

Strategies for Studying Mentoring Relationships for **Attunement** and **Cohesion**



NATIONAL
MENTORING
RESOURCE CENTER
A Program of **OJJDP**

May 13th, 2019

Welcome!

- Thanks to OJJDP for their support of this special webinar for researchers, evaluators, and others who want to learn more about the interactions of mentors and youth
- A few housekeeping things...
 - Phones are muted during the webinar to ensure a good recording
 - Questions for our presenters can be submitted via the Question panel
 - We will leave time for Q&A (halfway point and at the end)
 - **Slides/recording will be emailed to participants and available shortly after via email and on NMRC site (www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org)**



Today's presenters



Gabe Kuperminc
Georgia State



Julia Pryce
Loyola - Chicago



Mike Garringer
MENTOR/NMRC



Background

- The work of the NMRC Research Board brings together scholars that are doing cutting edge research in the mentoring and “caring adult” spaces
- Much of that work gets translated into information and technical assistance for “front line” practitioners
- But we also see a need to share innovations and methodologies with the research community so that we can get inside the “magic” of mentoring youth



Goals for today

- Spending some time learning about the concept of attunement in mentoring relationships
 - How can staff and mentors be more responsive to those in the mentoring system, and shift their approach based on others needs in real time?
 - Review a tool in development that can measure these relationship features
- Thinking about the complex interactions at work in group mentoring models
 - How can we examine the experiences of youth in mentoring groups over time (both interacting with their mentors and with each other)?
 - The importance of group dynamic in influencing individual outcomes



Strategies for Developing and Studying Attunement in Mentoring Relationships



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Julia Pryce, Ph.D.

Professor, School of Social Work, Loyola University Chicago

With special acknowledgement of

Kelsey Deane, Ph.D. & Linda Gilkerson, Ph.D.

Overview of presentation

- Brief calming exercise as part of Facilitating Attuned Interactions (FAN) model
- Background on attunement concept and evolution through training process
- Generalized Attunement Scale (GAS) and Mentor Attunement Scale (MAS) development
- Implications of attunement to practice and research



Practicing presence



Origin and definition of attunement (Pryce, 2012)

- Capacity to *respond flexibly* to verbal and nonverbal cues by *taking into account others'* needs and desires
- Represents *broad strategy* to elicit, read, interpret and reflect on others' cues
- Requires *adaptation of expectations* based on others' interests
- Involves level of *intentionality* toward building the relationship

