



From Connection to Opportunity: A Social Capital Building Toolkit for Youth Mentors

Purpose

“From Connection to Opportunity”, this Social Capital Building Toolkit is designed to support and empower mentors like you, as you intentionally build a meaningful relationship with your mentee and support them as they explore their passions and pursue their life goals. The Toolkit is designed with you in mind so that the activities and tools can be easily integrated into your regular mentoring sessions. Read this guide for tips and recommendations on implementing the activities with your mentee.

This project was supported by Award No. 15PNIJ-22-GG-01424-MENT, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

Why Social Capital?

Positive relationships have the greatest impact on young peoples’ success when they are part of a broader web of supportive connections. Rather than relying on a single relationship, young people thrive when they’re surrounded by multiple caring adults and peers who offer encouragement, resources, and opportunities. This network of support—known as social capital—can open doors to new experiences, helpful information, and meaningful connections.

Watch this [video](#) to learn more about youth social capital and why it matters.

Benefits of Youth Social Capital

The Toolkit is grounded in extensive research on youth mentoring and social capital, which shows that strong mentoring relationships and social capital can:

- **Increase self-efficacy** and support progress toward education, career, and life goals;
- **Strengthen social and emotional skills** that young people will use throughout their lives;
- **Build resilience**, especially among youth who have experienced challenges or trauma;
- **Encourage prosocial behavior**, including a stronger commitment to helping peers and others;
- **Expand access to relationships and opportunities** that can lead to more equitable outcomes.

Guiding Principles

The **SoCAP Builder Toolkit** is grounded in current priorities from the fields of youth mentoring, social capital, and positive youth development. It is guided by the following core principles:

- 1. Strengthens-Based Approach.** Aligned with Search Institute’s legacy of promoting [Developmental Assets](#) and best practices in youth development, the Toolkit emphasizes recognizing and building on each young person’s strengths. This approach empowers youth across diverse backgrounds and experiences—to leverage their talents, build confidence, and pursue their goals.
- 2. Relationship-Driven.** Rather than functioning as a prescribed “program” that teaches isolated skills, the Toolkit offers a collection of activities designed to deepen and enrich mentoring relationships. Grounded in Search Institute’s [Developmental Relationships Framework](#), these activities support meaningful connection by inviting mentors and mentees to choose experiences that align with their unique relationship dynamics.
- 3. Culturally Responsive.** The Toolkit is designed to foster culturally responsive interactions that help young people expand their social capital. Activities encourage mentors to learn about their mentees’ backgrounds and experiences, support identity development, and help youth access networks, opportunities, and resources that may have previously felt out of reach. The approach is intentional and inclusive, centering what is meaningful and relevant to each mentee.
- 4. Flexible and Adaptable.** Recognizing that every mentoring relationship is different, the Toolkit is designed for easy integration into sessions. It includes guidance on sequencing and flow, while encouraging mentors to adapt activities based on the individual needs, goals, and preferences of their mentees.

Description of Toolkit

The Toolkit is organized into four modules, each marked with a unique icon to help you easily identify where you are in the sequence. The chart below offers a high-level overview of each module, giving you a snapshot of what to expect as you move through the Toolkit.

High-Level Overview of Toolkit

Module 1. Building Developmental Mentoring Relationships	Module 2. Setting Goals Aligned with Youth Sparks	Module 3. Understanding Our Web of Support	Module 4. Strengthening Our Web of Support
<p>Module 1 includes four activities designed to strengthen mentoring relationships and get to know each other better. To support young people’s social capital growth, having a strong, developmental mentoring relationship is foundational.</p> <p>Included Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity Wheel • 4s Conversations • Bucket List • Chi-Ji Cards 	<p>Module 2 provides activities and tools that mentors can use with their mentee to help them set realistic, meaningful goals aligned with what excites and motivates them. By understanding youth sparks, mentors are better equipped to connect them with relevant opportunities and resources.</p> <p>Included Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying & Sharing Sparks • Goal Setting • Opportunity Board • Brag Sheet 	<p>One of the best ways to support youth in making progress towards their life goals is to help them identify and understand who is in their web of support. Module 3 is designed to help mentees understand the importance of relationships and who is in their web of support through a series of interactive activities.</p> <p>Included Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why Relationships Matter • Identifying Connections • Mapping Our Webs of Support 	<p>Once youth have a good understanding of who is already in their web of support, it is valuable to help them consider ways they can continue to grow and strengthen their relationships with individuals within that web of support and beyond.</p> <p>Included Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menu of Support • Informational Interviews

Who is the Toolkit Designed for?

The Toolkit is intended for one-to-one mentoring relationships with mentees aged 13 and older. However, activities can be adapted to suit different mentoring approaches and age groups.

Description of Activity Components

Each of the 13 activities in the Toolkit follows a consistent format to make them easy to use and adaptable. You can find all activities in the Appendix. Below is a breakdown of the key components included in each activity.

- **Preparation.** Each activity begins with a brief overview, estimated preparation and activity time, and a list of materials needed. This helps you plan ahead and gather any necessary resources.
- **Steps.** Activities are broken into clear, step-by-step instructions written specifically for mentors. We recommend reviewing these steps in advance so you can confidently lead the activity without needing to refer back frequently.
- **Tips.** Each activity also includes a series of tips. Tips include recommendations to help tailor or adapt the activity to meet the needs of mentees, potential challenges and solutions to consider, and any adaptations for certain age ranges.
- **Mentor Reflection Questions.** Most activities include reflection questions for mentors to consider after completing the activity. These questions encourage you to think about your mentee's background, sense of connection, access to resources, and your own role in supporting their growth. Reflection can help uncover new ways to strengthen your mentee's web of support and guide them toward opportunities aligned with their goals.
- **Templates and Printouts.** Some activities have templates and printouts. These often include materials needed to complete the activity. Make sure to prepare these printouts in advance.

Toolkit Implementation

Activity Selection Considerations

Consider your relationship stage. Module 1 activities are designed to help mentors and mentees build a strong, developmental relationship. These activities are valuable at any point but may be especially helpful if your match is new or needs support strengthening the relationship. We recommend completing at least one activity from this module, and more if it fits your mentee's needs.

Think about your mentee's interests. When choosing activities, consider what your mentee would enjoy or find engaging. Selecting activities that align with their interests will help build connection and enthusiasm.

Choose activities you're comfortable leading. Your comfort matters too. If an activity doesn't feel like a good fit, either modify it or choose a different one. Your confidence in leading the activity will influence how well it goes and how your mentee responds.

Be flexible. The suggested order of modules is a guide, not a rule. While Modules 3 and 4 are most focused on social capital development, their impact is stronger when at least one or two activities from Modules 1 and 2 are done first. Choose the number and sequence of activities based on how often you meet and what feels right for your mentoring relationship.

Tips for Introducing Toolkit or Activities

1. **Try out an activity first.** Practice an activity with a friend, family member, or colleague before trying it with your mentee. This helps you feel more prepared and confident.
2. **Come to sessions prepared.** Read the activity instructions in advance and have all materials ready, including any printouts or templates.
3. **Share the purpose.** Let your mentee know you'd like to try some new activities together. Explain that these are designed to help you get to know each other better and support their goals and interests.
4. **Set a goal or incentive.** Use the **SoCAP Builder Journey Tracker** to set a shared goal or reward for completing activities. The tracker includes ideas and suggestions to help make this process fun and motivating.
5. **Track and celebrate progress.** The Journey Tracker also includes badges for completing modules and a certificate for completing the full Toolkit. Help your mentee recognize these milestones—and encourage them to include accomplishments in resumes, applications, or school portfolios. This reinforces the value of their growth and progress.

Reflecting on Activities

Not every activity will land the same way—and that's okay. Use these reflection tips to make the most of each experience:

1. **Review in advance.** Make sure the activity fits your mentee's needs and that you feel confident facilitating it. Adjust if necessary to make it more engaging or accessible.

2. **Reflect afterward.** Think about how the activity went—for both you and your mentee. Were they engaged? Did anything surprise you? Would you do anything differently next time? You can reflect on your own, with your mentee, or with a staff member.

3. **Use the built-in reflection questions.** Most activities include prompts to help mentors reflect on what they learned about their mentee’s strengths, background, connectedness, and access to opportunities. These insights can guide how you continue to support your mentee in building their social capital in thoughtful, culturally responsive ways.

Toolkit Activities

Module 1 Activities

- [Identity Wheel](#)
- [The 4S Conversation](#)
- [Bucket List](#)
- [Chi-Ji Cards](#)

Module 2 Activities

- [Identifying & Sharing Sparks](#)
- [Goal Setting](#)
- [Brag Sheet](#)
- [Opportunity Board](#)

Module 3 Activities

- [Why Relationships Matter](#)
- [Identifying Connections](#)
- [Mapping Our Webs of Support](#)

Module 4 Activities

- [Menu of Support](#)
- [Informational Interviews](#)

SoCAP Builder Journey Tracker

- [SoCAP Builder Journey Tracker](#)

Identity Wheel

Reflect on and share aspects of your identities.

DESCRIPTION

Critical to connecting with your mentee and building an intentional and inclusive relationship is understanding the rich diversity they bring to the table. Learning about each other's background, heritage, talents, and skills, which make up your identities, supports this vision. This activity encourages mentors and mentees to share experiences relating to their identity and to learn about each other's identities.

Prep Time

None

Activity Time

90 minutes

Materials

Copies of identity wheel

Pens or pencils

STEPS

- 1. Prepare to engage in the activity.** Establish that this activity will provide an opportunity to get to know each other better. Before delving into the activity, it is important to set the tone for an engaging interactive experience and healthy discussion.
- 2. Share some things about yourselves before diving in.** To ease into the conversation, start by sharing what's unique about your names, using these prompts:
 - a. Tell your mentor/mentee about your name. If you know the meaning, you can share it.
 - b. Do others in your family share your name? Were you named after anyone? Who?
 - c. How were you named? Who named you?
 - d. How is your name unique?
- 3. Create your Identity Wheels.** Each of you will fill in an identity wheel. Identity encompasses one's background, heritage, cultural customs, interests, passions, skills, and talents. Write your name in the center, then fill in each piece of the wheel with a dimension of your identity that you consider to be important in defining who you are. As a mentor, you can model this by filling in and sharing your responses for a few of the pieces. If stuck, refer to the list of potential identities to consider. You may also encourage your mentee to get creative with their wheels (e.g., use color, draw, cut out pictures).

