

Mentee/Parent Training Guide



LEAD. INSPIRE. CONNECT

**Lead by Example.
Inspire Others.
Connect the World.**

About Work of Art



LEAD. INSPIRE. CONNECT

We believe we are all a work of art shaped and modeled by our personal experiences. Through character development, social-emotional empowerment, community service, post-secondary exploration and education each work of art will strive to achieve their full potential.

Our Vision:

"Each work of art will strive to achieve their own personal success through cultured experiences in collaboration with their school, community, family and the world."

Our Mission:

Work of Art is designed to empower young ladies ages 13-18 from single parent or low economic households, foster care or other unforeseen circumstances. The mission of the program is built on three beliefs: lead by example, inspire others and develop a deeper connection to their family, community and the world through volunteer opportunities and other cultivating experiences.

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Section I: What is a Mentor?

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What is Work of Art mentoring all about?

Our mentors are adults from the community who volunteer their time to work with Work of Art participants, providing guidance and support as the student works toward their goals. Mentors are required to meet with their mentee six hours a month, for a minimum of 10 months. These mentors help participants get the most out of everything Work of Art offers while also building a personal relationship that we hope lasts a lifetime.

Who Serves as Work of Art Mentors?

Work of Art mentors are volunteers from the community. They agree to spend at least six hours a month meeting with their Work of Art mentee (the pair is known as a “match”). They may have other phone, email, or text message contact throughout the month, but the goal is to have about an hour and a half a week of in-person meeting time.

Our program’s mentors come from all walks of life – they are business owners, teachers, college students, mothers and working women. But they are all united in caring for the young people that Work of Art serves. They must be at least **20 years of age**, although most of our mentors are a bit

older than that. They have all expressed a desire to give back to their communities and have committed to helping the Work of Art participant develop a course to a better future. They give their time, their talent, and their wisdom to our participants.



Our mentors are also **safe**. All of them have been through a criminal background check and other screening measures that ensure that they are safe individuals and a good fit for the philosophy of the mentoring program: that we seek to empower all of our participants through leadership, inspiration and