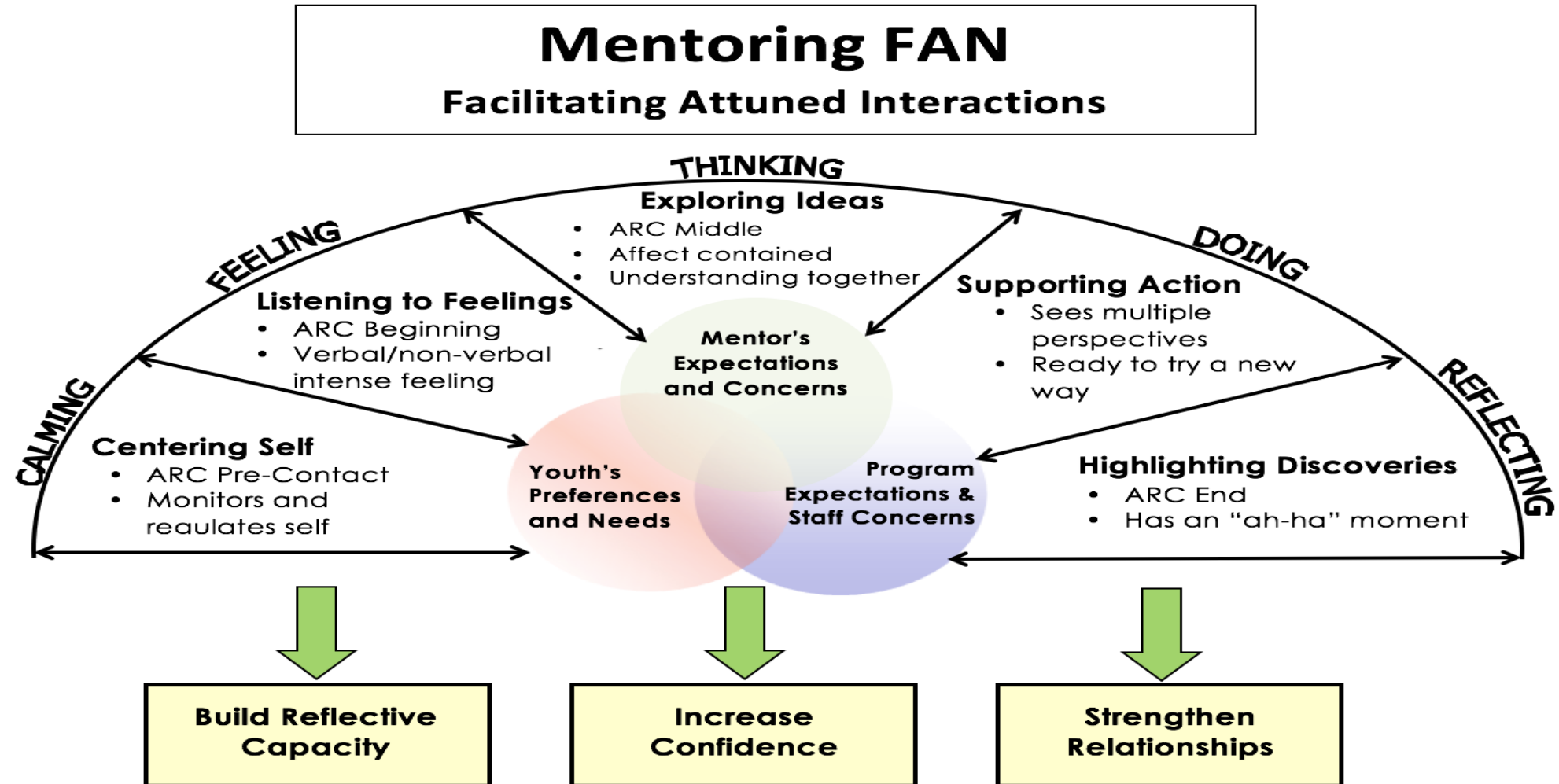
Range of attunement levels among mentors and staff observed

High levels of mentor attunement associated with different types of relationships and improved youth outcomes (Keller & Pryce, 2011; Pryce & Keller, 2011)



Mentoring FAN: “How you do the work”

(Gilkerson & Pryce, under review—do not disseminate model without permission)





*MENTORING FAN HELPS YOU READ CUES
AND MATCH WITH OTHERS*



Survey data on Mentoring FAN training

- Statistically significant differences in interpersonal reactivity from pre- to post- among trained staff (Pryce et. al, 2018), and in ability to self-reflect; increase in empathy that approaches significance
- Statistically significant differences in empathy within small sample of trained staff as part of pilot with Mentor Together (India) (Pryce et al., in preparation)



Select findings from staff interviews

- Improved ability to listen and read cues

“I was able to grow just in terms of really **attending** to the mentor. I developed a real **intentionality** about **observing their cues**, um, and asking more probing questions depending on **where they're at**. I came to a place where I can really sort of **watch** them. I guess I became a **better listener** in the process. Just thinking more about where they're at and **what they're ready for** before I begin to provide feedback...provide guidance, provide suggestions, um, and **observe** where they're at **before I jump** into those things.”