4. **Play two truths and a lie to share one part of your wheels.** You and your mentee will each take a turn sharing two truths from your wheels and one lie about your identity. After one person shares, the other guesses which statements are true and which was the lie. At the end of each round, share more about the truths you told about your identities, and let the guesser share their reasoning for their guess.
5. **Continue to discuss the different parts of your identity.** Once you and your mentee have played a round of two truths and a lie, share about the other aspects of your identity that you documented in your wheel.
6. **Reflect on the activity together.** Consider these prompts:
 - a. Which parts of our identities were obvious and easy to recognize in each other? Which parts were less obvious?
 - b. How do you think the different aspects of your identity affect how you build relationships with other people?
 - c. Did you learn new things about each other? How did it feel to find out these new things?
 - d. What was it like when the guesser guessed incorrectly? What can we do to make sure we're seeing each other for who we really are?

TIPS

- This activity works best in a context that allows space for pairs to have conversations without getting distracted.
- This activity builds on the foundation of trust and asks for a high level of vulnerability from both mentors and mentees. Listen with empathy to demonstrate that your mentee's experience matters to you.
- Consider whether you and your mentee are ready to engage in this activity or whether there are activities to build your relationship that should come first.
- Let your mentee know that if they're not comfortable talking about some aspect of their wheel, they don't have to share and that's okay.

REFLECTION

The Identity Wheel Activity encourages you to reflect with your mentee about the layers of your shared and different identities and how those identities are more or less keenly felt, depending on the social context. Doing this activity can reveal how privilege may operate, sensitize you to the challenges your mentee faces based on their identity, and encourages empathy. These are critical to supporting your mentee on their journey. In reflection:

1. What are some of the notable similarities between you and your mentee? In what ways do you feel closer to your mentee now that you've shared more about your identities?
2. What are some of the notable differences between you and your mentee? As you reflect on these differences, what feelings come up for you?

Identity Wheel

Potential Identities to Consider:

1. Community.

- a. What communities are you a part of? (e.g., mentor Brothers mentors Sisters community)
- b. What activities do you participate in?
- c. What groups do you belong to? What school do you go to?

2. Race, Culture, and/or Ethnicity.

- a. What race, culture, or ethnicity do you identify as?
- b. What cultural traditions do you have in your family?
- c. Where are your ancestors from?

3. Family.

- a. Who is in your family? Who lives in your home?
- b. What family roles are part of your identity that are important to you? (e.g., I am a sibling, a cousin, etc.)

4. Gender.

- a. Which, if any, gender do you identify as?

5. Age.

- a. What age group do you identify with?

6. Hobbies/Interests.

- a. What do you do for fun?
- b. What activities are you involved in?
- c. What topics are you interested in?

7. Beliefs/Values.

- a. What guides your decisions?
- b. What is important to you?

8. Religion/Spirituality.

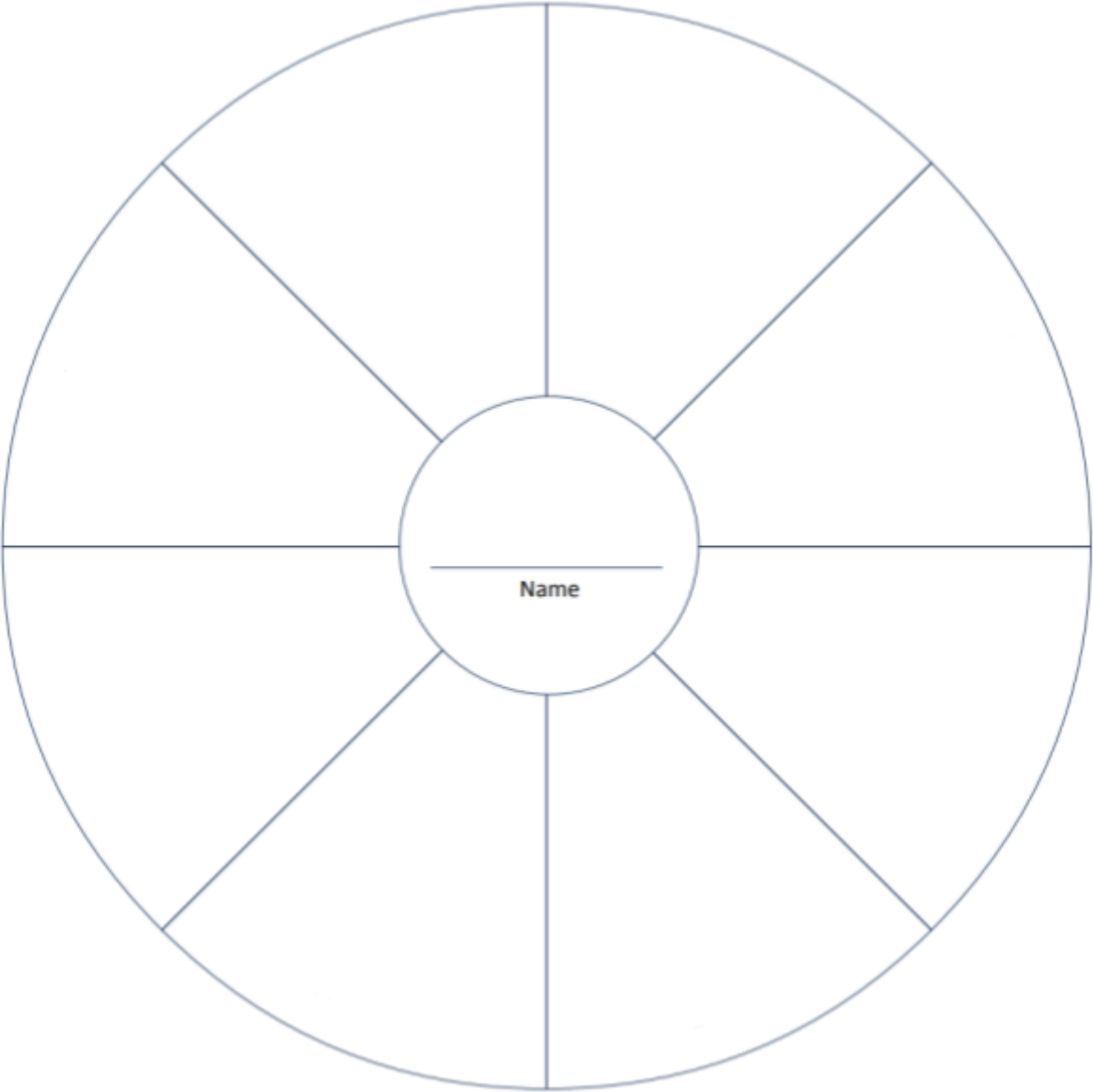
- a. Do you belong to a faith community?
- b. What helps you think about mentor questions in life?
- c. What holidays or traditions do you observe?

9. Others.

- a. You might consider school, occupation, club memberships, politics, and more.

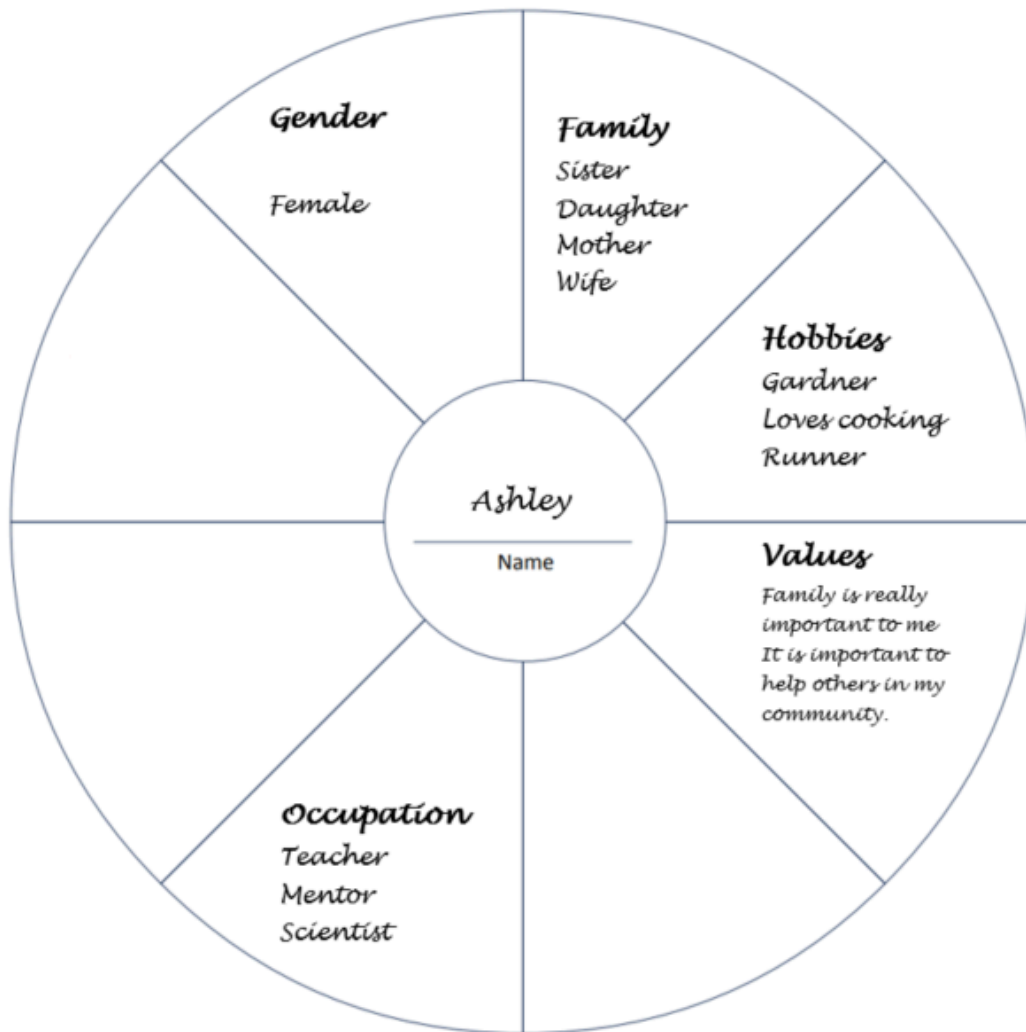
Identity Wheel

Print a copy for yourself and your mentee to fill out.



Identity Wheel

Example



The 4S Conversation

Lay the foundation for building a strong mentoring relationship

DESCRIPTION

This activity is for mentors and mentees to get to know each other in a 1:1 discussion focusing on sparks, strengths, struggles, and supports. It can help you get to know each other so each of you feels more understood and validated. It can also help you both understand the resources and supports needed to continue strengthening the relationship.

