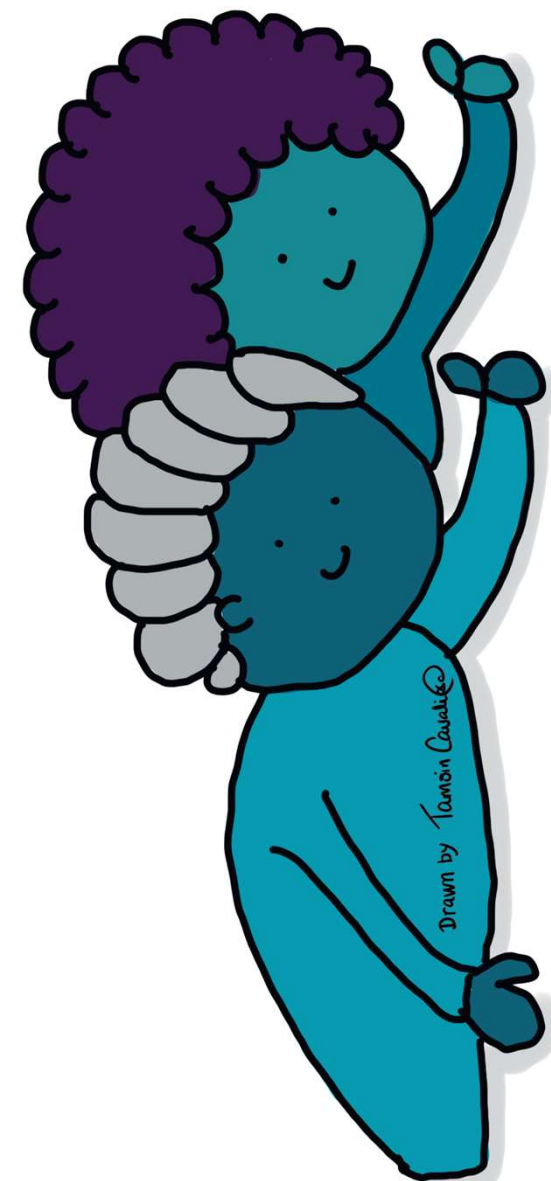


Mentoring for Access, Retention and Student Success: A review of practice in the West-North West Cluster of HEIs

Launch February 2024



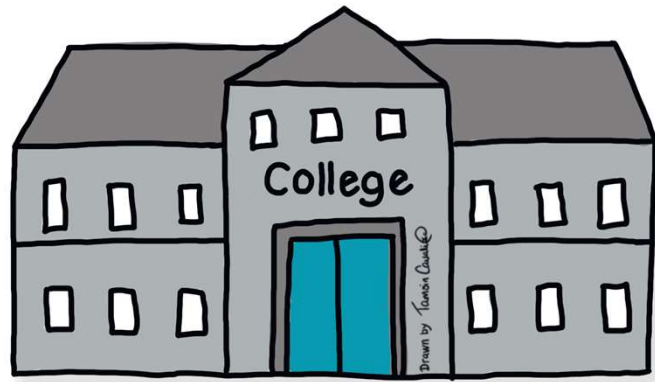
Dr. Michele Glacken

Registrar & Vice President
Students, Teaching & Learning

ATU Sligo



A model of partnership between community organisations and third level institutions

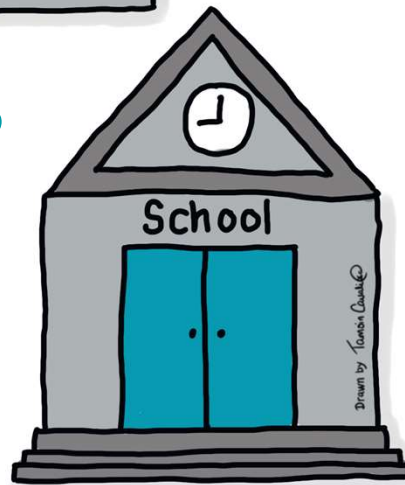


Mentoring Partners

- Community groups
- Foróige
- Second-level schools
- University of Galway

Participating HEIs

- ATU Galway
- ATU Sligo
- ATU Donegal
- University of Galway

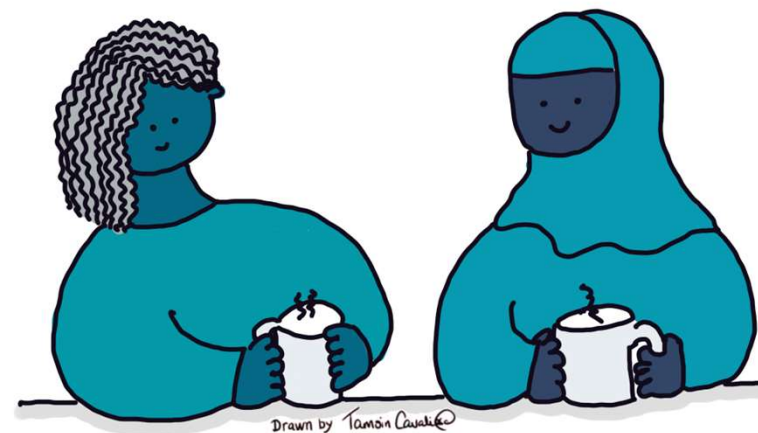


CREATING
PATHWAYS
TO HIGHER
EDUCATION

Sarah Mohan

ATU Galway Student
Union President

ATU Galway



CREATING
PATHWAYS
TO HIGHER
EDUCATION

Dr. Bernadine Brady

Principal Investigator

UNESCO Child & Family
Research Centre



University of Galway



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UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Mentoring for access, retention & student success: *A review of practice in the West North -West Cluster*

Dr Bernadine Brady
Dr Lorraine Duffy
Dr Paul Flynn
Dr Rosemary Crosse
Dr Celia Keenaghan
Dr Seamus Morrissey

Graphic Facilitation: Dr Tamsin Cavaliero, ATU

28th February 2024



University
ofGalway.ie

Context for the study

National Access Plan: *A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028*, guided by two overarching aspirations (HEA, 2022, p. 28):

- The higher education student body entering, participating in, and completing higher education...reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.
- HEIs are inclusive environments which support and foster student success ..and are responsive to the needs of students and wider communities.

West North-West Connect aims to create and promote accessible routes to Higher Education in the region.



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What is mentoring?

Any process that facilitates someone with lived experience to provide guidance, support and knowledge in a way that allows another person (the mentee) to thrive over time in the mentoring relationship.

