

# Examining the Health of Youth Mentoring Relationships

*A research-based and practitioner informed framework to assess the overall health and functioning of youth mentoring relationships*

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The focus in a youth mentoring relationship is typically on the quality of interactions, and depth of engagement, between a child and their mentor.<sup>1</sup> However, recent mentoring research illustrates that the perceptions, expectations, and feelings of people supporting the mentoring relationship (including parents and staff) can impact the strength and ultimate benefit of the mentoring relationship.<sup>2</sup> The Study to Analyze Relationships (STAR) examined predictors of early match endings among Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies in four major metropolitan areas in the US and analyzed factors that influenced match duration. While the full report from STAR has not yet been published, preliminary findings revealed during the 2016 Summer Institute for Youth Mentoring informed the development of this resource.<sup>3,4</sup>

This resource and the supplemental *Match Support Check-in Questions* are designed to support mentoring program staff to gain feedback from youth, mentors, and parents to inform the overall health of individual mentoring relationships. With this framework, a match support person is tasked with painting an objective, holistic portrait of the mentoring experience from the perspective of each party mentors, parents, youth and themselves, as program staff, to examine the multiple two-way interactions that impact the lifecycle of any given mentoring relationship. With this framework mentoring staff can hear the perspective of multiple parties to the match, refrain from judging the accuracy of each perspective, and work towards developing a broad awareness of the relationship's functioning from those who know it most intimately.

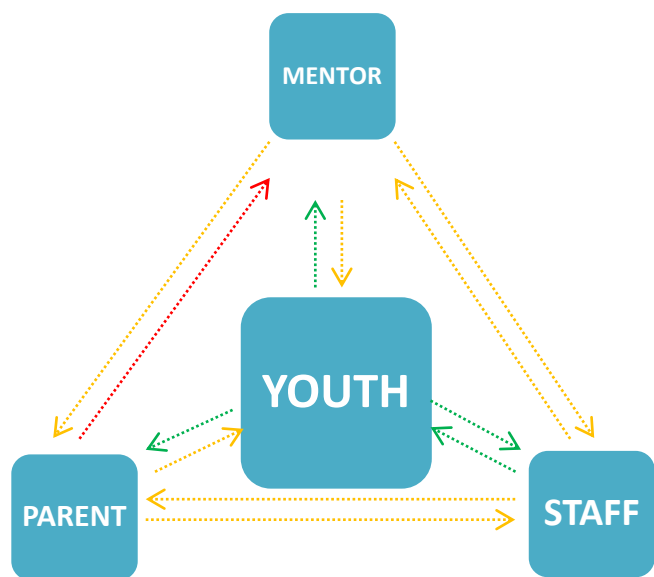
As the experiences of individuals engaged in a relationship-based service evolve and change constantly, staff are encouraged to use this framework to create a snapshot of the relationship over time to: a) inform support provided to all parties engaged in a relationship; b) bolster the overall quality of the experience; c) amplify positive outcomes for youth; and d) decrease pre-mature relationship endings. How frequently program staff may choose to use this framework depends on multiple factors including but not limited to program design, program size, staff capacity, caseload size, etc. For greatest benefit programs are recommended to apply this framework several times per year in community-based, one-to-one mentoring relationships. Programs with greater staff capacity may elect to utilize this framework more frequently.

This resource will allow program staff to examine the health of youth mentoring relationships in their care applying 10 research-based and practitioner-informed factors including: **Consistency & Frequency of Interactions, Communication, Youth-Centeredness, Youth Emotional Engagement, Mentor Emotional Engagement, Developmental Interactions, Parent/Guardian Comfort, Program Satisfaction, Cultural Responsivity and Aligned Expectations.** Decades of youth mentoring research are reflected in this resource; however the framework itself has not been tested in an experimental or quasi-experimental design. For this reason, we caution against relying solely on this framework in high-level decision making—it is intended simply to provide insights into the areas where matches are succeeding or struggling in a continuous improvement context.

To use this assessment, staff should assign a 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 rating to every item, and these ratings should be informed by their conversations with each party to the relationship. Scores in each domain should be aggregated to build an overall score incorporating the perspectives of parents, youth, mentors, and staff. Some domains include multiple items to reflect the bi-directional nature of perspectives within that domain. When arriving at a value for each item staff should ask themselves, "Based on the information I have, how do I think this person (the mentor, parent, or youth) would rate this?" The combined domain scores should be added and divided by 10 for an overall match score. There are some items within a domain where a youth, parent or mentor perspective is not included, primarily because asking this information of that party could be developmentally or relationally inappropriate. See the summary section for more information on interpreting scores.

