

INTENTIONAL MENTOR TRAINING: SUPPORTING ADOLESCENT MALES COPING
WITH FATHERLESSNESS OR HAVING AN ABSENT FATHER BY EQUIPPING MALE
MENTORS

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Intentional Mentor Training: Supporting Adolescent Males Coping with Fatherlessness or
Having an Absent Father by Equipping Male Mentors

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Abstract

This project answers the research question: How could male mentorship support adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father? Through evaluating relevant research linked to fatherlessness and absent fathers and mentorship, an application component comprising of a video training and training manual were created for equipping male mentors to intentionally support adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father. By utilizing the academic literature defining mentorship and father involvement and integrating the research on effective mentoring relationship practices, culturally relevant resiliency factors, and effective mentoring in foster care, this mentor training could improve the trajectory for reaching the academic, career, and life goals of adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father.

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Intentional Mentor Training: Supporting Adolescent Males Coping with Fatherlessness or Having an Absent Father by Equipping Male Mentors

Significant adults have been viewed as a key element in the identity development of adolescents (Jones, Dick, Coyl-Shepherd, & Ogletree, 2014). Brooks (1994) states that having a caring, encouraging adult can have a strong influence on a young person's aptitude to gain resilience to overcome challenges by offering empathy and a confident attitude. The essential relationship of having a significant male adult can be viewed as particularly imperative in the lives of adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009; Spencer, 2007). It is reasoned that adolescent males who are fatherless or have an absent father are missing the utmost model for identity development (Bucher, 2014; Floyd, 2006; Holman, 1998). This important model for identity development could be due to the role the father plays in shaping the son's perception of masculinity by observing how the father functions, and hearing how the father communicates manhood (Bucher, 2014).

It is this imperative need for male mentors in the lives of adolescent males facing fatherlessness or living with an absent father that created this research project. The context and purpose of this project is to reveal what has been studied regarding the efforts to support adolescent males dealing with fatherlessness or having an absent father. Discovering how male mentorship is affecting adolescent boys coping with living in a fatherless home or growing up with an absent father might create new perspectives and plans showing how to assist with bringing up the next generation of adult men. Therefore, this project asked the following research question: How could male mentorship support adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father? The terms fatherlessness and absent father are both presented when examining how male mentorship could affect adolescent males (Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2011; Fox, Nordquist, Billen, & Savoca, 2015; Twamley, Brunton, Sutcliffe, Hinds, &

Thomas, 2013). When an adolescent male is fatherless, the individual does not possess knowledge and has no interactions with his biological father (Atobrah, 2004). When an adolescent male has an absent father, the individual's father can be absent for any of the following reasons: (a) not residing with the adolescent male, (b) being apart for extended periods of time, or (c) being emotionally distant (Clowes, Ratele, & Shefer, 2013; Mancini, 2010). Consequently, when an adolescent male is lacking father involvement due to fatherlessness or having an absent father, the individual is missing the benefits connected to strong father involvement (Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999; Wilson & Prior, 2011). Therefore, the need to discover how supporting both groups of individuals lacking the positives linked to father involvement is vital for understanding how to effectively support these adolescent males.

Groth (2011) states that it is essential for men to mentor boys who are fatherless or have an absent father in a very purposeful and intentional fashion. Groth reasons that the pathway to manhood is affected by the way of a father mentors a son across the bridge of son-hood into becoming a man. When a father is not present in a son's life, it is imperative that a male mentor provides the link of son-hood by upholding and believing in the boy as a father figure, helping the individual to cross the bridge to manhood (Groth, 2011).

The basic application of this research project is a video training and training manual for equipping male mentors to intentionally support adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father. By utilizing the academic literature on mentorship and father involvement and integrating effective mentoring relationship practices, culturally relevant resiliency factors, and effective mentoring in foster care, this mentor training could improve the trajectory for reaching the academic, career, and life goals of adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father.

Literature Review

Description of Need

Groth (2011) states that the need for significant male influence is essential for boys coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father. When healthy father involvement is present in children, cognitive, affective, and behavioral development is impacted positively across all stages toward adult living (Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999; Wilson & Prior, 2011). The beneficial outcomes of father involvement often include: (a) higher levels of cognitive and social ability, (b) increased capacities to display empathy and self-control, (c) a more positive self-esteem, and (d) a larger set of life skills (Wilson & Prior, 2011). Other positive effects of father involvement include: (a) children having better mental health as adults, (b) more positive child-father relationships, (c) more positive sibling relations, (d) stronger academic performance, and (e) greater career success (Wilson & Prior, 2011). Additionally, positive father involvement is connected to marital satisfaction, parental confidence, connection to children, and the mental health of mothers, fathers, and children (Twamley et al., 2013; Wilson & Prior, 2011). Castillo and colleagues (2011) also suggest the involvement is linked to increased cognitive and socio-emotional growth, educational progression, and healthy peer relationships.

In light of the benefits connected to father involvement (Wilson & Prior, 2011) and the negative trajectory of maladaptive behaviors associated with parental rejection and neglect (Caldwell et al., 2014), how does an adolescent male benefit from a mentoring relationship that could offer the attentiveness that otherwise would happen through father involvement? To help answer this question, a closer look at how a mentor is defined and how father involvement is defined merits consideration.

Definition and Description of Mentoring

For the purpose of this project, a mentor is defined as an adult male who has consistent contact on a weekly basis with an adolescent male mentee, while providing encouragement and positive support pertaining to education, life skills, and personal development (Brooks, 1994; Keller & Pryce, 2010; Lakind, Eddy, & Zell, 2014; Wineburgh, 2000).

Although mentors are not subject to age, but rather experience and accomplishment in the community, Day's (2006) standards describe a mentor as being typically older than the mentee and taking on a personal position in the individual's life. When portions of a mentoring relationship take on a fatherly function, the mentor may better understand the impact of the relationship by understanding how father involvement is defined for children.

When a child is fatherless or dealing with an absent father, three components are missing. Father involvement is defined and evaluated by the father's engagement, accessibility, and responsibility (Castillo et al., 2011; Fox et al., 2015; Twamley et al., 2013). Engagement implies time spent in positive interactions between a father and children (Castillo et al., 2011; Saleh & Hilton, 2011). A child's access of being in close proximity to the father is what is meant by accessibility (Castillo et al., 2011; Saleh & Hilton, 2011). The element of responsibility means more than securing financial stability (Saleh & Hilton, 2011), but responsibility encompasses partaking in household decision making and contributing to child rearing obligations (Castillo et al., 2011; Twamley et al., 2013).

Pleck (2010) offers ideas to further define the components of engagement and responsibility and reveals how fathers display these two components. Pleck (2010) provides meaning and depth to the component of engagement by defining these one-on-one interactions as engaging in positive activities, displaying warmth and responsiveness, and offering control and

security within the interactions. However, one-on-one interactions alone are not sufficient enough to define engagement; the positive exchanges when doing activities together merits how the engagement is benefiting to the development of the child (Pleck, 2012). The component of responsibility is further explained by social and material indirect care and process responsibility (Pleck, 2010). Process responsibility is understood as the father's prioritizing that social and material care happens in the lives of his children, as well as living out the ideas that further the meaning behind father engagement (Pleck, 2010). Social and material indirect care is viewed as actions done for children as opposed to actions done with children (Pleck, 2010). Material indirect care encompasses physical resources, and social indirect care examines the nurturing and promoting of the children's relationships that provide social capital, the child often benefiting from the social networks of the father (Pleck, 2012).

Two of the factors that affect how a father displays the components of engagement and responsibility both center on the father's attitude toward father involvement and the father's paternal identity (Pleck, 2012). Pleck (2012) argues that a father's attitude is linked to his actions and functioning, and paternal identity involves how the father defines who he is as a father. The importance of providing financially can determine how a father views his parental identity, in turn, motivating the attitude and action of being a strong caregiver of resources (Pleck, 2012). Likewise, displaying warmth and interacting positively can determine the father's identity by demonstrating the importance of engaging with his children; how a father defines his attitudes and identity will determine how father involvement is personally carried out in life (Pleck, 2012).

Pleck's (2012) ideas behind the motivation of fathers' attitudes and identity regarding father involvement seem to run parallel with the research of McLaughlin and Muldoon's (2014) study on father identity and balance between work and family obligations. McLaughlin and

Muldoon found that the component of responsibility is primarily determined by employment in the eyes of fathers, which can be assumed is an element defining father involvement.

Involvement through employment was suggested as justification for lack of engagement and accessibility, due to the traditional view of father identity as the breadwinner (Castillo, et al., 2011; McLaughlin & Muldoon, 2014). McLaughlin and Muldoon propose the struggle of balancing the traditional identity involving the responsibility of providing, while living out the identity with the role of society's new view of a father of engaging with children, puts the father in a time limited position for emotional engagement. This new father identity and way of thinking may be due to the cultural shift of both parents in the workforce and establishing more efforts in co-parenting, for parenting has been viewed as only a maternal role but is now being defined as a paternal role (McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002). Fathers who are actively involved by engaging, being accessible, and joining in the responsibilities of caregiving, could offset the likelihood of father absenteeism that is due to employment obligations or lifestyle choices.

Research on parental monitoring through the middle school period highlights the positive influence father involvement can have on adolescents (Fosco, Stormshak, Dishion, & Winter, 2012). Fosco and colleagues (2012) found the existence of a father-youth relationship valuable in helping middle aged adolescents traverse through this stage of increased exposure to negative peer groups and harmful and negative behaviors. Yet on the other hand, Twamley and colleagues found that when fathers lack involvement in childcare, kids have a higher possibility to exhibit behavioral problems.

If the debt of fatherlessness or having an absent father is so great, how is credit gained for building resiliency in young boys and adolescent males? Cartwright and Henriksen's (2012) qualitative research explored the lives of five different collegiate African American males

attending two southeast Texas universities, who grew up in absent father or fatherlessness environments. The age range of these five individuals was 19 to 21 years old, and although each individual's life story was different regarding the commonality of having an absent father, the following themes were revealed as significant in the successful journey through childhood, adolescence, and on into higher learning: (a) having a supportive mother, (b) having passion to achieve academically, (c) having resilience, (d) gaining respect and understanding for the biological father, and (e) having male mentors (Cartwright & Henriksen, 2012). Notably, each participant communicated having role models growing up and expressed how vital this relationship was for discussing matters too sensitive to discuss with mothers. One participant communicated being a mentor father figure to another young man, while another participant shared the importance of learning and spending quality time with a mentor.

It is noteworthy to address how significant time is to children and adolescents, for Buswell, Zabriskie, Lundberg, and Hawkins (2012) studied father involvement through the venue of family leisure time. It was discovered that regular scheduled activities such as meals, game nights, plus larger activities, such as day trips or outings that required planning and effort from all members, helped strengthen family relationships and increased more positive family functioning (Buswell et al., 2012). Furthermore, Fletcher and colleagues' (2011) study of rough and tumble play between fathers and children yielded positive results pertaining to social development, self-confidence, and maturity involving winning and losing, but also this interaction time was found to be an expected family routine supporting relationships as a consistent form of engagement. It is critical for mentors to be cognizant of spending not just quality time with adolescent males, but also a quantity of time.