Improved ability to support relationships between mentors and youth

- As staff developed skills in attunement, report they are more able to understand the mentors and mentoring relationships

*"Just working with that mentor and not um, giving up...there were very many times when I know he wanted to give up, and I kind of wanted to terminate the match because of the frustration I was feeling because of the mentor. Meeting together, **problem solving to think of solutions**, and just **affirming his worth, his value** in the relationship, really helped change the relationship."*

- Increased sense of staff purpose in work supporting mentors
- Mentor feedback further reinforces the strengthening of connection between staff and mentors as associated with Mentoring FAN training



Preliminary findings on training of mentors

- Enhanced listening skills
- Increased attention to balance of curriculum content and relationship development
- Increased use of calming practices during stressful interactions with mentees



Process evaluation data

- Mentoring FAN Reflection Tool – self-report process evaluation data collected during practice phase
- Results from open- and closed-ended questions show increased confidence and self-awareness of those trained (i.e., ability to identify own feelings and feelings of mentors they support), and increased engagement with tool over time

Mentoring FAN Reflection Tool

Mentor Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Core Processes

a. Please mark with an X the two core processes which you most used during this contact:



b. Questions to ask mentee during your meeting:

	Asked mentor	
	Yes	No
1. "What has it been like for you this week?"	Yes	No
2. Check in with mentee ("Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?")	Yes	No
3. Ask at end "What will you take away from our time together? What would you like me to take away/remember?"	Yes	No

2. Reflection after the meeting (BOLD the response that most fits your experience)

- a) Were you and the mentee on the same page during the session? Yes No Sometimes
- b) Were you able to regulate your feelings during this session? Yes No Sometimes
- c) List two feelings you had during the session _____
- d) List two feelings your mentee expressed _____
- e) Were you able to validate the mentee's feelings? Yes No Sometimes N/A

3. Observations/Actions (type response below question and use whatever space you need)

- a) What concerns did the mentee have/what did you discuss?
- b) What support/assistance were you able to offer the mentee (if none, explain)?
- c) What were you able to appreciate/affirm in your time with your mentee?
- d) What stands out to you as noteworthy from your time together?



Need to measure attunement directly

- Current quantitative measures only approximate concept of attunement or represent one part of skill set
 - Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003)
 - Empathy Quotient (EQ-8; Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004)
 - Interpersonal Reactivity Inventory (IRI; Davis, 1980; 1983)
 - Self-Reflection & Insight Scale (SRIS; Grant et al., 2002)
 - Groningen Reflection Ability Scale (GRAS; Leo et al., 2007)
- Greater conceptual understanding of nature of attunement as enacted process and as separate from empathy and other concepts
- Need for parsimonious measure that captures skills in attunement for purposes of screening, recruitment, evaluation



Revisit original definition & lessons through trainings

Capacity to *respond flexibly* to verbal and nonverbal cues by *taking into account others'* needs and desires

Represents *broad strategy* to elicit, read, interpret and reflect on others' cues

Requires *adaptation of expectations* based on others' interests

Involves level of *intentionality* toward building the relationship

Key domains

- **Self-regulation** (Calming/Mindful Self-Regulation: “adaptation of expectations”; “intentionality”)
- **Reading Cues** (tracking & matching process; “elicit, read, interpret & reflect on others' cues”)
- **Flexibility** (“Capacity to respond flexibly”; “adaptation of expectations”)
- **Collaboration** (“based on others' interests”; “taking into account others' needs”)



Development of scale items & generation of data

- Team identified items for scale based on early work on attunement, FAN, and Mentoring FAN trainings
- Connection with Read Ahead (<https://readahead.org/>) as training partner
 - Large school-based mentoring program based in NYC and spanning 19 schools focused on developing relationships through literacy-building activities
 - Cross-sectional data on both Generalized Attunement Scale and Mentor Attunement Scale from mentors in 2017, Mentor Attunement Scale in 2018
- Connection with Higher Achievement (<https://higherachievement.org/>), Washington DC and other cities
 - Academically focused mentoring program for middle-school youth
 - Generalized Attunement Scale (2017)



Rasch Analysis

- Aim: Ensure items function as intended (original 20 item scale)
- Results:
 - Pointed to the need to reduce response options
 - Reverse coded items were problematic in terms of expected response patterns
 - Items generally function well
 - No evidence of differential item functioning by gender