## Using this Framework

Research demonstrates that when parties involved in a mentoring relationship receive consistent, ongoing program support, they're more likely to experience satisfying and ultimately effective relationships.<sup>5,6</sup> Consistent monitoring and support involves connecting with all parties involved in a mentoring relationship on a regular basis to understand the perspectives of the youth, mentor, and parent. These interactions prove most informative when conducted in-person or over the phone, where program staff can hear tone and inferences of participants and ask poignant follow-up questions. Best practice standards in the field of mentoring necessitate verbal, monthly communication with all parties to the relationship parents, youth, and mentors.<sup>7</sup> This framework is supported by a set of aligning and supplemental check-in questions that program staff can use to gain the perspective of youth, families, and mentors engaged in a mentoring match. (See the file *Match Support Check-in Questions* for details on these questions.)



A Systemic Model of Youth Mentoring<sup>8</sup>

There are multiple, bi-directional interactions that impact the overall health, duration and outcomes of youth mentoring relationships.<sup>8</sup> Minor inconsistencies, misaligned expectations, or misunderstandings when not monitored and attended to by program staff can severely weaken one or multiple parties' engagement and overall support of the mentoring relationship.<sup>9,10</sup>

Using the following framework, program staff can keep a pulse on the overall health of youth mentoring relationships in their care. The categories of relationship quality outlined in this tool are based on qualitative research on mentoring relationship failures.<sup>10,11</sup>

In a systemic model of mentoring (see diagram), each line represents a portion of the overall match health<sup>8</sup>. As engagement between any two parties is bi-directional, the quality of these interactions and the ultimate satisfaction of any two parties are demonstrated by the following categories:

- Strong = Both lines are green
- Adequate = One line is green, and one line is yellow
- Tenuous = Both lines are yellow
- Weak = Both lines are red, or one line is yellow and one is red

Using the following framework staff can assign a rating to indicate their own perspective and that of the youth, mentor, and parent/guardian across 10 indicators of relationship health. The summary section includes tips for programs staff on how to calculate overall scores and respond to "tenuous" and "weak" indications of mentoring relationship health.

Begin assessing a relationship by filling out the rubric that follows here. Note that "P/G" indicates Parents or Guardians. See page 12 for additional scoring guidance.

Weak (1)	(2)	Tenuous (3)	(4)	Strong (5)	Score
<b>Item 1. Consistency &amp; Frequency of Interactions:</b> How often are the youth and adult meeting?					
Interactions <u>between youth and mentor</u> are inconsistent and don't meet program expectations. Cancelled outings aren't rescheduled.		Interactions <u>between youth and mentor</u> are somewhat consistent, and usually meet program expectations (i.e. meetings typically occur weekly, and are rescheduled when cancelled).		Interactions <u>between youth and mentor</u> are consistent, and meet program expectations. Meetings occur frequently, and are very rarely cancelled.	1.0 P/G
					1.0 Youth
					1.0 Mentor
					1.0 Staff
					<b>1.0 Average</b>
<b>Item 2. Communication:</b> How frequent and constructive is communication between all parties to the relationship?					
Communication <u>between the P/G and the mentor</u> is predominately irregular, negative, or non-existent.		Communication <u>between the P/G and mentor</u> is somewhat consistent.		Communication <u>between the P/G and the mentor</u> is predominately positive, and regular.	2.1 P/G
					2.1 Mentor
					2.1 Staff
					<b>2.1 Average</b>
Communication <u>between the youth and mentor</u> is predominately irregular, negative, or non-existent.		Communication <u>between the youth and mentor</u> is somewhat consistent.		Communication <u>between the youth and the mentor</u> is predominately positive, and regular.	2.2 P/G
					2.2 Youth
					2.1 Mentor
					2.2 Staff
Communication <u>between the agency and mentor</u> is predominately irregular, negative, or non-existent.		Communication <u>between the agency and mentor</u> is somewhat consistent.		Communication <u>between the agency and the mentor</u> is predominately positive, and regular.	2.3 Mentor
					2.3 Staff
					<b>2.3 Average</b>
Communication <u>between the agency and P/G</u> is predominately irregular, negative, or non-existent.		Communication <u>between the agency and P/G</u> is somewhat consistent.		Communication <u>between the agency and the P/G</u> is predominately positive and	2.4 P/G
					2.4 Staff
					<b>2.4 Average</b>

