

Starting up a Peer Mentorship Program at GLHS

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Why a Peer Mentorship Program?

- ▶ **Strengthening Connections**
 - ▶ Can reach students who are more comfortable talking to peers who are close in age
 - ▶ Improves relationships on all levels: staff, teachers, administration, upper-class and younger students
 - ▶ Students can have more knowledge about resources and options available
- ▶ **Cost Effective and Flexible**
 - ▶ Many of the resources needed are already available
 - ▶ Students themselves have more time and different schedules
 - ▶ Upper-class students can fill in the gaps which administration cannot
- ▶ **Long Term Help to Students**
 - ▶ Can increase academic achievement and attendance
 - ▶ Helps young students to feel supported and able to explore their interests
 - ▶ Both mentors and mentees receive a quality experience which can promote healthy growth for them

What are Teenagers Going Through? Theories and Perspectives

- ▶ **Physical & Mental health**
 - ▶ Coping with stress, anxiety, depression, emotions, loneliness, suicide, eating disorders
 - ▶ Body image, self-esteem
 - ▶ Physical changes, puberty
- ▶ **Relationships**
 - ▶ healthy vs. unhealthy
 - ▶ Violence and safety, bullying
 - ▶ Peer pressure, boundary-setting, fitting in
 - ▶ friendships, dating, family, authority
- ▶ **Substance abuse and experimentation**
- ▶ **Internet involvement**
 - ▶ social media, safety, addiction, cyberbullying
 - ▶ Videogames, texting, pornography
- ▶ **Major goals and life pressures**
 - ▶ Staying on top of academics and extracurriculars
 - ▶ Personal growth, self-discovery, and health
 - ▶ Plans after high school



What are Teenagers Going Through? Theories and Perspectives

- ▶ **Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development**
 - ▶ Identity Vs. Role Confusion (ages 12-18)
 - ▶ Individuals search for self and identity, and in this process explore personal goals, values, and beliefs
 - ▶ Individuals start to form ideas about what they want to be as adults, and search for ways to reach these ideals
- ▶ **Social Learning Theory**
 - ▶ Young people learn through observation and imitation
 - ▶ Observers (incoming freshmen) look at modelled behavior (peer mentors) in order to understand how to act in situations which are unfamiliar or new to them
 - ▶ Can be utilized to encourage healthy and effective habits and lifestyles for observers



Research on Mentorship Programs

Several studies support the idea that peer mentoring programs can increase academic success...

- ▶ **Rutgers University Study**
 - ▶ Looks at an under-developed urban school system
 - ▶ 9% overall increase of graduation rates (Harper, 2017)
- ▶ **Big Brother Big Sisters Study**
 - ▶ Found statistically significant impacts in school-related attitudes, performance, and behavior (such as attendance)
- ▶ **SMILE Program Study**
 - ▶ Observed statistically significant gains for mentored youth in outcomes related to self-esteem and peer support when compared to a control group (School-Based Mentoring)

Examples of Current Mentorship Programs

- ▶ **Link Crew at Summit High School, California**
 - ▶ “link leaders” are 11th and 12th graders
 - ▶ undergo one-week training
 - ▶ are assigned a freshman to mentor
 - ▶ lowered the number of courses freshmen were failing
- ▶ **Students Mentoring Students at Poudre High School, Colorado**
 - ▶ year-long program with senior and junior mentors (6:1 ratio)
 - ▶ focus on building friendships, diversity-inclusion
 - ▶ bi-monthly meetings
 - ▶ teachers give feedback on mentor involvement
- ▶ **Peer Mentorship at Wayland High School, Massachusetts**
 - ▶ 11th and 12th graders with groups of 12 freshman
 - ▶ Give tours, talk about resources, how to cope with academic stress
 - ▶ Provides transitional support
- ▶ **Peer Mentoring at Liberty High School, Oregon**
 - ▶ emphasis on encouraging freshmen to be active in extracurriculars/personal interests
 - ▶ emphasis on planning for the future
 - ▶ helping mentors in the process in honing leadership skills and expanding resumes
 - ▶ 1:1 mentor/mentee ratio, after mentors undergo selection process

Voices of GLHS Students

What students of GLHS wish they had received help with their freshman year:

- ▶ **Help with how the process works**
 - ▶ Which classes to take
 - ▶ Order of when to take courses
 - ▶ ACT preparation tips
 - ▶ Extracurriculars available
 - ▶ Where classes are located
- ▶ **Academic Support**
 - ▶ Study skills, organization tips
 - ▶ How to work hard and push yourself
 - ▶ Learning independence and responsibility
 - ▶ Classroom behavior: how to ask questions/take notes/interactive
 - ▶ Understanding teacher expectations
- ▶ **Social Aspects**
 - ▶ How to get involved and have fun
 - ▶ How to challenge yourself
 - ▶ How to make friends and talk to new people
 - ▶ Avoiding comparisons, accepting who you are
 - ▶ How to not be intimidated by teachers and older students
 - ▶ How to deal with friendships changing, not knowing anyone, and peer pressure
 - ▶ Learning who you are

Planning and Framework of the Program

- ▶ Please read through the handout for an idea of the framework which will be used to plan an effective peer mentorship program!

- ▶ Further helpful resource handbooks:

- ▶ **The ABCs of School-Based Mentoring**

<https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/ABCs%20of%20Mentoring.pdf>

- ▶ **The Peer Mentor Handbook**

<http://www.mentoringpittsburgh.org/media/W1siZiIsIjIwMTcvMDkvMDYvYXpzZW5qNmwzX1BlZXJfTWVudG9yaW5nX0hhbmRib29rLnBkZiJdXQ/Peer%20Mentoring%20Handbook.pdf>

- ▶ **Ongoing Training For Mentors**

<https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/Ongoing%20Training%20for%20Mentors.pdf>

- ▶ **Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs in Schools**

<https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/building-effective-peer-mentoring-programs-intro-guide.pdf>



Research References:

- ▶ Harper, A. (2017, November 03). Freshman peer mentoring eases transition, improves high school success. Retrieved May, 2020, from <https://www.educationdive.com/news/freshman-peer-mentoring-eases-transition-improves-high-school-success/509997/>
- ▶ School-Based Mentoring. (n.d.). Retrieved May, 2020, from <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/30-topic-areas/182-school-based-mentoring.html>



THANK YOU
for your
time!