Mentoring for access, retention and student success refers to activities designed to support students in accessing, participating, and progressing in their journey to and through higher education.



Can be:

- 1-1
- Group
- Peer
- Formal / natural



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Study aims

- To profile current PATH 3 funded mentoring initiatives focused on access, progression, and retention currently in place in ATU and the University of Galway.
- To understand the perceived strengths and challenges of the mentoring initiatives from the perspectives of stakeholders.
- To reflect on issues arising for the future development and evaluation of mentoring initiatives.

Methodology:

- Ethical approval
- Literature review
- Semi-structured interviews with 23 stakeholders
- Thematic analysis



Findings

A. Profile of three key contexts in which mentoring is deployed:

1. Schools
2. Community
3. Higher Education

B. Issues, challenges & future development - Six cross-cutting themes



1. School-based mentoring

Rationale: At ages 11-15, children begin to think about going to higher education, grades start to fall for socioeconomically disadvantaged students *(Wimberly & Noeth, 2005; Levine & Nidiffer, 1996; Swail & Perna, 2002).*

Model components:

- In-school activities
- Campus visits with mentors from similar backgrounds
- Peer mentoring in schools

Initiatives:

Uni4U (University of Galway)
Strive Mentoring (ATU)



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School-based mentoring: Perceived benefits

Creates a **positive attitude** towards higher education:

Visiting campuses and meeting staff and students can be an '*eye opener*' for children, making HE feel '*less alien*' and more accessible to them.

Raises awareness among children that people have **different pathways** to and through HE:

'makes them realise that you don't have to have high points, or a certain background, that anyone can go to college' (Mentor).

Fosters children's **self-belief** in capacity to go to HE:

Mentors from their own communities act as role models, connect with children on topics that interest them



2. Community-based mentoring

Rationale: Targeted support in communities with low rates of educational progression

Model components:

- Education mentor based in community
- Supports and encourages young people and adults to consider accessing a further or higher education course
- Wraparound tailored support
- Accredited training for local mentors

Initiatives:

Ballybane Community Mentoring Programme, ATU Sligo
Cranmore Community Mentoring Programme, ATU Galway



Community-based mentoring: Perceived benefits

Flexibility:

'You are the person there that is going to help alleviate barriers that they are facing, no matter what it is. it is like how can we alleviate those barriers? It's that wrap around support for them.' (mentor)

Continuity of support:

'it's not a service that has an expiration date on it.' (mentee)

'having someone there dedicated to helping you progress' (mentee)

Changes outlooks:

'changes your thinking about your life choices'. (mentee)

'I felt paralysed before mentoring. I now realise there are no wrong decisions- just to keep stepping forward.' (mentee)



3. HEI-based mentoring

Rationale: Students are at a high risk of dropping out of higher education within the first year, particularly students from underrepresented groups (HEA, 2023).

Model components:

- Students ‘matched’ with trained mentors (peer or staff)
- Matched based on commonalities
- Provides a supportive, friendly relationship
- Removing barriers to progression from FE to HE

Initiatives:

ATS Mentoring (University of Galway)

Foróige’s Third Level Mentoring Programme (ATU & University of Galway)

FE2HE (University of Galway)



HEI-based mentoring: Perceived benefits

- Emotional and practical support
- Greater sense of security and confidence in college
- Staff understanding of the needs of students

‘If you have a consistent staff member checking in with you .. your mentee will be able to tell you that they might be experiencing difficulties, and you’d be able to kind of guide and navigate them, towards certain supports that they might need’ (Mentor)

‘We clicked straight away – as soon as we met it was like I was just talking to a friend. ... I knew I could ask whatever I liked and that she was there to help ... She pointed me in the right direction, how the college works, she helped me get to know other people in my class. Very practical, helpful support’. (Mentee)





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Six cross-cutting themes

1. Targeting & take-up of programmes

Not available outside DEIS schools

Lack of awareness of role of community mentor / slow engagement

Confusion about who HEI mentoring is 'for' / perceived 'stigma'

Variability in demand from year to year

2. General awareness of the meaning & importance of mentoring

Many mentoring models, varying degree of closeness, contact, etc.

Need for more awareness of the purpose & value of mentoring

Scope for mentoring to be part of HEI culture for staff & students



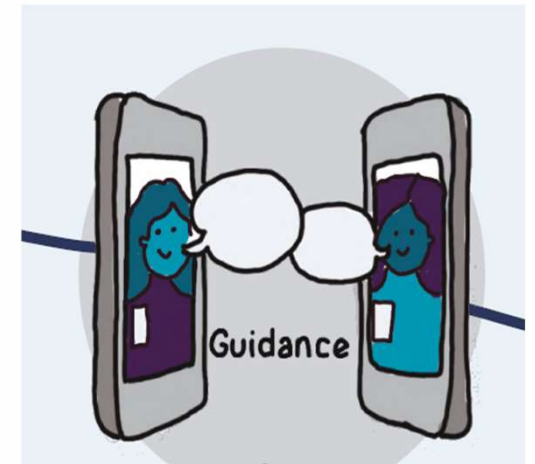
Six cross-cutting themes

3. Importance of partnership with schools & voluntary organisations

Ensures mentoring is appropriate to local context
Can draw on specific expertise

4. Building & sustaining mentoring relationships

Trusting relationships take time
Having similar interests a key facilitator
Structured training, co-ordination & support is essential



Six cross-cutting themes

6. Evaluation, impact & evidence-based practice

Measuring impact / outcomes is complex & challenging

Progression may not be linear

Short-term funding

Dearth of evidence based programmes for progression & retention



6. Sustainability of mentoring programmes

Concern that promising initiatives will end with current funding cycle

Appetite among stakeholders to build on learning to date / adopt a strategic approach



Conclusion



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- PATH 3 funded mentoring initiatives are being provided in a range of contexts.
- Perceived to be a valuable part of the overall package of measures targeted at access, progression and retention of under-represented students.
- Principles for practice proposed to guide for future development.





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Thank *you*

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ofGalway.ie

Dr. Celia Keenaghan

**WNW Connect Education
Mentoring Co-Ordinator**





Proposed Principles of Effective Practice

Dr Celia Keenaghan
Education Mentoring Co-ordinator



A joint Higher Education Cluster Access project between
Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and University of Galway.



Mentoring is everybody's business

Opportunities are provided throughout the student experience to ensure they are supported to access, enjoy, and succeed in their education by having access to mentors and by having the opportunity to be mentors to others.