Prep Time

None

Activity Time

30 minutes

Materials

4S Conversation Questions

STEPS

- 1. Prepare and review questions.** Review the 4S Conversation questions. Print the cards, cut out each question, and then write Sparks, Strengths, Struggles, or Supports on the opposite side of each card.
- 2. Introduce the 4S conversation to your mentee.** You may say something like: *“Let’s play a question game to get to know each other better. There are four categories of questions and each starts with the letter S: Sparks, Strengths, Struggles, and Supports. Sparks are talents, deep interests, and activities that you love doing. Strengths are skills, values, and other things about you that help you do well in life. Struggles are the things that you worry about or challenges you’ve experienced. Supports are things that help you get through struggles and succeed at things.”*
- 3. Setup 4S conversation game.** To make this activity feel more like a game, we recommend laying out the cards with each of the categories showing face-side up and the question side faced down. Each of you will take turns picking questions to ask each other. Be sure to let your mentee know that they are welcome to pass if they don’t feel comfortable answering a question. You might say something like: *“There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. These are just questions to help us get to know each other better. If there is ever a question that you don’t want to answer, it is okay to say ‘pass.’”*

4. **Play the game.** You can choose to go through all of the questions, or you may decide to break it up over several mentoring sessions.
5. **Reflect.** Together, reflect on the process of sharing about your sparks, strengths, struggles, and supports. Reflection questions could include:
 - a. What did you think of our conversation today?
 - b. Were some questions easier or harder than others to answer?
 - c. Did you learn anything today that surprised you, either about yourself or me?
 - d. What other questions might be fun to add to our list of questions?
6. **Return to these questions.** You can return to these questions from time to time to go even deeper, especially as you continue building trust.
7. **Putting it into practice.** When you have conversations that bring up struggles, be sure to brainstorm with your mentee about ways these struggles can be resolved. Consider whether there are appropriate resources that you can connect your mentee with to make sure they get the support they need.

TIPS

- Discuss questions in an informal and warm way. The goal of the conversation is to get to know one another. You may remove any questions that you anticipate may be challenging for your mentee to answer.
- Affirm your mentee's experiences by listening more than you talk, avoiding absolutes such as always and never, and affirming difficult circumstances while also maintaining hope.
- Depending on the conversation, sensitive topics may come up. Make sure you know what to do if something is reportable or referable.

Reflection:

The 4s Conversation can strengthen your bond and build trust, both necessary ingredients to an inclusive, intentional, and equitable relationship with your mentee. Reflecting on the 4S conversation with your mentee think about the following:

1. What barriers, at the personal, community, and institutional levels, do you believe your mentee may face in their pursuit of their sparks, strengths, and supports?

2. What can you do to help your mentee prepare for and overcome those barriers (while recognizing that some struggles may be outside of your control as a mentor)? How might that impact the development of their sparks?

Sparks Questions

What is something you really enjoy doing and that you almost lose track of time when you do it?

What is something that you want to learn more about?

What is your favorite subject in school? [For mentor: What was your favorite subject when in school?]

Describe your ideal weekend.

What is a new hobby you would like to try?

What type of job do you want when you're older? [For mentor: What type of job did you want when you were my age?]

Strengths Questions

<p>What is one of the best compliments you've received?</p>	<p>What is something you are good at doing?</p>
<p>What are some important traditions that you and/or your family have?</p>	<p>What is your favorite childhood memory?</p>
<p>What is something you would like me to know about you?</p>	<p>What is your favorite thing about yourself?</p>

Struggles Questions

What is your biggest fear?

What is your biggest regret?

Is there anything you wish you could change about yourself?

What is one thing you would like to be better at?

What is one thing you have learned that has made you a better person?

Create Your Own Question

Support Questions

<p>What do you wish people would do to help you when you are feeling down or sad?</p>	<p>If you had to be stuck on an island with one family member, who would you choose and why?</p>
<p>What qualities do you look for in friends? Or what makes someone a good friend?</p>	<p>What are some things you do if you feel stressed out or overwhelmed? What activities help calm you down?</p>
<p>What are things your friends or family do to help you?</p>	<p>Create Your Own Question</p>

Bucket List

Keep a bucket list with your mentee to track and reflect on their desired goals.

DESCRIPTION

Writing a bucket list is a good way for you and your mentee to get to know each other as you're building your relationship. Bucket lists also can help you set goals as individuals and as a mentoring match.

Prep Time

None

Activity Time

Ongoing, 30 minutes initially

Materials

Pen and paper, or electronic document

STEPS

- 1. Introduce the Bucket List.** A bucket list is a list of activities or goals that your mentee and you would like to achieve. Familiarize yourself with the concept of creating a bucket list, and then introduce the idea to your mentee. Explain that you are both going to create a bucket list. Each of you can create a personal bucket list using the template below, as well as a joint bucket list of things you would like to do together. Store your bucket lists in a place (e.g. in a Google document, in a shared journal, on a poster you hang in your office, or somewhere else) where both you and your mentee can return to it in the future.
- 2. Record Bucket List ideas.** To help get you and your mentee started, the template below provides prompts to help you think of potential bucket list items. Feel free to add your own categories as well. Remind your mentee that Bucket Lists do not need to include out of reach goals or aspirations. Instead, consider bucket list items within reach that you can easily check off and that will bring you joy.
- 3. Cross things off and add to the Bucket List over time.** Keep your bucket lists and add to them over time. As you hear your mentee share about their hopes or things they'd like to do and learn, encourage them to add those ideas to their bucket list.

4. **Use the Bucket List as a resource.** Refer back to your individual and shared bucket lists to help structure activities. The bucket list can also help you and your mentee reflect on values and goals, and identify important milestones and experiences.
5. **Reflect together.** Reflect on the intended outcomes of making bucket lists. You can use these three prompts (What, So What, Now What) to guide a conversation about what you've learned:
 - a. **What:** What was it like to create a bucket list together? Do you share any common goals or desires? What did you learn about each other?
 - b. **So what:** Why might creating a bucket list matter?
 - c. **Now what:** Now that we have written our bucket lists, what should we do first?

TIPS

- Keep in mind that your mentee's bucket list may be reflective of their real or perceived access to experiences both mentor and mentee. You may use this opportunity to encourage your mentee to partake in new experiences while also honoring the ones that feel within reach.
- Keep your mentee's racial-ethnic identity or cultural background at the forefront of your mind. For instance, you encourage your mentee to build a Bucket List that represents their cultural background or heritage. Use the Bucket List as a way to celebrate your identities and get to know each other more.
- Be mindful of what's in the scope of your role as a mentor. For example, a mentee might want to travel to Italy. This is not something you can provide as a mentor. However, you could learn more about what interested them about Italy and/or you could do some research about Italy as a match.
- This activity works best in a context that allows space for pairs to have conversations without getting distracted.
- This activity can be done with any age group. You may learn that youth of different ages focus on different types of bucket list items.

REFLECTION

Our bucket lists may connect to dimensions of our identity or our goals. In this way, our bucket lists are unique to our lives. Reflect on the ways in which you supported your mentee's racial-ethnic identity and/or cultural backgrounds by

helping them build a Bucket List specific to their hopes and wishes. Now that you have learned about your mentee's bucket list items, reflect:

1. What was it like to see your mentee's bucket list? Did anything about their bucket list surprise you?
2. Why does it matter to know about your mentee's bucket list? What can you do to help facilitate their experiences?

Mentee Bucket List

Places I would like to visit:

-
-
-
-
-

People I would like to meet:

-
-
-
-
-

Activities or hobbies I would like to try:

-
-
-
-
-

Things I want to learn more about:

-
-
-
-
-

Ways I want to help others:

-
-
-
-
-

Make your own category: _____

-
-
-

Mentor Bucket List

Places I would like to visit:

-
-
-
-
-

People I would like to meet:

-
-
-
-
-

Activities or hobbies I would like to try:

-
-
-
-
-

Things I want to learn more about:

-
-
-
-

Ways I want to help others:

-
-
-
-

Make your own category: _____

-
-
-
-

Our Bucket List

Things I want to share with my Mentor/Mentee:

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-

Things we want to learn from my Mentor/Mentee:

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-

Things we want to do together as a mentoring match:

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-

Make your own category: _____

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-
-

Chi-Ji Cards

Use Chi-Ji cards to help thoughts and process emotions.

DESCRIPTION

Mentees may find it hard to express different thoughts and emotions. Chi-Ji (or similar) cards can help young people overcome this by using images and their imaginations to process thoughts and emotions in an open-ended way.

Prep Time

None

Activity Time

30 minutes

Materials

Chi-Ji Cards

STEPS

- 1. Begin with a card deck.** Start by downloading and cutting out the images found below. You can also consider creating your own Chi-Ji card deck by working with your mentee to print off or cut out images you find online or in magazines. The goal is to have a large selection of images that you and your mentee can choose from to represent your emotions and thoughts.
- 2. Ask a guiding question.** There are many ways to play Chi-Ji cards. The easiest way is a question-response approach. You or your mentee can pick a guiding question from below (or create your own) and take turns using the cards to express how you feel.
 - a. What image best represents how you are feeling today?
 - b. What image best represents who you are as a person?
 - c. What image best represents a goal you have for the future?
 - d. What image speaks to you the most? Why?
 - e. Think about our time together today, which image reflects how you felt during our time together?
- 3. Facilitate conversation.** Take turns asking a guiding question and responding. Share how/why you both relate to the image you have selected. This can be done verbally or if your mentee prefers they may write down their response. Look for opportunities to affirm your mentees' feelings and share your own personal experiences.

TIPS

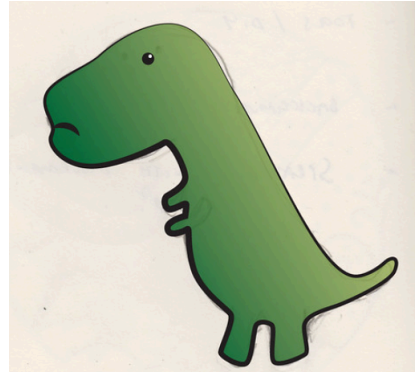
- Remind mentees that they can pick any card. If a young person is struggling to pick one card in response to your guiding question, remind them that there isn't a right or wrong answer. Invite your mentee to be creative with images that are available or to draw their own.
- Model participating in the activity yourself. You may start the activity by having your mentee select a guiding question and you pick out an image first. This may help your mentee feel more comfortable and connected to you.

