Fresh Start

Asking the Right Questions

The start of the school year is a great time to get to know your mentee better and deepen your relationship. Ask about his/her summer. Chat about what he/she hopes to accomplish this year. As you play and talk and work on projects, *pay particular attention to your mentee’s strengths and successes.*

After you have re-established closeness and a strong rapport, you can ask *solution-focused questions.* This approach helps your mentee engage his/her resiliency when challenges arise later in the year. To use this technique effectively, it’s best to already know about the traits and experiences your mentee owns.

The Method

Solution-focused questions target a better future. Your questions will focus on what life will be like when your mentee has overcome or limited his/her problem, especially using the strengths and knowledge that he or she already has. Some examples of good solution-focused questions include:

*Continued on reverse…*

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TRAUMA-INFORMED MENTORING w/ Kelly Vagts

*A Trauma Lens: Helping mentors understand and implement a trauma-informed approach with mentees and families.*

1 in 4 children has experienced a traumatic event that affects their behavior, emotions, and ability to learn. For you as a mentor, this translates to students who have defiant behavior, a lack of emotional regulation, self harm (such as cutting/burning), bullying, etc.

In this workshop you will learn what trauma is, how it affects children developmentally, why it is important for you as a mentor to have a trauma lens, and skills for you to help these children in your classes.

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Don’t miss our annual OARS raft trip!

**Who:** Mentors and mentees (limit 19 pairs)

**What:** We will run a section of the Daily.

**When:** September 17th (Noon-5PM). **NEW DATE!**

**Where:** OARS warehouse (2540 S Hwy 191)

Call and talk with your mentee (and his/her parent!) about participating. Parents must sign waiver. Students should eat lunch at home, and bring water bottle, extra clothes, sunblock.

**RSVP required.** Call 260-9646 or email. Hard deadline September 9th to sign up, no exceptions. Info: grandareamentoring@gmail.com

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This Month in Mentoring

- **September 5:** No School.
- **September 17:** OARS Rafting. See above.
- **September 20:** 4:30-5:30pm, HMK Mentor Room: Trauma-Informed Mentoring with Kelly Vagts. See box at left for more.
- **September 23:** No School.
- **September 29-30:** Mid-Term Conferences. No mentoring.
**Grand Area Mentoring**

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### Idea of the month: Get Organized!

The start of the school year is a great time to help your mentee get organized. Kick off with a schedule. Bring in a calendar (on a single page or the wall variety) on which to mark your mentoring dates and times in advance. Include all the school district holidays, your mentee’s after school clubs, and special weekend plans. If you’d like to arrange off-campus outings this year, make a list alongside your calendar. Pencil them in and leave plenty of time to find partners and get parent permission. Next, take a look at your mentee’s supplies. Do they have folders, notebooks, or binders? If so, celebrate and predict a great year by decorating them with the arts and crafts materials.

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**Continued from front…**

- “How have you overcome a challenge like this before?”
- “What will you be doing differently when things are better?”
- “What will you notice when the problem is better?”
- “How will others tell when the problem is better?”

A well-described future will include what is wanted rather than what is not wanted, will be specific and observable, and will be realistic.

It is helpful to use language that implies a positive outcome, for example:
- “*How will you do that*”, rather than “*Why will you do that*?”
- “*When this happens*”, rather than “*If this happens*...”
- “*What will you be doing*”, rather than “*What *would* you be doing*?”
- “*What will be happening*”, rather than “*What won’t be happening*?”

Also, helping the young person to notice that problems aren’t *always* present can reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed and can identify things they or others are already doing to solve the problem. You might ask:

- “*When is the problem less troubling, or when it is not happening*?”
- “*Tell me about the times when you cope better with the problem*.”
- “*When things are tough, how do you cope*?”
- “*Tell me what has worked in the past even if only for a short time*.”

Remember to cue your mentee to consider how he/she might apply his/her natural strengths to improve life (and recall how they already have!) **HOWEVER, don’t apply this technique in all circumstances.** If your mentee describes or faces a dangerous situation at home, at school, or elsewhere (such as abuse, bullying, or depression), contact Grand Area Mentoring immediately. 435-260-9646. Thank you for helping your mentee (and our community) create a better future.

Adapted from: [http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk/topics/techniques/solution_focused%20_Techniques.htm](http://www.handsonscotland.co.uk/topics/techniques/solution_focused%20_Techniques.htm)