Although time spent involving relational interaction is significant, it is not the only consideration for mentoring relationships; sustaining a mentoring relationship over a period of time that includes consistent one-on-one interactions is viewed as paramount for producing beneficial outcomes in the lives of mentees (Rhodes & DuBios, 2006). Larose, Cyrenne, Garceau, Brodeur, and Tarabulsky (2010) found that older adolescents engaging in an academic mentoring program demonstrated effectiveness when the mentorship came from two different angles: relational and goal-directed. Providing the adolescent with a goal-driven focus, while safeguarding a strong relationship for attending to the mentee's needs proved helpful. When mentors display affective engagement, benefits are generated from connecting with the adolescents (Larose et al., 2010). The call for invested mentors is paramount for adolescent males missing a biological father.

Schwartz, Rhodes, Spencer, and Grossman (2013) found one mentoring method that worked with vulnerable adolescents. Beneficial outcomes occurred when mentees were put in the position of choosing mentors. Rather than pairing mentees with unknown mentors, when young people selected personal mentors, the relationships were profoundly successful, reporting social-emotional support, guidance, and practical assistance (Schwartz et al., 2013). This more natural pursuit for selecting a mentor that the adolescent is attracted to, particularly adolescent males, may shed light on the theory of father hunger where boys are drawn to other men in the spheres of proximity (Herzog, 2014). The appeal for adult male attention may be a subconscious pursuit resulting from having an absent father (Wineburgh, 2000), which may be how adolescent males are coping with this missing relationship.

Concerns of Fatherlessness and Absent Fathers

Fatherlessness in America is a growing concern affecting the lives of at least 20 million children (United States Census Bureau, 2015). Anderson (2002) stated that approximately half of the children and adolescents in the United States would spend a portion of their lives in a single parent home, mostly consisting of absent fathers. Martin, Hamilton, Osterman, Curtin, and Matthew (2015) of the U.S. Division of Vital Statistics reported that in 2013, 40.6 percent of births in America were to unmarried women and more than two-thirds (71.5 percent) of non-Hispanic black American children were born to unmarried mothers. Although a large number of children are born to unmarried mothers, it cannot be automatically assumed that the presence of a father figure is missing. It can be inferred, however, that the number of children with absent fathers is likely higher in this population. Caldwell and colleagues (2014) reported that due to the trend of one-third of U.S. births being to unmarried mothers, it is probable that a significant number of children may live part or all of their childhood without the presence of the biological father. In 2012, 37.2 percent of the births in the state of Alaska were to unmarried mothers, and 67 percent of Alaska Natives' births were to unmarried mothers (Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics, 2015). In America, the birth rates to mothers of children from homes without a father are more often diagnosed with ADHD, more prone to retain a grade, and are more likely to be expelled or suspended from school (DeBell, 2008).

This trend of absent fathers and fatherlessness is reported as a threatening influence with potentially detrimental outcomes for behavioral and emotional concerns, failure in school, encounters with law enforcement, and social service dependencies (Horn, 2006; Luo, Wang, & Gao, 2012). The effects of absent fathers and fatherlessness should compel the current culture to find ways to combat its consequences on children and society (Horn, 2006; Luo et al, 2012).

More recent studies link absent fathers and lack of father involvement to delayed puberty in males, adolescents facing depression, increased levels of stress, anxiety, and lower levels of self-esteem and behavioral problems in preschool and primary grades (Flour, Narayanan, & Midouhas, 2015; Gobbi et al., 2015; Luo et al., 2012). Gobbi and colleagues (2015) studied the mental health and alcohol and cigarette use of adolescents facing the recent condition of having an absent father during parental separation. It was discovered that separation did not directly contribute to substance use; however, adolescents experienced increased levels of stress and depression at four to nine months following the separation and absence of the father (Gobbi et al., 2015). Gobbi and colleagues (2015) suggest that adults working with adolescents exhibiting stress and depression can help individuals cope by maintaining supportive environments and supporting positive extra curricular activities. This idea parallels the beneficial outcomes that youth mentoring programs provide through supportive mentoring relationships (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Karcher, 2008; Rhodes, 2002).

Luo and colleagues (2012) study revealed information on the effects of absent fathers experienced by adolescents in China. Examining the anxiety and self esteem levels of 2,233 adolescents representing all five provinces of China, Luo and colleagues found that father absence occurring between the ages of seven and 12 was an emotionally dangerous period. This study suggested that life without a father indicates increased levels of anxiety and lower self-esteem due to low regularity of interactions between fathers and children (Luo et al., 2012). However, father-child relationships were indicated as a preventive measure for middle school students in the U.S., reducing adolescents' contact with negative peer groups (Fosco, et al., 2012).

For boys, having an absent father yields an increased probability for unemployment and incarceration, plus it appears to increase the likelihood of repeating the cycle of low father involvement in the next generation of children (Cartwright & Henriksen, 2012; DeBell, 2008; Wineburgh, 2000). Although the literature reports that fatherlessness and having an absent father will create a large setback for all children (DeBell, 2008; Horn, 2006; Geddes, 2008), Wineburgh (2000) and Geddes (2008) report that the impact will differ for each child contingent to the relationship circumstances between the child and the absent father.

The level of absenteeism for fathers and fatherlessness may have a wide scope of effects in the lives of children, ranging from having no knowledge of the father, separation by relocation, incarceration, divorce, or death (Geller, Cooper, Garfinkel, Schwartz-Soicher, & Mincy, 2012; Wineburgh, 2000). Coming from a fatherless home can produce a large mystery causing a list of unanswered questions to surface within a child: what is the father like, what does he look like, is the father alive, why does the father display no interest. Additionally, contact from absent fathers that is unpredictable and unreliable can make it harder for children to define the significance of the father's role, causing individuals to further cope with the lack and uncertainty of physical or emotional involvement of father absenteeism.

Adolescent Males' Lack of Readiness for Adulthood

With the patterns of absent fathers and fatherlessness coupled with the deficits displayed in a large number of all adolescent boys, confronting societal structures is needed for growth in academics and character development (Singleton, 2007; Smith, 2012; Watson, Kehler, & Martino, 2010; Wilson, Cordier, & Wilkes-Gillan, 2014). Singleton (2007) states that adolescent males are not managing obstacles and difficulties appropriately, and that interventions are imperative to alter the maladaptive tendencies that can be displayed within boys. The need for

interventions can be greater for boys that are fatherless or have an absent father due to the lack of a father's support and guidance. Without purposeful involvement, boys will most likely lack readiness for the ability to cope with outside pressures to effectively perform life's tasks as an adult male.

Although this perception of lacking readiness or lacking purpose may be an attitude found in academic and community circles (Singleton, 2007; Smith, 2012; Watson et al., 2010; Wilson et al., 2014), the same perception is not necessarily shared by adolescent males (Singleton, 2007). A research study focused on Australian adolescents aged 13-17 years old, reported that males who identified with enjoying life and having purpose did not identify with ideas of helplessness and not belonging (Singleton, 2007). Singleton (2007) proposed that the data of male perceptions might not represent a clear self-reflection due to the cultural attitude for males to be reluctant to reveal feelings of insecurities or uncertainties.

Adolescent males' readiness and adolescent males' perceptions on education are further revealed in the research of Wilson and colleagues (2014) on the Men's Sheds mentoring program in Australia. Wilson and colleagues state the lack of academic performance of male students is a concern of procedure and planning within the institution of education, and that adolescent males are facing an upward challenge in school during the transition from boyhood to manhood. Within this study on the Men's Sheds mentorship program, nine teenage boys, identified with academic or behavioral issues, participated in the program, which was conducted for 19 weeks (Wilson et al., 2014). Men's Sheds are community-based organizations where men can associate with other men from the community, catering to an environment of learning hands-on skills and developing new and common interests (Wilson et al., 2014). The mentoring program was an intergenerational approach, having older men support and develop relationships with the

adolescent males on a weekly basis through informal hands-on learning (Wilson et al., 2014). The hands-on learning consisted of shared construction projects held within a collaborative learning environment (Wilson et al., 2014). The building projects were held once a week during morning class with a scheduled morning tea offered by the school (Wilson et al., 2014).

Unfortunately only four of the nine adolescent males received parent or guardian consent to participate in the interview data collection for this study (Wilson et al., 2014). The adolescent interviews conveyed a positive attitude regarding the mentoring program, communicated they learned practical skills, enjoyed the atmosphere that accommodated for social interactions, and helped cultivate the concept of service (Wilson et al., 2014). Although school was not a topic discussed in the interview, the adolescent males voiced the struggles of feeling subject to unrealistic behavioral expectations in the classroom, and enjoyed the environment of learning through social interactions and hands on projects within the Men's Shed mentoring program (Wilson et al., 2014).

Sadly, teacher evaluation indicated small amounts of academic and behavioral development within the classroom (Wilson et al., 2014). Perhaps, further modifications and accommodations within the classroom plus the involvement within programs such as the Men's Shed program may produce positive academic and behavior changes in the school setting (Clark, Flower, Walton, & Oakley, 2008; Wilson et al., 2014). Additionally, Wilson and colleagues state that the program experiences of having a positive and hands on learning environment that fosters supportive relationships with adult men emphasizing community service could support adolescent males to positively re-connect with their community and educational organization.

Academic Performance of Adolescent Males

Academic literature reveals that the achievement gap is increasing between genders with females consistently producing greater high school graduation rates (Clark et al., 2008). During the 2011-2012 school year, the national high school averaged freshman graduation rate (AFGR) for females was 85 percent compared to 78 percent for males (Stetser & Stillwell, 2014). Females also currently have higher enrollment and degree completion from universities than males (Clark et al., 2008; U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, 2015). Reading is the content area with the largest gap in performance between genders, as reported by literacy benchmarks and standardized tests (Watson, et al., 2010). The increase in boys with learning disabilities, medical issues, and mental health concerns continues to rise (Clark et al., 2008). Furthermore, low educational performance often correlates with low academic interest, lack of positive male role models, lack of organizational skills, and the need for diverse learning accommodations in middle school aged boys, which is where the gender achievement gap appears to broaden (Clark et al., 2008; Tyre, 2006). Another link to the poor academic trend of adolescent males might be gender expectations influenced by different cultural attitudes (Clark et al., 2008). Burn and Bracey (2001) state negative peer pressure between adolescent male students can be an indication of purposefully underperforming academically to avoid being viewed as feminine. However, a father's attitude and value on education can play a significant role in how adolescents function in school (Burn & Bracey, 2001).

To combat the negative patterns linked to the poor educational performance of male students, Clark and colleagues (2008) conducted a strength-based intervention to enhance the academic outcomes for eighth grade male students. Clark and colleagues argue that middle school is an opportunity to motivate and build organizational skills for helping male students

achieve educational success. One purpose for equipping and empowering eighth grade male students was to prepare them for academic success in high school (Clark et al., 2008). The group of male students chosen for this study included 17 individuals whose statewide assessment scores did not correlate the students' GPAs (Clark et al., 2008). The results of the statewide assessments suggested that these students were capable of performing well academically; however, students' GPAs were below grade level expectation. The study did not reveal the ethnicity of the students, but the school was described as having a diverse student body (Clark et al., 2008). However, there was specific information provided on these male students: (a) over half qualified for free and reduced lunch programs, (b) some were identified for discipline referrals, (c) some were had low academic motivation, (d) many reported living in single-parent households, (e) 60% were regarded as mainstream students, and (f) 40% were enrolled in a technology program for students who qualified as gifted (Clark et al., 2008).