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				regular.		
Communication <u>between the agency and youth</u> is predominately irregular, negative, or non-existent.		Communication between the agency and youth is somewhat consistent.		Communication <u>between the agency and the youth</u> is predominately positive, and regular.	2.5 P/G	
					2.5 Youth	
					2.5 Staff	
					<b>2.5 Average</b>	
Communication <u>between the P/G and youth regarding the mentoring relationship</u> is predominately irregular, negative, or non-existent.		Communication <u>between the P/G and youth regarding the mentoring relationship</u> is somewhat consistent.		Communication <u>between the P/G and the youth regarding the mentoring relationship</u> is predominately positive, and regular.	2.6 P/G	
					2.6 Youth	
					2.6 Mentor	
					2.6 Staff	
					<b>2.6 Average</b>	
Add all Average communication scores together and divide by 6 for <b>Total Communication Score:</b>						
<b>Item 3. Youth-Centered:</b> How does the mentor respond to the youth's preferences and interests?						
Mentor selects activities during interactions. Youth is not encouraged to voice and select what he/she wants to do. Mentor is not aware of/or responsive to the developmental needs of the youth. Mentor and youth do not work well together. Mentor does not empower youth.	A value between weak and tenuous.	Mentor offers the youth discrete choice among activity options primarily selected by the adult. Mentor is aware of and usually responsive to the developmental needs of the youth. Mentor and youth work somewhat well together. Mentor sometimes empowers youth.	A value between tenuous and strong.	Youth guides activity selection and engagement. Mentor is attuned to the developmental needs of the youth, scaffolds activities that build the youth's skills, exposes them to new opportunities, empowers and appropriately challenges growth. Mentor and youth work well together.	3. P/G	
					3. Youth	
					3. Mentor	
					3. Staff	
					<b>3. Average</b>	
<b>Item 4. Youth Emotional Engagement:</b> What is the youth's level emotional engagement in the relationship?						
The youth frequently demonstrates feelings of		The youth very rarely demonstrates feelings of		The youth frequently demonstrates feelings of	4. P/G	
					4. Youth	

<p>unease during interactions with their mentor. Behavior may indicate fear, anger, sadness, pain, boredom, and/or disappointment. Youth speaks directly about their expectations being unmet. Youth does not speak of a connection to the mentor.</p>		<p>unease during interactions with their mentor and typically demonstrates feelings of comfort, and enjoyment. Youth speaks directly about their expectations being somewhat met. Youth sometimes describes a bond, or emotional connection to the mentor.</p>		<p>enjoyment and excitement during interactions with their mentor as well as increased confidence and curiosity. Youth speaks directly about their expectations being primarily met. Youth frequently speaks of an emotional connection and/or bond with their mentor.</p>	4. Mentor	
					4. Staff	
					<p><b>4. Average</b></p>	
<p><b>Item 5. Developmental Interactions:</b> How does the adult approach interactions with the youth? Developmental interactions are characterized by attachment, reciprocity, progressive complexity, and a balance of power.<sup>12</sup></p>						
<p>The mentor talks more than listens; gives advice; frequently asks closed ended questions; does not respond to youth’s physical or emotional cues. Mentor demonstrates a lack of empathy, warmth, authenticity, and flexibility.</p>		<p>The mentor asks some open-ended questions; demonstrates active listening; usually listens more than talks. Mentor sometimes demonstrates empathy, warmth, authenticity, and flexibility.</p>		<p>The mentor consistently employs open-ended questions, active listening, and growth-promoting encouragement. Mentor empowers youth to lead in developmentally appropriate ways. Mentor consistently demonstrates empathy, warmth, authenticity, and/or flexibility.</p>	5.P/G	
					5. Youth	
					5. Mentor	
					5. Staff	
					<p><b>5. Average</b></p>	
<p><b>Item 6. Mentor Emotional Engagement/Commitment:</b> What’s the mentor’s level of engagement in the relationship?</p>						
<p>The mentor frequently demonstrates feelings of unease during or after interactions with youth.</p>	<p>A value between weak and tenuous.</p>	<p>The mentor very rarely demonstrates feelings of unease during or after interactions with youth. The</p>	<p>A value between tenuous and strong.</p>	<p>The mentor frequently demonstrates feelings of enjoyment and excitement during interactions with the</p>	6. P/G	
					6. Youth	
					6. Mentor	
					6. Staff	

Behavior may indicate frustration, hesitation, boredom, and/or disappointment. Mentors speak directly about their expectations being unmet.		mentor typically demonstrates feelings of comfort, and enjoyment with the mentoring relationship. Mentor speaks directly about their expectations being somewhat met.		youth as well as increased confidence and curiosity. Mentor speaks directly about their expectations being primarily met.	<b>6. Average</b>	
<b>Item 7. Comfort level of Parent/ Guardian:</b> How comfortable is the P/G with this mentoring relationship?						
P/G uses a less than positive tone or language when engaging with the mentor or program staff. P/G appears uncomfortable with some aspect of the mentoring relationship. P/G speaks directly about their expectations being unmet.		P/G is mostly comfortable with the relationship. P/G may describe the relationship positively, but may have some concerns. P/G may sometimes interfere with the relationship development process between youth and mentor. P/G speaks directly about their expectations being somewhat met.		P/G is predominately positive and supportive of the mentoring relationship. P/G supports the relationship, understands the benefits, and shares appreciation with mentor. P/G speaks directly about their expectations being primarily met.	7. P/G	
					7. Mentor	
					7. Staff	
					<b>7. Average</b>	
<b>Item 8. Program Satisfaction:</b> How satisfied are youth, P/G's, and mentors with the support of program staff and overall engagement with the program?						
The P/G is <u>dissatisfied</u> with the level of support provided by the program staff and/or agency. The P/G speaks directly to the lack of staff/agency involvement in supporting match progression.		The P/G is <u>less than satisfied</u> with the level of support provided by the program staff and/or agency. P/G speaks directly to inconsistent staff/agency involvement in supporting match progression.		The P/G is <u>satisfied</u> with the level of support and engagement provided by program and/or the agency. P/G speaks directly to consistent and positive staff/agency involvement in supporting match	8.1 P/G	
					8.1 Staff	
					<b>8.1 Average</b>	