Evidence-informed

Mentoring activity will be underpinned by appropriate evidence relating to the approach used. Qualitative and quantitative evidence will be gathered and shared. Quality mentoring tools and resources will be developed and shared to support training and implementation of evidence-based practice.

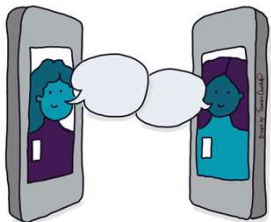


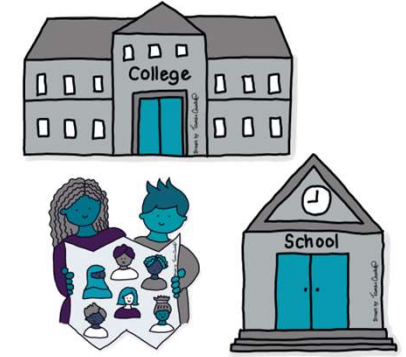
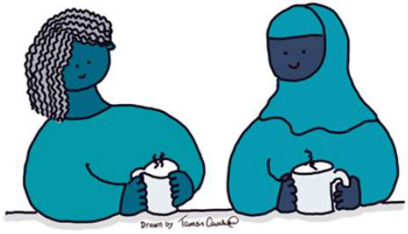
Mentee-led

To have meaningful mentoring experiences, mentees will be provided with relevant information on how to access mentors through natural and formal programmes. They will be supported find mentors and initiate mentoring relationships.

Innovative practice

Innovations are necessary to respond to evolving needs and contexts. Key areas of innovation include strengthening and expanding mentees social connections and exploration of the use of technology in the mentoring process.





Mentor-rich environments

Schools, communities and campuses are spaces where mentoring is promoted to cultivate a culture of mentoring. The needs and contexts of first-generation students will be considered in the design and delivery of any mentoring activity.

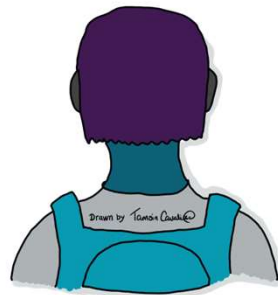
Understanding context

Mentoring programmes will be responsive to the racial and cultural perspectives of participants. Mentors must be cognisant of the context that mentees exist in and value mentee narrative, thus leveraging the mentoring relationship to support the mentee navigate the myriad of issues they may face.



Ethical practice: Within the context of the mentoring relationship, ethical practices will be observed to ensure relationships are based on safety, trust, integrity, dignity and the rights of the mentors and mentees.

Equity: Particular effort will be made to ensure first-generation students have mentoring support pre- and post-entry.



Sustainability

For mentoring to be effective, meaningful, and sustainable, it needs to be understood as a process that requires ongoing commitment in terms of time and resources.

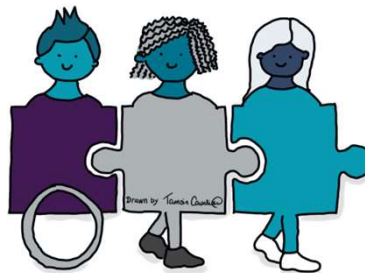
Collective impact

Mentoring does not happen in a vacuum. While mentoring is intended to improve access, retention and student success at an individual level, collaboration with partners in other sectors is key to meaningful social change needed for widening participation in higher education.



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TO HIGHER
EDUCATION

A joint Higher Education Cluster Access project between
Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and University of Galway.



Joellen Spacek

Senior Director of Affiliate Impact

MENTOR





MENTOR'S STORY

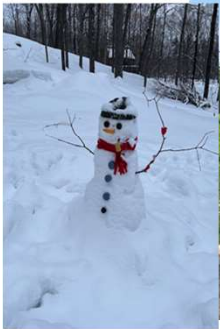
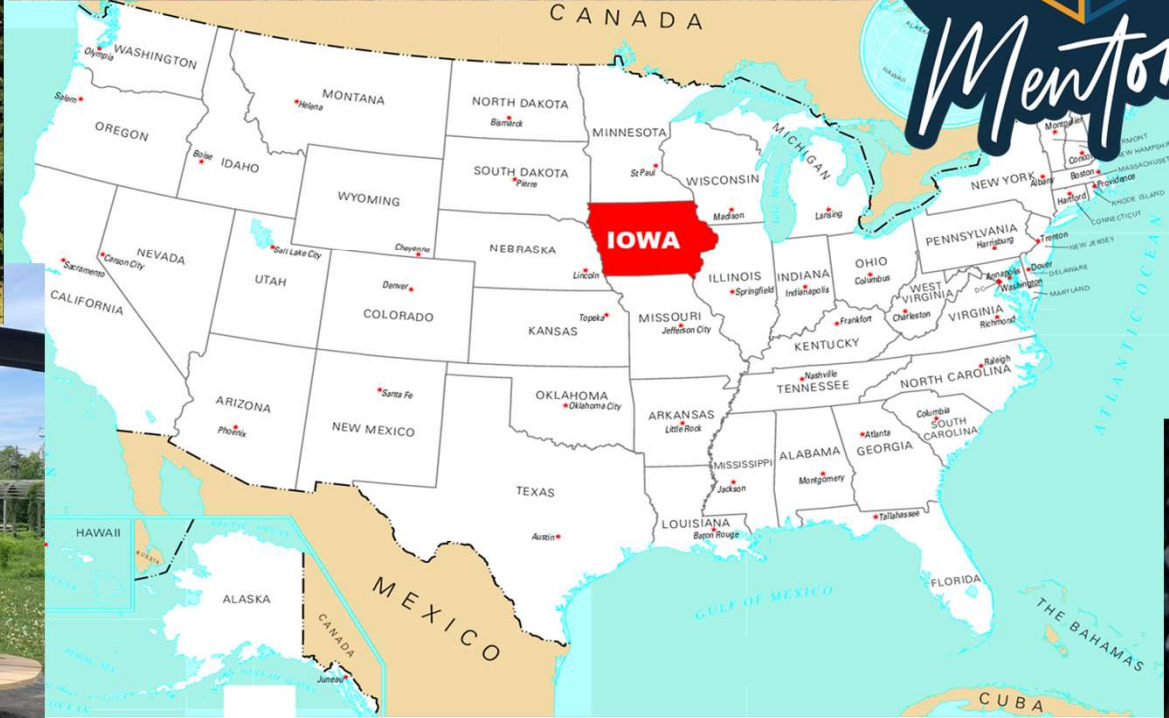


MENTOR

Ireland
February 2024
Joellen Spacek
MENTOR

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- I. Introduction
- II. Overview MENTOR, Mentoring in U.S., and Affiliate Model
- III. Building Strategic Partnerships, Defining Collective Impact and Coalition Building
- IV. Considerations Mentoring into Post-Secondary Education
- V. Discussion-Q&A



**There is no such
thing as other people's
children.**



Bill Russell

*Founding Board Member of MENTOR
Boston Celtics icon, Hall of Fame
member, and Civil Rights leader*



Who Are We?