The 17 individuals participating in this strength-based group met for 12 sessions that were 45 minutes long and met every two weeks throughout the academic school year (Clark et al., 2008). The themes that assisted in drafting the strength-based approach for serving these underachieving students came from a two-year study by Clark, Thompson, and Vialle (2008) that reported the following needs for male students at the junior high and high school levels: (a) receiving assistance in envisioning positive future roles, (b) learning organizational and study skills, (c) having modified learning environments conducive for movement and different learning styles, (d) obtaining positive role models, and (e) having gender specific small groups. Utilizing the themes pulled from the study of Clark and colleagues, the goals for the 12 sessions were: (a) improve academic motivation, (b) reduce discipline referrals, (c) support the identification of individual's strengths, and (d) provide resources and develop study skills for future high school

and postsecondary education success. Participants completed a pre-evaluation reporting the importance of topics to discuss which factored into the preparation of the session, and also creating buy-in from the students (Clark et al., 2008). This strength-based approach yielded positive results: (a) the total number of discipline referrals from the entire group went from 21 during the first semester to two referrals throughout the second semester, (b) for mainstream students outside of the study, 88% had improved GPAs, (c) students displayed positive attitudes regarding education, and (d) students conveyed being more focused toward future goals, as all 17 students were able to communicate ten year goals (Clark et al., 2008).

The idea that Clark and colleagues (2008) ran the intervention for the length of the academic year may be a significant factor in the success of the program, for Grossman and Rhodes (2002) state that mentoring relationships that sustained a duration of one year or more produced positive outcomes. Other ideas backing the success of Clark and colleagues' research can be found in the study of the SUCCESS "Life Coaching" counseling program (Castro-Atwater, 2013). The SUCCESS "Life Coaching" is a school based counseling and mentoring program, pairing graduate counseling students with adolescents having academic or behavioral concerns. Castro-Atwater (2013) states that building a relationship on the successes and interests of the students while collaborating to draft goals with the mentor-coach was successful for students' improvements. This style matches the characteristics of the instrumental mentoring styles that establishes the mentoring relationship through goal-directed interactions, for goal-directed interactions have been found effective when serving older adolescents (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010; Larose et al., 2010).

Efforts Toward Assisting Adolescent Males – Academic Efforts

The dilemmas that afflict adolescent males have sparked notice, and efforts have been made through the years to assist young boys. In Australia, poor academic performance in males led to redrafting gender equity policies to support male students in the 1990s (Yates, 1997). In the UK, a research project to increase academic achievements between the years of 1996 and 1998 sought to identify strategies for addressing the needs of low achieving sixteen-year-old males on high stakes testing (Burns & Bracey, 2001). Burns and Bracey (2001) reported the strategy of implementing a goal setting approach that addressed each content area and created an effective accountability system that improved student academic outcomes. Burns and Bracey also found that tutoring and mentoring techniques were effective tools for attending to students' learning needs.

Martin, Martin, Gibson, and Wilkin (2007) specifically addressed raising the social and academic achievement of adolescent African American males through an extensive after school program, which produced positive results. The research was conducted in a school district of 6,000 students in Youngstown, Ohio, where the graduation rate of African American males was 45 percent (Martin et al., 2007). Thirty-three African American males aged from 13 to 17 years participated in this two-year intervention. Each student had been suspended or expelled in the year prior to beginning the program. The cohort averaged 40 absences the previous school year; all students had a minimum of 20 discipline referrals, and attended an alternative school as a result of aggressive behavior and academic failure (Martin et al., 2007). All participants fit the federal poverty guidelines and qualified for free and reduced lunch services (Martin et al., 2007).

This comprehensive program had a two-year duration, meeting five days a week for three hours, involving social skill instruction, group counseling, tutoring, and cultural and recreational

activities (Martin, et al., 2007). The project reported the following outcomes: (a) increased daily attendance, (b) decreased discipline referrals, (c) no student expulsions or suspensions, and (d) an average improvement in reading and mathematics of at least two grade levels (Martin, et al., 2007). Martin and colleagues (2007) state that for project success, it is imperative for programs to be comprehensive, offering an array of components including the involvement of local community agencies (Martin et al., 2007). Furthermore, this study suggested that an after school program could close achievement gaps through interventions such as one-on-one tutoring, small group tutoring, social skills training, cultural and recreation activities, and nutritional education (Martin et al., 2007). It is noteworthy to add that the two-year duration may have been a significant variable in the success of the program, for mentoring relationships that last at least one year have produced positive outcomes (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

More current efforts towards supporting adolescent males' academic performance has been made in studying the link concerning educational success and reading motivation with high school male students (Bozack & Salvaggio, 2013). Bozack and Salvaggio (2013) state that in order for adolescent males to improve in high school and postsecondary education, considerations for gaining knowledge of the students' motives and beliefs are essential. Obtaining the motivations behind reading and the linking to motivations to achievement is a primary stage for creating proper interventions that address the long-term goal of high school and postsecondary success (Bozack & Salvaggio, 2013). This three-year study was conducted at a private Catholic high school for boys in the Northeast. The study revealed that motivation was consistent through high school with some exceptions (Bozack & Salvaggio, 2013). Motivation based on compliance, and functioning as a student mentor decreased over time; however,

motivation grew within male high school students when it was based on personal interests and social interactions (Bozack & Salvaggio, 2013). Teaching styles that upheld an authoritarian stance were deemed unsuccessful for motivating, most likely due to the developmentally stage of gaining autonomy and developing identity during adolescence (Bozack & Salvaggio, 2013; Santrock, 2014). Bozack and Salvaggio suggest that interventions may be effective for adolescent males when they are provided opportunities for engaging socially with reading material that spark personal interests. Interventions that are driven by the goals of students and the school may enable educators to support male high school students so they are able to reach future academic and postsecondary goals (Bozack & Salvaggio, 2013).

Efforts Toward Assisting Adolescent Males – Rites of Passage

Efforts to improve character development have been implemented along with strategies to address academic performance. Smith (2012) reports that a rites of passage program in an all-boys' school helped adolescent males decide to live more responsibly. Another rites of passage project called Mantra focused on increasing healthy masculine values in 16 to 21 year old males (Majors & Dewar, 2002). Through the venue of the Mantra program, these young males were encouraged in the journey toward manhood to make positive lifestyle choices (Majors & Dewar, 2002). A strong component of the Mantra project is its cyclical structure where alumni are encouraged to become mentors to new participants in the program (Majors & Dewar, 2002).

Rites of passage programs have the ability to link adolescents to society, encouraging individuals to live caring and resilient lives in response to coming of age and pursuing adult life (Larson & Martin, 2012; Sullwold, 1998; West-Olatunji, Shure, Garrett, Conwill, & Rivera, 2008). The absence of rituals and rites of passage can leave young people with no indications of maturity and meaning to life (Larson & Martin, 2012). When adults inadequately implement rites

of passage, adolescents may create other ritualistic methods, which may produce negative consequences and result in destructive behaviors (Larson & Martin, 2012). However, when young adolescent males complete positive rites of passage, an affirmation of belonging can fuel the starting point of being a contributing member within the community (Larson & Martin, 2012; West-Olatunji et al., 2008).

Rites of passage programs that are culturally relevant and strength-based have been found effective in raising resilience in African-American adolescent males (West-Olatunji et al., 2008). The concept of implementing culturally relevant rites of passage programs parallel the effective cultural mentoring methods of African American males that center on a collective goal setting approach (Gordon, Iwamoto, Ward, Potts, & Boyd, 2009; Utsey, Howard, & Williams, 2003).

Efforts Toward Assisting Adolescent Males – Mentorship Efforts

Further efforts toward investing in adolescent males have been made through the venue of effective mentorship. Effective mentorship includes relationships that are caring and supportive, maintain longevity and consistency, and provide emotional connections by the mentor to the mentee (Coller & Kuo, 2014; Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Hall, 2015; Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2012; Kanchewa, Rhodes, Schwartz, & Olsho, 2014; Lee, Kim, Park & Alcazar-Bejerano, 2015; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). The mentoring relationship is further understood as taking place between the mentee and a non-parental adult (Hurd & Sellers, 2013; Lee et al., 2015). Mentor relationships may vary by structure or program quality, occurring in schools or communities and exist for varied lengths of time and offer an array of activities (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Karcher, 2008).

School-based mentoring is a rapidly growing approach for serving youth, especially in the U.S. (Karcher, 2008). In 2002, it was projected that five million adolescents were involved in

school and community mentoring programs in the United States (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). In 2012, in the U.S., roughly 5,000 mentoring programs were identified, creating meaningful relationships between adults and young people to enable and empower positive development (Lee et al., 2015). Although mentoring programs are growing and a large number of youth are attending services, lack of time commitments by mentors and a shortage of volunteers are yielding negative attitudes and actions in adolescent mentees (Grossman et al., 2012; Karcher, 2008). However, when mentor relationships are not cut short but sustained for a length of one year or longer, improvements were reported in the lives of adolescents (Coller & Kuo, 2014; Grossman et al., 2012; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002).

Given the negative results found in mentoring relationships cut-short (Grossman et al., 2012; Karcher, 2008), one mentoring program implemented in South Korea sought to accommodate mentees with an online approach to connect with mentors with less regulated circumstances of time and place (Lee et al., 2015). This mentoring program was specifically offered to at-risk students incapable of attending after-school programs due to cost (Lee et al., 2015). There were 12 males and 11 females in the program with an age range of 10 to 15; the mentors were 23 sophomore-nursing students with an average age of 21 (Lee et al., 2015). The goals of the 20 online interaction sessions were to promote self-esteem, increase school adaptation flexibility, and change ideas toward parental attitudes (Lee et al., 2015). The mentors and mentees were also encouraged to engage in leisure activities in addition to the 20 online sessions. The results from study revealed that self-esteem did not produce significant increases, and there was a decline in academic performance once the program ended (Lee et al., 2015). However, mentees showed more positive perceptions toward parental attitudes (Lee et al., 2015). Lee and colleagues (2015) suggest that students' self-esteem may not have yielded significant

increases due to the lack of frequent contact required for producing a quality relationship within a mentoring alliance. The need for consistent contact and fostering solid emotional connections are reported as essential for producing positive mentoring outcomes (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Rhodes & DuBios, 2006). The drop in academic performance after the 20 sessions supports the call for maintaining mentoring relationships for the duration of at least one year (Coller & Kuo, 2014; Grossman et al., 2012; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). Given the online accommodation to support low-income at-risk students, Lee and colleagues (2015) state mentors should be accessible to gauge the progress of mentees. For mentees lacking an involved father, building consistent connections where mentors are physically accessible, in addition to interacting through online sessions, may be the factors needed for producing positive emotional connections (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006; Castillo, et al., 2011; Saleh & Hilton, 2011).

One specific school based mentoring program founded in 2000 tailored for African American males is called Young Men for Change (YMC). This program seeks to empower high school African American students through a problem-posed education method to create social and self-awareness (Hall, 2015). The mentoring format utilizes a group setting, working through a 3-phase problem-posed education method of dialogue, critique, and praxis (Hall, 2015). Results from the YMC program indicates that empowerment can help create avenues for mentees to take an active role toward personal positive development (Hall, 2015).