				progression.		
<u>The mentor is dissatisfied</u> with the level of support provided by the program staff and/or agency.	A value between weak and tenuous.	<u>The mentor is less than satisfied</u> with the level of support provided by the program staff and/or agency.	A value between tenuous and strong.	<u>The mentor is satisfied</u> with the level of support and engagement provided by program and/or the agency.	8.2 Mentor	
					8.2 Staff	
					<b>8.2 Average</b>	
<u>The youth is dissatisfied</u> with the level of support provided by the program staff and/or agency.		<u>The youth is less than satisfied</u> with the level of support provided by the program staff and/or agency.		<u>The youth is satisfied</u> with the level of support and engagement provided by program and/or the agency	8.3 Youth	
					8.3 Staff	
					<b>8.3 Average</b>	
Add all Average satisfaction scores together and divide by 3 for <b>Total Program Satisfaction Score:</b>						
<b>Item 9.0 Cultural Responsivity:</b> How do all parties to the relationship navigate cultural and/or personal identity awareness, responsivity, and potential conflict including but not limited to differences across race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, age, and ability?						
<u>In interactions with the P/G the mentor demonstrates a limited ability to</u> understand and appropriately respond to cultural differences in values, beliefs, perceptions, emotional responses, and behaviors. <sup>13</sup>		<u>In interactions with the P/G the mentor minimizes differences between</u> theirs and the P/G's cultural background as a result of a less self-aware cultural understanding. <sup>13</sup>		<u>In interactions with the P/G the mentor recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference</u> and seeks opportunities to build self-awareness, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures. <sup>13</sup>	9.1 P/G	
					9.1 Mentor	
					9.1 Staff	
					<b>9.1 Average</b>	
<u>In interactions with the youth, the mentor demonstrates a limited ability to</u> understand and appropriately respond to cultural differences in values, beliefs, perceptions, emotional responses, and behaviors.		<u>In interactions with the youth the mentor minimizes differences between</u> theirs and the P/G and or youth's cultural background as a result of a less self-aware cultural understanding.		<u>In interactions with the youth the mentor recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference</u> and seeks opportunities to build self-awareness, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures.	9.2 P/G	
					9.2 Mentor	
					9.2 Youth	
					9.3 Staff	
					<b>9.3 Average</b>	



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<p><u>In interactions with the agency the mentor demonstrates a limited ability to understand and appropriately respond to cultural differences in values, beliefs, perceptions, emotional responses, and behaviors.</u></p>		<p><u>In interactions with the agency the mentor minimizes differences between theirs and others cultural background as a result of a less self-aware cultural understanding.</u></p>		<p><u>In interactions with the agency the mentor recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference and seeks opportunities to build self-awareness, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures.</u></p>	9.3 Mentor	
					9.3 Staff	
					<b>9.3 Average</b>	
<p><u>In interactions with the mentor, the P/G demonstrates a limited ability to understand and appropriately respond to cultural differences in values, beliefs, perceptions, emotional responses, and behaviors.</u></p>	A value between weak and tenuous.	<p><u>In interactions with the mentor, the P/G minimizes differences between theirs and others cultural background as a result of a less self-aware cultural understanding.</u></p>	A value between tenuous and strong.	<p><u>In interactions with the mentor, the P/G recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference and seeks opportunities to build self-awareness, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures.</u></p>	9.4 P/G	
					9.4 Mentor	
					9.4 Staff	
					<b>9.4 Average</b>	
<p><u>In interactions with the agency the P/G demonstrates a limited ability to understand and appropriately respond to cultural differences in values, beliefs, perceptions, emotional responses, and behaviors.</u></p>		<p><u>In interactions with the agency the P/G minimizes differences between theirs and the P/G and or youth's cultural background as a result of a less self-aware cultural understanding.</u></p>		<p><u>In interactions with the agency the P/G recognizes and appreciates patterns of cultural difference and seeks opportunities to build self-awareness, understanding, and appreciation of other cultures.</u></p>	9.5 Parent	
					9.5 Staff	
					<b>9.5 Average</b>	
<p><u>In interactions with the P/G the supporting staff demonstrates a limited ability to understand and appropriately respond to</u></p>		<p><u>In interactions with the P/G the supporting staff minimizes differences between theirs and the P/G's cultural background as a</u></p>		<p><u>In interactions with the P/G the supporting staff recognizes patterns of cultural difference and seeks opportunities to build</u></p>	9.6 P/G	
					9.6 Mentor	
					9.6 Staff	
					<b>9.6 Average</b>	