MENTOR is the **unifying champion** for expanding the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships across the United States.

MENTOR is the **expert voice** representing a movement that meets young people everywhere they are – from schools, to workplaces, and beyond.

We operate in collaboration with **25 Affiliates across the country** who serve as community-based experts to galvanize local mentoring movements.

Why Us-MENTOR



Potential is equally distributed; opportunity is not. A major driver of healthy development and opportunity is who you know and who's in your corner.

30 years ago, MENTOR was created to expand that opportunity for young people by building a youth mentoring field and movement. The result- more than 10x increase in young people in structured mentoring relationships.

Today, we represent a movement that is diverse and broad and seeps into every aspect of daily life – meeting young people everywhere they are from schools to workplaces and beyond.

All Mentoring & All Mentors Make a Difference

We believe that mentoring relationships can be a tool to **drive equity** and that all young people deserve caring adult relationships outside their family.

That's why we work to create and expand connections for young people *everywhere they are*.

Our movement honors, supports, and elevates positive relationships and **everyone** who mentors young people.



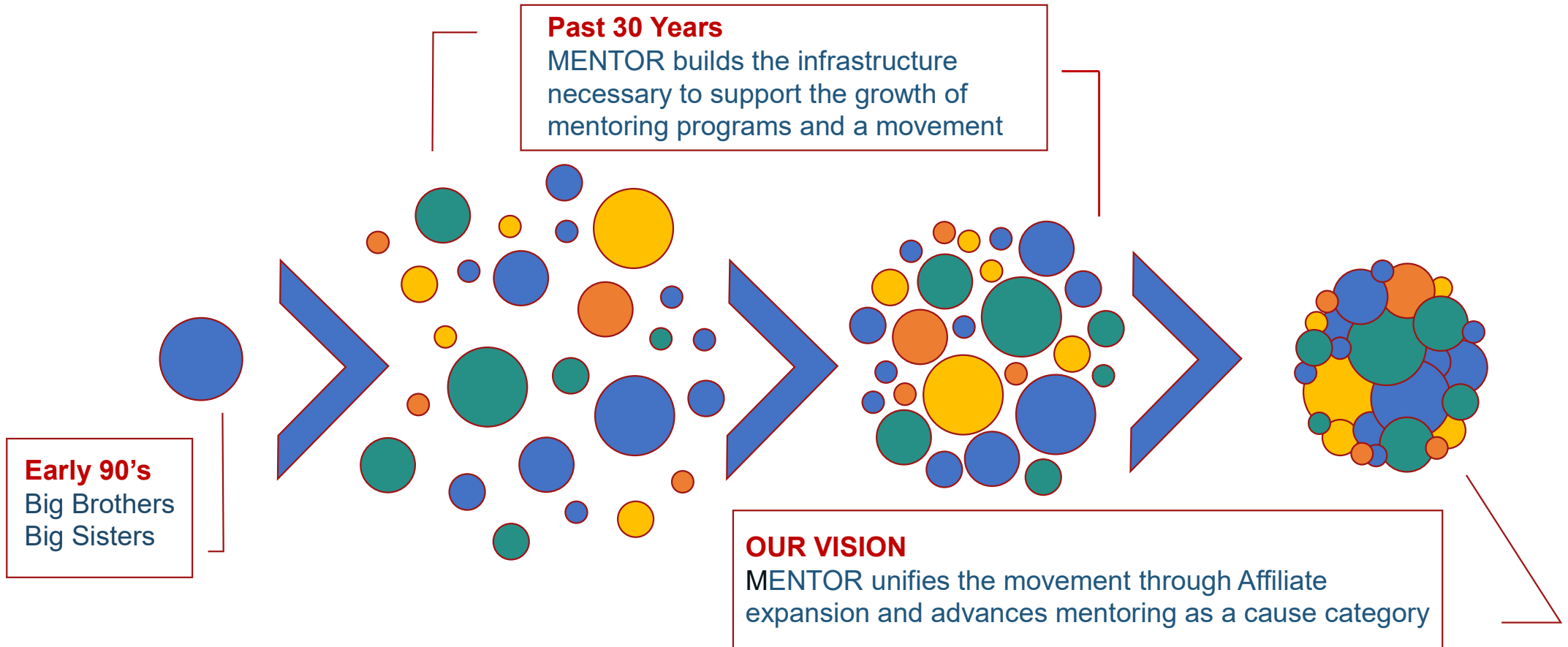
MENTOR

If You Mentored Me....

“IF YOU MENTOR ME...”



The Evolution of the Mentoring Movement

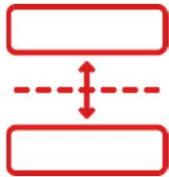




Why Now?



We live in a technological age with devices and media that can turn us away from each other while also making us seem as “connected” as ever.



Systemic and growing inequities show up as gaps in opportunity, networks, and access to adult relationships outside of families for our young people.



Mentoring unites us. It is a key response to these issues. At a time when research shows that loneliness and isolation are trending upwards, we know that relationships are powerful tools. They bring us together and navigate us to greater connection and opportunity.





Why Now?

Mental Health Crisis

The Surgeon General issued a warning about the state of mental health among America's youth. His public health advisory urged immediate action to support young people's mental health and well-being.

COVID-19 Pandemic

More than 200,000 young people lost caregivers, parents, or guardians to COVID

Presidential Proclamation

“Let's take on mental health — especially among our children, whose lives and education have been turned upside down,” Biden said, adding later that “we can all play a part — sign up to be a tutor or a mentor.”



