

# Using Natural Mentoring Relationships for Youth-Initiated Mentoring Interventions

Workshop presented at  
*Mentoring Youth in Illinois:  
Research Meets Practice*  
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What is natural mentoring?

# Sample criteria of natural mentors

## **Someone who:**

- you can count on to be there for you
- who believes in you and cares deeply about you
- who inspires you to do your best, and
- who has really influenced what you do and the choices you make

(Rhodes et al., 1994; Sánchez et al., 2008)

# *How* natural mentors help youth

(McDonald & Lambert, 2014)

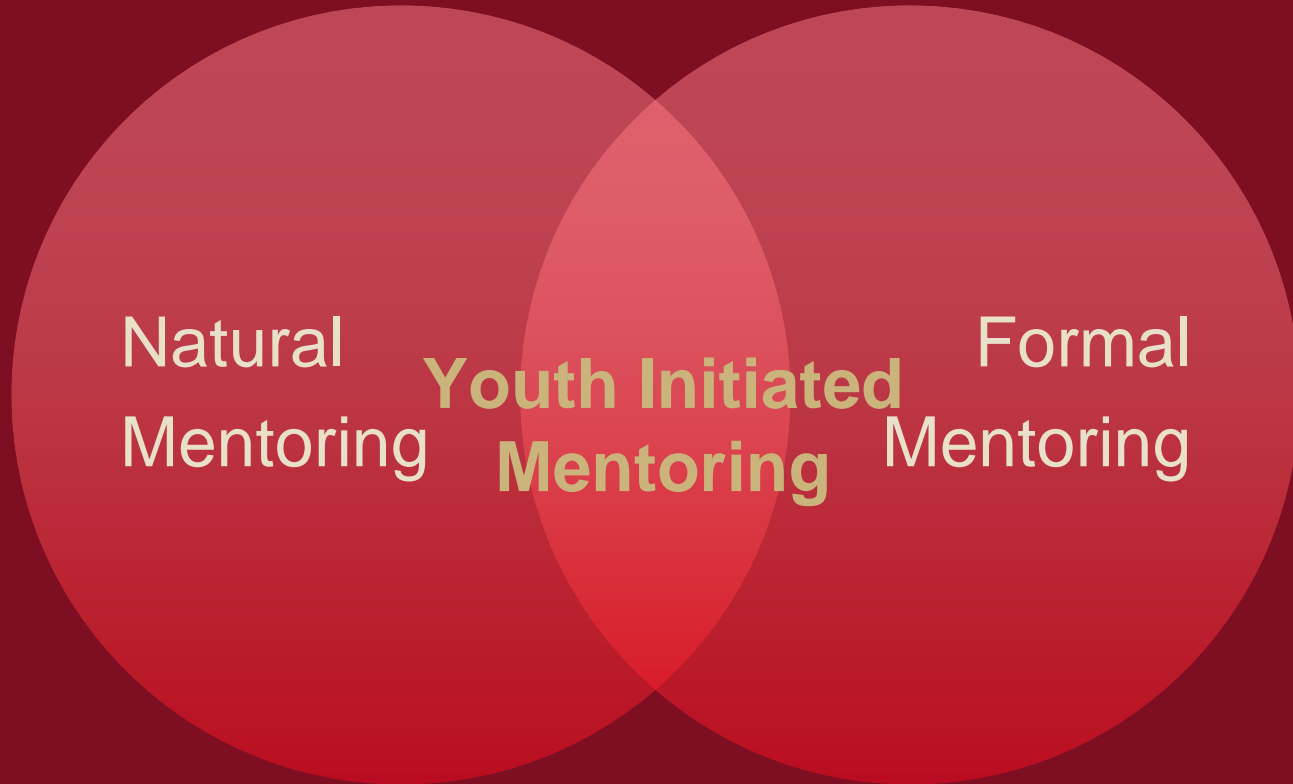
- Help young people develop skills and competencies
- Promote social learning by serving as role models
- Serve as social resources
- Serve as sources of resilience

# Benefits of natural mentoring

- Positive outcomes for youth:
  - Academic achievement (Sánchez et al., 2008)
  - Educational attainment (Erickson et al., 2009; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005)
  - Mental health (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010)
  - Prevent risk behaviors (Hurd & Zimmerman, 2010)
  - Employment (McDonald et al., 2007, Schwartz et al., 2013)
  - Long-term intrinsic job rewards in adulthood (McDonald & Lambert, 2014)

But advantaged youth are  
more likely to report  
natural mentors than  
disadvantaged youth

# A New Model of Mentoring



# Discussion

Where do your services lie on the continuum from natural to formal mentoring?

What (if anything) are you currently doing to facilitate natural mentoring relationships?

Do you currently provide any mentee training?



# Rationale for YIM

- Builds on **strengths of natural mentoring**  
AND provides **structure** to support relationships
- **Autonomy** in selecting mentors may increase investment, esp.  
for vulnerable adolescents
- Acquisition of “**help-recruiting skills**” (Balcazar & Keys, 1995)
- Redresses **shortage of volunteer mentors**

# Variations in YIM Model

- ◆ **“Full” YIM**
- ◆ **Network Engaged Mentoring**
- ◆ **Adult and youth training**
- ◆ **Youth training (group format)**

## Small Group Discussion + Share Out

1. What skills do your youth need to learn to develop social capital? To develop relationships with potential mentors?
2. What barriers do your youth face in developing social capital?
3. What kind of mentors do they need?

# YIM Training Workshops (Schwartz, Kanchewa, & Rhodes, 2014)

## **Social support, social capital, and mentoring relationships**

What is a mentor? Social support? Social capital?

What are ways that mentors can support goals (esp. academic and career goals)?

## **Eco-mapping**

Who are the adults in existing social network?

How to expand existing network

## **Networking & professionalism**

What is networking?

Why first impressions, communication and presentation matter

## **Power, privilege, code-switching**

Networking and building social capital in systems of privilege and oppression

What is code-switching and how is it a strength?

## **Reaching out to academic and professional mentors**

How to identify potential academic and professional mentors

How to communicate and develop relationships with academic/professional mentors

## **Networking Night**

## Initial Findings (Schwartz et al., 2014)

YIM workshops may:

- Teach value of nonparental adults support and social capital
- Increase “help-recruiting” skills and reaching out to nonparental adults for support
- Develop “networking” skills and “professionalism”
- Increase social support received from nonparental adults