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cultural differences in values, beliefs, perceptions, emotional responses, and behaviors.		result of a less self-aware cultural understanding.		self-awareness, understanding, and appreciation of and other cultures.		
<u>In interactions with the mentor the supporting staff</u> demonstrates a limited ability to understand and appropriately respond to cultural differences in values, beliefs, perceptions, emotional responses, and behaviors.		<u>In interactions with the mentor the supporting staff</u> minimizes differences between theirs and the P/G's cultural background as a result of a less self-aware cultural understanding.		<u>In interactions with the mentor the supporting staff</u> recognizes patterns of cultural difference and seeks opportunities to build self-awareness, understanding, and appreciation of and other cultures.	9.7 P/G	
					9.7 Mentor	
					9.7 Staff	
					<b>9.7 Average</b>	
<u>In interactions with the youth the supporting staff</u> demonstrates a limited ability to understand and appropriately respond to cultural differences in values, beliefs, perceptions, emotional responses, and behaviors.		<u>In interactions with the youth the supporting staff</u> minimizes differences between theirs and the P/G's cultural background as a result of a less self-aware cultural understanding.		<u>In interactions with the youth the supporting staff</u> recognizes patterns of cultural difference and seeks opportunities to build self-awareness, understanding, and appreciation of and other cultures.	9.8 P/G	
					9.8 Mentor	
					9.8 Youth	
					9.8 Staff	
					<b>9.8 Average</b>	
<b>Add all Average cultural responsivity scores together and divide by 8 for <b>Total Cultural Responsivity Score:</b></b>						
<b>Item 10. Appropriate &amp; Aligned Expectations:</b> How well does each party to the relationship maintain appropriate and aligned expectations for this experience?						
<u>P/G and mentor have conflicting expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship. (E.g. <i>P/G desires mentor to be a father figure and establish consequences for</i>	A value between weak and tenuous.	<u>P/G and/or mentor maintain primarily reasonable and aligned expectations</u> , with occasional discrepancy.	A value between tenuous and strong.	<u>P/G and mentor both maintain reasonable and aligned expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship. When expectations have changed both parties	10.1 P/G	
					10.1 Mentor	
					10.1 Staff	

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<i>the youth's behavior. The mentor is uncomfortable with and/or disagrees with this expectation).</i>				demonstrate understanding, and flexibility to learn, and support shared expectations.	<b>10.1 Average</b>	
<u>P/G and agency have conflicting expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship.		<u>P/G and/or agency maintain primarily reasonable and aligned expectations</u> , with occasional discrepancy.		<u>P/G and agency both maintain reasonable and aligned expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship. When expectations have changed both parties demonstrate understanding, and flexibility to learn, and support shared expectations.	10.2 P/G	
					10.2 Mentor	
					10.2 Staff	
					<b>10.2 Average</b>	
<u>P/G and youth have conflicting expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship.		<u>P/G and/or youth maintain primarily reasonable and aligned expectations</u> , with occasional discrepancy.		<u>P/G and youth both maintain reasonable and aligned expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship. When expectations have changed both parties demonstrate understanding, and flexibility to learn, and support shared expectations.	10.3 P/G	
					10.3 Mentor	
					10.3 Youth	
					10.3 Staff	
					<b>10.3 Average</b>	
<u>Mentor and youth have conflicting expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship. Youth desires mentor to be available all the time, indefinitely. The mentor is	A value between weak and tenuous.	<u>Mentor and/or youth maintain primarily reasonable and aligned expectations with occasional discrepancy</u> . Youth expects mentor to support them with	A value between tenuous and strong.	<u>Mentor and youth both maintain reasonable and aligned expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship. When expectations change, both parties demonstrate	10.4 P/G	
					10.4 Mentor	
					10.4 Youth	
					10.4 Staff	