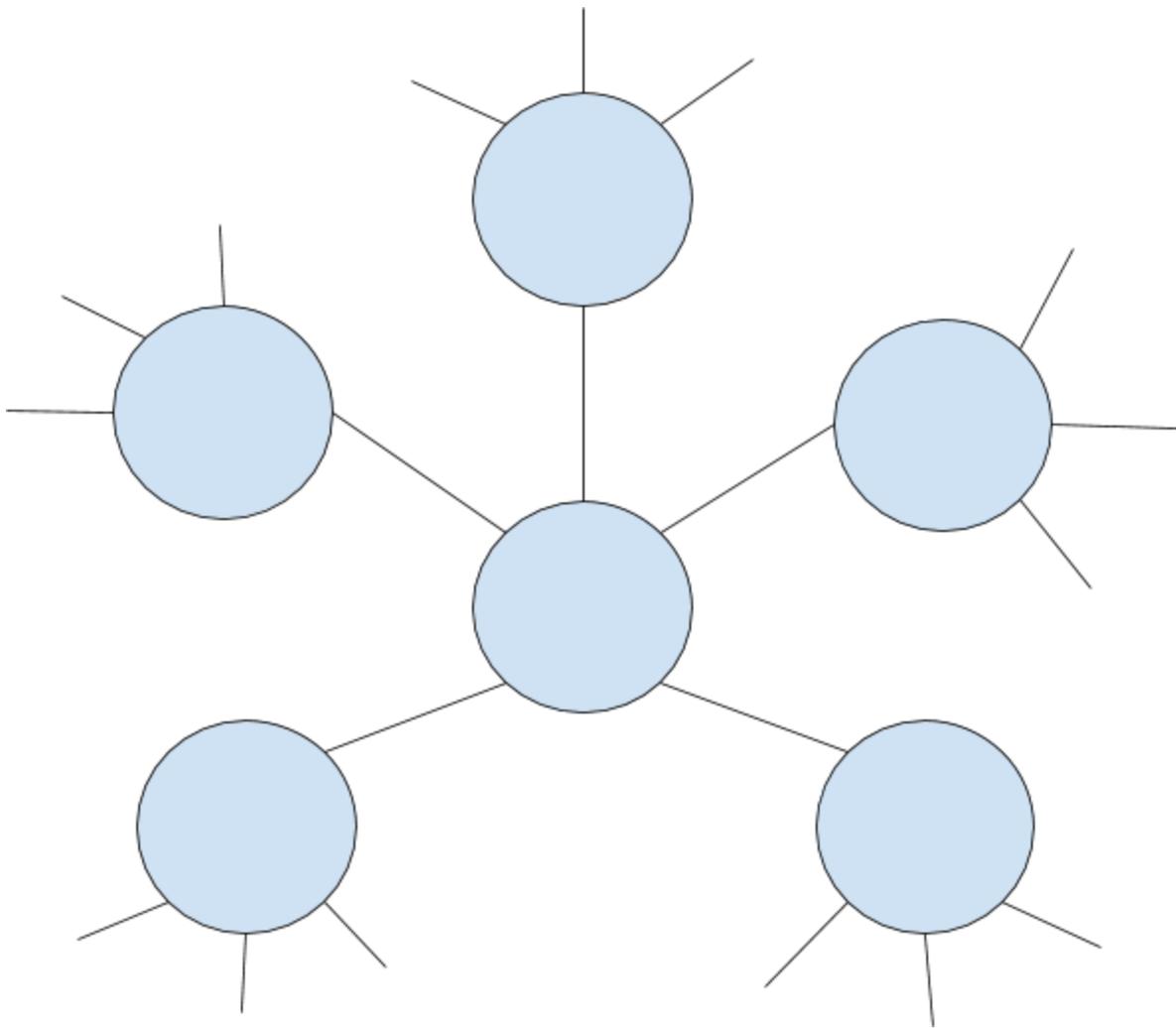
connections.

Our mentors receive 2 hours of in-person training before they are matched with a mentee. This training teaches them how to relate to our participants, explains the mentor role, and offers tips on providing appropriate support to the Work of Art participants no matter what goals or needs they have.

Once our mentors are prepared for their role, we introduce them to our participants and allow each young person to have input into who they will be matched with. We help all of our participants find a mentor that they will “click” with and who can provide the specific kind of support they need.

Mentor Web

What are the Characteristics of a Good Mentor?



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Mentor Role:

What a mentor is... and is NOT

<p>A mentor is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● A role model● A friend● A “coach”● A partner in learning● A trusted guide● A connection to other resources● An advocate	<p>A mentor is NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● A substitute parent● A counselor● A therapist● A case worker● A source of money or gifts● A peer● A negative influence
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What do mentors and mentees do together?

Work of Art mentors support their mentee in a variety of ways and the activities they do together reflect this diverse approach.

- **Post-Secondary Plan activities** – Over the course of the Work of Art program, each mentee will complete what is known as a “Post-Secondary Plan.” This brief document charts the student’s short- and long-term goals for career, education, finances, personal health, relationships, and more. Mentoring matches use these youth-focused goals as a basis for many of their meetings. For example, a student who wants to attend college after Work of Art might go visit several campuses with their mentor, or have their mentor help with the application process.
- **Group activities** – Every so often, all of our matches will come together for group activities and service projects that allow all participants to interact and have fun together. Occasionally, these events involve parents, caregivers, and other supportive adults in the participants’ lives. We hope that you will be able to join us at some of these activities throughout the year!

Beyond these life plan and group activities, mentors and mentees also spend time just having fun and getting to know each other. Part of the value of having a mentor is learning about another person and seeing how they live their life and carry themselves in the community. So keep in mind that Work of Art mentoring can be both purposeful and fun at the same time!