Another school based mentoring program for supporting Latino students confirmed how relational consistency and longevity could increase the well-being and development of mentees (Coller & Kuo, 2014). This study also showed the need for further work focusing on recruiting and retaining male mentors to support male mentees (Coller & Kuo, 2014). The Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) for assisting low-income at risk Latino students was implemented

in 2008, in a Title I funded school in Los Angeles with a Latino student body of 91 percent (Coller & Kuo, 2014). This study reported that 100 percent of the student body qualified for free and reduced lunch and 21 percent of the students were reported as living in poverty (Coller & Kuo, 2014). Mentors for the YEP were UCLA student volunteers associated with Students for Community Outreach, Promotion, and Education (SCOPE), committing to one year of service, involving weekly one hour interactions (Coller & Kuo, 2014). Mentoring pairings were made based on language, common interests, and gender (Coller & Kuo, 2014). Matching by gender was difficult to maintain due the disproportional numbers of female participants and volunteers. In 2010, 70 percent of the mentees were females and 85 percent of the mentors were female. (Coller & Kuo, 2014). Therefore, all female mentees were likely to connect to a same gender mentor, but half of the male mentees were connected with female mentors (Coller & Kuo, 2014). It is noteworthy, that 95 percent of the mentoring relationships lasted one year, and 47 percent continued the relationship for two or more years, suggesting that same gender matches is not imperative for creating long-term mentoring relationships (Coller & Kuo, 2014). Coller and Kuo (2014) state that the YEP program demonstrated a strong level of youth centeredness and sufficient levels of emotional engagement, and reported the following teacher observations of mentees: (a) better student attendance, (b) improved attitudes and classroom behaviors, and (c) increased reading skills. It is suggested that the success rate of the YEP program was maintained by setting clear visit expectations, enrolling mentors who were skilled in interacting with children, and having ongoing mentor training (Coller & Kuo, 2014).

In light of the reality that a strong majority of mentors available to male mentees are female, Kanchewa, Rhodes, Schwartz, and Olsho (2014) studied relationships between female mentors with male mentees. Kanchewa and colleagues examined 1,513 male mentee mentoring

outcomes from the Department of Education Student Mentoring Program and the Big Brother Big Sister of America's School Based Mentoring. Because of the lack of male mentors, 90 percent of male mentees within this study were matched with female mentors (Kanchewa et al., 2014). The study results showed that meeting the primary goal of providing a positive relationship for male mentors occurred even when genders did not match between parties; however, Kanchewa and colleagues stated that same gender mentoring relationships could provide male mentees with opportunities to address gender specific questions and challenges.

Two different studies examining relationships between adolescent males and male mentors revealed that same gender matches during adolescence could provide positive results of modeling emotional closeness, offering a safe, vulnerable connection, and promoting personal development (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009; Spencer, 2007). Garraway and Pistrang (2009) sought to discover the same gender outcomes between Caribbean adolescent males' ages 12 to 17 identified with mental health difficulties. There were three aims of this study: (a) to explore male to male mentoring experiences, (b) identify what helped or hindered the establishment of the mentoring relationship, and (c) recognize mentee changes as a result to the mentoring connection. Five male mentors and 13 adolescent males participated in the mentoring program, and all of the individuals identified as African Caribbean (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). A youth offending team referred two of the adolescents, the 11 other individuals had medical diagnoses including ADHD, schizophrenia, and depression, and seven of the boys had police records (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). Only one mentee lived with two parents, three came from absent father homes, and nine came from fatherless homes (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). All of the mentors completed a mentoring training consisting of weekly sessions for six months (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). This voluntary program consisted of weekly one-on-one interactions

scheduled by the mentor and mentee; these interactions also happened in tandem with activities through the mentoring program (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). Mentors also maintained informal contact with the adolescent males' family to offer additional support (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). The qualitative data revealed multiple positive dimensions regarding these male-mentoring relationships (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). These mentoring relationships carried a family-like quality of safety, where mentors were viewed as role models and confidently displayed what it means to be a man (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). Mentors further modeled the ability of conversing about emotional concerns without threatening one's masculinity and were viewed as providing reliable advice due to similar life experiences (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). Another positive feature to this mentoring program was the wider network of connections provided from other mentors and boys within the program, creating a sense of belonging that strengthened the adolescents' obligation to the mentoring process (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). Some mentors communicated finding personal fulfillment from participating in the mentoring relationship, and the male mentees displayed positive changes in attitudes regarding receiving help for behaviors, gaining problem solving skills, and improving family relationships (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). Although the study did not communicate the length of the mentoring relationship, it was revealed that the positive development of self-reliance and seeking appropriate help grew over time (Garraway & Pistrang, 2009). Garraway and Pistrang (2009) suggest that a strong same gender connection between males could assist adolescent males facing challenges and promote positive developmental outcomes.

The discoveries from Garraway and Pistrang (2009) run parallel with the research of Spencer (2007) regarding emotional closeness between adolescent male and male mentor relationships. Spencer examined 12 successful male mentoring relationships identified by the

staff members of the Big Brothers Association to discover the effective factors behind these connections. The age range of the boys was 12-16, and the participants consisted of three white, five African American, one Latino, and three multiracial adolescent males (Spencer, 2007). All of the mentees came from fatherless or absent father homes (Spencer, 2007). The length of the mentoring relationship ranged from one to six years (Spencer, 2007). From the qualitative data gathered, Spencer identified six themes linked to the positive emotional connectedness behind these male mentoring relationships: (a) the significance of having a relationship with an adult male, (b) mentors desired to be involved and emotional connected, (c) close and enduring emotional connections, (d) the relationship being a safe supportive connection to display emotional vulnerabilities, (e) an alliance when dealing with anger effectively, and (f) the growing awareness of mentors displaying feelings.

The adolescents in the study communicated an appreciation of having a male mentor as a resource for discussing male specific topics due to the lack of positive male figures in their lives (Spencer, 2007). In light of the adolescents' gratitude for having a male mentor, the men within these relationships viewed it as essential to serve as positive male figures (Spencer, 2007). One mentor communicated the desire to be present in the absence of his mentee's father, having experienced the absence of his own father (Spencer, 2007). Another mentor communicated not meshing with his own father during adolescence but rather connecting with his uncle, voicing the importance of having another adult male in a young man's life when the father/son relationship experienced conflicts (Spencer, 2007). It seems the importance of having a male mentor from the standpoint of the adolescent males coupled with the significance of being a positive male role model from the male mentors' perspective helped create the foundation for the closeness and emotional connectivity within the relationship (Spencer, 2007). Some of the mentees in the study

viewed the mentors as a second father due to the care and trust established in the relationship (Spencer, 2007).

The description of trusting and caring by the mentees provide evidence to the ongoing consistent emotional support the mentors delivered (Spencer, 2007). Mentors communicated offering emotional support but did not force mentees into talking about personal concerns, revealing that trust between mentor and mentee took approximately six months to establish (Spencer, 2007). Making emotional support available on the timetable of the adolescent seems congruent with the research on the significance of mentor relationships sustaining consistency, longevity, and emotional connections (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Hall, 2015; Grossman, Chan, Schwartz, & Rhodes, 2012; Rhodes & DuBois, 2006). One form of emotional support that male mentors were able to help adolescent males walk through was handling anger more effectively (Spencer, 2007). For some boys, the mentor functioned as a sounding board to vent concerns, and mentors communicated an understanding that the anger of the mentees may stem from a variety of sources such as: (a) being deserted by their father, (b) having experienced abandonment from multiple father figures, and (c) being affected by bullying (Spencer, 2007).

This study implies that male mentors remaining emotionally available enabled the relationship to have emotional connectedness between parties, resulting in the emotional development and increased self-confidence of the male mentees. Spencer (2007) concludes male mentors may provide emotional support for adolescent males that female mentors may not be able to provide due to gender differences and experiences (Spencer, 2007). It is suggested that mentorship supports affirming and assisting individuals growing up and developing into men without, what some believe to be, the most important male to male relationship in a young adolescent's life, the father (Floyd, 2006; Garraway & Pistrang, 2009; Spencer, 2007).

Specific Frameworks for Understanding Successful Mentorship and Interaction Styles

In order to empower male mentors who provide consistent contact to adolescent males, a deeper understanding of effective mentoring relationship styles and interaction styles are essential. Keller and Pryce's (2010) research on mentoring, proposes utilizing a hybrid of familiar relationship roles to produce effective mentor-mentee relationships. Keller and Pryce state that youth mentoring needs can be viewed as an individualized intervention that is relationship-based for promoting positive development. Throughout the wide range of research conducted on mentoring youth, effective outcomes result from the strength of the mentoring relationship, the types of the interactions that are exchanged, and the developmental, cultural, and gender-specific connections that the relationship provides for the mentee (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Karcher and Nakkula (2010) state that the age of mentee, the meeting location, the hopes of the mentee, the objectives of the mentor, and the gender of the each party impact the nature of the interactions that transpire within the relationship.

One mentoring framework that has been employed for understanding and utilizing different relationship and interaction styles is the Theoretically Evolving Activities in Mentoring (TEAM) framework (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). The two relationship styles within this framework are developmental and instrumental (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Although these two styles have different initial focal points, Karcher and Nakkula (2010) found the styles to be complementary, producing vital attributes of effective youth mentoring. Both developmental and instrumental relational styles uphold three elements: (a) incorporating relational and goal-directed activities, (b) deciding if relational or goal-directed interactions will lead the initial stages of the mentoring relationship, and (c) emphasizing the importance of a collaborative, youth centered focus in honoring the mentee's voice and opinions in making decisions regarding

the activities within the mentoring encounters (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). It is noteworthy to stress the importance that mentors are cognizant of being youth-centered and collaborative in the decision making process; for one outcome of the mentoring relationship needs to be to release and empower youth, not enable and dismantle this potential with these pre-adults (Keller & Pryce, 2010).

A driving force behind how mentoring relationship styles evolve and change is found in the pattern of interactions between the mentor and mentee (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Karcher and Nakkula (2010) state that interactions can be defined as the specific discussion and activity that happens when mentor and mentee communicate and function together. Interactions styles are recognized as either being relational or goal-directed (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Relational interactions focus on establishing and nourishing the mentoring relationship (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). The priorities in the mentor-mentee relationships is always developing the relationship, promoting the mentee's emotional well-being and self-esteem, fostering connectedness, and fostering resilience, even when activities focus on skill-building rather than recreation (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Goal-directed interactions center specifically on goal-oriented outcomes for the mentee (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Goal-directed interactions are not just for relational growth and encouragement, but to obtain specific results pertaining to character development and skill competencies. Examples would include improving academic performance and improving classroom and peer behaviors (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). It is believed that a mentee can be indirectly impacted through goal-directed interactions and grow emotionally to positively affect self-esteem, connectedness, and resilience (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010; Larose et al., 2010).

Within the TEAM framework, the developmental and instrumental relationship styles suggest movement between interactions that are relational and goal-directed throughout the course of the mentoring relationship through the venue of decisions made collaboratively (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). When examining these relationship styles, Karcher and Nakkula (2010) find that each style parallels the other, which plays a role in the pattern of interactions between the mentor and mentee.

The developmental style is rooted in establishing a pattern of interactions, starting as relational and naturally flowing into goal-directed interactions (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). The collaborative atmosphere of the developmental relationship over time allows and supports the integration of goal-directed interactions (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). For the instrumental style, the relationship's starting point begins with the youth-centered focus of producing mutual outcomes for the relationship (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). From this starting point, the relationship can progress to address interactions that are more personal and in the moment (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010).

Understanding the nature and difference between the relationship styles of developmental and instrumental and the interaction styles of relational and goal-directed, Karcher and Nakkula (2010) present a framework for equipping mentors to effectively function within the mentoring relationship. The framework is founded on three core features: focus, purpose, and authorship (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). The feature of focus is characterized by the aim of the interaction and structure for obtaining it; focus sheds light on the continuum of interactions moving between relational and goal-directed (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). The feature of purpose encompasses understanding the underlying purposes the interaction serves (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). The feature of authorship deciphers how the interactions were negotiated (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010).