REFLECTION

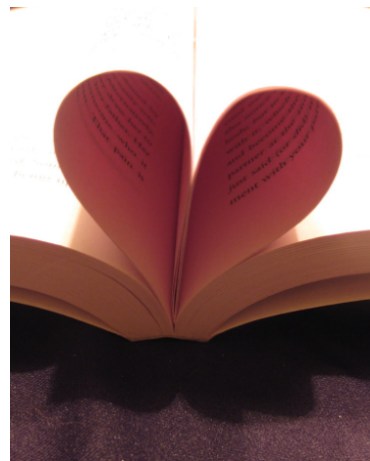
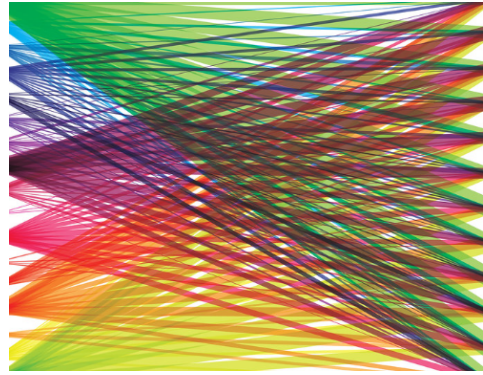
Connecting on an emotional level with your mentee is one way you can gain more insights into their experiences and beliefs. It also supports their own awareness of their beliefs and thoughts and how those connect to current and prior experiences specific to their lives, community, and society. Reflecting on using the Chi-Ji cards with your mentee:

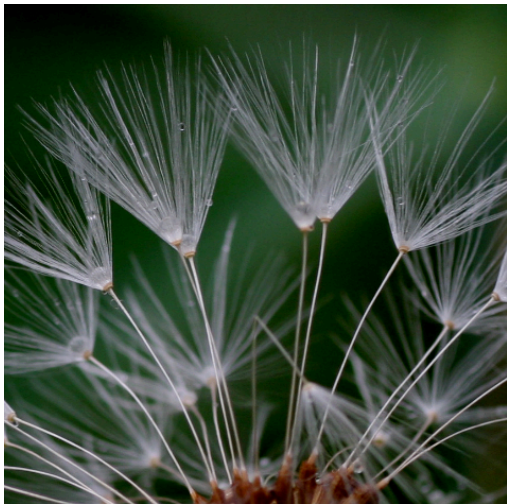
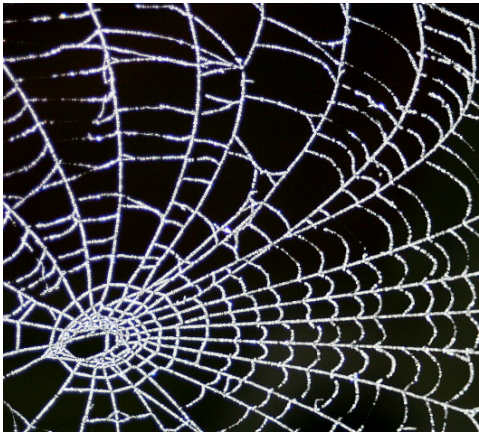
1. What did you learn about your mentee and yourself today?
2. How might this activity deepen your understanding of your mentee's experiences and beliefs?

Chi-Ji Cards









Identifying and Sharing Sparks

Support your mentee in identifying their deep interests, talents, or activities they love – their sparks!

DESCRIPTION

This activity will help you and your mentee identify your deep interests, talents, or activities you love doing, also known as sparks. You will then share your sparks with each other using question prompts.

Prep Time

5-10 minutes

Activity Time

30 minutes

Materials

Sparks Exploration and Sparks Question Prompts

STEPS

- 1. Help your mentee understand what a spark is.** You might say something like the following: *“One way we can get to know each other even better is by identifying our sparks. Sparks are interests, talents, or activities we love to do. They can be all sorts of things like sports, music, art, science, animals, technology, and much more. I want to share some of my sparks with you and I want to learn more about what your sparks are.”* It may be helpful to share one of your own sparks with your mentee as an example.
- 2. Introduce the Sparks Exploration Activity.** Introduce the worksheet below to your mentee. Explain: *“I have this worksheet that lists a bunch of sparks that people sometimes have. Let’s each review the worksheet and put stars next to the things that interest us the most. I am going to do the same!”* Give your mentee time to think and star the things that are most interesting to them. Encourage your mentee to add additional things to the list. If your mentee is getting stuck, consider these prompts:
 - a. Did looking at the list of possibilities make you think of other possibilities that are not on the list? If yes, add them to the list.
 - b. If you woke up one morning and were told you could do one

- activity for as long as you wanted, what activity would it be?
- c. When in your life do you feel happiest? What are you doing at those times?

- 3. Share some of the things that you starred.** After you and your mentee finish starring the things that interest you the most, share some of the things you starred with each other.
- 4. Use the question prompts provided to learn more about each other's sparks.** Show interest in what your mentee shares by taking turns using the different question prompts to learn more about each other's sparks.

TIPS

- Encourage positive expressions of sparks. It's unlikely (but not impossible) that someone's spark could be a harmful activity (drugs, self-injurious behaviors, etc.).
- Model sharing some of your own sparks or use the question prompts provided, if your mentee is feeling stuck.
- Consider adding additional categories to Sparks Exploration Activity List, especially if there are things missing that you already know your mentee is very excited or passionate about.

REFLECTION
















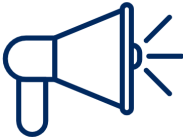
Sparks are critical to young people's identity development particularly youth who experience inequities. Many young people from marginalized backgrounds and communities experience systemic racial/ethnic discrimination and structural barriers that tend to get in the way of finding their spark and reaching their life goals. Reflecting on this reality:

1. What did you learn about your mentee's sparks?
2. How can you support your mentee's sparks? Are there resources or opportunities that you can connect your mentee with to help them with their sparks?

Sparks Exploration

Before you begin to explore a spark, take a few minutes to see what's out there. Here is a list of different spark categories that people can do during their lives—to help you imagine possibilities to explore. Star the ones that sound interesting to you.

	<p>Music:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing an instrument • Writing song lyrics • Listening to your favorite artists 		<p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novels • Biographies • Science Fiction
	<p>Visual Art:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painting • Drawing • Sculpting 		<p>Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student government • Politics
	<p>Writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry • Stories • Plays 		<p>Building/Design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architecture • Drafting • Woodworking
	<p>Dance/Movement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballet • Modern • Karate 		<p>Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneur • Business idea
	<p>Cooking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baking • Eating new foods 		<p>Sports/Athletics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soccer • Basketball • Running
	<p>Fashion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing clothes • Experimenting with new clothes 		<p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Math • Science • History

	<p>Teach/Coach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sport • Tutoring • Counseling 		<p>Relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being supportive • A good friend
	<p>Volunteer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving • Helping • Contributing time 		<p>Nature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecology • Protecting wildlife • Environment
	<p>Animals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Raising • Caring for 		<p>Family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ancestors • Cultural traditions
	<p>Outdoors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing • Camping • Hiking 		<p>Computers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web page design • Coding
	<p>Theater/Drama:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting • Directing 		<p>Comedy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling jokes • Improv
	<p>Speech:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate • Public speaking • Radio 		<p>Spirituality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness • Religion
	<p>Photography/Film:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movies • Animation • Video games 		<p>Journalism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporter • Radio • TV production
	<p>Engineering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanics • Electronics • Repair 		<p>Advocacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice • Solve social justice issues

Sparks Question Prompts

1. What are some of the things you starred that you are really interested in?
2. What is one of your sparks you are most excited about or interested in? How do you feel when you are doing or are focused on your spark?
3. What is something that most people don't know about your spark?
4. Do you do anything to get better at your spark? If so, what do you do?
5. Who are your spark champions - or who helps you with your spark? What do they do that helps? Who else might help you with your spark? What other types of support do you need?
6. Let's brainstorm some activities that we could do together to explore our sparks more!

Goal Setting

Brainstorm and document a list of goals with your mentee.

DESCRIPTION:

Documenting goals even before figuring out a plan for how to achieve them provides focus and can help motivate action. Goals can be anything! They can be large and longer term or they can be small daily goals. Support your mentee by helping them identify their goals for the future.

Prep Time

None

Activity Time

30 minutes

Materials

Goal-Setting
Template

STEPS:

- 1. Introduce the goal-setting template.** The goal-setting template provides structure for discussing goals with your mentee. Once you download the template familiarize yourselves with each category on the template.
- 2. Discuss the importance of identifying goals.** Discuss with your mentee why identifying goals is important. Setting goals can increase motivation, provide a sense of responsibility, allow you to track your progress, provide structure, and prioritize what's important. Identifying goals can also help us grow our sparks – interests and passions – that provide a sense of purpose.
- 3. Level set.** Explain that both short and long term, easy and more difficult goals have value. Goals can also span many different parts of life. Whether mentor or small, goals of all sorts have value because they increase focus and encourage action.
- 4. Fill out the goal-setting template together.** Take time to reflect on the goal categories, reflection questions, and set goals in the goal setting template. We recommend that both you and your mentee complete the worksheet. A great way to support your mentee is by demonstrating how you also set goals for yourself and different parts of your life.

- 5. Reflect.** After completing this activity, reflect on the following questions together:
- a.** What did you learn about yourself by identifying goals?
 - b.** What kind of support do you need to accomplish your goals? Who are your champions?
 - c.** How can I, as your mentor, support you in accomplishing your goals?

TIPS:

- Encourage positive goals that can improve your mentee’s life, but open yourself up to all kinds of goals. A goal does not have to be one that is future oriented or academically focused, for instance.
- Like identifying opportunities, your mentee may shape their goals around the types of experiences they feel they do or do not have access to. Keep in mind that their goals may also be influenced by their backgrounds, including their race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender and sexuality, etc.
- If your mentee is feeling stuck, return to the Identifying and Sharing Sparks activity for some ideas of goals your mentee might have aligned with their interests and passions. You might also consider setting a goal together.

REFLECTION:

The goals we set and feel like we can set for ourselves, whether mentor or small or short- or long-term, connect to our identities. As part of the goal-setting activity, you have the opportunity to learn more about the goals your mentee feels like they do or do not have access to and how their goals connect to their hopes and dreams. Now that you have set goals with your mentee, reflect:

- 1.** What do you notice about your mentee’s goals? Did they find it difficult or easy to set goals?
- 2.** Think about the ways that your mentee’s goals connect to their identity. Do their goals reveal anything about their background or mindsets or what they feel they do or do not have access to?

3. What can you do as their mentor to help them achieve their goals? What support might you need to do so?

GOAL-SETTING TEMPLATE

Use the following template to craft your list of goals.

Goal Category	Guiding Questions	Answers
LEARNING	What learning goal is important to me right now?	
FRIENDSHIP	What is your current friendship related goal?	
MAKING A DIFFERENCE	What is one thing you would like to do to make a difference?	
PERSONAL GROWTH	What personal growth goal would you like to work on?	