II. Mentees' Roles and Responsibilities

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What are the roles and responsibilities of the mentee?

As a mentee, you will play many different roles during the course of your mentoring relationship. The following are some important roles for you to keep in mind:

Driver of Relationship

- Identify the skills, knowledge, and/or goals that you want to achieve and communicate them to your mentor
- Bring up new topics that are important to you at any point and give feedback to your mentor
- Communicate with your mentor. It is more than okay to initiate conversations via text or face-to face. Also replying to messages is key!

Activity Planner

- You are in control of activities you do with your mentor. Develop a list of things you would like to do for the year and share them with your mentor. Together, you can create amazing moments and goals with each other.

Teacher

- Look for opportunities to give back to your mentor; share any information that you think might be valuable

Continuous Learner

- Take full advantage of this opportunity to learn
- Work with your mentor to seek resources for learning; identify people and information that might be helpful

How can parents or caregivers support the relationship?

- **Express your interest in the relationship** – Show your support by asking how it’s going. If the mentee sees that you care about this new relationship, they are more likely to give it a chance.
- **Help support the meeting schedule** – That face-to-face time is critical for mentoring relationships, especially during the initial phases of the match. Be understanding if the young person needs to meet with their mentor or spend time on mentoring activities. Work with the mentor to work around scheduling conflicts and reschedule meetings appropriately.
- **Participate in group activities when asked** – Work of Art mentoring is about bringing people together. Join in the fun if the mentee or mentor invites you to participate in a group outing, service project, or other event.
- **Communicate openly with the mentor when the opportunity arises** – Mentors can be most effective when other people share information about the student’s strengths, personality, and needs. Give the mentor feedback on how you think the relationship is going and thank the mentor for their efforts.



- **Honor the mentoring relationship’s confidentiality and trust** – Their relationship is a personal one; respect those boundaries.

- **Communicate with program staff as needed** – You can provide feedback on how the relationship is going and help with program safety by informing staff about rules violations.

- **Encourage the student to stick with it when the going gets tough** – This is true of both the mentoring relationship and Work of Art in general. Help the student work through any challenges that come up along the way. Like any

meaningful personal relationship, mentoring pairs will have their ups and downs. Help the young person see the “big picture” value in the relationship and the positive nature of all the changes they are trying to make in their lives.

Building Relationships:

Guidelines for Successful Relationships, your mentor will:

- **Be patient:** At the initial stages of the match, your mentee may appear to be hesitant, unresponsive and unappreciative of the mentor relationship. Don't try to speed up the process by going out of your way to accommodate your mentee, such as seeing your mentee more than the prescribed time period.
- **Respect the uniqueness** and honor the integrity of your mentee and influence her through constructive feedback. The mentor empowers the mentee to make the right decisions without actually deciding for the mentee. Be alert of opportunities and teachable moments.
- **Set realistic expectations** and goals for with mentor and make achievement for them fun! Remember there is a big difference between encouraging and demanding.
- **Be supportive of your parent** even when you may disagree with your parents, your mentor will not take sides or make judgments concerning any family conflict or situation.
- **Support your health and safety of** by reporting potential issues and concerns.
- **Will not act as the disciplinarian** and recognize that this complicates a mentor's role and can harm relationship-building and trust.
- **Limit exchanges of gifts or money** your presence is enough!
- **Develop trust** by consistently showing up, providing a listening ear and acknowledging if you need to report safety concerns.
- **Act as a friend, not an all-knowing authority** Be the adult in your mentee's life who is just there without having to fix her. Hanging out and talking is surprisingly helpful to a young person's healthy development.
- **Practice active listening** Effective listening is based on respect and honesty and requires paying attention to the speaker and minimizing distractions.
- **Be consistent** Mentors make a commitment to being consistent and dependable to maintaining a steady presence in the youth's life.
- **Be a role model** The best action is to lead by example. Keep your word, be responsive, be attentive and engaged.
- **Let you guide the relationship** Involve the youth in deciding how the pair will spend their time together. While youth are often reluctant about expressing what they want to do, successful mentors take time to learn about the youth's interests and provide them with options for how to spend their time, rather than planning everything without their input.
- **Utilize the knowledge, advice and resources of the mentoring program staff** Successful mentors recognize that they don't have all the answers and they value the support and guidance that program staff can provide. ¹