Factor Analysis

- Aims:

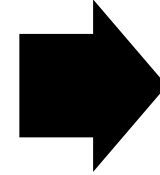
- Assess dimensionality of Generalized and Mentor Attunement Scales
- Ensure parsimonious and valid measurement of attunement
- Demonstrate replicability of factor structure across independent samples
- Demonstrate stability of factor structure across Generalized and Mentor Attunement Scales



Factor Analysis Process

Generalized Attunement Scale

Exploratory Factor Analysis (PAF) on Read Ahead 2017 sample
(n = 377)

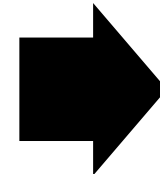


Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Higher Achievement sample
(n = 219)



Mentor Attunement Scale

Exploratory Factor Analysis (PAF) on Read Ahead 2017 sample
(n = 372)



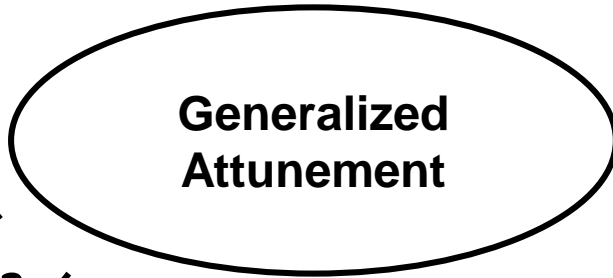
Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Read Ahead 2018 sample
(n = 423)



Results of CFAs

- 7 item, unidimensional attunement scale consisting of 3 Flexibility, 2 Collaboration, and 2 Self-Regulation items had best fit for both Generalised and Mentor Attunement Scales

$\alpha = .83$



.76

.63

.67

.67

.63

.60

.57

A17FL

A14FL

A20FL

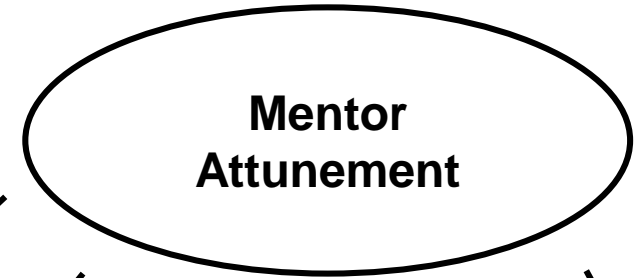
A16CO

A12CO

A5SR

A9SR

$\alpha = .80$



.70

.64

.66

.76

.57

.46

.48

A17FL

A14FL

A20FL

A16CO

A12CO

5SRA

A9SR



(Pryce, Deane, & Milligan, in progress)

Model Fit Indices for 7-item GAS and MAS

Measure	N	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	p	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
GAS (Higher Achievement)	219	<u>14.05</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>.45</u>	<u>.00</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>.03</u>
MAS (Read Ahead 2018)	423	22.11	14	1.58	.07	<u>.04</u>	<u>.98</u>	<u>.97</u>	<u>.03</u>



In your interactions with your mentee, on a scale of 1-6, how often do you (1 = rarely if ever, 6 almost always) (do not use or disseminate without permission):

- 1. Try to learn more about your mentee's concern before offering a solution**
- 2. Notice your own reactions when speaking to your mentee**
- 3. Remain open to your mentee's lead when making decisions**
- 4. Prioritize projects or activities that seem to interest your mentee**
- 5. Encourage your mentee's ideas**
- 6. Go back to projects or activities that seem to interest your mentee**
- 7. Adapt your approach based on the preference of your mentee**



Next steps in measuring attunement

- Measurement invariance tests
- Test concurrent criterion and discriminant validity with established empathy scale adapted for use with mentors
- Test predictive validity with mentoring relationship quality measures over time and cross-cultural validity of scale with mentor samples from India and New Zealand
- Develop data on attunement through observation (visual and audio recordings)