SELF-CARE	What will you do to improve your self-care?	
FAMILY	What is a goal you have that is related to your family?	
HEALTH	What is one thing you would like to do to improve your health?	
OTHER		

Reflect on a Goal

Use the prompts below to focus on one goal from your list above that you would like to pursue more deeply in the immediate future:

Write the goal from above your selected:

Complete the following sentences:

I will _____

By _____

When and with whom: _____

Example:

I will improve my health.

By drinking more water.

When and with whom: I will drink a glass of water every morning when I first wake up. I will ask my family to remind me and regularly check-in on how my goal of drinking water first thing in the morning is going.

Brag Sheet

Keep track of your mentee's accomplishments to use as a reference for future goals.

DESCRIPTION:

Encourage your mentee to track their activities and accomplishments in a running document. Not only can this help them recognize their strengths, but this brag sheet can be a valuable resource as they pursue life goals (including the transition to college and/or careers). Support your mentee by helping them see the many strengths and assets they already have!

Prep Time

None

Activity Time

Ongoing, ~15 minutes at a time

Materials

Pen and paper,
Brag Sheet

STEPS:

- 1. Introduce the Brag Sheet.** Tell your mentee that, as they think about their future goals, it can be helpful to start recording their activities and accomplishments. Together, you will create a document of your mentee's strengths that can be used to plan and prepare for their future. Print the Brag Sheet template or make a copy of this document that can be shared with your mentee. Make sure that this document is stored in a place where your mentee can access it as needed.
- 2. Create the Brag Sheet.** Start by having a conversation about your mentee's best qualities and skills and write those down. Then, begin asking about your mentee's activities and accomplishments. Tell your mentee to name everything that they've been involved in, even if they don't feel like it was an accomplishment. Have your mentee record the name of each activity, when they participated, and a couple of sentences about what the activity was and what they did during that time.

If you and your mentee need help identifying what to add to the Brag Sheet, consider the following prompts:

- a. What experiences or accomplishments are you most proud of?

- b. Are you involved in any clubs or activities at school? Are you involved in any activities or programs outside of school?
- c. Is anything noteworthy happening in your activities? Are you working on any projects that you're excited about?
- d. What are some things that you've done to give back to the community? Or to help at school? Or to support friends/family?
- e. What are your best skills? What did you do to learn those skills?
- f. Can you think of a time when you achieved a goal?
- g. Have you ever won an award?
- h. Can you think of a time when you did something meaningful for yourself or others?

3. Add to the Brag Sheet over time. Some mentees readily share about their activities and achievements with their mentors, while others might need explicit prompting. Every time you connect with your mentee, ask for updates about their life. When your mentee shares something brag-worthy, tell them to add it to the Brag Sheet.

4. Use the Brag Sheet as a resource. The Brag Sheet can be used in a variety of ways throughout your relationship with your mentee.

<i>Helping your mentee become aware of their growth and development.</i>	Periodically reflect on the Brag Sheet with your mentee to help them understand how they've developed their passions and grown along the way.
<i>Helping to build your mentee's self esteem.</i>	Refer to the Brag Sheet to remind your mentee of their accomplishments and amazing growth so far.
<i>Helping your mentee prepare for introductions, interviews, and drafting application materials.</i>	Use the Brag Sheet to help your mentee lead with their strengths when they meet new people or apply for different opportunities.

TIPS:

- There may be times when your mentee feels that their involvement or performance in an activity is just “average” and not noteworthy. Encourage your mentee to include these activities and accomplishments on their Brag Sheet, as well. Combined, they help to paint a picture of your mentee’s interests, experiences, and growth trajectory. By encouraging your mentee to include these on their Brag Sheet, you validate their experience and hard work.

REFLECTION:

Accomplishments that may be added to a Brag Sheet can be mentor and small and will reflect your mentee’s backgrounds and interests. As you think about the creation of the Brag Sheet:

1. What story does your brag sheet tell about you so far?
2. Why is it important to keep track of your activities and accomplishments?
3. What are some different ways that we could use this brag sheet?

Brag Sheet

My Best Qualities

-
-
-

My Best Skills

-
-
-

Dates	Details
	Activity: Description:
	Activity: Description:
	Activity: Description:
	Activity: Description:

	Activity: Description:
	Activity: Description:
	Activity: Description:
	Activity: Description:
	Activity: Description:

Opportunity Board

Help your mentee visualize and explore different opportunities to help them achieve their goals.

DESCRIPTION:

The opportunity board can inspire your mentee to pursue opportunities to explore their interests and work towards their goals. After your mentee pursues an opportunity, they can return to their opportunity board to reflect on their experience.

Activity Time

90 minutes

Materials

Poster paper,
pens/markers,
glue, scissors,
pictures/images,
Opportunity
Planning template,
sticky notes

STEPS:

1. **Start a conversation about goals.** Share some of your goals with each other, and begin a conversation about what it looks like to achieve your goals. Share from your life and explain that people have many different pathways that they follow when trying to reach their goals. Some people take longer paths than others, or pursue different opportunities for achieving their goals. We all have different ways of getting to where we're supposed to be, and that's okay.

- 2. Identify opportunities for reaching goals.** Let your mentee know that one way we can make progress toward our goals is by identifying opportunities or experiences that can help us along the way. Then use the Opportunity Planning template to guide your conversation: you will each write a goal and identify opportunities you would like to explore. Use the question prompts to help you and your mentee identify what opportunities might exist.
- 3. Create opportunity boards.** You and your mentee will each need a sheet of poster paper. Write your goal at the top of your poster paper. Explain to your mentee that this opportunity board is a mentee different from vision boards: instead of creating a vision of their goal, your opportunity boards will show all of the opportunities that you want to explore as you work toward your goals. As you create your opportunity boards, you can draw, write, or cut and paste images to represent these different opportunities. See the example for a basic version of an opportunity board; these can be as simple or as complex and creative as you want.
- 4. Explore the opportunities on your mentee’s opportunity board.** As you and your mentee meet and hang out, help your mentee get involved in the opportunities they depicted on their opportunity board. This may involve helping them enroll in related classes and activities, or planning outings to explore opportunities that aren’t provided at school.
- 5. Reflect together.** After exploring an opportunity, reflect with your mentee about their experience:
 - a. What did they learn through this experience?
 - b. How did this experience affect their motivation or confidence to achieve their goal?
 - c. Is there anything about their goal—or their plans for achieving it—that they want to tweak after having this experience?

Encourage your mentee to jot down their thoughts on a couple of sticky notes, and paste the notes on their opportunity board, next to their depiction of the opportunity.

TIPS:

- If your mentee is feeling stuck or having a hard time thinking of potential opportunities, make transparent different types of opportunities they do have access to. You may do so by conducting a web search to learn about what is involved in accomplishing their goal. Then, help them brainstorm ways they can gain that experience in your local community.
- Additionally, it may be helpful to provide personal examples of how you or someone you know achieved a similar goal. You may research and share stories of people who have a shared background as your mentee who also had the same type of goals. Or, if your mentee is inspired by a story you tell about someone you know, consider offering to introduce your mentee to this person, if appropriate.
- If your mentee is not very interested in arts and crafts, consider using [Canva](#) to help you mentee create a digital collage like the example included in this activity.

REFLECTION:

Opportunities your mentee feels they have access to may be influenced by their backgrounds, including their race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender and sexuality, etc. As part of this activity, you have the chance to learn more about the opportunities your mentee feels are in reach. Now that you have created an opportunity board, reflect:

1. What do you notice about the opportunities your mentee has identified? Did they find it difficult or easy to identify opportunities aligned with their goal?
2. Think about the ways that your mentee's opportunities connect to their identity. Do the opportunities they identify reveal anything about their background or mindsets or what they feel they do or do not have access to?
3. What can you do as their mentor to help them access valuable opportunities?

Opportunity Planning

My Goal

--

Question Prompts

- What skills or experiences do you need to reach this goal?
- What clubs, activities, classes, or other experiences would help you develop needed skills and gain relevant experience?
- What steps might you take to make progress towards this goal?
- Who could you meet to get more information about pursuing this goal?
- Who could help you make progress towards this goal?
- Where could you visit to learn more about pursuing this goal?
- What things can I do as your mentor to support you in reaching this goal?
- How can your family, peers, or other adults in your life support you?

Opportunities I'm Pursuing to Explore My Goal

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Example Opportunity Board

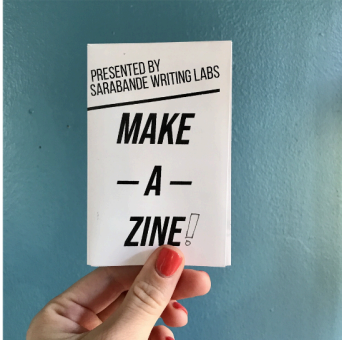
Goal: Become a journalist.



Join newspaper class



Keep a diary



Write a zine and share it at school



Read the news weekly



Enter a writing contest



Write a letter to the editor of my local newspaper

Why Relationships Matter

Support your mentee in learning about social capital and why it is important.

DESCRIPTION:

This activity is designed to support your mentee in learning about the important role their relationships play in their life as they work towards their life goals.

Prep Time

5 minutes

Activity Time

30 minutes

Materials

Gratitude Prompts
Gratitude
Notecards
YouTube

STEPS:

- 1. Identify one person to express gratitude to.** Different people in our lives can play big and small roles in helping us reach different goals. This can include people such as family members, friends, teachers, coaches, and others. Ask your mentee if there is a person that they can think of that has helped them. One way we can show that we are thankful for this person is by expressing our gratitude.

As a mentor, model this by sharing about someone in your life who has helped you make progress towards a goal. Tell your mentee about how this person helped you.

- 2. Provide instructions for completing the Gratitude Notecards.** Tell your mentee that one way to reflect on the way that this person impacted your life is by writing them a gratitude note. Below are example prompts and fun gratitude notecards to get started. Feel free to get creative and create your own gratitude notecards. Challenge each other to create as many notecards as you can for the important people in your lives!

- 3. Reflect on your Gratitude Notecards by introducing the concept of social capital.** Review your gratitude notecards with each other and discuss the role these important people have played in your lives. Share with your mentee how one of the best ways to reach our goals is to build positive relationships with people who can help us. Sometimes people refer to this as a “web of support” or “social capital.” You might ask your mentee if they have ever heard the words “social capital” and ask them what it means to them. Share with your mentee the following video to get them thinking:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qL8wj0XEH2k>

- 4. Talk about social capital with your mentee.** Use the question prompts below to have a conversation about the video:
- What did you think of this video? What did you learn?
 - Did the video give you any ideas of different people who can help you?
 - What are some ways different people might help you?
 - How might you help others, such as your friends or family?