Authorship is particularly relevant to the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship, for understanding how decisions are authored can reveal how much buy-in the mentor brings to the relationship, and more importantly, how much buy-in the mentee holds regarding the relationship (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Within the framework, three forms of negotiations are defined: (a) unilateral, which is one-sided, (b) collaborative, which represents mutually agreed decisions, and (c) reciprocal, which suggests the honoring of both individual's perspectives, allowing for some give and take by both parties (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010).

Karcher and Nakkula (2010) state that the process of negotiating what happens within the match is more relevant than the focus of the interaction and whose agenda the purpose serves. For given the difference between the mentor and mentee, pertaining to permanence and social power (Keller & Pryce, 2010), collaborative authorship fostering an atmosphere of shared experience, plays a life-changing role in the mentoring relationship.

Utilizing the Fusion of Familiar Relationship Roles to Build upon the Framework of Focus, Purpose, and Authorship

Understanding the importance of focus, purpose, and authorship pertaining to relationships and interactions can benefit male mentors' understanding of the framework concept brought forth from the research of Keller and Pryce (2010) who put forth the idea that the mentorship between mentor and mentee can be mutual but remains unequal. Keller and Pryce's framework focuses on the relationship dynamics of permanence and social power. Parallel to the negotiation types described by Karcher and Nakkula (2010), Keller and Pryce conclude that mentors voluntarily join the relationship, and more successful outcomes may result from this collaborate commitment with mentees. Keller and Pryce found that mentor relationships that take on an authoritarian function produce unsuccessful outcomes, and mentor relationships that take

on too equally affiliated roles make for unproductive results. Rather mentors utilizing their position of power to validate and encourage individuals, focusing on youth-centered outcomes and goals could increase the likelihood for mentoring relationships to be beneficial (Keller & Pryce, 2010).

Understanding the positional power and relational influence adult mentors can hold impacts how the mentoring relationship will take root and influence mentees. Keller and Pryce (2010) state that an unrelated adult trying to form a trusting and understanding relationship is not automatically a smooth proposal for young people to accept and embrace. The mentor and the mentee bring different experiences, expectations, attitudes, and personalities into the relationship. Factors for male mentors to be aware of with mentees that are fatherless or have an absent father are the young men's relationship histories (Keller & Pryce, 2010). Prior relationships become the foundation for adapting behaviors and expectations to new adult relationships that are similar (Keller & Pryce, 2010). Understanding that the mentee has preconceived ideas about mentors needs to be in the mind's eye of the mentor. Regardless of the type of relationship, the variables of permanence and social power play vital roles in how the relationship develops (Keller & Pryce, 2010).

Permanence signifies the level that the relationship is stable and secure, and social power suggests the level of equality between the individuals in terms of age, life experience, expertise, and position (Keller & Pryce, 2010). Permanence defines whether the relationship is voluntary or holds an obligated tie, and power defines whether the relationship is equal or unequal. For example, parent-child relationships hold a permanence of obligation based on kinship and a position that is unequal in power (Keller & Pryce, 2010). Likewise, a peer friendship can be defined as voluntary in permanence and equal in power. Based on this idea, Keller and Pryce

(2010) state that a hybrid-mentoring model that is both positively influential in power and collaboratively committed in permanence can be an effective stance for mentee development.

The hybrid relationship between mentor and mentee has a permanence that is voluntary, yet has a social power that is unequal (Keller & Pryce, 2010).

Given the voluntary nature of the hybrid model, a mentor must be vested to stay with the mentee (Keller & Pryce, 2010). The mentor needs to be committed to offer a relationship that a young person will want to continue pursuing (Keller & Pryce, 2010). The unequal distribution of social power between mentor and mentee needs to propel mentors to take greater responsibility in initiating and creating the relationship interactions (Keller & Pryce, 2010). In effect, the mentee is looking to the mentor for direction. The male mentor needs to be aware that an adolescent male coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father is coming into the mentoring relationship questioning, “How will this man receive me, accept me, believe in me, help me, reject me, hurt me; how will I earn his approval, when will he leave?” Knowing the weight of potential impact as well as possible disappointment, it is imperative male mentors are well invested into the voluntary permanence of staying the course of time and using the unequal balance of power to benefit the instrumental and developmental outcomes that serve the adolescent male (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010; Keller & Pryce, 2010).

From the research by Keller and Pryce (2010) on the hybrid model of familiar roles within mentoring relationships, it is paramount for the male mentor to maintain an awareness of upholding a connection that is mutual but unequal. Studies have revealed that when mentors do not use power to push the mentee, but rather invest time into the relationship, it enables mentees to open up to seek guidance, resulting in positive transformation (Spencer, 2007; Styles & Morrow, 1992). Furthermore, Keller and Pryce found that mentoring relationships that presented

a hybrid combination of welcomed companionship combined with adult counsel and life experience proved most beneficial to mentees. As male mentors potentially position the mentoring relationship to take on the hybrid model of permanence and social power, it is essential to understand how developmental needs and cultural identity affect adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father.

Relevant Integration of Developmental and Cultural Needs

When embarking on the journey of mentoring, Karcher and Nakkula (2010) discussed that effective outcomes are also linked to the developmental and cultural needs of the mentee. Having knowledge of the developmental and cultural needs is imperative for building a relationship that is sensitive to the perspectives and beliefs of the mentee, and enhances how mentors connect and communicate. Older adolescents initially functioning in the relationship from an instrumental, goal-directed position has produced positive results, and for younger adolescents starting from a developmental, relational standpoint at the beginning of the relationship can lead to producing growth in the mentee (Larose et al., 2010; Karcher & Nakkula, 2010).

Although the relationship and interaction styles that suit the mentee must be cognizant to the mentor, how does cultural awareness fit into the process of mentoring adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father? Furthermore, how does mentoring fit into cultural perspectives that are more collective in nature? Two mentoring programs that have produced positive results functioning from a more collective and pro-social group mentoring approach resulted from research conducted by Utsey, Howard, and Williams (2003) and Gordon, Iwamoto, Ward, Potts, and Boyd (2009).

Utsey and colleagues (2003) conducted a therapeutic group-mentoring format for serving African American male adolescents in foster care by implementing West African social and cultural worldviews that paralleled the beliefs and values of the mentors and mentees. From this collective approach, mentees were led to view individuality and uniqueness in the context of being a member of a mentoring group. Mentoring individuals in a culturally relevant group format yielded unique advantages over the traditional one-on-one method because: (a) promoting an atmosphere of connectedness helped enable healthy emotional and psychological development, (b) the group format reduced the probability of mentor burnout, and spread the responsibility of being accessible to mentees across multiple mentors, and (c) having multiple mentors reduced the odds of mentee's setback or frustration if a mentor was not present at an event or activity. It is noteworthy that the mentors serving in the group model possess cultural buy in to the group mentoring approach, for the mentors were members of the Afro-centric college-based social fellowship dedicated to community progression and self-empowerment (Utsey et al., 2003). Mentors were specifically trained in the relevant matters of attachment and the psychological impact of neglect, physical and sexual abuse unique to adolescents in foster care, supporting and assisting the facilitation of discussions regarding living in foster care, transitioning into adulthood, functioning in an anti-Black society, and sex and sexuality.

The framework of this cultural-centered approach functioning from the African ethos that believes living in harmony and equilibrium with nature is the drive of human life, offers the following guiding principles for mentor-mentee interactions: (a) group before self, (b) respect for others and self, (c) responsibility for community and self, (d) reciprocity, and (e) authenticity (Utsey et al., 2003). Implementing and utilizing a mentoring approach for serving African American male adolescents that was both culturally relevant and worked in the context of a

group was fruitful in producing attitude and behavioral change in several adolescent males (Utsey et al., 2003). Furthermore, Utsey et al. (2003) found that the primary component to the group's effectiveness was the consistency of the behavior and presence of the mentors. This component of mentor consistency and mentor positive behavior is paramount for mentors to remember. For lacking consistent engagement and accessibility from a father is missing in adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father (Castillo, et al., 2011). The more consistent the behavior, the more purposeful the mentoring, the more time invested, the more impactful and effective the mentoring relationship can have on intrapersonal and interpersonal development in the adolescent males (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Groth, 2011; Karcher & Nakkula, 2010; Utsey et al., 2003).

Similar to the research of Utsey and colleagues (2003), Gordon and colleagues (2009) sought to examine the outcomes linked a culturally relevant mentoring program for African American males in middle school. Gordon and colleagues hypothesized that implementing a cultural relevant mentoring program to purposefully develop mentees' racial identity and confident identification with academics may improve statewide-standardized tests and increase student GPA. The participants in this study were 61 African American males, with the average age of 13, from a large Title I urban middle school in Connecticut (Gordon et al., 2009). The 61 individuals were divided into two groups to compare the effects of participating or not participating within the mentoring program, 32 individuals were identified as a non-equivalent comparison group, and the other 29 individuals were classified as members of the Benjamin E. Mays Institute group (Gordon et al., 2009).

The mentoring model constructed by the Benjamin E. Mays Institute takes on an Afrocentric perspective, modeling pro-social attitudes and actions, stressing cultural pride and

strengths, instructing mentees in a single-sex setting in a dual sex school environment (Gordon et al., 2009). The criteria for being selected for the BEMI group was: (a) having been retained a grade, (b) identified as an at-risk student by previous teachers, (c) having a willingness to participate in community activities for two hours a month, and (d) exhibiting positive character traits (Gordon et al., 2009).

The BEMI sought to influence the students holistically through role modeling and mentoring to impact the mentee's self-esteem, responsibility, vision for success, and self-discipline (Gordon et al., 2009). The BEMI pursues these efforts through multiple avenues: (a) having mentees schedule in an all male learning environment in a regular school setting, (b) core curriculum provided by male instructors, (c) participation in a weekly professional day, consisting of dressing professionally and interacting with community leaders and business owners, (d) meeting for planned activities with a male mentor, and (e) attending BEMI events for mentors, mentees, parents, and school staff that supports academic development (Gordon et al., 2009).

The study revealed that the comparison group gradually declined in academic performance as observed by disengaging in the learning process (Gordon et al., 2009). However, the eighth grade students who participated in the BEMI mentoring program produced greater academic achievements scores and racial identity awareness of immersion/emersion. Internalization and identification with education was connected to producing increased GPAs and higher scores on standardized achievement tests (Gordon et al., 2009). This study suggests that mentoring programs that are culturally relevant and culturally purposeful can positively promote academic achievement (Gordon et al., 2009). Furthermore, Gordon and colleagues

(2009) state that it is imperative to recognize and create racially and culturally consistent strategies such as mentoring programs for serving under represented groups.

To support adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father, the male mentor needs to address how the relationship functions in a culturally congruent manner. To assist in the process of being culturally aware and culturally sensitive merits the attention of mentors (Diehl et al., 2011). This list of attributes might include being trustworthy, reliable, genuine, empathic, and devoted to the relationship (Diehl et al., 2011). Committing to live out these qualities can be a crucial step in positioning a mentor towards becoming culturally sensitive.

How does Meaningful Mentorship fit into the Lives of Alaska's Indigenous Populations?

Similar to the culturally appropriate efforts created to mentor African American adolescent males (Gordon et al., 2009; Utsey et al., 2003), it is paramount for males seeking to mentor Alaska Native youth to implement and integrate culturally relevant activities and ideologies. What does research say regarding mentoring Alaska Native adolescent males? Furthermore, how can male mentors support these individuals that are fatherless or have an absent father?