The Multiplier Effect



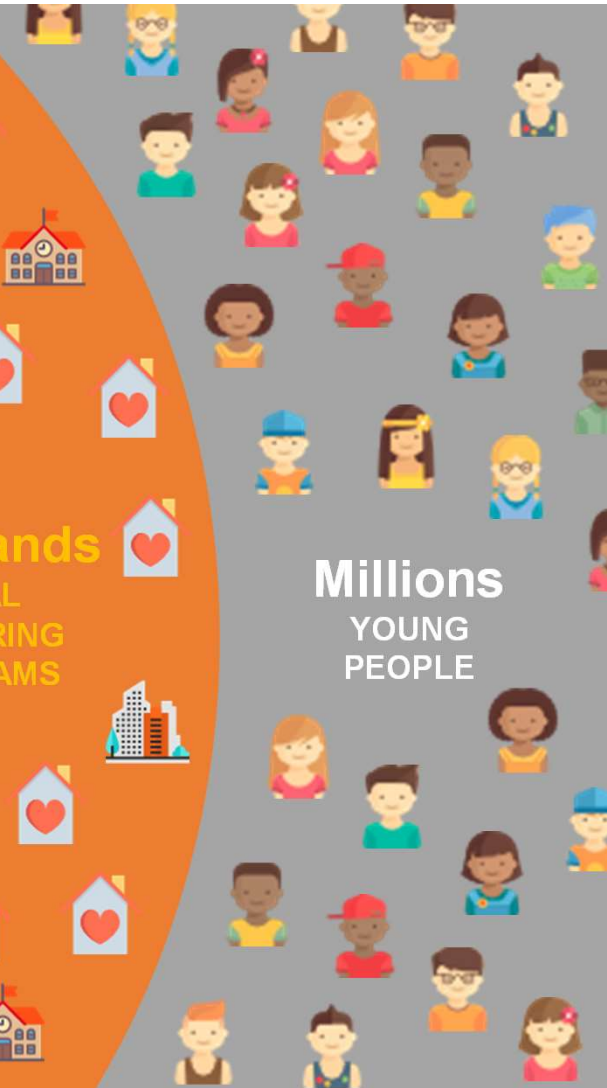
**MENTOR:
THE NATIONAL
MENTORING
PARTNERSHIP**