¹ Materials from New Mentor Handbook are provided with permission from Virginia Mentoring Partnership

Working Through Difficult Issues

Sensitive issues that come up between a mentor and mentee require different levels of response and intervention. These issues have been grouped in three categories: *Delicate Topics*, *Issues of Concern*, and *Crisis Intervention*. However, any of these issues can move up or down this continuum depending on the seriousness and the impact on the mentee or others.

Delicate Topics

Examples:

- Sex
- Peer Pressure
- Hygiene
- Behavior/Choice
- School Performance
- Self-image/Personal Insecurities
- Identity Issues: class, cultural and sexual

Working through delicate topics with your mentor

Generally speaking, delicate topics should only be discussed when initiated by the mentee. These topics can be touchy and strongly affect the relationship. Confidentiality takes on greater importance with these topics. Although mentors should be adequately trained to deal with these issues on their own, they should be encouraged to seek support and feedback from their program coordinator and other mentors when the mentee has brought issues such as these to their attention.

Issues of Concern

Examples:

- Unsafe Sex
- Fighting in School
- Depression
- Delinquent Behavior
- Gang Affiliation
- Substance Abuse
- Verbal Harassment: sexual, racial, bullying, others

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Working through issues of concern with your mentor

Issues of concern are those that may have lifelong implications for the mentee and therefore the mentor needs to report them to the mentor program coordinator. Because these issues may be part of ongoing situations and conditions that mentees face, mentors will be trained and supported to accept these aspects of the mentees' lives without judgment. Issues of concern impact the safety of the mentee. When safety is in jeopardy, these concerns need to be addressed by individuals who have the appropriate training to assist the mentee such as a school social worker or school counselor. It is the mentor's responsibility to bring these concerns to the mentor program coordinator to ensure the mentee is getting guidance from a trained professional. The mentor will need to let their mentee know that the issues/concerns they are sharing are beyond the scope of their expertise and they would need to share this information with the mentor program coordinator and another adult the mentee identifies. Because these are issues that impact the safety of the mentee, confidentiality between the mentor and mentee would have to be broken.

Crisis Requiring Intervention

Examples:

- Child abuse and neglect
- Suicidal behavior or intent to harm others
- Bullying; verbal and physical
- Abusive relationships; sexual abuse, incest, date violence/rape
- Chemical dependency
- Serious delinquency/arrest
- Mental illness
- Physical harassment; sexual, racial



Working through crises with your mentor

Crises involve issues of grave concern that generally require direct and immediate intervention. Some of the issues listed, like child abuse, neglect and suicide or intent to harm others are mandated by law to report to the county/city. The other listed crises may require the mentor to let the Work of Art Program Coordinator know about what the mentee is experiencing.

Mentors are never expected to handle issues such as these alone. In addition, many of these issues require collaboration with the mentee's parent/guardian, school/community organization personnel and intervention needed who should be involved.

In general, mentors are not considered mandated reporters as they are not trained in this procedure. Mentors **ARE** required reporters, meaning they need to take crisis issues to the Work of Art Program Coordinator who is either trained as a mandated reporter or will take it to their designee.



Section III. Communication

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Levels of Communication

A. Superficial Interaction

- We offer information that could be easily revealed to a stranger.

B. Small Talk

- We talk about general areas of interest such as school, jobs, one's leisure interests and activities.