Considerations for discussion

- Broader insights from coding process on attunement construct
 - Nature of attunement as “enacted” versus inherent--how intentional is it or does it need to be?
 - Capacity for attunement skill-building and “real-time” support (RA staff)
 - Role of attunement in program-based and natural mentoring relationships
 - Importance of exploring variance in necessary attunement to respond to youth needs
 - Role and assessment of collaboration in attunement
- Implications for practice
 - Screening, mentoring process, mentor outcomes
 - How do you think about attunement in programs or practice?
 - How might observations be useful in your research? Program?
 - Questions on training or model? Email jpryce@luc.edu





Please type your questions in using the Question Panel on your screen...



Understanding and Assessing Relational Processes in Group Mentoring Programs



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Gabriel Kuperminc

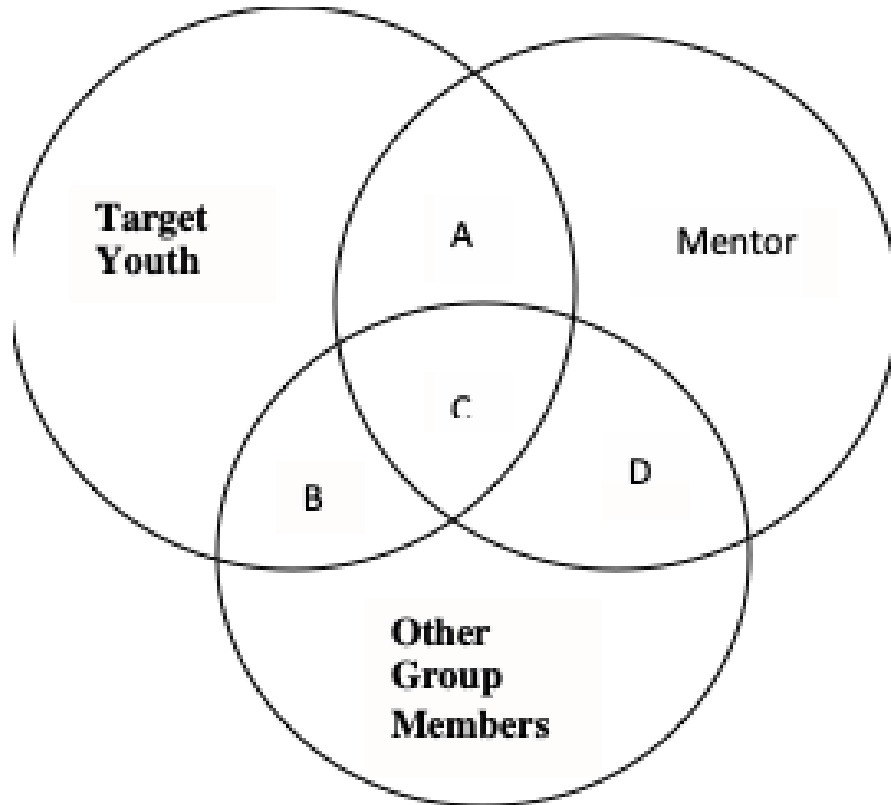
*Professor of Psychology and Public Health
Georgia State University*

What is group mentoring?

- ... broad array of “natural” or programmatic contexts in which mentoring activity takes place involving one or more mentors and at least two mentees (Kuperminc, 2016)
- Varied configurations
 - One (mentor) to many (youth)
 - Team mentoring (2 or more mentors + group of youth)
 - Hybrid – multiple 1:1 mentoring dyads (e.g., mentor “families”)
- Must include significant opportunities for meaningful, two-way interactions between or among mentors and mentees
 - Not a didactic class (e.g., skills training), but often includes a curriculum



What happens in group mentoring relationships?