TIPS:

- Not all mentees may feel comfortable writing a gratitude notecard. The goal of this activity is to get your mentee thinking about the importance of relationships. You might adapt this activity to meet your mentee’s needs by just having a conversation about an important person in their life while engaging in another activity or you might add a more creative element to the gratitude letter by encouraging your mentee to express themselves with drawings as opposed to text.
- You might inspire your mentee by coming to your session with a gratitude notecard that you wrote for them!

REFLECTION:

After completing this activity, reflect on the following questions with your mentee:

1. What was it like for you to write gratitude note cards? What were you thinking or feeling as you wrote them?

2. How do you think these people would react if (or when) you share these notes with them? How might you feel if you received a note like this?
3. How might strengthening your social capital and building more relationships like the ones you wrote about help you make progress towards your life goals?

Gratitude Prompts

1. You show me that I really matter to you when you...
2. You push me to work hard and keep getting better by...
3. You help me achieve goals like...
4. You let me make decisions for myself, like when you...
5. You have introduced me to new ideas and experiences, like when you...
6. Something I will always remember about you is...
7. You made me smile when
8. I appreciate it when you....
9. I am grateful to you when you...
10. You help me when you...

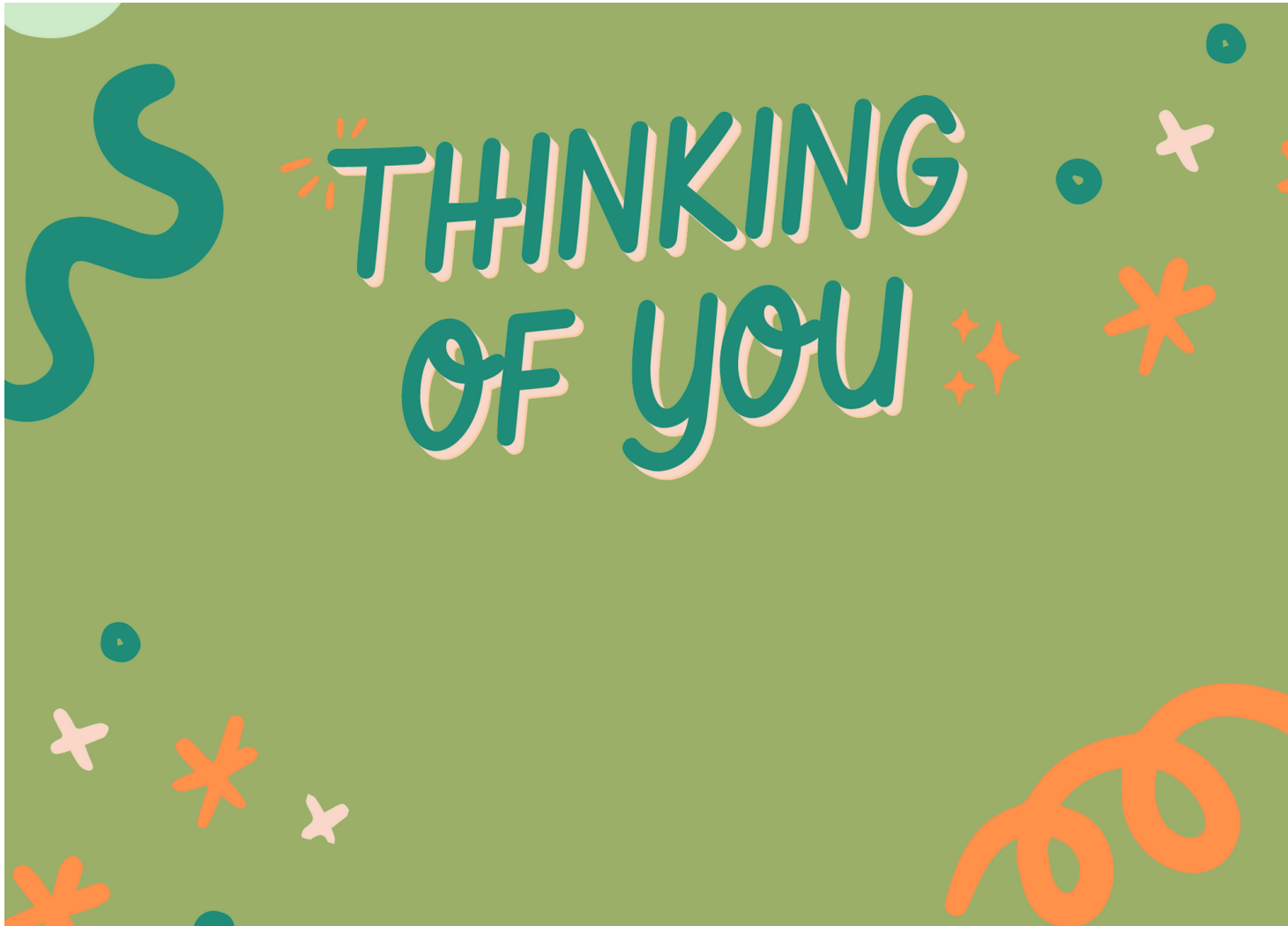


Thank You!

JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW I'M

Thinking
of You

















THANK YOU!





ANK YOU. **THANK YOU.** THANK
ANK YOU. **THANK YOU.** THANK
HANK YOU. **THANK YOU.** THAN





Identifying Connections

Mentees practice networking skills by brainstorming who in their web of support can help with different goals.

DESCRIPTION:

Asking for help can be challenging. Use this interactive matching game to practice identifying different times or opportunities when help may be needed from people in your web of support.

Prep Time

5 minutes

Activity Time

30 minutes

Materials

Deck of cards

STEPS:

- 1. Review the deck of cards.** Each card has a brief scenario that includes a possible challenge, problem, or goal that a young person may encounter. You may review the scenarios in advance to make sure there is nothing that could be perceived as triggering or confusing to your mentee. The second deck of cards includes people in our webs of support. Multiple relationships are included such as family members, coaches, teachers, friends, and more. Review the relationships and remove any that don't apply to you or your mentee. You may also add additional relationships that you know are particularly important for your mentee.
- 2. Set up the matching game.** Lay all the relationship cards face up in a row. Lay all of the scenario cards face down in multiple columns.
- 3. Introduce the game to your mentee.** You and your mentee will take turns picking different scenarios. You can read the scenario and then match the card with the type of relationship that you would go to for help. Encourage your mentee to share who they would go to and why. Continue playing for as long as you both would like or until you run out of scenario cards. Let your mentee know that they can choose to skip a scenario if they want to, or that they may choose to solve the problem on their own instead of reaching out for help.

- 4. Play the game.** As you take turns responding to scenarios, you can ask questions, share ideas, and pose challenges to engage more deeply with the game. For example, you might ask your mentee how the person they identified could provide support in that scenario. Then, challenge them to practice what they would say to that person if they were asking for help. Or, if your mentee chooses to solve a problem on their own, ask them about some different ways that people might still be helpful, even if they can't solve your problem. For example, that person might still be able to show you that they care about you, and that can still be supportive.
- 5. Reflect together.** After you've finished the game, discuss the following questions to reflect on the experience:
- What did you notice about the types of people you go to for support? Do you rely on some types of relationships more than others? Why do you think that may be?
 - What role do you think your identity (whether it be your race, ethnicity, cultural background, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic background) influences who you go to for support?
 - How easy or how difficult would it be to ask for support if you needed it? Would some scenarios be harder to get support with than others?
 - What would you do if you didn't know who to go to for help?

TIPS:

- Over time, you and your mentee may add new cards to the deck. Encourage your mentee to add different scenarios that they might run into. You might also have them add additional relationships that they have built as their web of support continues to grow.
- You might return to this game again in the future. You and your mentee can reflect on how who they go to in their web of support may change over time.

REFLECTION:

Reflecting after the activity helps you internalize what you learned about your mentee and how to support them. Consider the following prompts as you reflect on your interaction with your mentee:

1. How comfortable was your mentee in identifying people that they would go to for help or support? What supports and resources can you provide to help your mentee feel more comfortable?

2. Were there any specific scenarios that were more challenging than others? What does this tell you about your mentee?

Family Member	Current or Former Teacher
Friend	Current or Former Coach
Adult in my community	Another Adult at School

A Mentor	A Supervisor
A Doctor	Someone Else
Parent or Guardian of a Friend	Neighbor

You were absent and missed an important lesson in class.

You had an argument with your best friend.

You want to learn more about a future career.

You want to improve your grades.

You want to do more physical activity.

You want to try out a new sport.

You're curious about what going to college will be like.

You are filling out a job application.

You need a job reference.

You want to be on the school student advisory committee.

You want to feel more comfortable participating in class.

You want to get a better good night's sleep.

<p>You want to join a new club or extracurricular activity.</p>	<p>You are unsure about what you want to do after high school.</p>
<p>You want to make a new friend.</p>	<p>You want to learn more about a specific interest.</p>
<p>You want to be better at saving money.</p>	<p>Create Your Own Question:</p>

<p>You need some tips on managing stress.</p>	<p>You are applying for college.</p>
<p>You want to learn more about your family and your heritage.</p>	<p>You want to learn a new skill.</p>
<p>You feel anxious about moving to a new city.</p>	<p>Create Your Own Question:</p>

Mapping Our Webs of Support

Learn about your mentee's web of support and identify how your own web can be leveraged to support your mentee.

DESCRIPTION:

As we explore our sparks (refer back to Identifying and Strengthening Sparks Activity) and work toward our life goals, there are times when we need to reach out for help. This activity guides you and your mentee as you map the people you know and examine how they might be able to support your mentee's progress towards their life goals.

Prep Time

5 minutes

Activity Time

30 minutes

Materials

Example webs of support, Web of Support templates, pens, markers

STEPS:

- 1. Introduce your mentee to mapping their web of support.** Explain to your mentee that an important part of exploring sparks and making progress towards our goals is thinking about who you know who can help you along the way. One way to do this is to draw a map of your web of support. Show your mentee the example of the maps that you will be creating. Explain that each circle represents someone in their web of support, and the lines show how all these people are connected.
- 2. Map your webs of support.** Distribute the Web of Support templates. You should each write your name in the circle on your paper. Create your maps by writing the names of the supportive people in your lives and circling those names. Then, draw a line from your name to each of the other names on your map. Draw additional lines to connect the names of people who know each other.