C. Intellectual Disclosure

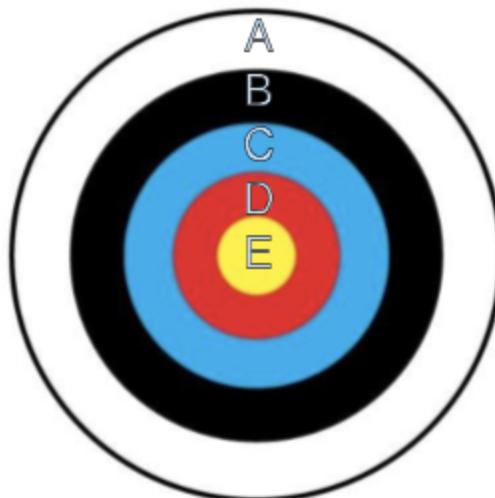
- We discuss issues that reveal some of our thoughts, beliefs and values.

D. Personal Disclosure

- We share information about personal needs, weaknesses, worries and feelings with the person with whom we are interacting.

E. Uncensored Self-Disclosure

- We feel freedom to reveal ourselves honestly and openly without risking loss of the relationship.



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Effective Communication

Active Listening

Active Listening is a fundamental communication skill which involves listening carefully to the words and feelings expressed by the speaker and then feeding these facts back to the speaker in such a way that he or she knows they have been understood.

Active Listening requires:

- “Listening to” rather than just hearing which takes concentration.
- The listener to **reflect back the feelings he or she has heard**, focusing on the feeling underlying the message.

Active Listening includes the following techniques:

Paraphrasing

The listener, in their own words, stated their understanding of what has been heard and asks the speaker to verify or correct this interpretation.

- “Do I hear you saying.....?”
- “Let me see if I understand correctly....”
- “Sounds like...”

Open Ended Questions

The listener invited the speaker to elaborate. The listener must show interest and must allow their own viewpoint or judgments to contaminate the invitation.

- “Intersteting.....Give me an example.”
- “What did you do in school today?” (versus “How was school today?”)

Probing

The listener raises a topic that is related to the speaker’s statement and asks the speaker to elaborate on the topic.

- Mentee: “I like math. The only reason I got a D is that I can hardly hear the teacher.”
- Mentor: “Have you noticed having trouble catching what other teachers are saying?”

Perception Checking

The listener also pays attention to what is not being said to reach new insights and hunches, then checks the accuracy of these with³ the speaker.

- “Every time you’ve mentioned your sister today, you’ve clinched your fists and gritted your teeth. I sense a lot of anger. Are you mad at her?”

Open Body Language

The listener faces towards the speaker, arms uncrossed and displays physical signs of listening, such as head nodding, facial expressions, etc.

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Practice Active Listening

To Practice Active Listening:

- Listen without interrupting the speaker
- Concentrate on what is being said
- Avoid being distracted from words of mannerisms, clothing or voice quality
- Avoid letting expectations interfere with hearing what is being said
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues and body language
- Listen to feelings, attitudes, perceptions and values as well as facts
- Be attentive to inarticulate, repetitious or slow speakers
- Restate the other person's statements to be sure they are understood
- Ask the other person to repeat or clarify if needed for understanding
- Wait for the other person to finish before framing a response

Active Listening Responses:

- Uh huh
- I hear what you are saying
- That makes sense
- I know
- I've felt that way too
- It would be hard not to feel that way
- It's normal to think those feelings
- It's OK to feel that way
- If I were you I might feel _____ too

Feelings to Reflect

glad	angry	cheated	relieved	excited
bored	unhappy	tired	happy	mad
worried	scared	nervous	depressed	embarrassed
stupid	humiliated	silly	unsure	left out



Section III. Boundaries

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Setting Healthy Boundaries

When interacting with children, there may be certain topics, questions, language or actions that make mentors feel unsure or uncomfortable. While building off of a mentor's communication skills, it is critical to articulate boundaries in a clear way.