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uncomfortable with and/or disagrees with this expectation.		transportation to sports activities –mentor is primarily available and supportive of this though sometimes experiences scheduling conflicts.		understanding, and flexibility to learn and support shared expectations.	<b>10.4 Average</b>	
<u>Mentor and agency have conflicting expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship. Youth desires mentor to be available all the time, indefinitely. The mentor is uncomfortable with and/or disagrees with this expectation.		<u>Mentor and/or agency maintain primarily reasonable and aligned expectations with occasional discrepancy.</u>		<u>Mentor and agency both maintain reasonable and aligned expectations for the mentoring relationship.</u> When expectations change, both parties demonstrate understanding, and flexibility to learn and support shared expectations.	10.5 Mentor	
					10.5 Staff	
					<b>10.5 Average</b>	
<u>Youth and agency have conflicting expectations</u> for the mentoring relationship. The agency staff is concerned for this relationship.		<u>Youth and/or agency maintain primarily reasonable and aligned expectations with occasional discrepancy.</u> The agency staff is somewhat concerned for this relationship.		<u>Youth and agency both maintain reasonable and aligned expectations for the mentoring relationship.</u> When expectations change, both parties demonstrate understanding, and flexibility to learn and support shared expectations. The agency staff is not concerned for this relationship.	10.6 P/G	
					10.6 Youth	
					10.6 Mentor	
					10.6 Staff	
					<b>10.6 Average</b>	
<b>Add all Average appropriate and aligned expectation scores together and divide by 6 for Total Appropriate &amp; Aligned Expectations Score:</b>						

### Overall Scoring

The following section provides directions on how to assign a score to assess the overall health of a youth mentoring relationship. The match support specialist or program coordinator should assign a 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 to each item in the above assessment. When arriving at a value for each item staff should ask themselves, “based on the information I have, how do I think this person (the mentor, parent, or youth) would rate this?” For domains with multiple items (Communication, Program Satisfaction, Cultural Responsivity, and Appropriate & Aligned Expectations) an Average score should first be calculated by averaging each party’s perspective for each item; all Average scores in that domain should then be averaged and entered as the overall value for that domain. The combined domain scores should be added and divided by 10 for an overall match score. See sample scoring on the next page.

<b>Scoring Overall Match Health</b>	
<i>Item 1. Consistency &amp; Frequency of Interactions</i>	
<i>Item 2. Total Combined Communication Score</i>	
<i>Item 3. Youth Centered</i>	
<i>Item 4. Youth Emotional Engagement</i>	
<i>Item 5. Developmental Interactions</i>	
<i>Item 6. Mentor Emotional Engagement</i>	
<i>Item 7. Parent/Guardian Comfort</i>	
<i>Item 8. Total Combined Program Satisfaction</i>	
<i>Item 9. Total Combined Cultural Responsivity</i>	
<i>Item 10. Total Combined Appropriate &amp; Aligned Expectations</i>	
<i>Item 1 + Item 2 + Item 3 + Item 4 + Item 5 + Item 6 + Item 7 + Item 8 + Item 9 + Item 10 = SUM of all Item Scores</i> <i>(Sum of all Item Scores) / 10 = Overall Match Health Score</i>	

Note that all items also require the staff person to reflect on their own skills or behavior in support of individual mentoring relationships. For this reason programs should consider training staff on topics such as self-reflection, and objective note taking. When scoring individual items staff should assign a rating based on case-note documentation that details respondents’ feedback to a series of open-ended, match-support check-in questions. Coordinators should use this series of check-in questions in communication with each party to the relationship (youth, mentors, and P/G’s) to supplement and inform this rubric. Answers to these questions should be used as evidence or observations for each item.

**Example of Multiple-Average Scoring: Communication Section**

<i>2.1 Between the mentor and P/G</i>		
Parent Perspective	2	
Mentor Perspective	3	
Staff Perspective	2	
<b>Average</b>		<b>7/3=2.33</b>
<i>2.2 Between the mentor and youth</i>		
Parent Perspective	3	
Youth Perspective	4	
Mentor Perspective	4	
Staff Perspective	4	
<b>Average</b>		<b>15/4 =3.75</b>
<i>2.3 Between the agency and the Mentor</i>		
Mentor Perspective	4	
Staff Perspective	4	
<b>Average</b>		<b>8/2=4</b>
<i>2.4 Between the agency and the parent</i>		
Parent Perspective	3	
Staff Perspective	4	
<b>Average</b>		<b>7/2=3.5</b>
<i>2.5 Between the agency and the youth</i>		
Youth Perspective	4	
Agency Perspective	4	
<b>Average</b>		<b>8/2=4</b>
<i>2.6 Between the P/G and the youth</i>		
Parent Perspective	4	
Youth Perspective	2	
Mentor Perspective	2	
Staff Perspective	3	
<b>Average</b>		<b>11/4= 2.75</b>

**Overall Communication Score:**  $2.33+3.75+4+3.5+4+2.75/6 = 3.38$

## Case Study

*The following case study about a hypothetical match further illustrates how this tool might be used in practice:*