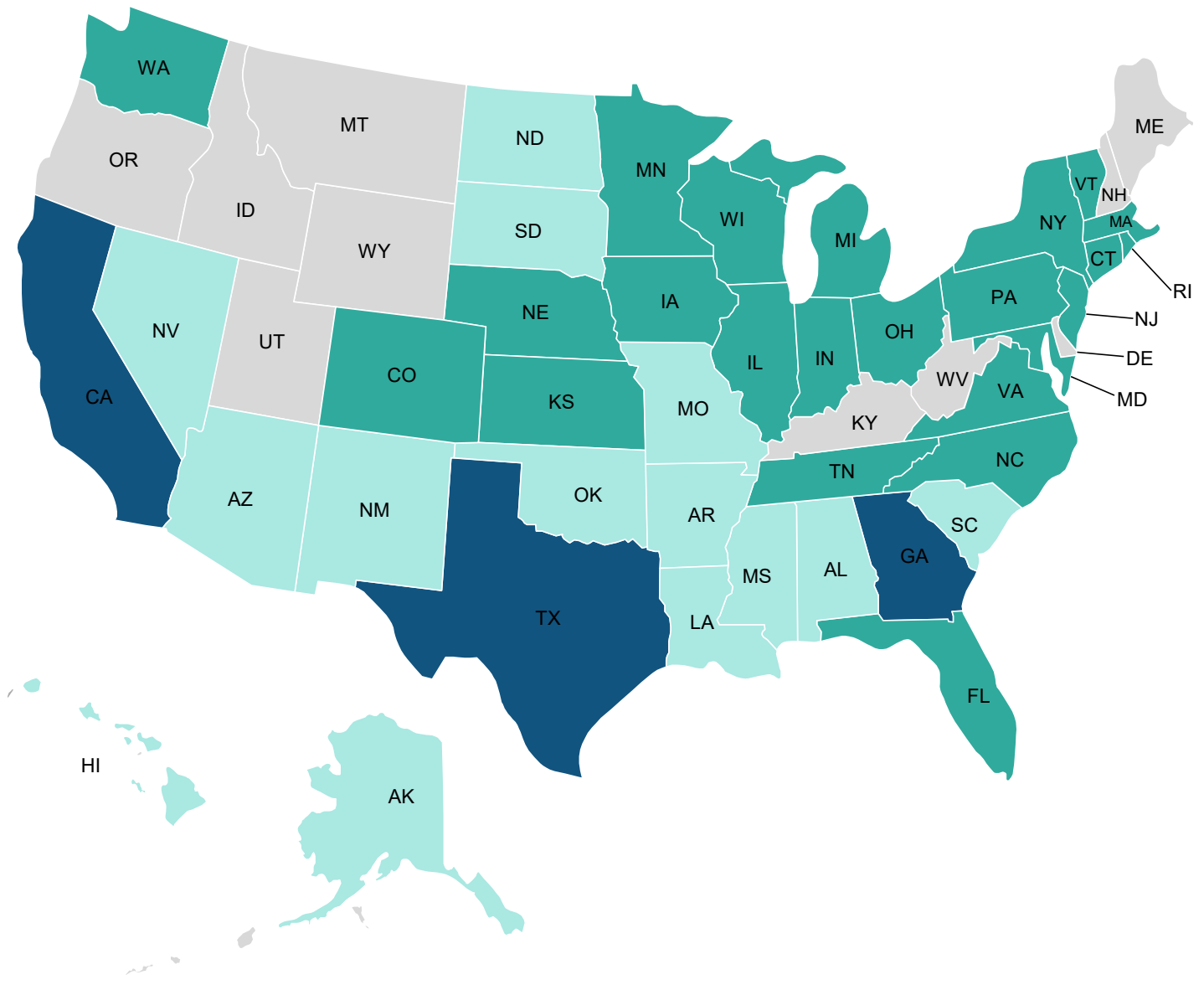
**25
REGIONAL
MENTOR
AFFILIATES**



**Thousands
LOCAL
MENTORING
PROGRAMS**



**Millions
YOUNG
PEOPLE**



Affiliate Staff State Map

Key

- Current Affiliate
- Expansion in Process

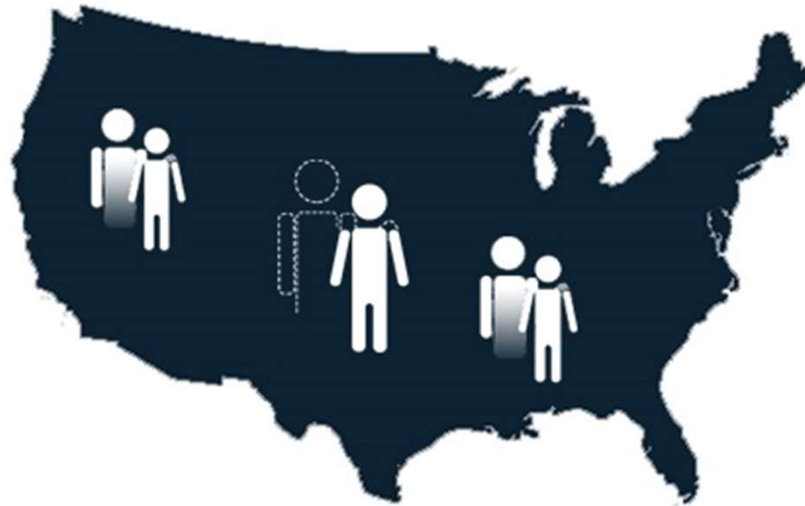
Powerful Mentoring Statistics



MENTOR's mission is to fuel the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships for America's young people **and to close the mentoring gap for the one in three young people growing up without this critical support.**

What is the Mentoring Gap?

One in three young people are growing up in this country without a mentor.



From *The Mentoring Effect* – **MENTOR's** report informed by the first-ever nationally representative survey of young people on the topic of mentoring.

YOUTH WITH A MENTOR ARE...



92%

more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities.



75%

more likely to have held a leadership position in a club or sports team.



22%

more likely to have experienced a strong sense of belonging while growing up.

ADULTS WHO WERE MENTORED AS YOUTH REPORT LONG LASTING IMPACT...



74%

of those who had a meaningful mentor say that person contributed significantly to their success later in life.



69%

of young adults say that this key relationship has helped them with issues related to their education.



58%

say their mentor has supported their mental health.

The Ripple Effect

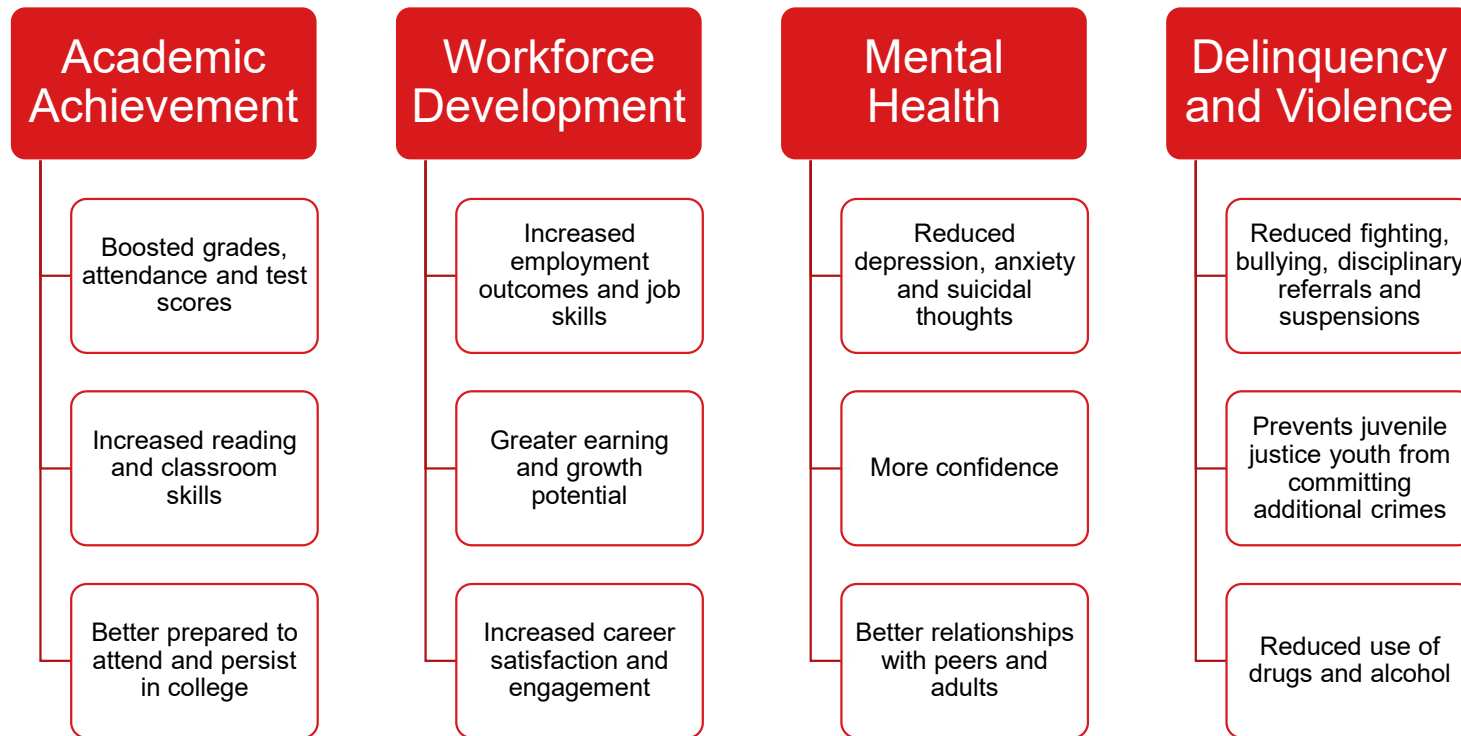


2X

as likely to serve as mentors themselves

Impact of Mentoring

Research has shown mentoring has significant impact across multiple youth development outcome areas – often simultaneously.