An essential starting point for male mentors supporting mentees who are Alaska Native is learning important cultural and spiritual values. Sue and Sue (2013) have compiled a spectrum of ideas that can provide male mentors with relevant knowledge for supporting Alaska Native adolescent males. These ideas include: (a) the significance of sharing, (b) cooperation, (c) noninterference, (d) time orientation, (e) spirituality, and (f) nonverbal communication. Sharing and giving is viewed as a way to display honor and respect, for material things are not viewed as status, but a means to appreciate the present (Sue & Sue, 2013). Similar to the collective nature

of the Afrocentric ethos (Utsey et al., 2003), cooperation encompasses the idea of harmony, having family as the primary focus, and individuality as the secondary focus. Noninterference implies the relational position of observation rather than reaction. For teaching and correcting children and youth is often through less punitive actions and less direct confrontation. Instead, alternatives for instructing and redirecting might come through oral tradition, implementing spiritual values, and connecting the extended family in the child rearing process (Sue & Sue, 2013). Time orientation emphasizes the importance of the present, that life is experienced in the here and now. Spirituality can be considered all encircling of body, mind, and spirit. Finally, nonverbal communication involves how listening functions; Sue and Sue state that learning happens by listening as opposed to conversing, and eye contact with elders can be viewed as disrespectful. Having an understanding and awareness of these elements are significant for building genuine relationships and connecting with Alaska Native youth.

Learning what builds resiliency within Alaska Native youth has been a topic researched within different Alaska Native communities (Rasmus, Allen, & Ford, 2014; Wexler, Joule, Garoutte, Mazziotti, & Hopper, 2014; Wexler, Moses, Hopper, Joule, & Garoutte, 2013). Understanding how resiliency is fostered in the lives of Alaska Natives can enable mentors to effectively position the relationship to benefit the adolescent.

Given the fact that research points to positive, caring adult relationships as a key factor in building resilience within children and youth, it seems fitting for male mentors seeking to build relationships with Alaska Native adolescent males to recognize what research reports as important for fostering resilience within Alaska Native adolescent males (Brooks, 1994; Rasmus et al., 2014; Wexler et al., 2013; Wexler et al., 2014). Wexler and colleagues (2013) discovered the role of relationships was a key factor that built youth resilience, yet was also a source of

stress when relationships were negative or strained. The male and female adolescents who participated in their research were from an Iñupiaq Alaska Native community and ranged in age from 11-20. It is understood that throughout the generations, Alaska Natives' difficulties requiring resilience have magnified beyond the natural elements due to the arrival of outside influences. This study defined youth resilience as the developmental capability to traverse continuous difficulties to find routes to strong and healthy adulthood. Resilience strategies were reported from youth building positive kin-like connections that held a reciprocal bond to live responsibly. Relationship obligations encouraged the participants to function in purposeful manners by contributing to others. Wexler and colleagues (2013) stated that having relationships with specific individuals can situate adolescents to be successful, for strong relationships can elevate Alaska Native youth to navigate circumstances with developed resilience. These findings regarding positive kin-like relationships parallel factors that play an essential role in adolescents building resilience from a universal perspective. Possessing some or all of the following factors can position adolescents to develop into resilient individuals: (a) a positive social environment, (b) having strong family support, and (c) possessing the individual characteristics of having a problem-solving perspective, (d) having an optimistic outlook, (e) forming positive relationships, (f) possessing good social skills, (g) having an internal locus of control, and (h) keeping a healthy self-regard (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter, & McWhirter, 2013).

Further research conducted on youth resilience within a Yup'ik community reported developing and fostering cultural and social connectedness with traditional practice helped to produce resilience within Yup'ik youth (Rasmus et al., 2014). Rasmus and colleagues (2014) discovered that opportunities provided by family and community that functioned in a cross-generational fashion between youth and Elders, the land and resources, collectively offered

strategies for living well and living purposefully. This study of connecting community members and Elders with Yup'ik adolescent males can be suggested as a strong source of natural mentors to assist these individuals who may be coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father (Rasmus et al., 2014).

Foster Care

Given the host of factors affecting adolescents in the foster care system, research has provided effective elements for mentoring programs to enhance the emotional development of mentees (Diehl et al., 2011; Spencer, Collins, Ward, & Smashnaya, 2010). In 2014, an estimated 22,392 youth exited the foster care system without a permanent, consistent family unit to rely on for support when facing the tasks of early adulthood (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children Youth and Families Children's Bureau, 2015). This population is coping with not only fatherlessness, but also motherlessness and they were found more prone to the following negative outcomes: (a) lower graduation rates, (b) lower college enrollment, (c) lower wages, (d) more frequent financial stress, (e) higher rates of out-of-wedlock parenting, and (f) more frequent issues with law enforcement (Courtney et al., 2007). Diehl and colleagues (2011) state that in the wake of setbacks facing adolescents, a large number of adults and professionals in the foster care system have concluded that adoption is a consistently positive option, yet many adolescents are unwilling, uncertain, or wary about adoption. However, mentoring networks with meaningful adults can be a significant resource of encouragement and consistency to offset the negative outcomes of older adolescents leaving the foster care system who have not been adopted or do not desire to be adopted (Diehl et al., 2011). Volunteers and adults in the network of influence of adolescents from foster care can offer a mentoring relationship that can promote the potential to

develop self-esteem, increase emotional and psychological wellness, improve health, reduce the probability for risky sexually behavior, and open new networks beyond the foster care system (Gilligan, 1999; Munson & McMillen, 2008; Osterling & Hines, 2006). Diehl and colleagues (2011) conclude that mentoring adolescents can prove helpful on the development of those in foster care.

Diehl and colleagues (2011) studied the thoughts and feelings of foster care youth regarding adoption and mentoring. The data collected in a qualitative interview style, involved 54 youth, ages 10-17 (Diehl et al., 2011). The 54 individuals included 33 Caucasians and 21 African Americans with a gender difference of 25 males and 29 females (Diehl et al., 2011). Mentors gaining the perspectives of this population can benefit by understanding the intentions and responses of adolescent males being mentored that are fatherlessness or dealing with an absent father. Diehl and colleagues found that the bulk of the youth in foster care did not desire to be adopted; particularly older adolescents close to aging out of the system. Holding a position of resistance to adoption was due to viewing adoption as betraying the biological family and making reconciliation impossible with the biological parents.

It is noteworthy to add that one study revealed some adolescents in foster care viewed reconnecting with the biological family in adulthood an option if the need for family reconciliation arose (Samuels, 2009). Loyalty to one's biological family appears to provide adolescent youth a feeling of control (Samuels, 2009). It is crucial for male mentors to be aware that when supporting fatherless or absent father adolescent males, a primary focus in the mentoring relationship needs to be standing in the gap as a father figure, but not replacing the biological father. In light of the mentoring framework put forth by Keller and Pryce (2010) to utilize the permanence and social power of the relationship when mentoring can be an impactful

position for male mentoring efforts toward fulfilling a charge suggested by Groth (2011). Groth states that if the biological father is not available, then other male adults need to take the responsibility to encourage, assist, and carry the fatherless boy toward manhood. It is within this position of standing in the gap as a father figure and not a father replacer, that adhering to the permanence and power of the relationship could provide support for the development and growth within the adolescent coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father. Styles and Morrow (1992) found when mentors established a trusting relationship and were available to provide support when needed, growth and progress took place within the mentee. However, this study also found that both mentors and mentees revealed relationship resistance and frustration when mentors expected to change the mentee by utilizing their relationship permanence and social power (Styles & Morrow, 1992). Mentors' expectation to change the mentee typically resulted in short-lived relationships, which sadly have been found to further setback mentees' interpersonal skills and social and emotional development (Keller & Pryce, 2010; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). Grossman and Rhodes (2002) found that when mentor relationships are cut-short, negative expectations towards adults and feelings of negative self-worth are confirmed within the adolescent.

Although the majority of the research put forth by Diehl and colleagues (2011) suggested that adolescents are closed to the option of adoption, some individuals are open to the possibility. Adolescents in foster care expressed an interest in having a mentor that provides support by routinely checking on the individual, listening, and doing activities together (Diehl et al., 2011). Attributes reported as significant to mentees that mentors would possess are being trustworthy, consistent, authenticity, respectful, and empathic, and being committed to the longevity of the relationship (Diehl et al., 2011). Additionally, Gilligan (1999) states mentor relationships

offering empathy, consistency, genuineness, and respect could give youth in foster care the opportunity to express concerns or fears regarding adoption. Gilligan's discoveries can make room for postulating that providing similar mentoring characteristics could support the daily functioning and identity development of adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father.

In light of the research pointing to the positives connected to mentoring adolescents in foster care (Diehl et al., 2011; Spencer et al., 2010), what are the variables for effectively mentoring this population of individuals? Understanding insights for supporting adolescents in foster care may benefit male mentors aiming to support adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father. Key variables are duration, consistency, and emotional connections through the venue of natural mentor relationships that support the mentoring of adolescents in foster care (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

Natural mentors are defined as significant non-parental adults with strong influence and credibility in the lives of young people (Hurd & Sellers, 2013). Although formal mentoring programs have been found effective (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002), for male mentors mentoring adolescent males coping with fatherlessness and having absent fathers and perhaps having similar concerns facing youth in the foster care system, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of being a natural mentor. Adult males must gain an understanding that being a natural mentor is within their sphere of influence. It is the coach, the bus driver, the teacher, the employer, the librarian, the director, a grandfather, an uncle, who can connect on a consistent basis that are natural mentors (Diehl et al., 2011). It is this form of natural mentoring relationships that over time can build trust and consistency producing positive results in adolescents (Greeson, Usher, & Grinstein-Weiss, 2010).

Application

The application portion of this project is a training video and training manual for equipping adult males who are in the position of being a caring mentor for supporting adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father. The training video consists of four introductory segments complimenting each section of the training manual and can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/gDenH9Guws0>. Providing these influential male mentors with the information, instruction, reflection, and application for mentoring could transform how adolescents are impacted to move forward into adult living.

Found in Appendix A is a training manual for equipping male mentors, specifically supporting adolescent males who are fatherless or have an absent father. This training manual is intended for adult men in the proximity of adolescent males, to increase awareness of the potential opportunities to positively impact adolescent male mentee relationships within their sphere of influence. An objective of this training manual is to assist mentoring relationships in becoming more focused and more intentional when supporting adolescent males' through the setting of natural mentor relationships. Intended to not only inform mentors on relevant factors for effectively supporting adolescents, this manual also provides an opportunity for the mentor to reflect on personal experiences regarding father involvement or lack of father involvement. Exploring past experiences with mentors and how father involvement was existent or nonexistent could equip mentors to connect and support fatherless or absent father adolescent males in a more intentional fashion (Spencer, 2007).

The content of the manual will take the trainee through a process of receiving information, reflecting on the information, and responding to the information to intentionally

enhance the mentoring relationship with adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father.

Conclusion

According to current literature, male mentorship could support adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father (Cartwright & Henriksen, 2012; Coller & Kuo, 2014; Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Diehl et al., 2011; Garraway & Pistrang, 2009; Grossman et al., 2012; Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Hall, 2015; Keller & Pryce, 2010; Lakind et al., 2014; Rhodes & DuBios, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2013; Spencer, 2007; Wilson et al., 2014). Male mentors being conscious to use their natural setting and sphere of influence is viewed as a strong format for mentor relationships to naturally evolve into a supporting caring relationship setting for adolescent males (Hurd & Sellers, 2013). It can be assumed that gaining knowledge and understanding of the benefits of father involvement, while utilizing the mentor relationship could provide adolescent males with a setting for developing resiliency and becoming a healthy adult (Groth, 2011; McWhirter et al., 2013).