Melissa (age 29) and Caitlin (age 11) have been matched for 3 months. The two were matched based on their shared interests in sports, particularly softball. Melissa is a graduate student at the local university and though she typically meets with Caitlin on Thursday afternoons she's cancelled twice and rescheduled once. Melissa and Caitlin's grandmother typically communicate via text, but both have shared frustrations with the program staff regarding follow up communication. Caitlin is outgoing and energetic in her interactions with Melissa and enjoys selecting activities to do together. So far the program staff has established voice to voice communication with Melissa, Caitlin, and Caitlin's grandmother at least monthly. Melissa encourages Caitlin to choose between activity options during their interactions though Melissa often tries to incorporate a quiet reflective activity which Caitlin is not always receptive to. The staff observed Melissa and Caitlin's interactions at a monthly group activity and observed Melissa practicing some open-ended questions and active listening. Melissa appears fairly engaged in the relationship though her scheduling challenges could mean she finds it harder than anticipated to meet program expectations regarding meeting frequency.

Caitlin's grandmother has shared that for the most part she's comfortable and satisfied with the relationship though she thinks there's room for improvement regarding Melissa's communication and activity planning. Melissa has also shared that Caitlin's grandmother can be 'short' in her communication. For the most part all parties to the relationship seem to be navigating cultural responsiveness needs.

However, during one instance the program staff demonstrated room for growth in this area. Melissa shared with the program coordinator that she asked Caitlin what it was like to be raised by her grandmother who doesn't share the same race as Caitlin. Caitlin responded with a funny look, and said, "it's fine." The mentor shared this with the match support specialist because she felt like she shouldn't have asked the question. The staff person reassured Melissa that it was fine to have asked the question, and said that Caitlin's response affirmed "we're all just people anyway." The staff member realized upon reflection that this response minimized cultural differences and didn't support the mentor in building her own cultural responsiveness. For the most part all parties have appropriate and aligned expectations for the mentoring relationship though Caitlin's grandmother has expressed that she wants the agency to offer 'more' programming or services to Caitlin to keep her occupied when her mentor's not available.

### **Calculating the Overall Match Score for Melissa & Caitlin**

1. <i>Consistency/ Frequency of Interactions:</i>	3
2. <i>Total Combined Communication Score</i>	3.38
3. <i>Youth Centered</i>	3
4. <i>Youth Emotional Engagement</i>	3.5
5. <i>Developmental Interactions</i>	3.25
6. <i>Mentor Emotional Engagement</i>	3
7. <i>Parent/Guardian Comfort</i>	2.66
8. <i>Total Combined Program Satisfaction</i>	4

Examining the Health of Youth Mentoring Relationships

9. <i>Total Combined Cultural Responsivity</i>	3.43
10. <i>Total Combined Appropriate &amp; Aligned Expectations</i>	<u>2.81</u>
	32.03

(Sum of items 1 through 10)/ 10 =

**Match Score: 3.20**

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This mentoring relationship is progressing well, particularly for the length of the relationship. Looking at the above holistic portrait of the relationship's health it's clear that most parties are generally with satisfied with their experience and the progress of the relationship save for the grandmother whose experience and perceptions of the relationship may impact the overall success of the relationship. This staff person can continue to check-in with Caitlin's grandmother to affirm program expectations, and ensure that she and Melissa maintain or improve their communication. With continued support from program staff on how to keep interactions youth centered, Melissa can also continue to build a strong foundation for her relationship with Caitlin.

This program's staff may also benefit from increased training and support related to communication and cultural responsivity. If the program continues to demonstrate opportunities for growth in the domain of appropriate and aligned expectations they may consider examining the way they orient youth, mentors, and families to the program. There may be an opportunity to use a tool like *Starting Relationships Right: Topics and Questions to Align Participant Expectations in Youth Mentoring Programs* to strengthen participant understanding and aligned expectations for program engagement.



### Interpreting Scores and Going Deeper

Mentoring relationship quality scores will range from 1 to 5. Below is a benchmark guide for interpreting scores. Remember that this scoring is based on your staff member's own perspective and should be viewed as one estimate as to how things are going for the match.