Developmental Significance of Relationships (Hartup, 1989)

- Vertical– greater social power
- Horizontal - equal social power
- Both – contribute to learning important skills

Group as “social microcosm” (Yalom, 2005)

- Context for practicing and observing
- Opportunities to give and receive support
- A place to belong

Kuperminc & Thomason (2013). Also, see article by Jean Rhodes in *Chronicle of Evidence Based Mentoring*: <https://www.evidencebasedmentoring.org/social-relationships-and-their-developmental-significance/>



Mentors speak about their groups

Students are getting support, not just by an adult, but by each other”



“A lot of my kids support one another to improve their grades”



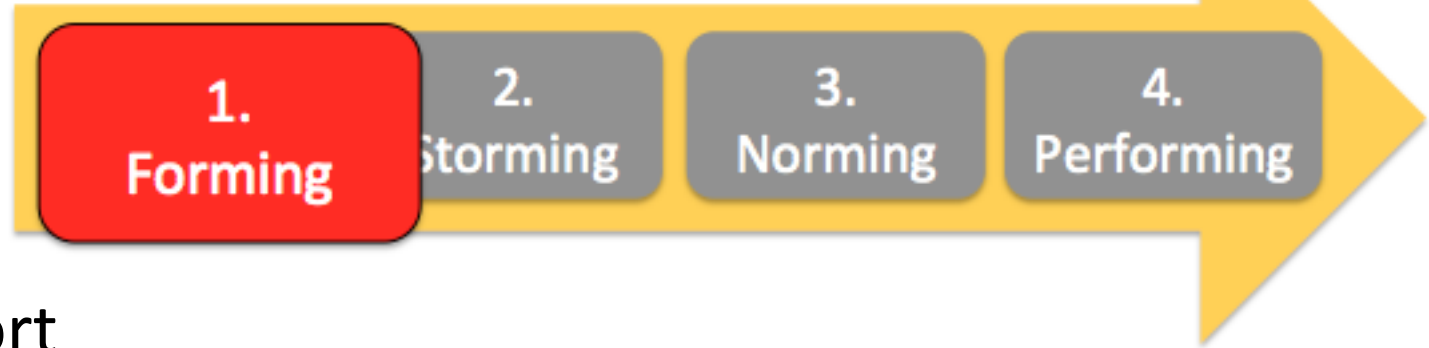
Mentees speak up

“...we talk to each other. We know more things about each other”

“They give us advice to help us get our grades up”



Roles for mentors



- Provide guidance and support
- Facilitate group process over “life cycle” of group
 - Foster positive group climate
 - Keep everyone engaged
 - Promote positive group norms

(Tuckman & Jensen, 2010)



Assessing group climate

- Cohesion and Belonging
- Mutual Help
- Engagement

- Other facets:
 - Co-mentor teamwork
 - Group social norms

- Strategies for Assessing
 - Survey items (perceived climate)
 - Qualitative interviews
 - Observation



Questions to Address

- What mentoring practices help build a positive group climate?
- How does group climate vary with group stages?
- What is the role of group climate in youth outcomes?



Relationship with Mentors

These next questions are about how you feel about your mentor/group leader. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Not at all true	A little true	Pretty much true	Very much true
1. I like to meet with my mentor(s).	1	2	3	4
2. My mentor(s) care about me.	1	2	3	4
3. My mentor(s) help me do better in school	1	2	3	4
4. Time spent with my mentor(s) is worthwhile.	1	2	3	4



Cohesion and Belonging

These next questions are about your thoughts and feelings about the members of your group.

	Not a lot	A little bit	Somewhat	Very much
1. Kids in this group care about each other.	1	2	3	4
2. Kids in this group make each other feel good.	1	2	3	4
3. When someone says something in the group, it stays in the group (nobody will repeat it outside of the group).	1	2	3	4
4. If kids in the group are really mad or upset about something, they can talk about it in the group.	1	2	3	4
5. Kids in this group argue or fight with each other.	1	2	3	4
6. I feel like I am part of this group.	1	2	3	4



Mutual Help and Engagement

These next questions are about your thoughts and feelings about being a group member.

