e.g., tribal elders) or advisory board members to provide feedback on program development and implementation.

- Assess mentors cultural competence from mentor’s and/or youth’s perspective to target training efforts, matching, and supervision of mentors.