<b>Scores</b>	<b>Level</b>
<b>1.0-1.99</b>	<b>Weak</b>
<b>2.0-3.49</b>	<b>Tenuous</b>
<b>3.5-5.0</b>	<b>Adequate /Strong</b>

If a staff wants to drill down on the specific interactions and factors that may be contributing to a tenuous or weak overall match health score, then they should examine each party's perspective on the strength of their interactions with any other party to the mentoring relationship. As engagement between any two parties is bi-directional, the quality of these interactions and the ultimate satisfaction of any two parties are demonstrated by the following:

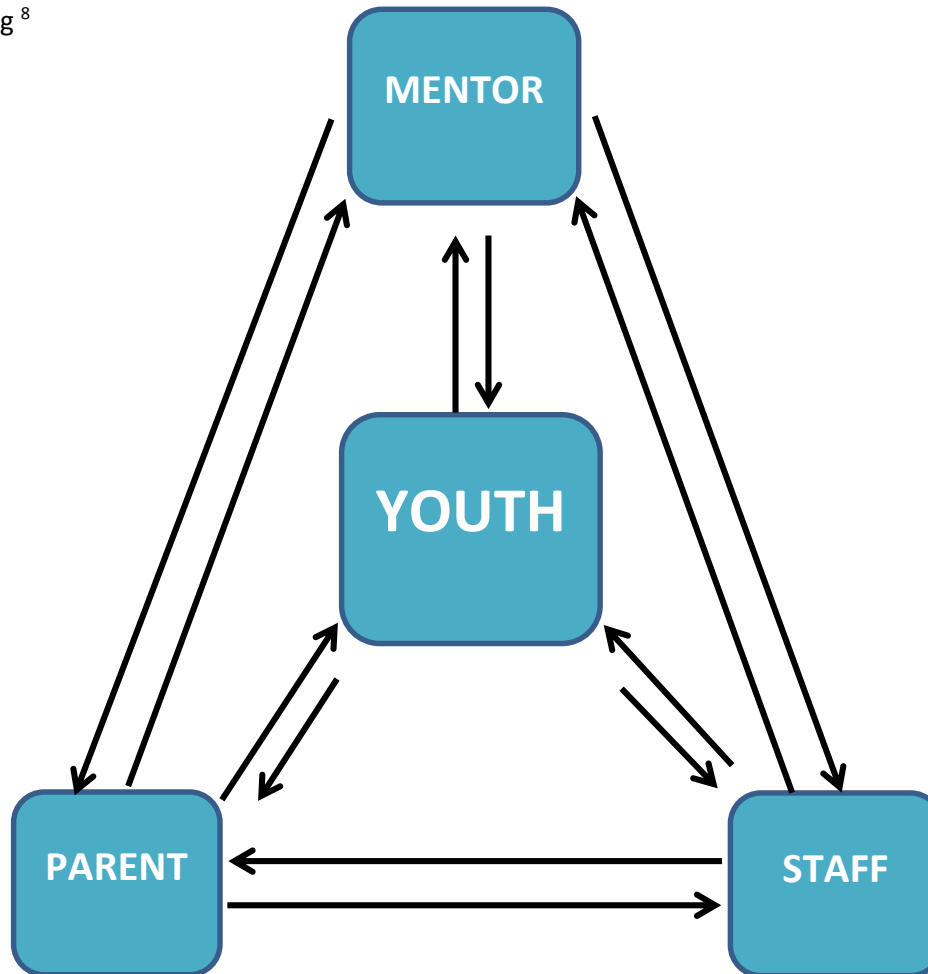
- Strong = Both lines are green
- Adequate = One line is green, and one line is yellow
- Tenuous = Both lines are yellow
- Weak = Both lines are red or one is yellow and the other red

You may find it helpful to color-code the lines of relationship among the parties in the match as a way of visually representing the strength of participant interactions and relationships. You can use the template on the following page as a start to map the green/yellow/red lines that describe the health of specific participant interactions.

## Relationship Interaction Strength Template

Use the following graphic to rate the strength of participant interactions based on the scoring of the Rubric presented here. Color each line green, yellow, or red to indicate strong, tenuous, or weak relations.

A Systemic Model of Youth Mentoring<sup>8</sup>



Endnotes

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3. Keller, T.E., Miranda-Diaz, M., Clark-Shim, H., & Spencer, R. (2016, August). *Learning more about match closures: New questions and new perspectives*. Workshop presented at Summer Institute on Youth Mentoring, Portland, OR.
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5. DuBois, D., Holloway, B., Valentine, J., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analysis review. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30, 157-197.
6. Herrera, C., DuBois, D., & Grossman, J. (2013). *The role of risk: Mentoring experiences for youth with varying risk profiles*. New York, NY: A Public/Private Ventures project distributed by MDRC.
7. Garringer et al., (2015). *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Mentor: The National Mentoring Partnership
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10. Spencer, R., Basualdo-Delmonico, A., Walsh, J., & Drew, A. (2017). Breaking up is hard to do: A qualitative interview study of how and why youth mentoring relationships end. *Youth & Society*, 49(4), 438-460.
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12. Li, J. & Julian, M. (in press) Developmental relationship as the active ingredient: A unifying working hypothesis of "what works" across intervention settings. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*.
13. Adapted from the Intercultural Development Continuum. Intercultural Development Inventory. 2017.