**44% OF AMERICANS
AREN'T MENTORING
YET, BUT ARE
WILLING TO
CONSIDER IT**

The Power of Relationships Report



**MENTORING UNITES US.
78% OF MENTORS ARE
MENTORING YOUTH OF
A DIFFERENT SOCIO-
ECONOMIC STATUS**

The Power of Relationships Report



**83% OF AMERICANS
SUPPORT THE
GOVERNMENT
INVESTING IN
YOUTH MENTORING**

The Power of Relationships Report

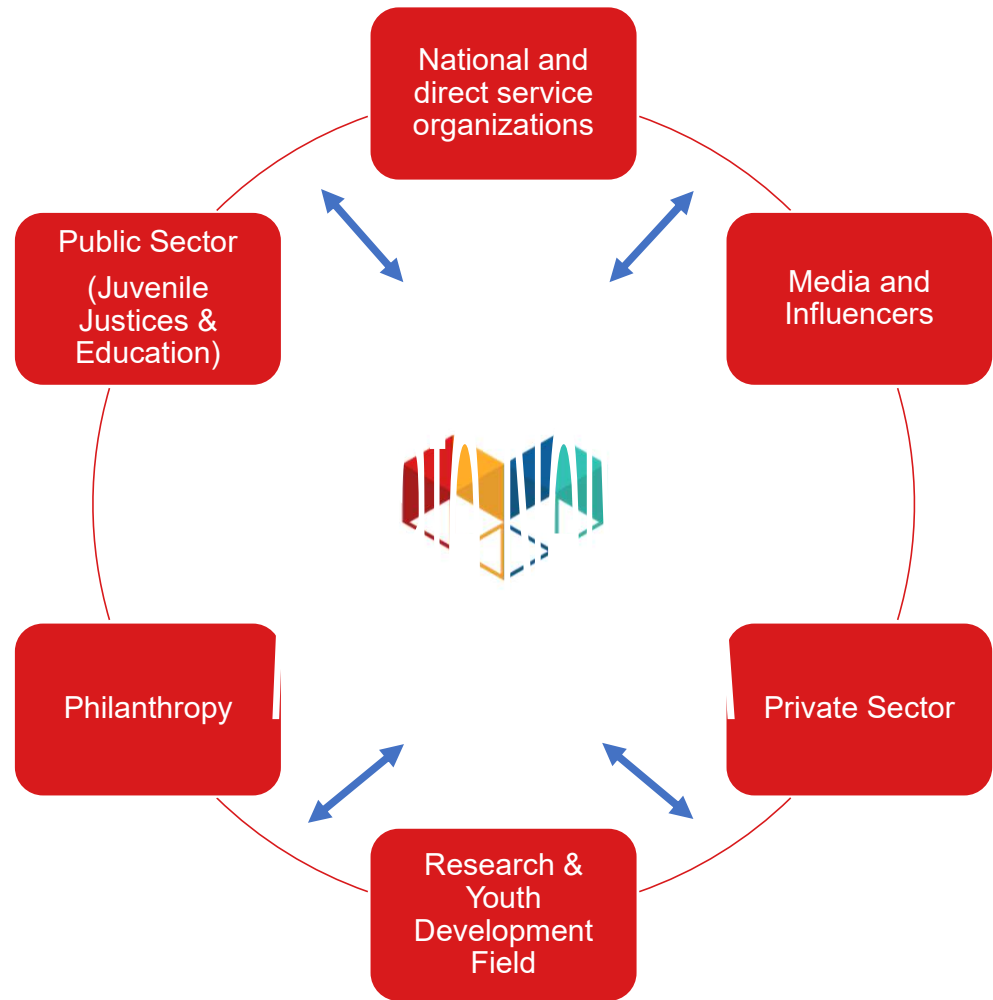
The Movement in Action



Progress through Strategic Partnerships & Collective Impact

Collective impact and strategic partnerships brings people together in a structured way to achieve social change

Collective impact is a network of community members, organizations, and institutions learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems level change.



Five Conditions of Strategic Partnerships and Collective Impact

1. It starts with a **common agenda**-This means coming together to collectively define the problem and create a shared vision to solve it.
2. It establishes **shared measurement**-That means tracking progress in the same way, allowing for continuous learning and accountability.
3. It fosters **mutually reinforcing activities**-That means integrating the participants' many different activities to maximize the end result.
4. It encourages **continuous communications**-That means building trust and strengthening relationships.
5. And it has a **strong backbone**-That means having a team dedicated to aligning and coordinating the work of the group.

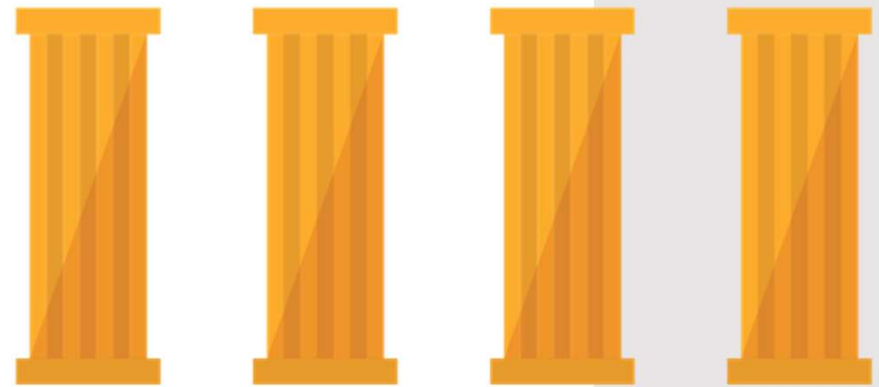
MENTOR's Work: Four Levers to Close the Mentoring Gap

 **Prioritizing Quality**

 **Ensuring Local Field Leadership**

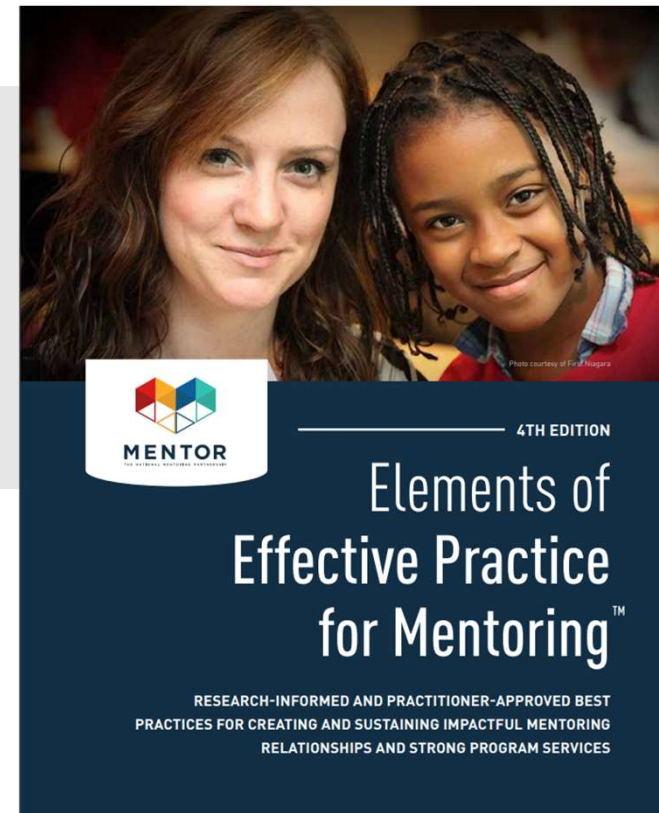
 **Expanding the Movement**

 **Influencing Systems**



1. Prioritizing Quality

MENTOR ensures that leading-edge **research**, field-based **evidence**, **community insights**, and **effective training** converge to increase, sustain, and evaluate the quality of mentoring relationships for young people.