	Not a lot	A little bit	Somewhat	Very much
1. How much did the group help you to deal with everyday problems?	1	2	3	4
2. How much did you help others to deal with everyday problems?	1	2	3	4
3. How much did the group help you make better decisions?	1	2	3	4
4. How much did you help others make better decisions?	1	2	3	4
5. When you are with your group, how much do you enjoy the activities you participate in?	1	2	3	4
6. Do you think the activities you do in your group are interesting?	1	2	3	4
7. How hard do you concentrate on the activities you do in your group?	1	2	3	4



Does group climate matter?



Mentor Relationship and Group Climate: *Internal Resilience Assets*

	Self-Efficacy	Empathy	Problem Solving	Self Awareness
Rel. Quality w/ Mentors	.22	.15	.11	.22
Group Climate	.37*	.31	.16	.52*



Mentor Relationship and Group Climate: *External Resilience Assets*

	School Belonging	School Support	School Meaningful Participation
Rel. Quality with Mentors	.26	.44*	.11
Group Climate	.31	.36*	.26*

	Peer Support	Prosocial Peers	Home Support	Home Meaningful Participation
Rel. Quality with Mentors	.23*	.06	.15	.22
Group Climate	.26	.29	.14	.23*



Mentor Relationship and Group Climate: *Academic Achievement*

	GPA (9)	Instruct. Time (9)	Credits (9)
Rel. Quality w/ Mentors	0.34*	2.27	4.46*
Group Climate	0.28	-1.02	3.41

	GPA (10)	Instruct. Time (10)	Credits (10)
Rel. Quality w/ Mentors	0.53*	0.20	4.71*
Group Climate	0.26*	0.13	0.18



In summary

- Group mentoring introduces a “social microcosm” for youth to practice and observe social skills in action, both in relationship with mentors (vertical) and peers (horizontal)
- Mentors tasked with providing guidance and support, in addition to managing and facilitating group dynamics
- A cohesive group climate means that participants feel a sense of belonging, are engaged in group activities, and take part in mutual support
 - May also establish positive norms and model positive interactions with adults and peers
- Can be assessed reliably, using simple survey items (but other methods, including qualitative interviews, observation, etc. are also valuable)
- A positive group climate can complement and reinforce the effects of positive relationships with mentors



For further reading

Hartup, W. W. (1989). Social relationships and their developmental significance. *American Psychologist*, 44(2), 120. (Summary by Jean Rhodes: <https://www.evidencebasedmentoring.org/social-relationships-and-their-developmental-significance/>)

Kuperminc, G.P. (2016, January) *Group Mentoring: National Mentoring Resource Center Model and Population Review*. Available: <http://www.nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/what-works-in-mentoring/model-and-population-reviews.html?id=121>

Kuperminc, G.P. & Thomason, J.T. (2013). Group mentoring. In D.L. DuBois & M.J. Karcher (Eds.). *Handbook of Youth Mentoring* (2nd Ed.), pp. 273-290. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kuperminc, G.P, Chan, W. Y., & Hale, K. E. (2018, September). *Final Technical Report: Group mentoring for resilience: Increasing positive development and reducing involvement in the juvenile justice system*. Final report for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, grant number 2013-JU-FX-0006. NCJ 252131. Available: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/grants/252131.pdf>

Kuperminc, G.P., Chan, W.Y. & Hale, K.E. (2018). Mentoring Group Climate Scale. Retrieved from: <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/toolkit/item/495-group-mentoring-climate.html>

Sanford, V. (2016, January 18). Understanding Group Formation is Key to Successful Group Mentoring [blog post]. Retrieved from: <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/nmrc-blog/122-understanding-group-formation-is-key-to-successful-group-mentoring.html>





Please type your questions in using the Question Panel on your screen...



Thank you and next steps!

- Slides and a recording of this presentation will be shared after the event and hosted on the NMRC website
- Another webinar in this series will happen in June (focus on research opportunities at the intersection of LBGTQ youth and mentoring)
- Reflections on Research podcast series in the fall will feature conversation with Gabe Kuperminc about his recent OJDP group mentoring study