It is paramount for male mentors to be conscious that some adolescent males may be drawn to gain attention from their influence in an attempt to fill the void of having an absent father (Herzog, 2014; Wineburgh, 2000). It can be assumed that this often, natural pull toward adult men may be male adolescents seeking to satisfy a need primarily fulfilled through healthy father involvement (Castillo et al., 2011; Wineburgh, 2000). Mentors implementing Keller and Pryce (2010) permanence and social power framework may enhance the mentoring relationship to meet the needs of the adolescent male and propel the individual toward reaching academic, career, and life goals. Tyre and colleagues (2006) report that predicting school success or failure for high school aged males can be based most reliably on whether a male mentor is present. This

prediction for school success is based on the variable that a male mentor partially provides what is missing for adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father and the mentoring relationship improves the trajectory for successful living.

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Appendix A

**Intentional
Mentor
Training**

**Supporting
Adolescent Males
Coping with
Fatherlessness
Or Having an
Absent Father
By Equipping
Male Mentors**



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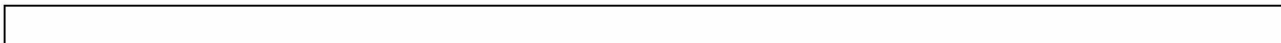
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Introduction

Welcome to *Intentional Mentoring Training: Supporting Adolescent Males Coping with Fatherlessness or Having an Absent Father by Equipping Male Mentors*.

This training is in your hands because you are willing to mentor adolescent males growing up fatherless (not having any contact with their father) or who have an absent father (fathers that are physically or emotionally disconnected from their son for prolonged periods of time). This training will empower you to effectively reach out and impact adolescent males in your sphere of influence. At first glance, adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father may not appear in need of support due to the outward facade of teenage independence. But the outcomes of young people who do not have an active present father, indicate they are lacking an important figure essential to their identity and development.

Within the pages of this manual, information regarding how to mentor and support adolescent males living life without the presence of a biological father is presented. Opportunities to reflect and respond to the content are also provided. Through learning information on fatherlessness and absent fathers, the impact of father involvement, and the meaningfulness of mentorship, you will be better equipped to increase the opportunity to help foster resilience within adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father.

The Impact of the Father

To begin this intentional mentoring training, please answer the following statements as true or false:

1. True or False: Fatherlessness affects thousands of kids. _____
2. True or False: A quarter of the children and adolescents in the U.S. will live a portion of their lives in a single parent home. _____
3. True or False: Fatherlessness is not viewed as a serious social problem. _____

The answers to these true or false statements are:

1. *False*, fatherlessness does not affect thousands of kids, but millions of kids. In fact, at least 20 million children are affected by fatherlessness (United States Census Bureau, 2015).
2. *False*, not a quarter, but half of the children and adolescents in the U.S. will live a portion of their lives in a single parent home (DeBell, 2008).
3. *False*, fatherlessness is considered a large social problem, as children from homes without a present father are diagnosed more often with ADHD, more likely to retain a grade, more likely to be expelled or suspended from school (DeBell, 2008), have higher

rates of behavioral and emotional issues, school failure, encounters with law enforcements, and dependencies of social services (Horn, 2006).

Given the reality that fatherlessness and absent fathers affects millions of children, and in light of the increased negative outcomes linked to living without a present father:

- What is missing from adolescent males' lives that their fathers could have given them if they were present?

Your answer to the above question may consist of a host of things, such as: a teacher of life skills, giver of advice, a driving instructor, a model for how to solve problems, a person who answers questions, a companion to spend time with, a model for how to treat people, a person who gives encouragement, praise, and affection. This question was specific to adolescent males, but remember this list is built upon the things provided by the father in boys' infancy stage, toddler and early childhood stage, and later children stage.

An FYI for you.....Unique Research Discovery

Fletcher and colleagues (2011) conducted a study involving the effects of "rough and tumble play" between fathers and their children, which suggests that such kind of play was helpful for children's' physical, social, and cognitive development. Specifically, "rough and tumble play" was viewed as boosting children's' confidence, social competence, and maturity with winning and losing. But perhaps the most significant discovery was that "rough and tumble play" became an expected enjoyable family routine that supported the relationship connections between fathers and their children.

Fletcher and colleagues' (2011) research confirms and supports how father involvement is defined, which is coming up in the next section.

Although your answers may be similar or different from other people, the list can most likely be compiled into one of the three components that define father involvement.

The Big 3

Research defines father involvement by three components:

1. Engagement
2. Accessibility
3. Responsibility

Engagement is defined as the time spent in positive interactions between a father and his children (Castillo, Welch, & Sarver, 2011; Saleh & Hilton, 2011). Accessibility is defined by a child's access of being in close proximity to his or her father (Castillo et al., 2011; Saleh & Hilton, 2011). Responsibility is defined by contributing to household decision-making and childrearing duties (Castillo et al., 2011).

Research suggests that when these three components of engagement, accessibility, and responsibly are provided to children, that cognitive, affective, and behavioral development is positively impacted (Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999; Wilson & Prior, 2011). Research also implies that positive father involvement is connected to increased social and cognitive ability, increased abilities to exhibit empathy and self-control, stronger levels of self-esteem, more life skills, better mental health, deeper academic performance, and increased career success (Wilson & Prior, 2011).

Picture It.... Peter, Paul, and Patrick.

His mother who he loves very much picks Peter up everyday from daycare. They meet each other with a big hug and kiss. Hand in hand they walk to the car. But Peter wonders as he watches other kids getting picked up occasionally by a man called daddy, "Do I have one? Where did mine go?" And begins to feel that something may be wrong, that something may be missing.....

Paul is beside himself! He can't wait to go to bed because every six weeks is like a "Christmas morning" when his dad comes home from his job. Paul's eleven now, but still feels like he is a 6 year old on nights like this. As he sets his alarm clock, his mom pops her head in his room and says, "Hey Hon, Dad just called and said the foreman needs him to stay through his two weeks off. Sorry, but look on the bright side, we'll be able to do another trip to Hawaii next year. Think about what island you want to visit this time." Paul rolls over, growing bitter to Hawaiian vacations, asking why his Dad's foreman is always first in line.....

Patrick takes his last step, and looks over his shoulder exhausted, but amazed. Fifty yards behind him is his dad. For the last ten years it has been his dad reaching the summit first. But today, on his seventeenth birthday he beat him. As he wonders about whether or not his dad let him reach the summit first, he is flooded with the memories from climbing this 4,000 foot mountain so many times before with his dad. He faintly recalls being in the backpack carrier at age

two. He remembers the big “Woo-hoo” from his dad when he climbed to the halfway marker as a five year old. And then there is the memory of the very first time he reached the summit at seven, feeling like a conquering hero, and feeling so confident from the hug his dad gave him, with words of affirmation, “Seven, and you reached the top! You the man, Tiger!” Then there was the memory of the “talk” at age twelve on top of the mountain. Patrick chuckles as he remembers the awkward comments about hair growing in private places, but feeling relieved that his dad would give him answers about his insecurities and uncertainties. As his dad steps next to him and puts his arm around him, he declares Patrick now holds the first place position for reaching the top. Patrick feels a glimpse of sadness knowing that next year he will be off at college, and unable to climb as often as he would like with his dad. But as he hears his dad yell, “I’ll beat you to the bottom” joy arises within his soul knowing that he still has eight months of climbing adventures with his dad before moving into a dorm room 5,000 miles away.....

Peter, Paul, and Patrick are fictional characters, but paint a realistic portrait of three different males, with three different fathering experiences. Although Peter has a loving, responsible mother, being fatherless, he is beginning to question his self-worth. Paul is headed to Hawaii, but the absent reality of his father, is causing him to want to find ways to numb his hurt, perhaps online gaming, maybe pursuing what the big deal is about chewing tobacco. Then, there is Patrick, who feels secure and confident as a result to the time he spends with his dad, the reality that his dad is home every night, and that his dad takes the initiative to teach him life skills and responsibility.

Questions for Reflection

In light of the three components of father involvement (engagement, accessibility, and responsibly) and stories of Peter, Paul, and Patrick:

- How has father involvement affected you personally in your upbringing?
 - What component (engagement, accessibility, or responsibility) was most important to you? Please explain:
- If you had an absent father or were fatherless, write how you believe this has affected you.

Describe how father involvement or lack of father involvement has formed you into the person you are today.

If you lacked healthy father involvement during your childhood or adolescence, what helped you overcome this setback?

What or whom do you think may support *Peter* or *Paul* as adolescent males lacking father involvement?

Take Care...of Yourself

Taking a look inwardly on your own personal experiences regarding your father's involvement in your life may evoke feelings and thoughts of joy and gratefulness or sadness and hurt.

It is highly encouraged to take steps toward self-awareness for your own inner healing and continual journey toward being a developed and whole individual.

Perhaps you need to forgive your father. Research suggests that forgiveness involves our emotional, cognitive and behavior systems, and choosing to forgive can enable and empower the process of letting go of the emotions of anger, hatred, resentment, bitterness, sadness, and contempt (Enright & Gassin, 1992; Richards, 1988).

Mentoring

One answer for supporting adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father can be found within male mentoring. Groth (2011) states it is paramount that a male mentor provide support as a father figure to a boy who is fatherless or has an absent father to help the individual cross the bridge to manhood. Furthermore, Tyre and colleagues (2006) report that predicting school success or failure for high school aged males can be based most reliably on whether a male mentor is present.

So, where do these effective male mentors come from? Although formal mentoring programs such as school based mentoring programs and community-based programs are popular nationwide and do produce positive results (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Karcher, 2008), mentoring relationships that take on a natural form can develop to produce positive long-term results (Hurd & Sellers, 2013). When the choice to draw near to an adult male is found in the daily or weekly routine of the adolescent male, the relationship can be viewed as being in the "right place" and at the "right position" for the "right period of time" to positively support the adolescent male.

An FYI for you..... Unique Research Discovery

Hurd and Sellers (2013) found that natural mentors for African American male middle school student yielded positive results: greater academic engagement, increased well-being, and improved social skill development.

Dang & Miller (2013) study revealed that natural mentors were helpful and necessary from the perspective of homeless youth. Homeless youth communicated that natural mentors acted as surrogate parents providing essential social and emotional support.

Gilligan (1999) reports that mentoring relationships for adolescents in foster care helped with increasing self-esteem, improving mental health, and opening new networks and resource opportunities.

“Right Place” in the “Right Position” for the “Right Period of Time”

Natural mentors are defined as:

- A significant non-parental adult who has influence and credibility in the life of a young person (Hurd & Sellers, 2013).

Create a list of possible “natural everyday” male relationships where you could possibly become “natural male mentors” for adolescent males. When making your list, think of those male relationships that can be at the “right place” in the “right position” for the “right period of time.”

Your list may be a broad array of occupations, but remember “natural everyday” male relationships can be any meaningful non-parental male adult with influence (Hurd & Sellers, 2013).

Question for Reflection

How do you define a mentor?

To help with your definition, here are some synonyms for mentor: counselor, guide, tutor, teacher, guru, supporter, and advisor. Before you write your definition, consider what Diehl and colleagues (2011) discovered were important for young people when seeking out a mentor: being trustworthy, consistent, authenticity, respectful, empathic, and committed to the longevity of the relationship.