2. Ensuring Local Field Leadership



MENTOR strengthens and expands local mentoring leadership to identify innovations and systemic solutions to ultimately **provide the access and capacity** necessary to drive increased quality mentoring relationships for young people.



MENTOR Affiliates Accelerate Local Impact

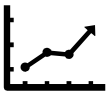
INCREASE MENTORING PROGRAM CAPACITY



Provide ongoing training and technical assistance to ensure quality standards in all mentoring efforts



Recruit mentors to significantly increase the number of youth in quality mentoring relationships



Enable a range of organizations to start, manage and expand mentoring initiatives to meet the local demand

INCREASE LOCAL ENGAGEMENT



Identify ways to leverage or increase human, financial or in-kind investments in mentoring initiatives



Advocate for legislation, policies and public funding streams to support the mentoring movement.



Help local systems integrate mentoring as an evidence-based intervention proven to maximize impact in a range of outcome areas

PROVIDE EXPERTISE & RAISE AWARENESS



Lead public awareness campaigns to increase the general public's knowledge of the need for mentoring



Convene local mentoring providers, and promote networking, collaboration and shared learning



Regularly collect data to identify gaps and share findings to increase understanding of the impact of and need for mentoring

Affiliates are Uniquely Poised to Solve Community Problems

Affiliate	Partner(s)	Action	Outcome
IL	Mayor of Chicago	Engage companies in youth mentoring initiatives	Leveraged the human capital resources of companies to recruit more mentors for vulnerable youth
MA	State Government	Coordinate statewide advocacy efforts to increase public funding for mentoring	Increased state funding for quality mentoring programs through the Mentoring Matching Grants line item
NE	Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems	Pilot Youth Initiated Mentoring Model	Provided a solution to help address the unique mentoring needs of incarcerated youth, foster youth, homeless youth and teen parents across greater Omaha
PA	Pittsburgh Public Schools	Be a Middle School Mentor for students in grades 6-8	Helped ensure the Pittsburgh Public Schools were able to provide students with the support and guidance most beneficial to them so they could benefit from Pittsburgh Promise®
VT	20 mentoring agencies and 100 mentoring program sites that Mobius awards grant funding to	Provide young Vermonters with mentors from K-12 and beyond	Provided support and resources for program staff and mentors, and connected programs with one another so that matches could transition as the mentee ages out of the original program

3. Expanding the Movement

MENTOR accelerates and influences public and political will to drive **civic engagement, mentor recruitment, policy change, and public/private investment** that deliver the relationships necessary for young people.



4. Influencing Systems



We know that in order to harness the full potential of mentoring relationships -- and to scale -- we must meet people where they are and **integrate relationship-based solutions** into the systems they are navigating.

That's why we've focused our lens on workforce and education spaces, **bringing mentoring training to managers and employees, schools and school districts.**



Mentoring in Post-Secondary Education

1. Matching Process
2. Training and Orientation
3. Regular Meetings
4. Goal Setting
5. Resource Sharing
6. Evaluation
7. Community Events
8. Adaptable
9. Long Term Relationships



Questions?????



Thank you!
Contact Joellen Spacek
Jspacek@mentoring.org



Discussion

- What about the MENTOR model resonates?
- What's different in your community?
- What resources do you already have to begin building strategic partnerships and collective impact work around mentoring in your country?
- What systems do you think are good prospects to work with around mentoring in your region? (education, workforce, government, justice, faith, neighborhoods, others)
- Why are some of these systems good prospects?

Dr Orla Flynn

ATU President





Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

WNW Connect 2024

Dr Orla Flynn, President ATU

ABOUT ATU

Atlantic Technological University (ATU) was established following the merger of three institutes of technology on April 1, 2022;

- Galway-Mayo (GMIT)
- Letterkenny (LYIT)
- IT Sligo



ATU Campuses





ATU's "Spirit" launch video, April 2022

Vision

We will become an internationally renowned university that enhances the quality of life in our region and creates a sustainable future for all.



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an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University

Mission

We enrich our region by delivering academic and research excellence working collaboratively with regional, national and international partners.

Values

By embodying these values, we create a culture that will enable us to be a successful university.



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Our Guiding Lights

Five key themes to set our direction for the future



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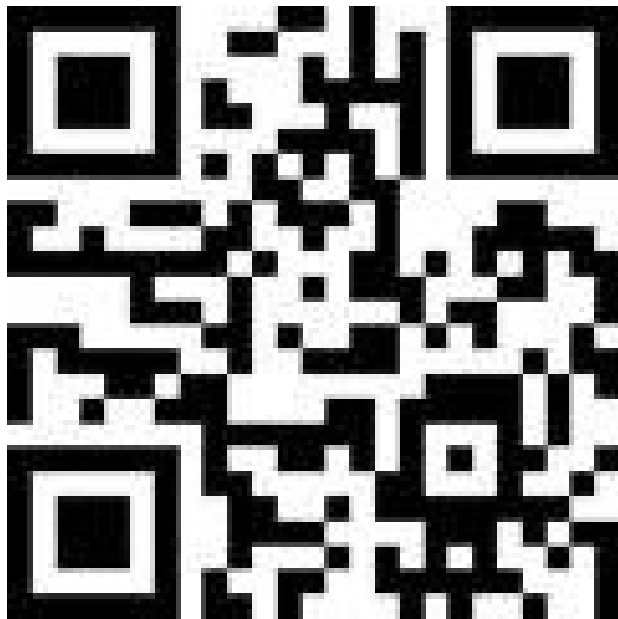
Go raibh maith agaibh!

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University

Donegal

Mentoring for Access, Retention and Student Success: A review of practice in the West-North West Cluster of HEIs



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UNIVERSITY
OF GALWAY



Transforming
Learning



Funded by
the European Union
NextGenerationEU



For further information:

**WNW Connect Education
Mentoring Co-Ordinator
Celia.Keenaghan@atu.ie**