- 3. Support your mentee in identifying supportive people.** If your mentee struggles to identify supportive people in their lives, help them consider people they interact with frequently: teachers, counselors, peers, family, neighbors, or other members of the community. You can help them identify these people by having them reflect on something they've already accomplished and ask who helped them achieve that goal. Ask them who they interact with the most in different contexts of their lives: at home, at school, after school, in the community, etc. Prompt them to consider adults and other youth in these contexts. Let them know that they don't have to know someone very well in order for that person to be supportive.
- 4. Reflect on your relationships.** Examine your completed maps and take some notes about how these people support you. You and your mentee can write your notes in a blank space on your maps or on the backs of your papers. Consider the following questions:
 - What have these people done to help you achieve your goals?
 - When do you feel most supported by these individuals?
 - What kinds of things have they helped you accomplish?
- 5. Merge your maps.** Remind your mentee that since you've been matched, you are part of each other's webs of support, too. Line up the right edge of your map to the left edge of your mentee's map so that the lines between your names connect. Have a discussion to learn more about each others' webs of support:
 - How do the people on our maps support each of us?
 - How are our relationships and types of support we both receive similar? How are they different?
 - What kind(s) of support would you like more of?
 - How is combining our webs of support helpful?

TIPS:

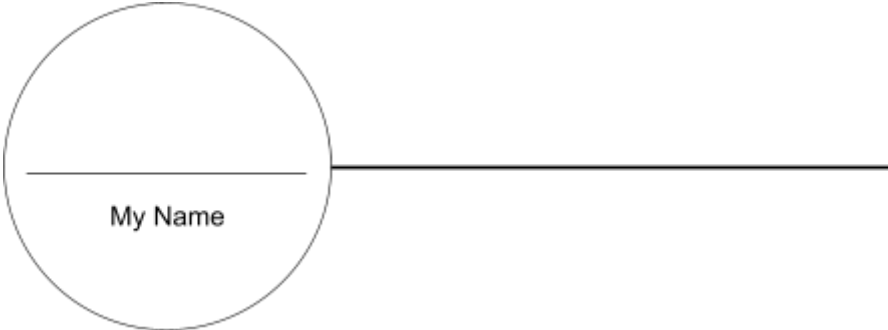
- When drawing your network maps, consider drawing thick lines to represent close relationships, and dotted lines to represent more casual acquaintances. Or, instead of circling names, you may want to use different shapes to represent different types of relationships.
- You can share with your mentee that your web of support may be more expansive than theirs. This is not a bad thing rather this may be for a variety of reasons you can make transparent to your mentee. For instance, it may be because you're older with more personal, familial, community, and occupational experiences.

REFLECTION:

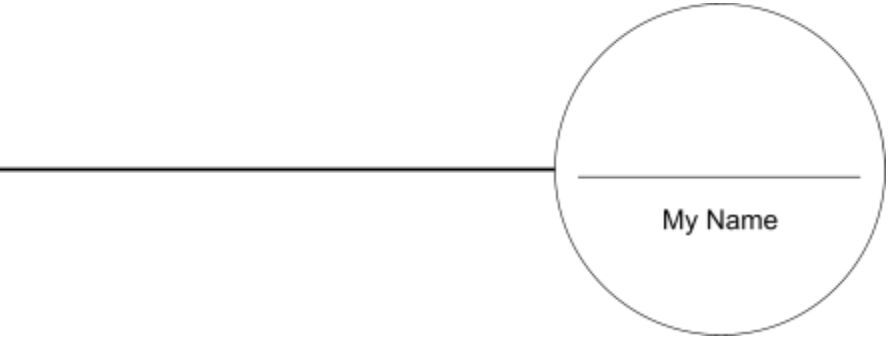
Mapping our webs of support can reveal the places we feel really connected and the places where we may be seeking even more connection. A mentee's understanding of their web of support could help them note the places and situations in which they feel comfortable asking for help and those they do not. Like goal setting and seeking out opportunities, mentee's experience of connectedness may be influenced by their positionality. As you created a web of support with your mentee:

1. What did you learn about the support that your mentee has access to in their network? What are the strengths of their network? Are there any gaps in their access to needed supports?
2. In what ways can you leverage your network to support your mentee?
3. Who could you connect with from your mentee's network in order to bolster their web of support?

Web of Support (mentor)

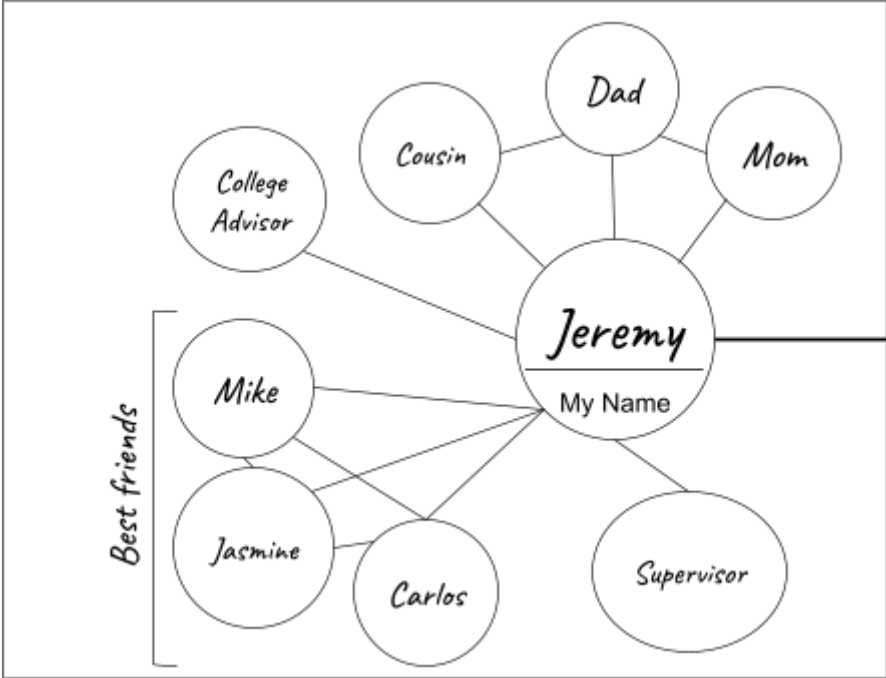


Web of Support (mentee)

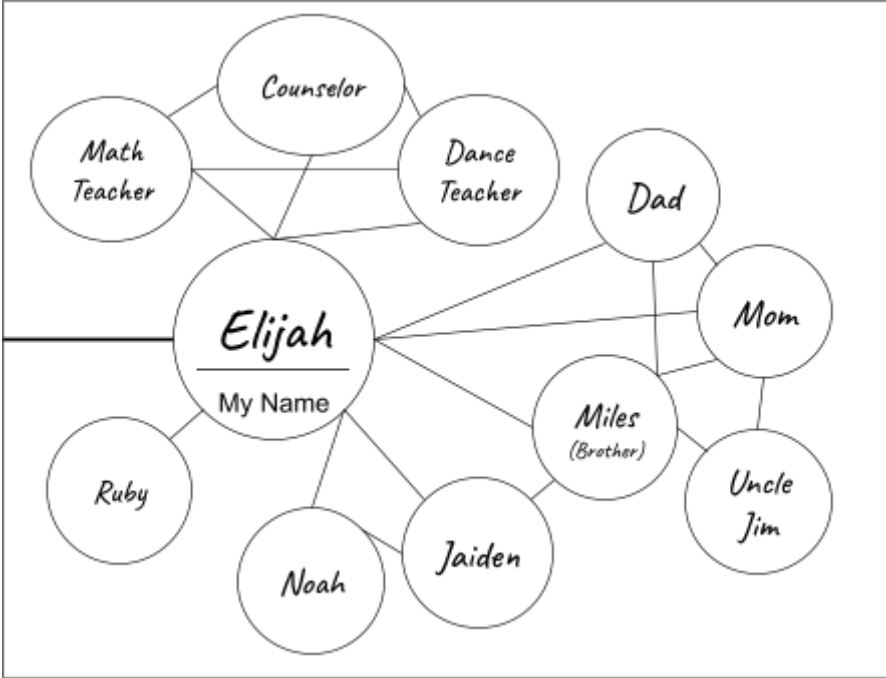


Example

Mentor's (Jeremy's) Web of Support



Mentee's (Elijah's) Web of Support



Menu of Support

Provide options for how you can connect your mentee to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

DESCRIPTION:

As a mentor, one of your responsibilities is to play a supportive role in your mentee's life. This activity will help you identify a variety of ways in which you can support your mentee as they work towards their goals, and prompt you to think about how to leverage your and your mentee's relationships to enhance your mentee's sense of support.

Prep Time

5 minutes

Activity Time

45 minutes

Materials

Device with internet, Menu of Support worksheet

STEPS:

- 1. Identify resources and opportunities to support your mentee.** When you think about your mentee's goals or their passions, what kinds of resources or opportunities would really support their development? Brainstorm a list of ideas on your Notes app or on a sheet of paper.
- 2. Create a menu of support.** Use your brainstormed list to find valuable resources or local opportunities to support your mentee's growth in their interests. You might identify these resources and opportunities via web search, by asking someone in your or your mentee's webs of support, or by checking in with your mentoring program. Use the Menu of Support worksheet to list the different resources and opportunities.
- 3. Let your mentee pick.** Next time you meet with your mentee, let them know that you've been thinking about ways to support their passions and goals. Show them the Menu of Support that you created, explaining each item on the list, and ask them to pick which resource(s) or opportunity(ies) they want to pursue.
- 4. Make the connection.** Help your mentee access the resource(s) or opportunity(ies) that they're interested in pursuing. This might look like helping them sign up for an activity, helping them reach out to someone for information, or any other action you might take to connect your mentee to a needed support.

TIPS:

- If you and your mentee have already completed the “Goal Setting” or “Mapping Our Webs of Support” activities, you can use the completed worksheets to identify what kinds of supports your mentee might need and if either of you knows someone who can help you access that support.
- When identifying opportunities to add to the Menu of Support, make sure that they are accessible to your mentee. Consider if there are any barriers related to the cost, time, or location of the opportunity, and how those barriers could be overcome if possible.
- Consider letting your mentee add options to the Menu of Support—they may have ideas for their development that you hadn’t thought of yet.

REFLECTION:

By now, you have likely identified that your mentee has a variety of goals and opportunities they would like to pursue. This activity gives you the chance to explicitly connect your mentee’s goals to supports that can help them come to be. As you build the menu of support, consider:

1. Although you’re able to provide support in many different ways, why is it valuable to let your mentee decide what types of support they want from you?
2. How might you incorporate and attend to your mentee’s unique background and identity as you curate their menu of support?
3. How will you hold yourself accountable to follow through on making these connections to support your mentee?

Menu of Support

Option 1: _____

Description:

Option 2: _____

Description:

Option 3: _____

Description:

Option 4: _____

Description:

Option 5: _____

Description:

Option 6: _____

Description:

Informational Interviews

Encourage mentees to connect with an expert in a field they're interested in learning more about.

DESCRIPTION:

One key way you can support your mentee in strengthening their relationships and web of support is to teach them about informational interviewing.