Personal Boundaries

Relate to mentor's own level of comfort. These may vary for each individual.

- Vulgar language
- Discussion of personal information
- Relationship status, family life, background

Program Boundaries

Relate to Work of Art's program policies and rules. Even if an action does not cross a mentor's personal boundaries, it is still necessary to follow our program policy.

- Exchange of phone numbers
- Exchange of social media
- Contact outside of our program's structure
- Physical contact such as hugs etc.
- Transportation
- Photographs

How to respond if boundaries are tested:

- **Know your personal boundaries** to better recognize when they are crossed
- Calmly share that the behavior, action or language makes you feel uncomfortable or disrespected. If the mentee's behavior is overly emotional, agitated, or angry, it may be necessary to speak to them when they are calm.
- In the case of sharing personal information (relationship status, family life, background) state that you would **prefer to keep some information** private and focus attention back on the mentee's experiences.

If a suggested activity or question violates your personal or program boundaries (such as sharing phone numbers or social media information) **share that it is not allowed** within the program. ⁴

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Section IV. Resources

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Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What is the structure of our program?

We meet bi-weekly on Wednesday from 6:00 pm- 7:30 pm. Workshops are engaging and focused on character development, social-emotional growth, academic or career exploration. We also meet one Saturday a month as a program to participate in a scheduled activity.

Q. What are Work of Art's Program Goals?

- Cultivate positive and healthy relationships;
- Exposure to cultured experiences and enrichment field trips;
- Increase social/emotional awareness;
- Promote active community service;
- Provide tutoring and remediation in areas of weakness;
- Referral to community agencies based on areas where additional support is necessary;
- Build self-esteem and reduce relational aggression among peers;
- Cultivate a love for lifelong learning;
- Provide quality mentor to mentee compatibility to support the individual needs of each Work of Art;
- Encourage on-time graduation with post-secondary plans.

Q. What is the time commitment?

Outside of the planned activities, mentors are asked to meet at least 6 hours a month for a full school year (10 months).

Q. What is a mentor meet up?

Feedback is key to the success of our program; therefore, quarterly we will hold quarterly mentee meet-ups in which we discuss program highlights and concerns.

Q. How does Work of Art evaluate programming?

After each activity, mentors and mentees will receive a QR code to complete a brief survey to provide feedback on each workshop or activity.

Identify Interests

GOAL: To help you and your mentee get to know each other by identifying interests and activities.

MATERIAL: Pen or pencil and paper.

WHAT TO DO:

- List about 20 different types of activities that you and your mentee enjoy doing or would like to participate in. Activities may range from watching movies, playing in a band, reading at the library, shopping, or talking on the phone with friends. Discuss with your mentee why she enjoys these activities. Share with her your own list and see if there are any in common.
- Take turns answering the following questions. Identifying similar interests and hobbies the two of you share.
 - Favorite music
 - Favorite TV show or movie
 - Favorite sport, exercise or game
 - Favorite book or magazine
 - Subject in school you like the most
 - Subject in school you like the least
 - Favorite food, restaurants
 - Heroes, real life or television/movie
 - Place you work full/part-time
 - Club or groups you belong to
 - What you do in your free time
 - What you and your friends do together
 - What you want to do after graduating from high school
- Ask your mentee to describe three good things about her.

FOLLOW- UP:

- Engage in one activity of common interest during the next month.
- Keep a list of favorite activities in a journal and add new ones as they develop.

Plan Activities

GOAL: To generate ideas for activities to do with your mentor.

MATERIAL: Pen or pencil, paper

WHAT TO DO: With your mentor, think of activities you could do together throughout the school year. Consider the age/stage of your mentee and time spent together each month.

Month	Mentoring Activity
September	
October	Middle School: Make a collage of words that describe you. High School: Talk about the college acceptance process.
November	
December	
January is National Mentoring Month!	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	