What kind of “natural everyday” male mentor are you? Who is drawn to you? Are you teacher with students? Are you a manager at a restaurant with employees? Are you a coach or director? Are you an uncle, neighbor, or grandpa to any fatherless or absent father adolescent males? The “father hunger” theory suggests that boys can be drawn to men within their spheres of proximity (Herzog, 2014). This gravitation to get attention may be an unconscious search stemming from having an absent father (Wineburgh, 2000), which may be how adolescent males are coping with this missing relationship.

Thought for Reflection

Take a moment to consider the idea behind “father hunger” – Who is pursuing you? Do you have a student acting out? He may be unconsciously wanting and needing your attention. Do you have an employee who shows up early or stays late? His questions and comments may be his way of seeking your reactions.

Through the lens of “father hunger,” write down any names of adolescent males who may be specifically *hungering after you* or may be *hungering for another man’s* attention.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Principle Number 1

Have Purposeful Eyes

To be an effective natural mentor for adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent a father, it is essential to ***see who is hungering*** for you or who is hungering for a relationship with other men. Change your lens to see beyond the surface. Look deeper into the adolescent male because he may need you. Human motivation is intentional, and one of the foundational needs of a person is the need for love and belonging (Wubbolding, 2015). Being aware that those who “hunger” for a father may be seeking to satisfy the need for love and belonging. Mentoring is a venue to fulfill that hunger for relationships.

An FYI for you.....Unique Research Discovery

Diehl and colleagues’ (2011) research on adolescents’ perceptions and perspectives on adoption and mentoring suggest a more closed door to adoption and a further open door to mentorship. Older adolescents in foster care viewed adoption as cutting off the option for reconnecting with the biological family, and a threat to their autonomy and control of their lives. Yet the interest of having a mentor was viewed positively - a mentor that provides a routine of meeting regularly to do activities together, listen, and to provide support. Additionally, attributes of mentors that adolescents reported as important are trustworthiness, consistency, authenticity, respectful, empathic, and committed.

Principle Number 2***Know the Need behind the Hunger***

To have an effective positive impact on adolescent males coping with fatherlessness or having an absent a father, it is vital to *know the need behind the hunger*. The hunger for a father, and the pursuit can result from the failure of the relationship with the biological father. For from healthy father involvement, the fulfillment comes through the components of the big 3:

1. Engagement
2. Accessibility
3. Responsibility

This need to see the potential impact you can make needs to be a part of who you are and how you respond to adolescent males who are fatherless or have an absent father.

- Give them your one-on-one engagement.
- Give them access to you.
- Give them your “buy in” and commitment that you are vested in their success.

If not the “right place” in the “right position” the “right period of time” can be missed.

Questions for Reflection

--

- Think of those adolescent males seeking for your attention or who may benefit from having a positive male influence:
 - How can you engage with them?

- How can you make yourself accessible to them?

- How can you commit to their success?

Principle Number 3***Give Consistency, Duration, and Emotional Connections***

Being in a position of *having purposeful eyes* and *knowing the need behind the hunger*, it is paramount to *give adolescent males consistency, duration, and emotional connections*. Giving adolescent males *consistent* contact over a significant length of *time*, it is very likely positive emotional connections and development will take root (Rhodes & DuBois, 2006).

Give relationship consistency for lack of father engagement.

Give relationship duration for lack of father accessibility.

Give emotional connections for lack of father responsibility.

Relationship Consistency

Deutsch and Spencer (2009) state that consistent and frequent contact between mentors and mentees is an attribute of higher-quality mentoring relationships. Consistency is a vital building block of trust and dependability. Experiencing consistency within the mentoring relationship is especially important for adolescents dealing with the lack of consistency from key relationships such as their father (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009). The idea behind constant consistent contact is the probability for more opportunities for direct involvement to positively support the lives of adolescents (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009).

**If mentors do not consistently have contact with the child,
then creating chances for change crumble away.**

on the other hand....

**If mentors make moments for matching up,
momentum for maturity is more likely.**

An adolescent male lacking engagement from his father is going to need the adult male mentor relationship to be consistent with interactions.

Question for Reflection

- What commitment to relationship consistency can you give?

Relationship Duration

Positive outcomes and strong connections have been found in mentoring relationships that are maintained over time (Deutsch & Spencer, 2009; Spencer, Collins, Ward, & Smashaya, 2010). When it comes to relationship duration, there have been straightforward outcomes connected to relationships that end early versus relationships that continue over time. Mentoring relationships ending after a few months have the potential to negatively affect mentees' attitudes and actions; however, the longer the mentoring relationship (at least one year), the stronger the mentoring relationship, generating improved academic achievement and healthier emotional and behavioral functioning (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Karcher, 2008; Rhodes, 2002).

**If mentors do not count the cost of committing long term to mentoring,
then the child will be short changed and be in relationship debt.**
on the other hand....

**If mentors commit to the longevity of the relationship,
the accumulation of time can bring benefits to the mentee.**

An adolescent male lacking accessibility from his father is going to need a long lasting relationship with an adult male who is in his proximity to assess.

Question for Reflection

- What commitment to relationship duration can you give?

Emotional Connections

Although the factors of consistency and duration are essential, if mentoring relationships are not meaningful, small results will follow (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002; Parra, DuBois, Neville, & Pugh-Lilly, 2002). However, Deutsch and Spencer (2009) state that having solid emotional connections between a mentor and mentee are linked to stronger outcomes such as academics and self-esteem. Parra and colleagues (2002) state that the closeness of the relationship concerning a mentor and adolescent was the largest variable in producing beneficial outcomes of the mentoring relationship. It is imperative for mentors to take responsibility to be proactive to make strong emotional connections with mentees.

**If mentors are passive in pursuing the child's heart,
then the child will lack the emotional connection to change.**
on the other hand....

**If mentors take responsibility to connect with the child's heart,
the connection to change is more confident.**

An adolescent male lacking responsibility from his father needs emotional connections from a proactive adult male pursuing his heart.

Question for Reflection

- What commitment to emotional connections can you give?

Principle Number 4

Know How to Relate and Know How to Interact

Principle number four encompasses learning relationship styles and interaction styles within the mentoring relationship. How a mentor relates and interacts with a mentee is vital to the relationship having emotional connect-ability and adolescent buy-in. Plainly put, if a male mentor cannot relate and interact with an adolescent male coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father, he will be unable to provide meaningful emotional connections required to counter the impact of not having positive father involvement in his life. Learning and employing the proper relationship style and interaction style could pay dividends in the end resulting to positive outcomes.

Relationship Styles – Developmental and Instrumental Interaction Styles – Relational and Goal-Directed

Developmental Approach with Relational Interactions

The developmental style of mentoring is focused on building a positive relationship with the mentee. The interaction style that fosters development is relational interactions. Relational interactions aim to establish and nourish the mentoring relationship (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). The goal is to promote the mentee's emotional well being which includes building self-esteem, connectedness, and resilience (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010).

**The primary outcome for the
developmental approach with relational interactions
is internal growth.**

Instrumental Approach with Goal-Directed Interactions

The instrumental style to mentoring is focused on producing mutual youth-centered outcomes within the mentee (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010). Goal-directed interactions foster the instrumental style. Goal-directed interactions point specifically to reaching goal-oriented results (Karcher & Nakkula, 2010).

**The primary outcome for the
instrumental approach with goal-directed interactions
is external growth.**

The setting and situation for your natural mentoring relationship can determine which relationship approach and interaction style leads to the initial journey of the alliance. But remember, regardless of the approach and style used, the mentoring relationship can provide relevant involvement that is missing from a lack of father involvement.

An FYI for you.....Unique Research Discovery

Forming a trusting and caring relationship with a new adult is not always a smooth process for young people to accept and embrace. Keller and Pryce (2010) state that a young person's expectations and attitudes can be affected by past relationship experiences. It has been reported that mentors who used their power of position to push mentees found resistance in the mentoring relationship (Styles & Morrow, 1992). However, when mentors do not use power to push mentees, but rather invest time towards making a meaningful connection within the relationships, mentees were enabled to open-up and seek guidance on their terms and needs, resulting in positive change (Spencer, 2007; Styles & Morrow, 1992).

Question for Reflection

What relationship approach and interaction style best fosters the natural mentoring relationships in your sphere of influence?

How can you utilize your natural mentoring relationship to promote both the internal goals and external goals of the adolescent males in your sphere of influence?

Principle Number 5

Be For Your Young Man

Within the mentoring relationship, it is essential the mentee feel his mentor is *for him*. *Being for the young man* you are influencing requires specific relationship qualities to be functioning within the mentoring relationship. Deutsch and Spencer (2009) state that vital qualities are authenticity, positive regard, empathy, kindness, appropriate challenges, and support.

**Be for your young man
by providing
authenticity, positive regard, empathy,
kindness, appropriate challenges, and support.**

Questions for Reflection

In what ways can you display and perform these vital qualities?

- Authenticity
 - How can you be authentic?

- Positive Regard
 - How can you display positive regard and acceptance?

- Empathy
 - How can you show empathy and understanding?

-
- Kindness
 - How can you communicate and display kindness and warmth?
-
-
-
- Appropriate Challenges and Support
 - How can you provide support and healthy challenges to the mentee?
-
-
-

An FYI for you.....Unique Research Discovery

Bjornsen (2000) states that a supportive feature for adolescent males coming of age and moving into manhood happens by way of the message sent from the father. This message from the father implies “you are now a man.” Bjornsen states the absence of the father’s message can be linked to difficult development during adulthood. Bjornsen’s study of college students in their 20s indicated that receiving a verbal approval of coming to age was a significant event. The students that received a verbal approval were impacted positively by the affirmation, and those that did not receive such a verbal affirmation desired one.

From this study, Bjornsen (2000) offers the following suggestions to parents and individuals working with adolescents: receiving a spoken affirmation of approval into adulthood may be desired by adolescents for the transition into adulthood, however receiving approval into adulthood from an emotional-absent parent may cause further distance in the relationship rather than receiving blessing to move into adulthood.

Principle Number 6
Speak Life, Speak Approval, Speak Blessing

Bjornsen’s (2000) study shed light on the power of positive words, and how words of approval and affirmation are crucial for an adolescent male’s development. As a male mentor, the position

to speak life, to speak approval, and to speak blessing could be the vital piece to the puzzle for adolescent males coping with fatherless or having an absent father.

Questions for Reflections

How can you use your role as mentor to speak life and to speak approval to the adolescent male you are mentoring?

How can you speak words to affirm the adolescent male's progression into becoming a man?

Conclusion

Answering the call to be a male mentor for an adolescent male coping with fatherlessness or having an absent father is something not to be taken lightly. The prerequisites alone of giving consistent contact and committing to the longevity of the relationship require mentors to honestly count the cost. It is important that as a mentor enters into the relationship to remember the impact one has received from a mentor in his own life.

Questions for Reflection

Think back to your adolescence, did you have a male mentor?

Did you have a natural mentor you were drawn too?

What kind of impact did this male mentor have on you? How has this male mentor's influence affected who you are today?

If you did not have a male mentor, what did you need, or wish you could have received?

Look back over your response. Can you give what you received, or what you wished you would have received to the adolescent males in your sphere of influence? How can you begin moving into the role of mentoring the adolescent males in your sphere of influence?

**“Life’s most urgent question is:
What are you doing for others?”
-Martin Luther King Jr.**

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