Prep Time

None

Activity Time

Ongoing, 30 minutes to prepare

Materials

Conversation Starter Guide
Email Template

STEPS:

- 1. Introduce the concept of an Informational Interview.** Share with your mentee what an informational interview entails. It is an informal conversation with someone working in a field they may like to work in one day or learn more about. Informational interviews can help your mentee better understand the realities of pursuing a certain life, education, or career path. Describe also the benefits of informational interviews including that your mentee can learn about future paths they may want to take and about skills or experiences that are valuable for reaching goals.
- 2. Help your mentee in finding people to interview.** Your mentee may need help in identifying people for informational interviews. Start by making a list with them of all the individuals who they may be interested in learning more about. These individuals can include people they already know such as friends, family members, and teachers, as well as people they have not met yet in their community or contacts/individuals who you work with and know.

- 3. Reach out to request an informational interview.** Once you and your mentee have identified who they will interview, use the email template to draft a message together for an informational interview request. This communication should include a brief introduction and why they're interested in interviewing the person. Prepare your mentee for rebuttals or non-responsiveness. Oftentimes, professionals may be busy and thus may not always respond to such requests right away or may be too busy to participate in an informational interview at the current moment. It can be hard to not take these types of objections personally. Help prepare your mentee from the onset that this is one possible outcome. It may be helpful to share a time that you have experienced a similar situation yourself. Help your mentee respond appropriately if they receive a rebuttal to their request.
- 4. Help your mentee prepare for the interview.** Do research together to learn more about who the mentee will be talking to. What is the interviewee's background? Spend time also preparing a brief introduction – who is the mentee and why did they want to meet? Then, prepare questions. What questions does your mentee have for the interviewee? To support drafting questions, help your mentee think critically about what they want to learn and what information they cannot find online. Use the Conversation Starter Guide below to get started. You and your mentee can then use the Conversation Starter Guide to practice for the informational interview. Depending on your mentee's level of comfort, you may role play the interviewee or the interviewer.
- 5. Share pointers with your mentee in advance of their interview.** Help your mentee prepare by considering what they might wear to the interview and whether there are materials such as a notebook and pen that they should bring to take notes. Talk about other norms or expectations such as showing up to the interview on time and introducing themselves.
- 6. Reflect together on the interview and send a thank you note.** Reflect together on how the interview went and be sure to craft a thank you note to the interviewee. A thank you note can be an excellent way to show appreciation for the interviewee taking time to connect with you. You can use these three prompts to guide your discussion and articulate learnings:
 - a. How did you feel the interview went? What went well? What would you like to change for next time?
 - b. What did you learn about from the interview? Was anything surprising?

TIPS:

- Your mentee may be skeptical that an adult or professional would be interested in talking to them. Yet, there are many reasons why adults are eager to help, including that most people remember what it was like to be in middle or high school. Remind your mentee that most adults want to help and are flattered that someone wants to learn more about them.

- Consider the age of your mentee and who may be most appropriate to interview. For younger youth, this may be a teacher to learn more about why they became a teacher and how they got their job. For older youth, consider finding individuals who might have similar jobs or education paths that your mentee is wanting to pursue and learn more about.
- Make sure you have parent/guardian permission to help your mentee set up an information interview, especially if you are connecting your mentee with someone in your own network. You might also plan to attend the interview to provide support to your mentee, especially if the connection has been made by you.
- Informational interviews can also happen on virtual platforms such as Zoom. Some professionals may actually prefer to meet this way. Work with your mentee to decide what format is most comfortable for them.

REFLECTION:

Beyond informational interviewing, you can provide your mentee an opportunity to see themselves in roles and on future paths that may not have felt accessible previously. When connecting with someone new, you may encourage your mentee to meet individuals who have similar backgrounds to them. Reflect:

1. What did you learn about who your mentee would like to meet or perform an informational interview with?
2. What can you do to help your mentee set up and perform an informational interview again in the future? Is there anything you both learned this time around that you would change for next time?

Email Template

Sending a clear and concise email is a good way to reach out to set up an informational interview.

Subject Line

Brainstorm what a brief subject line could be to help get the person's attention. An example might be "Informational Interview Request." Whatever you choose, make sure it is no more than 3-5 words.

Subject Line: _____

Greeting

Discuss what an appropriate title is for the person you are reaching out to. Do you know if the person uses a Mr. or Mrs. title? Does the person have a special credential that changes their title, such as a doctor (Dr.)?

Hi [Insert Name: _____].

Body of Email

An example email is provided below. Work together to adapt to meet your needs.

I'm a student at [Insert Name of School]. I am interested in learning more about your job and the steps you took to get to where you are today.

Would you be willing to meet with me for a 30-minute conversation to share more about your career journey?

If so, would you be available on any of the following dates and times:

[day & time slot]

[day & time slot]

Closing

Thank you for considering this opportunity. I look forward to hearing back from you.

[Insert Name]

[Insert Name of School]

Conversation Starter Guide

Kicking Off the Conversation

At the very beginning of your meeting, it's best practice to express your gratitude for their time to meet with you and/or a few easy, non-career questions. Some examples are below:

- “I really appreciate this opportunity to have some time to ask you about your career.”
- “Thank you for taking time to meet with me today.”
- “I am excited to learn more about you and your career path.”

Brainstorm what you might say:

Set the Stage

After expressing your gratitude, you may start the conversation by explaining why you requested to speak with them. Some examples are below:

- “I wanted to meet with you because I am interested in learning more about”
- “I hope to one day be And I thought learning about your career journey could help me learn what skills and experiences I need.”
- “I would like to go to college and I want to hear more about your experiences and what it was like for you to be in college.”

Brainstorm what you might say:

Brainstorm Questions to Ask

The questions you ask will vary depending on what you are hoping to learn. Below are some possible questions you might ask:

- At what age did you start thinking about which career you'd like to have?
- What was your next step after high school?
- How did you decide which careers or industries were interesting to you?
- What didn't you know before you got into your career that you wish someone had told you?
- What advice would you give your younger self?
- What do you like the most or least about your job?
- What other jobs did you consider?
- What does a typical workday or day in college look like for you?
- What are the biggest challenges you face?
- What has helped you be successful in your current job?
- What advice do you have for me?

Brainstorm questions you'd like to ask:

Close Out the Conversation

To close out the conversation, you can once again thank the interviewee for their time.

Brainstorm what you might say:

The SoCAP Builder Journey Tracker

Track and celebrate your progress.

DESCRIPTION:

The SoCAP Builder Journey Tracker is designed to help you and your mentee track and celebrate your progress as you complete the modules of the SoCAP Builder Toolkit.

Prep Time

None

Activity Time

Ongoing

Materials

Tracker

STEPS:

- 1. Introduce the SoCAP Builder Toolkit to your mentee.** It is valuable to help your mentee understand and see the benefits of engaging in the Toolkit and its activities. Share with your mentee that the SoCAP Builder Toolkit includes some activities and games that will help you both get to know each other better. These activities are also designed so that you can better support them as they develop and work towards their goals.
- 2. Review the SoCAP Builder Journey Tracker.** The SoCAP Builder Journey Tracker is color-coded for each Module to help guide you along as you complete activities (Module 1 is red, Module 2 is blue, Module 3 is green, and Module 4 is purple). Introduce the Journey Tracker to your mentee. You might say something like: *“As we complete the toolkit activities, we can use this tracker to monitor and celebrate our progress. After completing each goal that we set, we can pick a way to celebrate.”*

- 3. Set a goal or incentive with your mentee.** Before starting a new Module, brainstorm a goal or reward that you and your mentee can work towards. There are some suggestions on the next page but it is best to discuss specific activities or rewards that you and your mentee will both enjoy. This is also a great opportunity to connect this back to your mentee's sparks or personal goals. Make sure to record whatever reward you both agree to in the Journey Tracker!
- 4. Track your progress.** Once you and your mentee have agreed on a goal, it is time to track your progress! After completing each activity, add your activity completion date and any notes and/or milestones that you would like to note.

To continue to help build some momentum and excitement for your mentee, let them know that they can also earn a milestone badge for each Module completed and a Certificate of Completion for completing all of the activities. You can print these off and share them with your mentee. Be sure to add these achievements to your mentee's Brag Sheet (found in Module 2)! Each milestone completed and/or badge earned represents the initiative, commitment, and knowledge your mentee gained which can be a great tool to use when they are networking and building out their resume for future opportunities.

TIPS:

- If completing all of the activities feels like too much, adjust your and your mentee's goal. For example, perhaps your goal is to complete two activities within each Module. Set a goal that feels realistic but ambitious for you and your mentee.
- Document your milestones! Take pictures and/or notes of reward celebrations and milestones.

Potential Rewards

- Take a trip to a local museum, gallery, or bookstore
- Have your mentee job shadow you for a day at work
- Go out for ice cream, hot cocoa, or try a new restaurant
- Enjoy an outdoor activity (e.g., boating, hiking, taking a walk)
- Read a new book together
- Attend a concert, play, or movie together
- Visit a local college
- Complete an art or craft activity together
- Take a workshop or course together to learn a new skill
- Play a new board game or video game together
- Cook or bake a meal or treat
- Volunteer for a local cause or at an animal shelter
- Send each other a letter in the mail
- Attend a sporting event
- Visit a zoo or amusement park
- Visit a state park or a community festival
- Make each other a gift
- Have a self-care day (e.g., practice yoga)
- Listen to a podcast together

SoCAP Builder Journey Tracker

Module 1 Activities	Date Completed	Notes
Identity Wheel		
4s Conversation		
Bucket List		
Chi-Ji Cards		
<p>For Module 1, we will set a goal to complete _____ activities by _____.</p> <p>If we meet our goal, we will _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		

Module 2 Activities	Date Completed	Notes
Identifying & Sharing Sparks		
Goal Setting		
Brag Sheet		
Opportunity Board		

For Module 2, we will set a goal to complete _____ activities by _____.

If we meet our goal, we will _____

Module 3 Activities	Date Completed	Notes
Why Relationships Matter		
Identifying Connections		
Merging Our Webs of Support		
<p>For Module 3, we will set a goal to complete _____ activities by _____.</p> <p>If we meet our goal, we will _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		

Module 4 Activities	Date Completed	Notes
Menu of Support		
Informational Interviews		

For Module 4, we will set a goal to complete _____ activities by _____.

If we meet our goal, we will _____





CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

HAS COMPLETED THE SOCAP
BUILDER TOOLKIT!

Big Signature

Little Signature

About Search Institute

We collaborate with schools and youth-serving organizations to conduct applied research, co-design solutions, and create an environment where each and every young person can thrive. Through professional learning experiences, surveys, measurement tools, and support for continuous improvement, we build capacity and inspire change.

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